

# thINKingDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation

## Next/UP? Bulletins from the Dance Community's New Coalition

by Patricia Graham

As of March 31, 2015 Dance/USA's local service organization, Dance/UP, ceased to exist as we knew it. But due to the dedicated efforts of Philadelphia's dance community, Dance/UP will start fresh—same name, new iteration.

A steering committee of forty-two interested community members met recently with former Dance/UP Director Lois Welk and Dance/USA Executive Director Amy Fitterer. Welk skillfully facilitated a transitional plan with the group. Three co-chairs were selected to lead the steering committee through the end of the year: Keila Cordova, Kathy Kerner and Ellen Chenoweth. For the moment, a skeletal structure is in place to preserve vital programs. Former Dance/UP employee Danielle Currica will administer the Deadlines At A Glance calendar and DancePass Program without disruption through September 30<sup>th</sup>, which will be a first milestone. Those programs will then need to transition to new administration, most likely a pool of volunteers. By the year's end, the structure can be re-visited, with the co-chairs opting to continue or step down.

Other valued programs have been farmed out to able partners: the Polish Exchange Program will be administered by Mascher Space Cooperative, the Hungarian Exchange Program by Philadelphia Dance Projects, and the [Portable Dance Floor program by BalletX](#).

At this point, it appears that volunteer labor will be key to maintaining services and that organizing those workers will be a prime function of the committee. Welk commented that upon hearing of the loss of funding for Dance/UP, many people approached her with offers of hands-on support. How long Dance/UP will be a volunteer organization primarily is one of many questions to be resolved.

What will the long-term structure be and how will this sustain itself? With the basic programs taken care of, the committee can start hashing out these issues. Chenoweth spoke to me of the steering committee's desire to draw widely from the dance community in formulating more detailed plans. Bi-weekly electronic newsletters will be going out with updates. The newsletter will be a place where the steering committee can communicate directly with the community.

Dance/USA is also generously sponsoring a trip for each of the steering committee co-chairs to the 2015 Dance/USA Conference in Miami this spring, giving them the opportunity to engage with other service organizations. Welk and Fitterer have pledged support during the ensuing nine-month period. Fitterer will be attending the monthly committee meetings and sharing the national perspective on what's going on in other dance communities. In the most recent meeting, Cordova reiterated thoughts from a previous get-together, reminding everyone that the future of this organization is what they collectively make it.

Dance/UP is dead. Long live Dance/UP.

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<http://www.danceup.org/>

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