

DANCE *for* PD[®]

CLASSES | TRAINING | RESOURCES

“My experiences with this class have played a major role in reclaiming my physicality and mobility from the relentless ravaging of PD. It’s helping me to keep in mind the significance of not permitting PD to define me, but rather for me to shape my own dimension in the struggle to maintain mobility and agility.”

—David C., Dance for PD student for three years



Photo by Amber Star Merikens

The **Dance for PD[®]** program offers dance classes for people with Parkinson’s disease in Brooklyn, New York and, through its network of partners and associates, in more than 40 other communities around the world. An on-going collaboration between the **Mark Morris Dance Group** and the **Brooklyn Parkinson Group**—a chapter of the National Parkinson Foundation—the **Dance for PD[®]** program also provides teacher training and nurtures relationships among other organizations so that classes based on the original Brooklyn class model are available to as many people in as many communities as possible.

About the Program

Photo by Amber Star Merkens



The **Dance for PD**[®] teaching method is built on a fundamental premise: professionally-trained dancers are movement experts whose knowledge is useful to persons with PD. Dancers know all about stretching and strengthening muscles, and about balance and rhythm. Most importantly, dancers know about the power of dance to concentrate mind, body, and emotion on movement; they use their thoughts, imagination, eyes, ears, and touch to control their bodies. **Dance for PD**[®] teaching artists integrate movement from modern and theater dance, ballet, folk dance, tap, improvisation, and choreographic repertory to engage the participants' minds and bodies and create an enjoyable social environment that emphasizes dancing for dancing's sake. The dance class is an aesthetic experience that focuses on developing artistry and grace while addressing such PD-specific concerns as balance, flexibility, coordination, gait, social isolation, and depression.

The method has been presented at the International Congress for Parkinson's Disease and Related Disorders in Berlin (2005), the World Parkinson Congress in Washington, D.C. (2006) and at the Society for Neuroscience 2008 in Washington D.C. Articles about the class have appeared in *USA Today*, *Neurology Now*, *The New York Times*, and *Topics in Geriatric Rehabilitation* among other publications, and the class has been featured on NPR's *All Things Considered*, PBS Frontline and CBS. **Dance PD**[®] was featured as a model program at the 2010 Annual Conference of the Society for the Arts in Healthcare (SAH). The program's teaching points have been condensed into the DVD entitled *Why Dance for Parkinson's Disease?* (2009), which won first prize at the 2010 SAH Film Festival.

Such medical centers as Evergreen Hospital (Seattle), Jewish Hospital/Frazier Rehabilitation Institute (Louisville), Carle Hospital (Champaign-Urbana), and Beth Israel Deaconess (Boston) have hosted demonstration classes in their facilities.

Since 2007, MMDG/BPG have sponsored more than eight teacher training and professional development workshops, resulting in the replication of **Dance for PD**[®] classes throughout the United States, and in Canada, Germany, India, Israel and the United Kingdom.

MARK MORRIS  DANCE GROUP

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