

Accomplish at JCPA



DEVELOPING HEALTH - *Body, Mind and Soul* AT JCPA

"Hey, Corona!! We're still dancing!!"

Echoing the words of our wonderful Jpro intern, Gabby Foster, accomplished and educated dancer/artist/social activist in response to an assignment I gave her to create an online classroom where the assistant/peer mentors in the **JCPA Leadership Program** would tackle assignments to keep us positive, proactive and growth-oriented during this period of separation and isolation. An email I received yesterday from the **women's health organization, Bishvilech underscored the importance of continuing exercise during these challenging times**. What seems like an extra may prove vital to keep us healthy: body, mind, heart and soul. So, let's keep dancing!! -All my Love, Rachel

But not only does it feel good to the soul, dancing also has some major health perks. Research shows dancing can improve your mental health by boosting your overall happiness...dancing can improve cardiovascular health, increase stamina, strengthen bones and muscles and **stave off illnesses**. But aside from the perks associated any heart-pounding activity, dancing has a cardio edge with unique benefits...Fabio Comana (an exercise physiologist and education team member for the National Academy of Sports) describes five components of fitness: cardiovascular endurance, flexibility, muscular endurance, body composition and muscular strength. And that's on top of improved balance, agility, coordination, power, reactivity and speed, he explains. "If exercise is not an enjoyable experience, we're not going to do it," Comana said. And the bottom line is that dancing is, plain and simple, fun...(and can trigger the release of feel good hormones like serotonin and endorphins.

And, as fitness expert Tracey Mallet explains... "Dance inspires people to get in shape with something they love to do, which doesn't feel like dreaded exercise or a bad chore, but fun and exhilarating." (By Lindsay Holmes, January 26, 2016)

Like art, dance allows children and young people to express and manage feelings that might otherwise be overwhelming. It enables them to explore emotions they may not be able to articulate. It's fantastic that we're now encouraged to talk, but sometimes talk simply doesn't cut it. For those who aren't fluent in English, dance provides a creative release and a means of expression. For those either not ready or unable to put their feelings into words, dance can fill the breach while simultaneously providing a shot of feel-good endorphins. (By Annabel Abbs, March 23, 2017)

Dancing also seems to encourage social bonding and what psychologists call "self-other merging." Like chatting with a stranger and finding out you both attended the same school or grew up in the same neighborhood, moving and grooving in rhythm with others lights up brain pathways that blur the barriers your mind erects between yourself and a stranger, and so helps you feel a sense of connection and sameness, suggests a study from the University of Oxford. (By Markham Heid, July 5, 2017)

Two new studies say that dancing may keep you healthy well into old age, potentially by reducing the risk of disability and dementia. The researchers found that physical activity generally helped women remain independent as they aged, but certain types of exercise seemed to have larger effects than others — and dancing led the pack...The secret may be that dancing requires a variety of different skills, both mental and physical. "Dancing requires not only balance, strength, and endurance ability, but also cognitive ability: adaptability and concentration to move according to the music and partner, artistry for graceful and fluid motion, and memory for choreography," the researchers write.

The second paper, published in the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society, further examined dancing's mental health benefits. After reviewing all the data, the researchers determined that aging adults who engaged in mind-body exercises tended to have stronger global cognition (a measure of general cognitive function) than people who did not do any.

Of course, dancing is also a good form of physical exercise, which plenty of research has shown to benefit mood, mental health and physical health — and it doesn't hurt that it's just great fun. (By Jaime Ducharme, December 20, 2018)

FEATURED TEACHER...

LEXIE KOH*BALLET TEACHER*

Lexie Koh has been teaching ballet in Israel since 2007. She began dancing at a young age in Pittsburgh, PA, where her training included mentors from the Bolshoi, Kirov and New York City ballet companies. Lexie graduated from Northwestern University in 1993 with a degree in theatre and psychology. After graduation she moved to Los Angeles where she became a talent agent. Realizing that the Hollywood entertainment industry was not for her, at the age of 32, she decided to change direction and get her masters in clinical psychology. It was during this time completing her internship in an LA county mental health clinic that her direction changed even further as she started the process of T'shuvah (with the encouragement and assistance of her husband-to-be). Two years later in August 2005, Lexie made aliyah, and she and her (Israeli) husband married a week later.

Never thinking she'd have the opportunity to dance again, especially as a newlywed and new ba'al'ah teshuvah, Hashem had different plans; her neighbor had just met Rachel Factor at a shabbaton, and a few weeks later, Lexie took a dance class, with Rachel...and she danced all the way home. From that fortunate meeting 14 years ago, Lexie was soon dancing, performing and eventually teaching with Rachel. She is beyond grateful to Rachel, her husband, her parents, and Hashem, for bringing her back to dance. She feels like the most fortunate woman in the world to be able to have all of her dreams together at the same time.



The chance to keep dancing and being able to give that over to so many students is an honor and opportunity she never dreamed she'd have, especially as a middle-aged frum woman! BH, Hashem answered all of her prayers. Over the years she has seen so many students develop as dancers and people, to wed, to have children, to begin to teach themselves and more. Besides her wealth of experience as a student, teacher, entertainment professional, therapist and mother (of 3 awesome kids), Lexie brings to her classroom a powerful sense of positivity, validation and joy. She loves her students and feels a personal investment in each and every one of them. She is proud of their accomplishments at every level and has immense gratitude in encouraging and witnessing their continued growth.

WHAT HAPPENED!!**Exciting News!!**

Our new partnership with the Lavy Organization in the BY Tzaharons (we are now teaching dance in the afterschool programming of BY HaTzafon and IY"H will be invited to more schools next year) was getting off the ground when the Corona virus hit. We did have 5 successful weeks before the lockdown and I want to report exciting positive outcomes so far.

Engagement vs. Strict Discipline- As dance should be an enjoyable and voluntary experience and the setting is extra-curricular, we worked with the teachers to help them understand that force is not effective or beneficial in our process. With their cooperation, we have seen most of the girls sitting on the sidelines come forward with joyful participation over just a few weeks!!

Teacher Recognition-Feeling seen /noticed/valued by an authority figure can be of the utmost value in the building of a child. Class sizes (max 25 students) are smaller than in school (can be 40+) and JCPA's insistence on multiple dance teachers per class give us the ability to recognize and notice each and every student.

Spreading Passion & Joy-We love and value dance and connection and it is contagious. Parents raved to us on their child's enthusiasm for the program, teachers reported that girls were waiting for the class to arrive each week and students approached us in stores and streets greeting us by name with broad smiles and open hearts confident that we know and love them, AND WE DO!!

WHAT'S HAPPENING!!**NISSAN SCHEDULE**

PESACH BREAK WAS SCHEDULED FROM MARCH 29-APRIL 17 IY"H, CLASSES WILL RESUME DIRECTLY AFTER PESACH ON APRIL 19 OR AS SOON AS RESTRICTIONS ARE LIFTED.

DURING THIS TIME WE WILL BE OFFERING CLASSES IN OUR ONLINE LIBRARY AND WE WILL TRY TO UPLOAD A NEW VIDEO EVERY DAY. PLEASE ENCOURAGE YOUR FAMILIES TO DANCE, EVEN THOSE NOT IN THE CHUG (AND ESPECIALLY THE MOMS!!) IT IS IMPORTANT TO STRENGTHEN OUR BODIES, MINDS, HEARTS AND SOULS DURING THESE CHALLENGING TIMES!!

WHAT'S COMING!!**Recital News!!**

IY"H, the recital is postponed, not cancelled. We hope to re-schedule the show for the month of June so keep on practicing your dances!!

In addition, we started a project on Show Day 2020 to video yourself performing your dance for your family and send it in to us. We will edit together a temporary performance to keep our spirits high!!

We have a Fundraising goal of \$30K to support scholarships and professional program development. We are \$10K away from meeting our goal!!

We are looking for more partners in our dance!!

Please consider giving a pledge by contacting us at jcpa5776@gmail.com

**NEEDED NOW
MORE THAN
EVER!!**

**BE OUR
PARTNER!!**