

School Program Debuts at Greater Hartford Chapter's Social Dance

On Friday, April 27th, the Greater Hartford, CT Chapter #3056 hosted a “*Celebrate Spring*” social dance in Glastonbury, featuring the wonderful ballroom and swing sounds of the band, **Eight to the Bar**. In addition to an evening filled with dancing, delicious refreshments and friendship, the 100+ attendees were entertained by the premier performance of members of the USA Dance/Greater Hartford pilot school program.

An overview of the pilot program was provided by Barbara Baran, Chapter President, including background on how this program differentiates itself from other school dance program offerings for K-12 students. The program provides a structured approach to teaching the WDSF syllabus with periodic assessments throughout the school year. As part of the dance classes, students are also introduced to concepts of basic project management by participating in the planning and running of USA Dance events. The objectives of the program also include the development of a local USA Dance team, working towards participation in USA Dance competitive events and the development of future leaders of USA Dance.

Members of Eight to the Bar



Dancers enjoying the evening.....



The program was initiated in mid-February of this year at East Hartford High School. The start of the program was delayed due to school winter storm closings occurring throughout the months of January and February (and even several class cancellations in March!). Despite the delay and cancellations, the East Hartford High students displayed a high degree of enthusiasm and commitment to this unique program. Participants in the program included sophomores, juniors and seniors.



Preparing for the performance.....



Team in action.....

The students performed a bronze international rumba routine choreographed and taught by local certified dance instructor, Wendy Nielsen. The audience was delighted and expressed their support through applause and individual congratulations. Following the performance, these students introduced themselves and stated why they enjoy ballroom – including how it helps them focus, work in a partnership and think differently! The students then enjoyed dancing socially with various dancers. The students performing at the event also assisted with the overall planning and set-up of the event, exposing them to the various aspects of running a dance.



Students of the East Hartford High School Ballroom Program with Board Members of the Greater Hartford, CT Chapter.

The program is scheduled to continue through the month of May and will resume in September at the start of the new school year, with increased participation and the objective of preparing the team for participating in an upcoming USA Dance competitive event in 2019. The program is funded entirely by the Greater Hartford, CT Chapter via proceeds raised at social dances. The Chapter also sponsors a college scholarship program for high school seniors involved in ballroom, through which recipients are awarded stipends applicable to their college tuition. For additional information regarding the program, please contact Barbara Baran at baranbarbara@aol.com.