



## A Unique Artistic Contribution to Chicago

**The mission of Dance for Life is to raise awareness and funds for HIV/AIDS care, education and prevention while promoting the art of dance in Chicago.**

- **Dance for Life Chicago** is the Midwest's largest dance performance-based fundraiser, benefiting **AIDS Foundation of Chicago** and **The Dancers Fund**.
- It allows the Chicago professional dance community the opportunity to play a proactive role in the fight against HIV/AIDS while creating and performing together.
- Partner dance companies include **Giordano Dance Chicago, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, The Joffrey Ballet** and **River North Dance Chicago**.
- The benefit concert performance is held annually in August at the **Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University**.

## History

Keith Elliott, former member of the Joseph Holmes Chicago Dance Theatre, had experienced the loss of many close friends and dance colleagues to complications of HIV/AIDS. He felt it was time for Chicago dancers to take an active role in preventing the spread of this disease had a brilliant idea: why not bring Chicago's dance community together for one night to dance for life! In 1991, along with Todd Kiech, Keith started to create Dance for Life, a benefit evening of dance performances. Keith and Todd enlisted the help of Harriet Ross, then associate artistic director of Joseph Holmes Chicago Dance Theater, to give Dance for Life the artist edge it needed. In 1992, Keith partnered with HIV/AIDS community activist and event fundraiser Danny Kopelson, as well as Chicago dance professional Gail Kalver. The first Dance for Life premiered at the Organic Theatre in June, 1992. Every seat was sold out.

Over the years, DFL has presented 31 Chicago-based professional dance companies and numerous choreographers, providing its audience with a wide array of dance styles. This is the only such event in which these incredibly talented, world-class Chicago dancers unite artistically to help those who are affected by HIV/AIDS. The dancers, companies, and choreographers involved donate their time and efforts to this cause. Dance for Life Chicago has raised millions of dollars since its beginning for the AIDS Foundation of Chicago, The Dancers' Fund and 28 AIDS Service Providing Organizations in Chicago.

## Organization

### *Executive Committee*

Keith Elliott, Patti Eylar, Marty Gorbien, Gail Kalver, Danny Kopelson, Marcia Lazar, Kevin McGirr, Harriet Ross, Richard Turner

### *Managing Director*

Anthony Guerrero



### **The Dancers' Fund**

#### *Financial Assistance for Chicago's Professional Dance Community*

The Dancers' Fund provides financial assistance to those facing life-threatening illness, injury or circumstance. In the past, The Dancers' Fund has provided assistance to qualified applicants dealing with HIV/AIDS, leukemia, various forms of cancer, and traumatic injury. The fund will offer assistance in, but not limited to, the following areas: rent, utilities, insurance, medication and travel.

Designed to help qualified individuals meet their immediate financial obligations while dealing with their condition, The Dancers' Fund is available to Chicago-based, professionally trained working dancers and those whose primary source of income is derived by serving the dance community. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Dancers in a professional concert dance company
- Freelance dancers
- Musical theatre chorus dancers
- Full time dance instructors
- Full time class/rehearsal piano accompanists
- Dance company full-time administration and/or production personnel
- Choreographers

### **Dance for Life Awareness Initiative**

The Dance for Life Awareness Initiative engages high school and college-aged dancers in Metropolitan Chicago about HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention as well as the importance of philanthropy. Through this initiative, DFL engages hundreds of students across the Chicago area who works with DFL volunteer choreographers and dance instructors to create their own Dance for Life benefits and raise thousands of dollars each year for the fight against AIDS. They include Dance for Life: The Next Generation at Wheeling High School, Dance for Life benefit concert at Morgan Park Academy and Art for Life at Northern Illinois University. These events raised over \$11,000 in 2013 and are already on their way to passing that number in 2014.

# dance for life

C H I C A G O

## **Press**

[Keith Elliott leaves behind a legacy of philanthropy](#)

[The craft of Jeremy Plummer: new heights in Dance for Life](#)

[Good Cause: Dance for Life fundraiser](#)

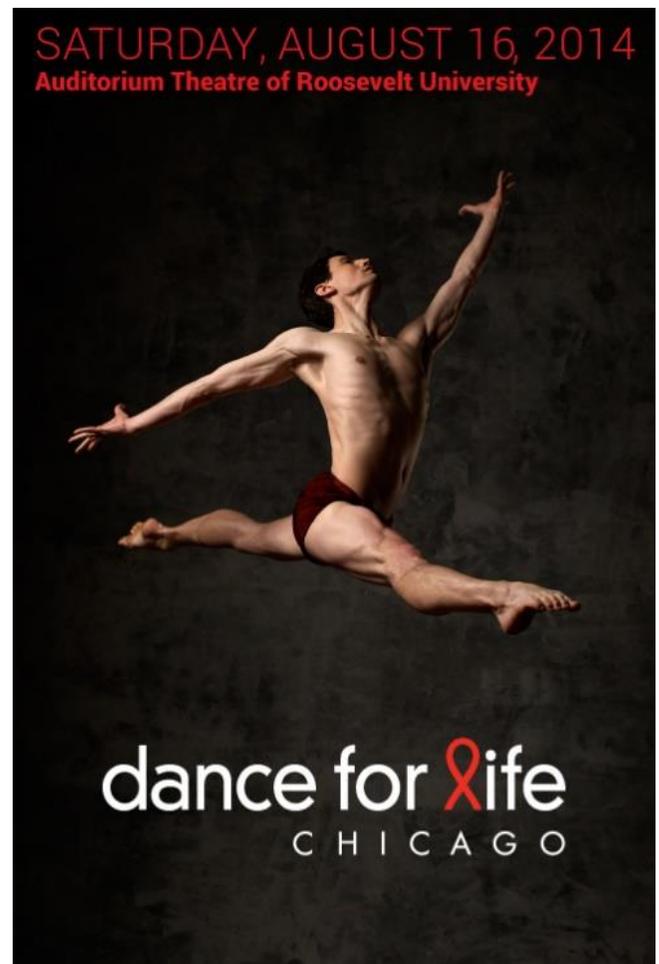
[Dance companies unite to raise AIDS awareness](#)

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