

Message from the President...

It is with great pleasure and excitement that I extend my warmest welcome to all of you for the 2023-2024 season of DANCEFEST. As the President of this event, I am deeply honored to be a part of such an inspiring group of board members, adjudicators, workshop leaders and of course, dance educators and talented dance students.

This event is not just about the performances; it is a celebration of the human spirit's ability to express itself through movement, rhythm, and artistry and coming together as a community to share our mutual love of the Art of Dance. Our chosen theme of **"Dance For All"** touches on our encouragement as diverse audience members but also on our philosophy that dance is an art form for ANYONE and EVERYONE. Dance has the unique power to transcend language barriers and touch the deepest corners of our hearts. It allows us to communicate emotions, tell stories, and connect with one another in ways that words alone cannot.

To the remarkable dancers who will dedicate countless hours to perfect your craft, remember that you are the heart and soul of this event. Your dedication, discipline, and creativity inspire us all, and your commitment to the art of dance is truly commendable. As you prepare for your participation in this year's event, I encourage all of you to embrace the magic of dance, let it fill your hearts with joy, inspiration, and a renewed appreciation for the art form that unites us all.

To our esteemed panel of judges, **Shelley Kenney, Shawn Byfield and Debra Kapp**, your expertise and discernment play a vital role in ensuring the fairness and integrity of this competition. We trust your judgment and look forward to witnessing your insights when evaluating these incredible performances.

To the families and friends of our participants, your unwavering support and encouragement are the pillars upon which these dancers stand. Thank you for all you will do this season to support your dancers in their preparations for this amazing opportunity.

We stand by our **OSSDF Mission Statement** ***"to provide inclusive, encouraging, and empowering opportunities for dance learners, educators, and artists to explore and collaborate within the artform of dance as learners move through elementary to postsecondary, and beyond."*** Our mandate is to plan for an amazing DANCEFEST 2024 event that is truly accessible to all dance educators and schools in Ontario.

Let us celebrate the diversity of dance styles, the unity of purpose, and the sheer joy that comes from sharing our passion for dance. Together, let us celebrate the beauty of dance, encourage one another, and create lasting memories.

In closing, I hope you have a great year in dance! On behalf of the OSSDF Board Members, I look forward to seeing you at DANCEFEST2024 at the University of Waterloo's Theatre of Modern Arts in Waterloo, Ontario from May 22nd-25th to "Dance For All!"

Keep dancing!

Katie Knowlton
OSSDF President