



## 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 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.

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### **KATHI HALBERT – Director**

Kathi has owned and operated her own dance and gymnastics program for the past 50 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 USAG including levels 4 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 21 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 Director, Scholarship Chairman and Recording Secretary. 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 nine 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 teachers.

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

## **KATHI HALBERT – Director** (continued)

### **Memberships & Certifications**

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

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### **DANIELLE ARGERAS:**

Bio coming soon...

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### **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 34 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.



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### **SARAH BEST:**

Sarah Best 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 3<sup>rd</sup> place on vault, 2<sup>nd</sup> place on uneven bars, 1<sup>st</sup> place on balance beam, 3<sup>rd</sup> place on floor exercise, and 1<sup>st</sup> 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 five years. Sarah is currently a senior at Youngstown State University and is doing her student teaching at East Palestine School District. She will graduate in the spring.



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### **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 25 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.



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### **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 Zumba gets hooked! Get a full-body workout and burn from 500 to 1,000 calories per class while having a blast!

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### **ERICA KERR:**

Erica is 20 years old and was a competitive gymnast at Kathi's for many years. This is her third year coaching with us. Erica graduated from Poland Seminary High School in 2014 and currently is a junior at Youngstown State University studying Exercise Science on the track to physical therapy.



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### **LAUREN MUIR:**

This is Lauren's third year on the teaching staff at Kathi's Dance & Gym Center. She graduated in 2012 playing the lead role of Woody in "Toy Story 2". While dancing at Kathi's she completed her Cecchetti VI exam, attended Cecchetti Summer Intensive at Hope College in Michigan for three years, and just recently passed her Cecchetti Teacher's Grade IV exam. She was in the junior membership program with Ohio Dance Masters for 7 years and was president her last year. She received college scholarships from both Cecchetti Council of Ohio and Ohio Dance Masters. Lauren graduated in the Spring of 2016 with her Bachelor's Degree in Accounting and was married in September of 2016 to Thomas Muir.



### **ERIANNE RAIB-PTICHKIN:**

Eri is joining KDGC for a sixth year, bringing her creative and entertaining tap choreography to life. She has trained for nearly 20 years, studying under master teachers including Ayodele Cassel, Barbara Duffy, and Michael Minery. She has a Bachelor of Arts from YSU, and is now pursuing an advanced degree in exercise science. Eri holds certifications from the Aerobics & Fitness Association of America and the National Exercise Trainers Association.



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### **MARY VADALA:**

Mary is a 22 year faculty member of KDGC. She began her dance training at 5 years of age under the direction of Ken & Jean Phifer, has studied with the Pittsburgh Youth Ballet, the Pittsburgh Ballet Theater, and the Pennsylvania Governor's School for the Arts. 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 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.



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### **MACKENZIE WARDLE:**

Bio coming soon...

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## **Guest Faculty**

### **AMANDA PETERSON:**

Amanda is a 2008 graduate of Kathi's Dance and Gym Center from Edinburg, 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 has been on staff at KDGC since 1999 and is a true professional in every way. Renee has been the resident choreographer for Easy Street Productions for the past 12 years. Her thrilling choreography has decorated the stage in such shows as Miracle on Easy Street, Joseph, Annie, Easy Street Goes Hollywood, That's Entertainment, Ritz Rock Reunion, The Kids and I, Beauty & The Beast, Forever Plaid, High School Musical and Hello, Dolly! Renee has toured the US dancing with numerous dance conventions, and has choreographed and performed professionally, in addition to local work with area theaters and charity events. Appearing in several dance instruction videos, most recently with RizBiz Productions, Renee is a highly regarded dance instructor as well as a popular guest teacher/choreographer at studios and conventions across the states. Renee graduated from YSU with a BS in Exercise Science and just completed her Masters degree in exercise physiology from the University of Pittsburgh where she is now continuing with her doctoral work.



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## **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 also is a member of Ohio Dance Masters.

