Cheryl Vassiliadis

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**ARTIST CV**

Member of the Fort Wayne Ballet Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Performed with the Southern Ballet Theatre, Orlando, FL in The Nutcracker Ballet in 1992.

Performed with the Little Theatre of New Smyrna Beach, FL in Dearly Departed in 1997.

Studied Ballet, Jazz Dance and Modern Dance at Daytona Beach Community College at the age of 40 as part of my AA Degree.

BA in Journalism from the University of Central Florida.

Dance Artist/ Instructor at the Port Orange Senior Center in Port Orange, FL.

Dance Artist/Instructor at the Village at Deaton Creek, Hoschton, GA.

Flowing Rhythm Dance Instructor at the Village at Deaton Creek, Hoschton, Ga

Tai Chi for Health Instructor at the Village at Deaton Creek, Hoschton, GA

Tai Chi for Health Instructor at the Villas of Winder, Winder, GA.

Dance movement artist (volunteer) at the Guest House Adult Day Care in Gainesville, Ga.

Dance movement artist at The Oaks of Braselton, Braselton, GA.

Dance movement artist (volunteer) at Lamplight Inn of Fort Wayne, Fort Wayne, IN.

Performed with my Flowing Rhythm dancers at the East Hall Recreational Facility, Gainesville, GA and at the Villas at Winder, Winder, GA.

Chosen as a Beautiful Mind for 2014 by the National Center for Creative Aging.

Co-author of the book ***Creative Aging: A Baby Boomer’s Guide to Successful Living***, MSI Press, released Dec. 2014.

**TEACHING RESUME—Cheryl Vassiliadis**

As a dancer I feel movement and as a dance artist I make others feel movement too. Yes, I performed early in my dance career with the Fort Wayne Ballet until scoliosis took hold. Then later in life I transitioned to a different style of dancing. One that embraced bringing dance and movement to a whole new group; one who was older; one who may have issues with arthritis, hip/knee/or shoulder issues, one who may have dementia or Alzheimer’s. But ALL these participants find a special joy and energy through dancing with me.

In 2001, I started a dance class in Port Orange, Florida called Flowing Rhythm that was designed specifically for adults over the age of 50 who wanted to learn to dance. It was, and still is, a combination of several dance styles including ballet, modern and jazz. None of the ladies who took the class had any formal dance training and all professed to having two left feet. BUT with the series of simple warm up steps, followed by easy, follow-along choreographed dances, every student felt a sense of accomplishment and pride that they could dance.

Now fourteen years later, I have since moved to the northeast Atlanta area and I have expanded the Flowing Rhythm classes to include several at the Village at Deaton Creek, a Del Webb Active Adult Community. All the dancers are ages 65 and better, and many have been dancing with me for more than five years, with new dancers joining as they see the fun all the others are having.

I have had several of my dancers tell me, “I never thought I would be able to learn to dance and have fun like this at my age (75), but doing this and feeling so good and confident about the moves and myself, I don’t fear getting old anymore.” And several in this group have joined in my ballet class for seniors over 55. That class combines ballet barre exercises with graceful and flowing movements for their arms and simple dances choreographed once again to music for a beginning ballet dancer. The ballet dancers range in age from 68 to 90. And that class keeps growing too.

We are now beginning to work on some dance movements using improvisational techniques. But improvisational dance can only be achieved after the dancers achieve a level of confidence in themselves as creators.

So that everyone could find joy in dancing, I began a sit down version of the Flowing Rhythm dance class in the same community for people aged 65-90. Many in this group had dementia or Parkinson’s and all enjoyed moving to the music and being in a social group.

Then in December of 2012, after reading about Maria Genne’s Kairos Dance Group in an AARP Magazine, I felt inspired to take my Flowing Rhythm dance movement to the Guest House Adult Day Care facility in nearby Gainesville, Georgia. I do this as a volunteer, dancing with the their residents twice a month. I have learned so much about moving with these wonderful and giving souls, many who have some dementia, Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, or strokes. Mostly I have been rewarded through the uplifting and positive experiences we share each time we dance together.

I inspire dance movements that everyone can do in some way. And they are so excited to dance along with me each time. I have even introduced a little Tai Chi movement into the end of the sessions as a calming ending to our sessions. They follow along to the slow and methodical tai chi movements to soft and relaxing music. And then I end each session with looking into each individual’s eyes, taking their hands in mine and doing a little dance movement and then we bow to each other.

You know how rewarding that is to feel that you have made a difference in that person’s life if only for an hour. You have given them joy in the moment. That feeling is what I would like to be able to share with more people in other settings.

**Listing of Skills:**

I am a classically trained ballet dancer who has taught for more than 30 years, with most of those years teaching adults over the age of 50. Since I work with this age group almost exclusively now, I understand the challenges many face as they age. But I also understand the rewards personally in those people who dance/move with me.

I am over the age of 60 myself and I have been through some challenges in my life, ie severe scoliosis at age 11, but I never let challenges define who I was and I never stopped dancing and moving and inspiring others to do the same.

Last year I was chosen as one of nine Beautiful Minds by the National Center for Creative Aging because of my dancing and inspiring others to dance. My story is on You Tube at [www.beautiful-minds.com](http://www.beautiful-minds.com)

I am currently in the process of trying to make a video version of the Flowing Rhythm dance movement classes that could be utilized in assisted living/ nursing home settings to be shown on a television in a large activity room. This would allow the activity personnel to learn the dances and move with the residents even when a live dance artist wasn’t available. And even though I know that dancing with a teaching artist in person is the best, I am very aware that not every place can afford to hire them.

I was asked to try to do this after dancing with the residents of my mother’s assisted living facility in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Everyone had such a good time dancing with me that they wanted to have a way to do the dance movements when I wasn’t there.

I am also a Tai Chi Instructor Certified from the Tai Chi for Health Institute by Dr. Paul Lam. I teach Tai Chi classes in several communities of active adults over 55. So once again, I have been working with this demographic for several years and thoroughly enjoy bringing a new learning experience to them.