

*got rhythm?*

## for the love of dance

by Shelli T. Sivert

**Is it the rhythm, the music, the fancy footwork or the rush of wind** in your face as you twirl? What is it that makes so many Wasatch women and girls love to dance? We talked with women across the valley in an effort to discover why they get such a kick out of dancing.



## TEACHING OTHERS TO XCEL

Shelly Stringham and Liz Raybould, two sisters and group fitness teachers, have danced their way through life, reaping the myriad rewards that dancing can offer. Together they have shared the joys of dance, each earning the Miss Drill Team Utah title in different years.

"I think dance has always been my thing," Shelly says. "I'm a very self-motivated person and dance did that for me." After high school, Shelly joined the acclaimed Odyssey Dance Theater in Draper. "(Dancing) has provided a job for me ever since I graduated," she says. Recently, Shelly was on TV making it through to the second round of auditions for "So You Think You Can Dance," the Fox Network's popular dance competition.

Liz also has an impressive resumé that includes dancing with the Brigham Young University Cougarettes. She encourages her two young daughters, Kate and Claire, to dance as well. "I want my daughters to have the self-confidence from (dance) I always felt like I had," Liz says.

Both women now enjoy teaching group fitness classes together at Xcel Fitness in Holladay. "The group fitness setting is



awesome because people from all backgrounds, all ages, all body types come in and work out," Liz says. "They can open up and feel like they're on a stage, so to speak. They're just having fun letting go. That's what group fitness is about for me — to empower people to do that."

## "DANCE THERAPY"

Talking with Margene Anderson, owner of Dance Scene and a professional dance teacher of 25 years, you'd never guess that she used to be painfully shy. Her enthusiasm and zest for life, especially dance, is truly contagious.

Margene recounts a pivotal experience after her divorce at a young age. She got dressed and drove to a singles dance only to sit in the car for a full hour. Finally, she got the courage to go inside. Something about that dance lit a fire inside her. She began a partnership with dance that led her to becoming a teacher and avid lover of all things dance.

"I've loved it ever since the day I first started dancing," Margene says. "I think it was hand in glove ... It brings so many good feelings to my heart — to my soul. It's happiness."

She teaches many forms of partner dance including ballroom, swing and salsa at locations spanning the Wasatch Front. She trains regularly in Los Angeles with world-renowned instructors to keep her dance skills on the cutting edge. She does all of this because she possesses a keen passion for dance and teaching.

Margene also underscores the many health benefits that dancing provides: strength, flexibility, coordination, weight loss, reduced stress levels and improved memory. "Dancing is a way of exercising without even knowing it," she says.

People often ask Margene if she is a marriage counselor because of the principles of communication taught in her dance classes. She is continually fascinated by the wonders that dancing

MARGENE ANDERSON  
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will do for relationships. She calls this phenomenon "dance therapy."

"You're communicating with your partner at a whole different non-verbal level," Margene says. "There's the trust — the lead-and-follow that you learn."

Margene is proud of her "100 percent success rate." Success to her means that her students — especially the beginners — come to her classes, keep coming and leave feeling more positively about their ability to dance. "I love reaching out to people so they walk out knowing they can dance. Nothing in the world can replace that feeling."

## STEPS TO SUCCESS

A buzz of energy and excitement fills the air when you walk into The Dance Club studio in Orem. Since 1979, they have offered a variety of classes in ballet, jazz, hip hop, tap and everything in between.

Studio director Sheryl Dowling and studio manager Allison Thornton tell about their mission, which is not only to turn out quality dancers, but also to teach their students essential life skills. "We really set high expectations for our kids," says Allison. "I think that's one thing that sets us apart from other studios."

Sheryl adds, "I'm so proud of (our students) because they're so dependable. They learn how to dance, which is wonderful, but the other things they learn are so much bigger and more important."

"I've had so many school teachers tell me that their best students are kids who are in programs (like dance) where it's structured and they have to learn to use their time well," Sheryl says.

"I want my daughters to have the self-confidence I always felt like I had." **LIZ RAYBOULD**



**WHAT THE STUDENTS AT THE DANCE CLUB SAY:**

"I love to dance because I love the way you feel when you do it," says Alexia Meyer, 13.

"I just like that when you come to dance, there's a whole different environment. Like if you have a bad day at school, it just totally changes when you walk in the doors," says Megan Skalla, 12.

Forest Robey, 13, says, "I learn how to socialize and it helps me to present myself and feel comfortable performing."

"You can express yourself through movement," says Mollee Gray, 17. "You also gain so many friendships that you'll have for the rest of your life. It's dance — I love it!"

"My heart just makes me like it."  
MADISON McCLELLAN, AGE 5



THE DANCE CLUB  
801-224-4400  
www.thedanceclub.com

The Dance Club also values the principle of giving back to the community. Each year, their studio combines with two others in Utah to produce the "Art with Heart" benefit concert for Shriner's Hospital.

"This is our kids' favorite performance of the year. It's friendly, it's not competitive ... and all the money goes to charity,"

Sheryl says. Going into their seventh year, they have raised about \$150,000.

The Dance Club now offers a free dance class for children with disabilities. So far there is just one student enrolled, but they look forward to seeing it grow.

The consensus is that the power of dance is a positive force in people's lives.

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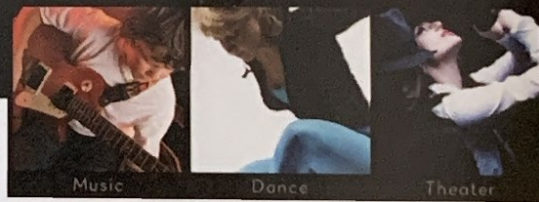
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