

## Heartland Chapter of USA Dance #2022

### Supporting Documentation for the 2015 Chapter of the Year Submission

For a small Chapter, Heartland runs an extraordinary number of projects:

dance parties, community exhibitions, kids dance program, ballroom workshops, Special Olympics program, fundraisers, and providing volunteers for local competitions.

Through hard work and dedication, Heartland's Board improved the Chapter's financial situation by increasing the Chapter's checking account balance by 44% between Oct 2014 and Sep 2015.

What's more, the Heartland has a clear vision of what the Chapter wants to achieve in the near future in terms of programs' expansion and the type of services provided to its members.

Below are the highlights of the Chapter's activities for 2015:

#### -- Community Exhibitions:

Over the last several years, Heartland has established a very active exhibition program. Some exhibitions are recurring events, others explore brand new venues. These include exhibitions at social groups, retirement centers, nursing homes, hospitals, indoor and outdoor venues, shopping malls, and more recently, a prison. Most of Heartland's exhibitions have an educational component, where we dance with the members of the audience and / or have a dance lesson during the event.

Between Oct 2014 and Sep 2015, Heartland held **9 public exhibitions**.

These included:

- 3 Arts Garden Exhibitions at the Indianapolis Circle Centre Mall (Oct 2014, Nov 2014, Aug 2015)
- Franklin Active Adult Center, a day-time Seniors' Center that offers activities to enhance physical and mental well-being (May 2015)
- Northridge Gracious Retirement Living (Jun 2015)
- Children's Bureau / Gene Glick Family Support Center, a non-profit that assists high risk children and their families (Jun 2015)
- "Appreciation in the Park" in honor of the City of Greenwood's 1st Responders (Jul 2015)
- 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Heartland Homecoming at the Indiana Roof Ballroom (Aug 2015)
- Indiana Women's Prison in honor of the National Ballroom Dance Week (NBDW) (Sep 2015)



Heartland Dancers during Franklin Performance



Group Dance at the Children's Bureau



"Girl from Ipanema" Rumba, Alexis and 1<sup>st</sup> Responders, Greenwood Appreciation in the Park



### **What is next:**

- Heartland has applied for sponsorship from Johnny Rockets restaurant. If successful, the sponsorship would lead to the public weekly ballroom dance classes in the shopping mall next to the restaurant.

- Heartland is working with the Indiana Women's Prison (IWP) on starting semester-long ballroom dance lessons for inmates. We have submitted a proposal with dance curriculum for Spring semester to the IWP and have recruited 6 dance volunteers / amateur instructors.

- Heartland is working on offering formation classes that would allow participants to take part in future Heartland's exhibitions.

- Heartland is applying to be part of the Indy Fringe Festival in 2016.

"IndyFringe" is a 10-day showcase of traditional and non-traditional theatre, dance, music, improvisation and a wide range of other performance and visual arts, performed and created by local, national and international artists. The first year for the festival was 2005. It takes place every August and features performances by 40 adult performance groups and 12 teen performance groups, and attracts thousands of people in the audience. 80% of ticket revenue is returned to the performers.

- Heartland is applying to be part of the "Spotlight Indy 2016". Spotlight Indy is an annual gala performance and fundraiser for The Indiana AIDS Fund, a fundraising program of The Health Foundation of Greater Indianapolis. The Health Foundation is the largest private funder of HIV/AIDS programs in Indiana, and Spotlight is the largest fundraiser of its kind for HIV/AIDS in the Midwest. The event brings together the central Indiana performing arts organizations featuring the best live music, dance, theater and spoken word in Indiana, and is a wonderful venue for promoting USA Dance. Held at the Clowes Memorial Hall of Butler University, the performance draws ~2,000 spectators and supporters every year. Spotlight Indy celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2015. The event routinely features modern dance and ballet companies but so far has not had ballroom dancing included in its program.

### **-- Kids Dance program:**

In early 2015, the Heartland Chapter has launched a partnership with the Kids Dance Outreach (KDO), a preventative program designed to equip at-risk school children with the discipline,



persistence, determination, social consciousness and cognitive developmental skills that can prepare them to achieve success in life. KDO is a non-profit organization that works through Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) with inner city kids by introducing them to different styles of dancing. The program cultivates teamwork, leadership skills, self confidence, respect, and the sense of self-accomplishment. <http://kidsdanceoutreach.org/>

Prior to partnership with Heartland, the KDO offered lessons in ballet, modern, line and cultural dances. With Heartland coming on board, the KDO was able to add ballroom lessons to each dance session. Heartland recruited a ballroom instructor to teach ballroom lessons to the KDO kids. The IPS kids are transported by school buses from their classrooms to a ballroom facility in downtown Indy where KDO lessons are held. Each KDO session lasts 8 weeks and culminates in an exhibition. The ballroom lessons are taught during two out of each eight week session. The Fall and Spring sessions tend to consist of a very large group of kids (40-50 participants in each session), with summer session being smaller (~20 kids). The kids demonstrate their newly acquired dance skills at the Showcase Graduation that culminates each session, and Heartland volunteers attend the Showcase to cheer the kids on.

In 2015, the Heartland has successfully completed 3 sessions with the KDO students (Spring, Summer and Fall of 2015), and is looking forward to many more.

The Heartland Chapter participates in a number of ways:

- Heartland pays for ballroom dance instructor
- Heartland volunteers help the ballroom instructor with the flow of the lessons;
- Heartland holds raffles or 50/50 at each monthly dance, with all the proceeds earmarked to fund the KDO instructor's fees, thus making the program self-sufficient.

The kids from our Summer ballroom KDO lessons joined Heartland in community exhibition at the Children's Bureau / Gene Glick Family Support Center, a non-profit that assists high risk children and their families in Jun 2015. It was such a pleasure to watch kids performing for, and later on, dancing with other kids.

### **What is next:**

- Heartland is working on expanding the ballroom portion of the KDO program to reach a larger pool of the IPS kids.
- Separately, Heartland is discussing ballroom dance program for home school kids.



KDO Volunteers



Pirate Dance at KDO Showcase, June 2015

**-- Inviting dancers from other dance clubs and studios to join Heartland's community exhibitions and kids programs:**

Recognizing that the art of dance comes in various forms and that the boundaries between various dance styles are often blurry, Heartland works with other dance groups in Central Indiana. Heartland ballroom dancers themselves often belong to several dance clubs, including Salsa, Argentine Tango, Kizomba, etc. By becoming more inclusive, Heartland is able to attract more people to both its monthly dance parties and special events. In fact, the Heartland exhibitions are no longer restricted to Chapter members only. We expanded our pool of performers by inviting members of other ballroom dance clubs, as well as Argentine Tango, Salsa, Cabaret and modern dancers. We also invite singers to Heartland exhibitions, many of whom do both singing and dancing. To increase participation in the program, the Heartland welcomes all skill levels; and does not require a partner. If single dancers express interest in participating, we pair them up with other dancers. This allowed Heartland to attract a large, talented and very active group of dancers who are eager to share their passion for dance with others in the community. The performers represent different dancing skill levels, ranging from beginners to seasoned social dancers to competitors and National Amateur Champions. Likewise, Heartland relies on both member and non-member volunteers to run the ballroom portion of the KDO program. Since kids dance lessons generally take place during work week, it limits our pool of volunteers. And this is where cooperation with other dance clubs comes in handy.

***What is Next:***

- Heartland is working on attracting musicians who can provide live accompaniment to our performers in the future.



Cabaret performers at Heartland exhibitions in a retirement center



Argentine Tango Dancers at Heartland Exhibition, Arts Garden

**-- Annual Events:**

Several exhibitions occur on an annual (or more frequent basis). These are:

- Arts Garden Exhibitions at Circle Centre Mall:





Heartland Exhibitions at the Arts Garden, Circle Centre Mall, Indy

The Indianapolis Arts Garden is situated in the heart of downtown Indianapolis. A sleek glass and steel icon for the city, the Arts Garden is a seven-story tall, glass-enclosed structure that hosts more than 300 performances per year. Heartland hosts 3 Arts Garden performances per year. These are scheduled to coincide with special events or holidays in order to attract a larger audience.

- Heartland Homecoming at the Indiana Roof Ballroom. The Indiana Roof was built as a movie palace and ballroom in 1927, and was added to the U.S. National Register of Historic Places in 1979. It has the largest ballroom dance floor in Indianapolis (8,700 square foot), and is home to the Big Band semi-monthly dance series that provide live music and bring together 400+ dancers from various dance studios in Central Indiana and beyond. Heartland has been hosting Homecoming events at the Indiana Roof for 4 years now. The Homecoming includes exhibitions by Heartland members and help to promote the Chapter mission to other dance clubs in the area.



Heartland Homecoming at the Indiana Roof Ballroom

- Exhibitions at Elderberries, a fellowship group at St Luke's United Methodist Church.
- The Big Ballroom Bash Fundraiser benefiting SO athletes (see Special Olympics section).
- Annual Ballroom **Workshops**: Now in its 4<sup>th</sup> year, the workshop is an all-day event, consisting

of 4 one-hour lessons, intermingled with practice time; and culminating in an evening dance party. The workshop brings in the best ballroom instructors in the region who typically do not offer group lessons, and thus avoids offering lessons that people could attend elsewhere throughout the year. The workshop is open to both USA Dance members and non-members, and concentrates on ballroom technique rather than pattern memorization. The workshop serves as a means of bringing together both the Chapter's social dancers and its amateur competitors, and is also open to the general public.

The workshop's popularity speaks for itself: when the Nov 2013 workshop sold out, the Heartland Chapter decided to move the Jan 2015 workshop to a larger ballroom studio, and it once again sold out!

#### ***What is Next:***

- Heartland's next workshop will take place on Jan 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016.
- Looking into the future, Heartland is considering organizing workshops with out-of-state instructors.

#### **-- Cooperating with Other Dance Organizations:**

In 2015, the Heartland USA Dance and the Continental Dance Club combined their Homecoming events at the historic Indiana Roof into one spectacular evening. The Continental Dance club is primarily geared toward retirees, and many Continentals members are also members of the Heartland. Regardless of the membership, many Continentals dancers participate in outreach activities sponsored and organized by Heartland. At the 2015 Homecoming, we had several exhibitions presented by: Suresh Nair and Lauren Shaffer, Anna Kovalyova and John Berry, Judy and Danny Corsaro; and Alexis McCall and John Berry, with special appearance by Rog and Amy Greenawalt. The Continentals dance club presented their famous annual Grand March. The members of both clubs jumped at the opportunity to dance Sirtaki, forming a giant circle along the dance floor. It was a wonderful event.



#### **--Striving for Improvement / Listening to our members:**

The Heartland Chapter improved the music selection and added exhibitions to our monthly parties, expanded the pool of instructors and launched Facebook page and a new website. Both



the website and the Facebook store pictures of numerous Chapter's events, including charity exhibitions and dance celebrations. We also updated the feel of the monthly newsletter by including *lots* of pictures of our dancers while moving the information that does not change frequently onto the website. This made our newsletter more dynamic and more relevant to the readers, thus raising the sense of ownership. We also implemented posting video summaries of the monthly dance lessons and ballroom workshops onto the website. The Board got many compliments from the Chapter's members on the ability to watch lesson summaries at their own leisure from the Heartland's webpage.

### -- Innovative ways to save money:

The largest expense of any dance event is the rental cost of the dance venue. Heartland worked hard to re-negotiate the rental fee as well as the instructors' fees in order to break-even on the dance parties. We also ask members to bring snacks to the parties or to make donation to the food fund in order to lower the food costs. New this year, Heartland established a fund for the kids dance program. The fund is exclusively financed through 50/50 drawings and raffles. Heartland is constantly looking for gift donations for its raffles. The donations range from tickets to museums to instructors' gift certificates for complimentary private dance lessons. All of these cost-cutting measures along with the proceeds from the workshops and special events allowed Heartland to increase its bank account by 44% (between Oct 2014 and Sep 2015).

**--Keeping dancers informed:** Heartland maintains 2 email databases: for members and non-members. Both groups of dancers receive flyers and other information about the upcoming parties; updates on exhibitions and workshops; and monthly newsletters. By now, Heartland dancers are used to getting "Dancers needed" emails that request help with volunteer opportunities, exhibitions, fundraisers, etc.

Heartland flyers get placed at several dance studios in town; are distributed at mall exhibitions; published on Heartland's website, Facebook, via newsletters and emails.

Collage of Heartland's flyers:





And monthly newsletters:



## -- Fundraisers:

- In 2014, Heartland worked with the Rotary Club of Greenfield, IN on organizing a dance fundraiser to benefit the Hope House, a shelter for homeless families and individuals of Hancock, Rush and Shelby Counties of Indiana. The shelter provides short-term housing and essential life-skills training to individuals and families in need. Each year, the Hope House provides more than 4,300 nights of shelter. The Hope House also provides each adult resident with individual guidance; and offers classes for a variety of life skills including budgeting. The shelter relies on the generosity of the community and its citizens to provide basic necessities and care for the shelter residents.

Through its ties with local dance studios and clubs, the Heartland Chapter recruited a panel of four judges (all volunteers) and put together a 3-hour program. A total of 47 contestants from 10 dance studios and clubs presented 27 gorgeous routines. The routines were intermixed with the general dancing.

The Rotary Club established parameters of the competition keeping in mind that the ultimate goal was to raise money for charity. The event was open to performers of all ages and all levels of proficiency (pro, pro-am and am dancers), and encompassed a variety of dance styles (ballet, ballroom, Latin, modern, etc). Routines ranged from solo dancers, to couples and formations. The event generated \$750 presented to the Hope House. Besides helping to organize and run the event, the Heartland Chapter made a cash donation to the fundraiser.



***What is Next:***

- Heartland is planning a fundraiser to sponsor the expansion of the ballroom dance lessons at the Kids Dance Outreach (KDO).

**--Special Olympics (SO) program:**

The program consists of two components: Fundraiser and Competition.

The Heartland members are actively involved in both SO annual Big Ballroom Bash Fundraiser and in training and competing with SO athletes at the SO Annual Competition in Fort Wayne, IN. This year, the SO competition took place in August:



- The **Big Ballroom Bash Annual Fundraiser for SO athletes** of Hendricks County. The fundraiser takes place at the Arabian Room of the Murat Shrine, also known as the Old National Centre, the largest Shrine temple in North America. The Fundraiser is a 3.5 hour event consisting of exhibitions by dancers from many local dance studios and groups (including Heartland dancers), SO athletes and their dance partners, and general dancing. Heartland donated \$100



toward the Bash. This year, the Bash took place on July 10, 2015 and celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary:



Barbara Newsom (center picture below), a long time Heartland's member, has been doing dance exhibitions at the Special Olympics Big Ballroom Bash Fundraiser all 20 years!



#### ***What is Next:***

- Expanding Special Olympics beyond Hendricks County to Central Indiana.

#### **-- Honoring Heartland Volunteers:**



Each November, Heartland holds a Volunteer Appreciation party, with cake, Award Certificate for Chapter Volunteer of the Year and recognition Plaques for years of service. The tradition started several years ago and quickly became a favorite. Throughout the year, volunteers are also recognized in Heartland's monthly newsletter, via email blasts, and on Facebook. The Heartland website hosts a page with photos of its numerous volunteers. As an example, at the last Heartland Classic competition (2013), we had over 40 (!) volunteers. Heartland also submits stories of its extraordinary volunteers to American Dancer (Marvin Bechtel, Ron Wright, etc), and several stories were featured in this wonderful national publication. Two of the Heartland volunteers recently became District (Larry Gogel, 2014) and National (Anna Kovalyova, 2015) Volunteers of the Year.





### -- Special Theme Annual Parties:

Heartland runs several theme parties throughout the year, including Valentine's Day, Volunteer Appreciation and Christmas party.



Although the special theme parties require extra preparation, they are a lot of fun, and help unite the members.



***What is Next:***

- Heartland will host New Year's party and Fundraiser on 31<sup>st</sup> Dec 2015.

**-- Providing volunteers for competitions:**

Indianapolis is home to 2 annual ballroom competitions: Indy Open and NA Imperial Star DanceSport Championships. Heartland provides volunteers for both. In addition, in June of 2015, Heartland was approached by the organizers of the Indianapolis International Ballet Competition who desperately needed volunteers to run their 4-day competition. And Heartland volunteers were eager to help.

**-- Other programs under consideration by Heartland Board:**

- Collegiate dance program
- Program for Riley Hospital for kids
- Other kids-oriented dance programs for needy kids, such as Children's Bureau and Ruth Lilly Women and Children's Center

**-- In the News:**



Heartland's dancers were featured in one of the summer issues of the **Southside Daily Journal**. To see the Journal's photo gallery coverage of the event, please visit [http://www.dailyjournal.net/view/local\\_story/Photo-gallery-Appreciation-in-1438387386](http://www.dailyjournal.net/view/local_story/Photo-gallery-Appreciation-in-1438387386)

## Appendix

### -- KDO

These are just a few comments that our volunteers said about the KDO program:

*"The program went very well and it was so fun. The children were great and Monica (instructor) did a super job. The children were all able to dance the groupings at the end of the first hour."*

*"Once the kids got over the shock of boys / girls holding hands they did a great job. Monica was wonderful as always."*

*"My favorite part was watching the kids' confidence grow before my eyes. They were proud of their accomplishment. Such a great group of kids!"*

*"Very impressed" "Kids caught on very quickly" "Kudos to Monica!"*

*"This was my first session volunteering for KDO. Can't wait for the next one!"*

A Thank you note from the KDO Director (Jun 2015):

"Dear All,

Thank you for the wonderful experience for our Kids Dance Outreach dancers yesterday and today. Monica did a wonderful job with the choreography and teaching it. We are so appreciative of all the efforts that your members put in this week. It was awesome! The kids and we really enjoyed it and this is a wonderful collaboration and addition to our Pirate dance.

Thank you Thank you Thank you!!!

Michael J. Johnson

Director

KidsDanceOutreach"

Another Thank You note from the KDO Director (Jun 2015):

"Today's Kids Dance Outreach Showcase was fantastic. The children did extremely well.

Monica Lung's Pirate waltz was beautiful and fit in perfectly with our choreography.

Thank you for working with us and for contributing to the mission of Kids Dance Outreach.

Everyone loved the Waltz.

Michael J. Johnson

KDO Director"

A Thank You note from the KDO Director reg Fall KDO session (Sep 30, 2015):

"Thank you and a huge round of applause to all the volunteers from USA Dance Chapter #2022 - Heartland IN who came and danced with some of our KDO students! Thank you for your support!"

A Thank You post card from the **Franklin Active Adults Center** (May 23015):

"Our members are still talking about your performance!!! They loved it and want you back!"

A thank you note from the Activity Coordinator at the **Northridge Retirement community** (Jun 2015):

"Thank you SO much for coming to perform for our prom! The residents LOVED every minute of it! We'd be thrilled to have you back when your schedule allows.

Elizabeth Barrett,



Activity Coordinator”

A thank you note from the **Children’s Bureau** Volunteer and Events Coordinator (June 2015):

"We loved having you!

We posted a bunch of pictures on our website: <http://www.childrens-bureau.org/stay-informed/2015/june/dancing-for-all-ages>

Please share them with everyone!

Thanks again for sharing your time & talents with our kiddos!

Chelsea Smock,

Volunteer and Events Coordinator "

A thank you note from the Interim Executive Director of “**The Social of Greenwood**” (Jul 2015):

“USA Dance Chapter #2022:

Thank you so much for performing at our Appreciation in the Park! You helped make our event a great success! We loved your performances as did our First Responders.

Thank you again,

Liz McKinley,

Interim Executive Director”

A Thank You letter from the **Indiana Women’s Prison (IWP)** (26 Sept, 2015):

“Thank you for honoring Indiana Women’s Prison on National Ballroom Dance week (NBDW).

We are greatly appreciative to have been introduced to Heartland Chapter of USA Dance.

Having the privilege to dance with National Ballroom Champions and experience this genre of dance has been for most of us a once in a lifetime experience.

Thank you for educating and sharing your time with us. We enjoyed every step and turn!

Sincerely,

Indiana Women’s Prison”

-- Some recent **comments on Heartland’s monthly parties and other activities:**

“Thank you for inviting us to show some Irish dancing last night. We had a nice time. You have a great group of dancers. They were very kind to us.”

Cyndi Simmerman,

Director, Irish Blessings Dancers (Jun 2015)

“Dave and I always have a great time with Heartland, and we'll look forward to the next dance. Sue Berard” (Sep 2015)

“I had a great time re-connecting with friends from the early USABDA Days (during Heartland’s October 2015 party). What a wonderful evening! Bob Blankenship”

“Our club does a great job at the Exhibitions! Candi Perry” (Sep 2015)

“GREAT job on IWP (Indiana Women’s Prison) exhibition! I must admit I doubted this would be a very receptive audience--wow, was I wrong! We were so glad to have shared in this experience. Thanks for all your hard work. Amy Greenawalt” (Sep 2015)