



Faculty

Every staff member has been selected by the director and has proven themselves as qualified educators. Our dance instructors are certified by test to teach by *Dance Masters of America* and the *Cecchetti Council of America*, the gym coaches are members of *USA Gymnastics and AAU* and are safety certified.

We are proud to say that not only is our faculty highly qualified in their areas of expertise but truly understand their impact on all of their student's ethical, moral, emotional and mental development. We stress quality of instruction and the importance of meeting the needs of all of our students through professional excellence and our dedication to teaching.

KATHI HALBERT – Director

Kathi has owned and operated her own dance and gymnastics program for the past 53 years. She teaches all major disciplines of dance and is a certified Women's Cecchetti Level VII ballet instructor. Her studio also offers a full acro/gym program with competitive teams through AAU and USAG including levels 3 through 10. Kathi is also a certified Stott Pilates instructor for mat work and reformer.



She was Administrator of Dance Masters of America's Teachers Training School at Kent State University and the University at Buffalo for 15 years and the ballet instructor for Dance Masters of America's Teachers Training School West and East. Over the past 24 years Kathi has served on Dance Masters of America's Executive Board and National Board of Directors serving in many different capacities. She is currently National Area Director, Scholarship Chairman and Recording Secretary of DMA. As a National Certified DMA examiner, she is instrumental in creating syllabus and testing materials to promote the education of the dance teacher. Kathi has been the Chairman to the Ohio Council of Cecchetti for the past 11 years. She is Principal, Examining Chairman and Past President of Ohio Dance Masters. She has taught master classes and adjudicated at national, regional and state conventions across the country.

Her dancers have been seen dancing on cruise lines, commercials, theme parks, dinner theaters, musicals, dance companies and various productions as her gymnasts gone on to colleges to compete in gymnastics at a collegiate level. Her goal is to educate and instill the love of dance and gymnastics in the souls of her students and all those she teaches.

Kathi is a graduate of Kent State University and formerly a fourth-grade teacher at Poland North Elementary. She is married to Ken Halbert, and is blessed to have in her life Ken, Katie, Kevin, Paula, Charlie, Maggie, Keith, Kelly, Lucy, Elliott, and Fiona.

KATHI HALBERT – Director (continued)

Memberships & Certifications

Dance Masters of America: National Director	Ohio Dance Masters: Past President Principal Examining Chairman	DMA’s Teacher’s Training School: Administrator / Post-Graduate
Cecchetti Council of America: Level VII Women’s Certification	Stott Pilates: Mat and Reformer Certification	USA Gymnastics: USA Gymnastics Safety Certification
Kent State University: Bachelors degree in Elementary Education		

CHRIS BEDNARIK:

Chris is a former member of the KDGC competitive team for 6 years and has taught gymnastics, Kindercise and all levels of competitive teams at Kathi’s for the past 37 years. She is a graduate of Kent State University where she was a member of their collegiate gymnastics team. She holds a bachelor’s degree in Health and Physical Education. Chris is safety certified and a member of the USA Gymnastics Association.



BRICE BIGGIN:

Brice competed for four years on Kent State’s gymnastics team and was co-captain his junior and senior year. He served as assistant coach for five years and has been the head women’s gymnastics coach at Kent for the past 26 years. Brice was named North East Regional Assistant Coach of the year in 1989, Mid American Conference Coach of the year in 1992, 1994, 1996, 2001, 2003, 2007, 2008 and 2014. He was North East Regional Coach of the year in 1996 and 1997 and he was the Central Regional Head Coach of the year in 2001. In 2011, Brice was named National Coach of the Year by the National Association of College Gymnastics Coaches after Brice and his assistant coaches took Kent State gymnastics to Nationals for the first time in school history. Brice has a bachelor’s degree in Physical Education and a master’s degree in sports administration from Kent State. Brice is one of our optional program coaches.



JENNA BONARIGO: COMING SOON

JAMI BYLER:

Jami has been a "*Dance Fit*" instructor since March 2010.

Dance Fit is a fun way to work out while you dance to hip-hop, salsa, merengue, samba, African and belly dancing music. Whether you're a born-dancer or have two left feet, anyone who tries Dance Fit gets hooked! Get a full-body workout and burn from 500 to 1,000 calories per class while having a blast!

JORDAN GADY:

Jordan Gady is 16 years old and a junior at Springfield Local High School. She was a gymnast at Kathi's for 12 years and was on competitive team for 9 of those. She also took dance at Kathi's for three years. This is her fourth year assisting and teaching at Kathi's Dance & Gym Center. She also works at S.N.P.J. as a lifeguard. After graduation, I plan on going into the medical field.

RANDALYN GROVES:

Randalyn Groves joined our staff over the summer, and we are so glad to have her. Randalyn graduated from Springfield Local High School in 2017. While in high school she was involved with school cheerleading for six years and competitive cheerleading for nine years. Randalyn was the captain of the cheer team for two years and coached junior high cheer for one year. She and her boyfriend of four years, Lucas, welcomed their daughter Paityn in November of 2018. Randalyn is currently enrolled at YSU for early childhood and special education.



CAPRIE KLACIK:

Caprie Klacik was born and raised in Youngstown, Ohio. She trained at her local studio, Jamie's Dance Force in many genres including jazz, tap, ballet, hip hop, contemporary, and lyrical. Caprie spent many of her weekends competing and taking classes at conventions. Dance is her passion and as she became closer to graduating high school, she decided she wanted to continue performing. Caprie had discovered Royal Caribbean Productions and the idea of performing while traveling the world intrigued her, so she set her heart on it. She started to travel around the US to auditions and landed her first job with Royal Caribbean at the age of 19. Caprie completed five contracts with Royal Caribbean and expanded her repertoire greatly during that time. Since deciding to carry out her passion on land she spends her time teaching at Kath's Dance & Gym Center and Torrie Trella's Academy of Dance, choreographing solos and group routines, traveling for master classes, furthering her fitness career, and judging at various events.



SARAH LEGER:

Sarah Leger is a former member of the competitive gymnastics team here at KDGC. She competed for ten years and reached level seven. While competing, Sarah received 3rd place on vault, 2nd place on uneven bars, 1st place on balance beam, 3rd place on floor exercise, and 1st place all-around at nationals which were held at the Disney Wide World of Sports complex in 2008. She has been a part of our coaching staff for the last 9 years. Sarah is a graduate of Youngstown State University and is now a pre-school teacher for the East Palestine School District. She recently married Zak Leger and they live in the Austintown area.



MACY METZGER:

This is Macy's second year as a teacher at Kath's Dance & Gym Center after fifteen years as a dancer at the school. In 2017, Macy performed the role of Bert in KDGC's production of "Mary Poppins". She is a sophomore at Youngstown State University studying child psychology with a minor in dance. Macy hopes to become a child psychologist, counselor, and dance movement therapist. At YSU, she is a member of Alpha Lambda Delta honor society as well as the Nationals Society for Collegiate Scholars. She also works as a nanny. This past fall, Macy passed her Cecchetti I teacher's exam. She hopes this is the first of many. Macy is incredible grateful for the experiences, lessons, and second family that Kath's Dance & Gym Center has given her.



PAUL MILETTA:

Paul is a graduate of Youngstown State University with a BS in Education/Special. His Dance career started after he stopped teaching gymnastics back in 1991 and joined the YSU Dance Ensemble for 6 1/2 years following. He also served as Vice President of the organization for his first four years of college. He performed in & choreographed many dance pieces and productions finding a new passion for Lyrical, Modern, and Contemporary styles of dance while dancing under his mentor Christine Cobb. He danced in the Dana School of Music Opera performances of The Bartered Bride and The Tenderland. In 1998 he was awarded the Marilyn Kocinsky Outstanding Senior Dance Award at the annual honors banquet.



After YSU he went on to teach, choreograph, and perform for local studios in workshops, promotions, rallies, and cheerleading programs, a lot of which were with Teri's Dance & Baton. He has been involved with major studios in Pittsburgh including Dance Alloy's Labco company where he danced in a community piece in 1999. He also sang and danced in a Big Band show celebrating our troops in a dinner theater setting with the Latshaw Performing Company. He also took classes in New York City at the Martha Graham School of Contemporary Dance & Broadway Dance.

He then performed with the Ballet Western Reserve in many of their productions. In his six years with them he was in Cinderella (chorus, dancer), Aladdin where he played the main character which was his favorite role, Fiddler on the Roof (chorus, soloist, and dancer), Peter Pan playing the role of Captain Hook, Footloose (chorus, soloist, and dancer), The Jazz Nutcracker, and several Evenings of Dance at the Butler. He also did shows with Easy Street Productions including Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat and The Will Roger's Follies.

Paul is in his 7th year as an instructor at Torrie's Academy of Dance in Boardman, and now in his 3rd year as manager, coordinator and teacher of his non-profit organization Limitless Dance Company alongside Torrie's, which teaches dance to kids/adults with disabilities, a long time dream of his. This is Paul's second year on staff at Kathi's Dance & Gym Center.

TARYN PATTERSON:

This is Taryn's first year teaching at Kathi's Dance and Gym Center. Taryn danced at Kathi's for the last 16 years where she received training in all styles of dance including Hip Hop, Jazz, Tap, Ballet, and Pointe. During her senior year at Kathi's, she passed her Cecchetti Level VI Exam and also performed in KDGC's production of *The Greatest Showman* as Phillip Carlyle. Taryn graduated in the top ten of her class from East Palestine High School in 2019 where she participated in musicals, marching band, plays, and video productions. Taryn loves all forms of art including singing, drawing, and acting but dance will always be her first love. She is currently attending Youngstown State University to pursue a major in Psychology and a minor in Dance to help and inspire others through art and dance. Taryn is tremendously grateful for the experience she had dancing at Kathi's and she is very excited to be on the teaching staff this year.



KAY RAIB: COMING SOON

ERIANNE RAIB-PTICHKIN:

Eri has nearly twenty years as a premier tap teacher in the Youngstown area. She has studied intensely under some of the most prestigious tap instructors in the world including Lady Diane Walker, Gregg Russell, Jason Samuel Smith, Mike Minery, and Brenda Buffalino. In 2006 and 2008, Erienne was an intern with the American Tap Dance Foundation in NYC for the New York City Tap Festival, where she had the opportunity to assist and study many master teachers. Eri holds certifications from Dance Masters of America, Ohio Dance Masters, Aerobics & Fitness Association of America, the National Exercise Trainers Association, and Red Cross CPR. She has a Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Applied Science in Exercise Science from Youngstown State University. In addition to teaching at many regional studios, Eri is a part-time faculty member of Youngstown State University's Theatre & Dance Department teaching advanced tap. Ms. Eri is also the Artistic Director of the Jewish Community Center of Youngstown's School of Dance, where she teaches students from 4 months to 75 years old. Ms. Eri resides in Liberty with her husband Andre and their three-year-old son, Nikolai and one year old, Theodore.



ANGEL RICCIULLI-CIOLLI:

Dr. Angel Ricciulli-Cioli began her gymnastics career at the age of nine at the YMCA where she was state champion in both 1988 and 1989. She then moved and trained in private club gymnastics and was the 1990 State of Ohio Level 7 Balance Beam Champion, Second All Around and 3rd place Vault. In 1992, Angel and her fellow teammates represented the United States in Madrid, Spain at the World Expo. Angel concluded her gymnastics career as an NCAA National gymnast for West Virginia University during the 1994-95 season. She then continued her athletic training and represented Youngstown State University on their Swim and Dive Team the following year. Dr. Angel is now a Chiropractic Physician and practices in Boardman, Ohio at Backs and Us Chiropractic Center. She is married to her husband Mike and has two daughters, Ave and Pia.



MARY VADALA:

Mary is a twenty-five-year faculty member of KDGC. She began her dance training at 5 years of age under the direction of Ken & Jean Phifer in North Versailles, Pennsylvania. Mary has studied with the Pittsburgh Ballet Theater, the Pittsburgh Youth Ballet under the direction of Jean Gedeon, and the Pennsylvania Governor's School for the Arts. In 1991, Mary held the title of Dance Masters Miss Dance of Pennsylvania. Mary is a member of Dance Masters of America, Ohio Dance Masters and Cecchetti Council of America. She has completed her Cecchetti Teacher's Grade VI and Student's Grade VI certification. Mary is a graduate of Butler University in Indianapolis, Indiana and has a bachelor's degree in Dance/Pedagogy Concentration. While attending Butler University, Mary performed with the Butler Ballet in ballets such as Sleeping Beauty, Les Sylphides, The Nutcracker, Cinderella, La Bayadere, and Diane and Acteon. Mary lives in Brookfield with her Husband of twenty-two years, Rocco, and their cat, Tutu.



MALLORY WARDLE: COMING SOON

LEXI WONNER: COMING SOON

Guest Faculty

AMANDA PETERSON:

Amanda is a 2008 graduate of Kathi's Dance and Gym Center from Edinburgh, PA. While at Kathi's, Amanda passed her Cecchetti VII exam and was part of Company Jazz and Lyrical. She was able to participate in many exciting dance ventures including Dance Masters of America Junior Membership, Easy Street Productions and a Bob Rizzo dance instructional video entitled "Jazz Dances for Kids and Teens." Amanda won fourth runner up at Miss Dance of Ohio in 2007. Amanda was a recipient of the Peggy Klinke Scholarship which allowed her to study at many amazing summer dance intensives. Her love of dance led her to college at Slippery Rock University where she graduated in 2012 with a major dance and a minor in business. She is very thankful for the opportunity to continue to guest teach at Kathi's and is excited for her future. Amanda currently is living in New York City and is pursuing a career in dance.



RENEE ROGERS:

Renee Rogers has had the pleasure of having the art of dance a part of her life for as long as she can remember. Enrolled in classes at a young age, Renee found her way to KDGC in need of a stronger foundation in Ballet technique. Here she fell in love with the studio, dancers, staff, and of course, Kathi – which truly became her second home and family. Renee started her dance career at an early age touring the USA performing and teaching for Tremaine Dance, LA Underground and West Coast Dance Explosion. These experiences connected her to industrial, commercial, and video performances and most importantly, fueled her passion for teaching and choreography. Upon return to the region, Renee spent several years as the resident choreographer for Easty Street Productions and has over the years worked with a multi-talented team of musicians, performers, and technical crew members on dozens of full scale theatrical productions including Will Rogers' Follies, Hello Dolly, High School Musical, Music Man, and original productions to name a few. Renee's passion for dance and movement led her to continue her education in the area of exercise physiology and health and wellness promotion, and she now has her PhD and is a professor at the University of Pittsburgh where she conducts research, teaches, and is the Health and Wellness Director for the Healthy Lifestyle Institute. She is considered an authority in the areas of physical activity engagement and lifestyle obesity treatment, and was recently featured as an expert for Good Housekeeping magazine. Despite her busy schedule, Renee values the time that she gets to spend at KDGC choreographing and teaching – and especially loves interacting and watching the dancers grow into young passionate adults and performers.



MEGAN CLELAND:

Megan has now moved to Nashville, Tennessee but will still be teaching at times here at Kathi's. She graduated from high school in 2006 playing one of the lead roles as Don Lockwood in "Singin' in the Rain". During her years dancing at Kathi's, Megan took many gymnastics and dance classes including hip hop, completed her Cecchetti V exam, assisted and taught at the studio and participated in the Junior Membership program for Dance Masters of America. Megan was the 2006 recipient of the "Peggy Klinke Scholarship" and with that scholarship studied in Las Vegas, Nevada with many teachers at the National Dance Masters of America Convention. Throughout her high school years, she participated in the "Easy Street Productions" in their Christmas and spring shows. Last summer, Megan attended Dance Masters Teacher's Training School in Buffalo, NY. She has passed her Cecchetti I Teacher's exam and is a member of Ohio Dance Masters. Megan currently is the creative director of the competitive program at West Main Studios in Huntsville, Alabama. She has been there for five years. For the last nine years, Megan has been the resident choreographer for Easy Street Productions in Youngstown, Ohio. She travels back and forth between Youngstown, Nashville, and Huntsville regularly.

