



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 54 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, Kate, Kevin, Paula, Charlie, Maggie, Claire, Keith, Kelly, Lucy, Elliott, Fiona and Chloe.

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		

DANIELLE BAKO: COMING SOON

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 38 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 27 years. Brice was named Northeast 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 Northeast 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.



HEATHER CHAMPION: COMING SOON

MEGAN CLELAND:

Megan is happy to be home in Youngstown and teaching at Kathi's again. 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. For the last ten years, Megan has been the resident choreographer for Easy Street Productions in Youngstown, Ohio. Megan has also started her own photography business and takes amazing portraits.



OLIVIA CMIL: COMING SOON

JORDAN GADY:

Jordan Gady is 18 years old and a freshman at Youngstown State University. 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 fifth year assisting and teaching at Kathi's Dance & Gym Center.

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 11 years. Sarah is a graduate of Youngstown State University and now lives in Austintown with her husband, Zak, and their daughter, Charlotte.



MACY METZGER:

This is Macy's 4th 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 graduated in December of 2021 from Youngstown State University with a degree in child psychology with a minor in dance. Macy hopes to become a child psychologist, counselor, and dance movement therapist. While at YSU, Macy was a member of Alpha Lambda Delta honor society as well as the National Society for Collegiate Scholars. She will be working towards her Masters Degree starting in the fall. She also works as a nanny. In 2020, 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.



LAUREN PANEZICH: COMING SOON

TARYN PATTERSON:

This is Taryn's third 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 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.



ANGEL RICCIULLI-CIOLLI:

Dr. Angel Ricciulli-Ciolti 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.



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.



MARY VADALA:

Mary is a twenty-six-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, their dog, Charlie, and their cat, Tutu.



MALLORY WARDLE: COMING SOON
