



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 7, 2017

Contact: Jill Chukerman
jchuk@rcn.com 773-392-1409

**CHICAGO DANCERS UNITED ANNOUNCES LEADERSHIP NEWS,
DATE OF 26TH DANCE FOR LIFE CHICAGO**

Chicago Dancers United (CDU), which mobilizes Chicago's dance community by raising funds through dance, announces changes to its administrative and board leadership and the date for its 26th annual Dance for Life Chicago benefit performance at the Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University: **August 19, 2017**. Prior to the performance, CDU hosts a gala celebration at the Hilton Chicago.

CDU has hired **Phil Reynolds** as executive director, effective January 2017. Reynolds brings nearly 30 years of experience in performing arts management to CDU, including 17 years as executive director of the Dance Center of Columbia College Chicago.

Kevin McGirr becomes president of CDU's board of directors, succeeding co-founder **Harriet Ross**, who remains on the board. **Patti Eylar**, co-director of Chicago Ballet Arts, is now vice president.

McGirr said, "The combination of a dedicated board, a new executive director and an energized dance community will chart our course for growth and service to Chicago's dance industry in 2017 and beyond."

"Dance for Life and its parent, Chicago Dancers United (Keith Elliott, Danny Kopelson, Gail Kalver and myself) was Keith's brainchild," said Ross. "Keith was a dancer with my company, Joseph Holmes Chicago Dance Theatre, who simply needed to do something in the face of this frightening, mysterious disease, AIDS, that was ravaging the dance world. We all did. And 26 years later, all four of us are still involved."

Dance for Life Chicago is the annual benefit dance concert presenting and showcasing the city's unique diversity of talent, dance traditions and styles by bringing together talented, world-renowned professional dancers from Chicago for one night on the same stage. The dance community unites artistically to support those affected by critical health and other life issues by generously donating their time, energy and artistry to the cause. During the past 25 years, Dance for Life has presented 33 Chicago-based, professional dance companies and numerous choreographers.

Co-chairs for the 26th annual Dance for Life Chicago, which takes place August 19, 2017 at the Hilton Chicago prior to the performance at the Auditorium Theatre, are **Jennifer Edgcomb**, vice president at GEM Realty Capital Inc.; **Erica Edwards**, director of community engagement for Joffrey Ballet; and **Aaron Weiss**, supervising attorney with the Cook County Public Guardian's Office.

CDU is now accepting submissions from Chicago-area dance companies to perform in Dance for Life Chicago 2017. **The deadline is March 15, 2017.** For more information, visit chicagodancersunited.org/company-submissions/.

About Chicago Dancers United

Dance for Life Chicago uses the art of dance to make a difference in people's lives. In response to the changing needs of Chicago's dance community, evolutions in the nature of HIV/AIDS, the growth of the annual event and its other programs, Dance for Life Chicago has matured into a nonprofit organization, [Chicago Dancers United](#) (CDU). CDU engages Chicago's dance community to support organizations and dance community professionals dealing with critical health and other life issues causing significant financial, emergency or catastrophic hardships, including, but not limited to, HIV/AIDS, through dance. Although [The Dancers' Fund](#) began in response to the impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic on the dance community, the fund now offers assistance in, but not limited to, housing, utilities, insurance, medication and travel. As a unified dance community in Chicago, CDU uses dance to support a stronger and healthier community by focusing on its health and well-being through the Dancers' Fund and Dance for Life Chicago.

###