



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 students 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 45 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 of Dance Masters of America's Teachers Training School West and East. Over the past 20 years Kathi has served on Dance Masters of America's Executive Board and National Board of Directors serving in many different capacities from Director, Area VP and currently, 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 eight 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, and they have three sons, Ken 35, Kevin 31, and Keith 29.

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 28 years. She is a graduate of Kent State University where she was a member of their collegiate gymnastics team. She hold a bachelor’s degree in Health and Physical Education. Chris is safety certified and a member of the USA Gymnastics Association.



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 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. Sarah is currently coaching the level 3, 4, and 5 teams. She has been a part of our coaching staff for the last three years. As a senior at East Palestine High School, she is captain of the varsity cheerleading squad and an active member of National Honor Society.

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 20 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, and 2008. He was North East Regional Coach of the year in 1196 and 1197 and he was the Central Regional Head Coach of the year in 2001. This year 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.

JAMI BYLER:

Jami has been a "**Zumba**" instructor since March 2010.

Zumba 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!



CHAD CLELAND:

Chad is a graduate of Campbell Memorial High School and attended YSU. He is going on his 17th year of coaching competitive gymnastics. A former gymnast himself, Chad competed nine years at Youngstown Gymnastics Center, achieving Class 2 status. Chad has produced state champions at levels 4 – 9, been a part of regional qualifiers levels 8 and 9, regional champions level 8, and a level 9 eastern national qualifier.

Chad is a member of USA gymnastics and is currently safety certified.



MEGAN CLELAND:

This is Megan's fifth year on the teaching staff 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 Klinker 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. This year she also passed her Cecchetti I teacher's exam and became a member of Ohio Dance Masters.



JAY J GRAHAM:

As the Midwest's top Hip Hop choreographer, Jay-J is known for his innovative style. Currently he has opened for such popular music artists as Usher, Brittany Spears, N'Sync and Backstreet Boys. Jay-J's talent and dedication has earned him a scholarship award to "Monsters of Hip Hop" in Chicago as well as being a three year running scholarship winner to Urban Jamm in LA.



Jay-J is currently teaching at many highly established studios throughout the Midwest. He has done master and scholarship classes for such organizations as Dance Masters of Ohio and the

Ohio Committee of Cecchetti. He has judged for organizations and events throughout our area.

Jay-J started his dance training under the direction of Dance Master's instructors taking jazz, modern, tap and ballet. He continued his education through such dance artists as Bob Rizzo, Frank Hatchett, Brian Friedman, Wade Robinson, Shane Sparks, Napoleon and Tabathy Dumo, Robert Schultz, Savion Glover and Dave Scott. All of who are currently working in the dance industry at this time.

One of Jay- J's highest attributes is his ability to work with children and adults of all ages from the beginner thru the most advanced. His classes are known for its high energy, but still maintain a technical base and a structured curriculum. His styles can vary from street tap, funk jazz and hip hop – all popular and current in today's dance culture, media, music video and television.

"Jay-J" will be on staff on Saturdays teaching hour funk jazz classes to several of our lines and hip hop to all levels. Jay J is looking for all types of dancers for his hip hop classes. You don't need to have a strong dance background to take part in these classes, just good rhythm and street moves. He is also entertaining the thought of creating performance hip hop teams.

COURTNEY GRATZ:

Courtney has been coaching at Kathi's for the last two years. She is a graduate of Boardman High School and is currently a junior at Youngstown State University. She participated in gymnastics at Kathi's for eight years, and was on the competitive team for six of those years. Courtney works at the Davis Family YMCA on top of working at Kathi's and taking a full schedule at YSU.



LAUREN ILLENCIK:

Lauren has taken gymnastics since the age of two. She was a USAG competitive gymnast at Youngstown Gymnastics Center for six years. After she quit competing, she started cheering. She is currently a senior at Cardinal Mooney High School where she has been on the cheerleading squad since freshman year. Lauren also plays lacrosse and runs track at Mooney. Lauren loves coaching gymnastics and cheer classes at KDGC and hopes that she can help make everyone she coaches the best they can be, and wants them to have fun while they are learning.



JOANNE MALONEY:

Joanne Maloney has been in the fitness industry since 1984. Along with a diploma in Fitness & Nutrition and CPR certification, she continues to attend seminars/lectures and take home study courses related to healthy living. Miss Joanne's specialty is putting together a safe and effective exercise program for individual needs. she has trained athletes, set up corporate wellness programs and assisted in putting together programs for post-rehab patients. Miss Joanne now teaches Adult Fitness classes, see the bulletin board for more information and schedules..

ERI RAIB:

Eri is joining KDGC for a fourth 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.

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.



ALISHIA SPARKS:

Alishia has danced for 23 years starting in the Warren, OH area, and has been certified in Cecchetti Ballet up to grade level VI. Alishia has competed in dance all her life including attending nationals in NY City, Las Vegas, Rhode Island, Miami, and so many more. She has won National Miss Dynamyte, National Miss DEA and has also competed for D.M.O., while taking seminars under scholarship with them as well. Alishia has also performed on television and for several churches nationwide. She has performed in the Great Lakes Ballet company as the Sugar Plum Fairy, and the American Beauty Rose. Alishia also auditioned for and was accepted into Fordham University academically and their dance program in the Alvin Ailey Dance Company, however she was also accepted into Point Park University as well where she attended as an advanced dance major.



She has performed in the Three Rivers Dance festival and the Pittsburgh ballet Dance company as well. Alishia has traveled and taken master classes in San Francisco while her husband played for the Oakland Raiders and has recently come back to Ohio to teach dance.

MARY VADALA:

Mary is an 18 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 V and Student's Grade VI certification. Mary is a graduate of Butler University and has a bachelor's degree in Dance/Pedagogy Concentration.



COURTNEY WOLFGALE:

Courtney is back for a second year on our staff at KDGC. She currently is a student at Youngstown State University where she studies communications and marketing. While attending Youngstown State, Courtney was a cheerleader there for three years. A Kathi's Dance & Gym Center Alumni, Courtney competed competitively for six years here. She wants everyone to



know she is proud to be back and coaching at KDGC and wants to share her gymnastics knowledge and help everyone be the best that they can be.

Guest Faculty

ALISON CLINE:

Alison has been a member of the KDGC team for over twenty years. She began her time here as a gymnast when her mother found her doing front-tucks off of the couch. From there she was asked to join the competitive team where she enjoyed seven rewarding years and “retired” as a level 8. In her time away from Kathi’s she attended Youngstown State University where she obtained her Bachelor’s degree in Psychology. As most of you know, Ali returned to coach at Kathi’s in 2009 and was so disappointed to learn that she would have to relocate to North Carolina to follow her husband, Michael’s career in the U.S. Army. Ali is so pleased to have the opportunity to return to KDGC once again, even if it is for a short time. She is so impressed with the progress the gymnasts have made in her absence and hopes that their growth will only continue.



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 majors in dance and has a minor in business. Amanda is the student director of Slippery Rock Dance Theater which showcases only student choreography. Her modern dance choreography was chosen to represent Slippery Rock at the American College Dance Festival. In college she has been able to work with many amazing choreographers. She is very thankful for the opportunity to continue to guest teach at Kathi’s and is excited for her future.



AMANDA SCIOLA:

Amanda has been on our staff for eight years and has been dancing since the age of four. She is a member of Dance Masters of America, Dance Masters of Ohio and the Cecchetti Council of America. She received her teaching degree at Dance Masters of America’s Teacher’s Training School at Buffalo, New York and has also completed her Cecchetti Teacher’s Grade III and Student’s Grade V certification. She has her MBA in Business Administration from YSU. Amanda currently works for DiRusso’s as the Sales and Marketing Director.



ROSEMARY SHUMATE:

Rosemary received her BFA in Dance at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio. While in college she enjoyed performing with Dayton Contemporary's 2nd Company, The Dayton Opera, WSU's Dance Ensemble and in various musicals including She Loves Me, Anything Goes and Oklahoma.



After college Rosemary went onto performing for The Cleveland Cavalier's Dance Team where she was co- captain and choreographer.

Rosemary has been teaching, choreographing and judging for 11 years all around northeast Ohio. She has worked with all ages, from pre-school, to the University level. She has earned various awards at competitions including; national and regional choreography awards, overalls, platinum awards, and best in show.

She enjoys exploring dance in new and exciting ways while incorporating and stressing technique in the movement. She continues her own education by annually attending master classes taught by Mia Michaels, Wade Robson, Travis Wall, Brian Friedman, Chris Judd, and Laurie Ann Gibson to name a few. She also enjoys sharing her experiences with her students

AMANDA WELKER:

Amanda literally grew up in the gym with her mother being a former gymnastics coach and Amanda often being used as an example for learning new skills. She studied ballet and jazz under Debbie Menichino for five years. Upon entering Junior High she joined the Wilmington Greyhounds Cheerleading squad where she cheered for five years only to return after graduation as an assistant coach. She is currently working towards a Bachelor's Degree at YSU. This is Amanda's fourth year on staff at Kathi's.

