

September 2010



Dear Friends and supporters of Dance to Live! I wanted to take a moment to update you on the progress of Dance to Live! programs. We are so grateful to have had these opportunities, thanks to your generous donations.

We are now in our third year of providing dance therapy/adaptive movement services to children in the Dallas metroplex. Dance to Live! served over 100 children in 2009.

Unfortunately, funding challenges forced us to drop one of our much needed programs that had been in place for two years, Nexus Recovery Center. Nexus serves female adolescents and their children who are recovering from drug addiction. Over the past two year we had seen measurable improvement and, literally, an ability to visualize and verbalize a future that was different than their present. These young women and children still need us – and we would like to return.

We hope that this retrospective will allow you an opportunity to share in our achievements and, if in some way you can contribute, we would appreciate it very much. Each and everything we have done has specific goals and it is painful to let go of such deserving programs. Please visit our Website at www.DanceToLive.org for more details.

Dance to Live! utilizes adaptive movement therapy developed specifically for children with emotional, physical and learning challenges. The therapy we provide facilitates pride in achievements, the knowledge that one can

exceed expectations, balance, co-operation, confidence and poise, effective breathing and calming exercises.

Our newest program began in June at the Family Place Safe House, a shelter for abused women and children. The Safe House opened a campus school for their children and Dance to Live! conducts classes weekly as part of the fall curriculum.

We are also serving the young children of Jonathan's Place, in a safe location, who have been removed forcibly from their homes. Dance to Live! uses Yoga Ed to teach the children calming breathing exercises, new words, colors, and how to follow instructions. The staff follows up with a daily program of breathing and calming exercises. This is a practical technique these children can use for the rest of their lives.

In September 2010 we added an additional program at Jonathan's Place. Living facilities within the secure campus house abused 10-17 year old female adolescents. Dance to Live! movement therapy is part of the weekly curriculum of this on-campus school.

Genesis Women's Shelter is also a secure location where women and children are housed and cared for when they leave abusive situations. For safety, the children are educated on site, and we provide weekly services in their classrooms. The needs of these children extend far beyond what we provide, but we have had children not want to leave the shelter for their transitional housing because they didn't want to give up their Yoga and dance classes. Dance to Live! has taught dances from around the world (with appropriate props!!) to supplement the classroom cultural history classes. As we facilitate the children's experience of the healing qualities of music and movement, other lessons are incorporated such as respect for self and others, cooperation, self control, peace and acceptance of oneself.

Ronald McDonald House, which was added to the Dance to Live! schedule in 2009-2010, is a delightful place to provide movement therapy. Sometimes even the parents join our classes, as they certainly struggle with the stress of dealing with their children's chronic illnesses. Depending on where children are in their treatment schedules, some participate with great energy and joy after spending a day at the doctor's office/hospital and others may participate from a chair, too weak to stand and exercise – but they are just as enthusiastic to be involved in the group. As they all dance, giggle and smile

along with their friends and families, we are proud to say that Dance to Live! is able to offer them a small respite from the challenges in their lives.

Nexus Recovery Center had received our services weekly for two years. It is a residential treatment center for female adolescents and children recovering from drug addiction. We work with adolescents and children in separate classes to inspire health, self esteem and confidence through different types of movement. It is extremely rewarding to us when the class of adolescents asked that we bring a tape measure to class because they wanted to measure their bodies and work toward a better body image. This request enabled us to realize that they were beginning to visualize themselves in the future and they wanted to be able to present themselves in the best possible way. What an inspiration! Unfortunately Funding for the Nexus program has been unavailable for 2010 and 2011, but we hope to continue it in the future.

At Scottish Rite Hospital, Dance to Live! embraces the challenge of providing movement therapy to children in wheel chairs or who must use walkers; children with shortened or amputated limbs, spinal defects or autism. Such special circumstances fuel our creativity and provide rewards in more than equal measure. These children seem exceptionally grateful to be called dancers and work hard to prove they can be graceful and talented and move with enthusiasm and joy. It is particularly fulfilling to see how their parents and grandparents surround them with pride and love. It is not rare to see tear-filled eyes among our audience. Be sure to go to the website www.DanceToLive.org and select “Our Mission” to check out the “Photo Gallery” for a show of our beautiful participants at Scottish Rite Hospital.

We thank you for the time it took to read this catch-up letter from Dance to Live! We are privileged to serve the community in Michelle’s memory and immensely grateful for your support. Without you we never could have positively impacted so many children’s lives. Your continuing support ensures that Dance to Live! is able to serve many more children in the future.

Susan Parma
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About Michelle

Michelle Parma
Jan 1975 - Oct 2002

Michelle's legacy of love lives on through Dance to Live! Her first dance lessons began at 5 and she danced through life.



IN LOVING MEMORY OF MICHELLE PARMA - 1975-2002

When she was 11 years old, Michelle wrote, "To me, dance is everything. It is my air to breathe, my will to live, and the water to quench the thirst in my soul to express myself. When I am dancing, my life is in order; without dance and my ability to free my feelings, my world is chaotic and confused."

Dancing helped Michelle get through the tough times in her life.

"When I was dancing, I could be anyone. I took all my anger, the love, and the disappointment that was hidden deep inside my soul and let it burst out through my body. I always knew I was OK when I was dancing, that things would work out after all and that tomorrow would be a brighter, new day.

In February, 2007, almost 4½ years after Michelle's death, her sister found a prayer, written between pages of math homework from several years before. "I thank you for your love and I pray for our relationship and your guidance to the vehicle I should use to give back, Lord. I love you. M."

Michelle was 24 when she wrote that prayer. She was 27 when she and her cousin Mandie were killed in an automobile accident. So... for you, Michelle, there is Dance to Live! Your love for dance extends your compassion into the world as the experience of Dance to Live! makes stronger bodies, enduring souls, and individuals passionate for life. Dance to Live! proves that love extends beyond a lifetime. It is the answer to your prayer.