

History of Ontario Secondary School DANCEFEST

2015 – 2019 – OSSDF is a Not-For-Profit & Bridging the Gap with Elementary and Post-Secondary Panels of Education



OSSDF2015 Board of Directors of newly incorporated not-for-profit organization

In February 2015, Ontario Secondary School DANCEFEST incorporated as a not-for-profit organization with legal assistance from Les Protopapas, of Protopapas and Spielberg, of Kitchener, and Shelley Wickenheiser, CPA of Wickenheiser Tax Advisory Professional Corporation of Elora. A Board of Directors was formed with a group of dedicated dance teachers, most who had been advocates since 2003: Jocelyn Bell-Summersby; Laurel Brown; Melissa Lolarga Chiandussi; Tara Duffy; Michelle Hillier; and, Debra Kapp.

OSSDF2015 introduced a new non-competitive category, Creative Collaborations, which is free for dancers to participate in. Glenys McQueen Fuentes suggested this category and she and her husband, Gato, who is a composer, own Drama Sound and happily sponsor this event presenting plaques to the participating schools and music from their catalogue for the schools to use.

In November 2015, OSSDF was pleased to partner with St. Clair College in Windsor. Ontario Secondary School DANCEFEST2016 was held at St. Clair College – Centre for the Performing Arts from Tuesday, May 24th until Friday, May 27th, 2016 with support from Katherine Kaszas, Artistic Director of St. Clair College's Performing Arts Programmes and their Dance Faculty: Melissa Williams, Kristyn Wiklanski, Katie Mecher Williams (Modern) and Ann Marie Pilon-Gerdun (Ballet). We were pleased with the opportunities this partnership provided for our intermediate and secondary dancers and their educators from 2016 - 2019.

In 2015, OSSDF increased the technology that was initiated by Bluevale graduate, Danny Smith, in 2014. OSSDF Communication Director, Allison Campbell, from General Amherst High School, and her Tech team: Noah Campbell, Max Calhoun, Jared Capaldi, Elizabeth Wiese and Adam Lang, introduced an adjudication platform for OSSDF2015. In the fall of 2017, with a successful application, we expanded that technology with University of Waterloo computer tech volunteers from UWBLUEPRINT.org. OSSDF was very grateful for the

support received from UWBLUEPRINT.org until 2020 to further the adjudication platform for our annual event.

In 2017, we added a FreeStyle Category for Hip Hop and Contemporary. This was innovated and organized by Katie Knowlton.

OSSDF strives to ensure that dance stays present and vital in education and that we “bridge the gap” between elementary, secondary, post-secondary education and the larger dance community. The introduction in 2020 of **OSSDF Teachers’ Council meetings** have allowed Ontario educators to meet and share information and resources; participate in “live” workshops; and gain opportunities to discuss the changes/reactions in education. Melanie Randall, OSSDF VP led the meetings over ZOOM during the 2020/2021/2022 school years and Joanna Perlus assumed the position as Teachers Council Convenor for 2022/2023 and 2023/2024.

2016	St. Clair College – Centre for the Performing Arts	Host: OSSDF Board
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