

CANADA'S NATIONAL BALLET SCHOOL AND RYERSON UNIVERSITY SHOWCASE PARKINSON'S DANCE RESEARCH

Mounting research highlights the impact of dance for people with Parkinson's disease

TORONTO, ON, April 4, 2017 --- Canada's National Ballet School (NBS), in conjunction with Ryerson University and Toronto Western Hospital (TWH), will be hosting two events to highlight the beneficial effects of dance for people with Parkinson's disease to mark Parkinson's Awareness Month.

Dance for Parkinson's: Translating Knowledge into Action will see researchers from Toronto-based universities, dancers from Parkinson's classes across the GTA and healthcare workers gathering in each location to learn, dance and discuss why the PD community should be dancing.

"Both empirical research and anecdotal testimonies indicate that if you have Parkinson's, you may benefit from dancing regularly. Yet, dance programs for people with Parkinson's are under used," says Rachel Bar, Manager, Health and Research Initiatives at NBS and PhD Student at Ryerson University. "These events are about looking at the research and considering what can and should be done to help get this community dancing," adds Bar.

The April 11 panel discussion at Toronto Western Hospital will focus on getting people with PD dancing, with emphasis on the role of healthcare workers in encouraging and supporting their clients.

This will be followed with an event on April 20 at Canada's National Ballet School where David Leventhal (co-founder of the Dance for PD® program at the Mark Morris Dance Theatre in Brooklyn, NY) will give a keynote address situating dance for Parkinson's more broadly in the role the arts can play in healthcare.

Supported through a grant from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the principal researchers are:

- Rachel Bar, M.A. and PhD. Student, Ryerson University;
- Dr. Jennifer Lapum, PhD, RN. Dr. an Associate Professor at Ryerson University in the Daphne Cockwell School of Nursing

- Lorraine Kalia, MD, PhD, neurologist at the Movement Disorder Clinic at Toronto Western Hospital and an Assistant Professor at the University of Toronto
- Dr. Michelle Dionne, PhD. Dr. Dionne is an Associate Professor at Ryerson University and Chair of the Department of Psychology

Research findings will be promoted through a series of visual displays and [video](#). Both dance participants and researchers will be available to speak about their experience and to advocate for more dance classes nationally.

April 11 – TWH Event

WHERE: Toronto Western Hospital atrium, 399 Bathurst Street

WHEN: April 11, 9am – 5pm

Dance Classes: 10.30am and 2.30pm

Panel discussion to follow the 2:30pm class

Visual displays available all day

April 20 – NBS Event

WHERE: Canada's National Ballet School, 400 Jarvis Street

WHEN: April 20, 6 – 9pm

Dancing begins at 6:30pm, followed by a keynote address by David Leventhal, co-founder of Dance for PD®.

Panel discussion and reception to follow.

Live stream of all events at NBS will be available at: <http://capture.nbs-enb.ca/27/Live/1256.aspx>

April 20 is also the official launch of The Dance For Parkinson's Network Canada — a consortium of partners including Canada's National Ballet School, Dance for PD®, Dancing with Parkinson's Canada, and Parkinson Canada.

*Established in 1959, **Canada's National Ballet School** is a world leader in the training of professional dancers and teachers. Dedicated to moving the world by teaching and celebrating dance, NBS is committed to promoting the art of dance through community engagements in addition to offering recreational and professional programs. NBS graduates can be found as dancers, choreographers, artistic directors, teachers and administrators in over 65 dance companies worldwide, and in even more schools around the globe.*

Ryerson University is Canada's leader in innovative, career-oriented education. Urban, culturally diverse and inclusive, the university is home to more than 44,500 students, including 2,400 master's and PhD students, 3,200 faculty and staff, and nearly 170,000 alumni worldwide. For more information, visit www.ryerson.ca

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