



Annual Report

2022 - 2023

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A Message from Sarah Robichaud



As I reflect on the past year, I am overwhelmed with gratitude for the community of care and compassion that we are building together at Dancing with Parkinson's. This has been a significant period of growth and expansion – where we are today makes it hard to believe that only one year ago we were navigating our way out of the COVID-19 pandemic, offering our online program and starting to reintroduce in-studio dance classes. Now here we are with 14 in-person locations across the greater Toronto area, our first class outside of Ontario and more to come!

Through this time one thing has become very clear: the DWP program is so much more than just a “dance class”. It is a critical public health intervention where expansive movement, connection and transformation are available to all who join, no matter their age, experience, or ability. DWP aims to provide an anchor where participants feel the beauty and joy of self-expression, and experience the power of dance to rejuvenate, invigorate, and elevate, revitalizing our bodies and minds.

For many who join us in-person and online, DWP classes are a gateway to connection, vitality and potential. Through the universal language of dance, we embrace a vision that knows no limits, that defies age and circumstance, and welcomes everyone who dares to dream, aspire, and become the embodiment of their own imagination.

This is a space where we find solace in the embrace of community; the camaraderie forged on the “dance floor” transcends age, background, and circumstance. It's a place where strangers become friends and friends become family, connected by the rhythm of their shared journey towards self-discovery.

We invite you to join us as we illuminate the potential of dance for seniors and those living with Parkinson's Disease. Guided by the rhythm of movement and united by the choreography of the human spirit, we'll dance towards a brighter, healthier future, fueled by the infinite possibility of who we have yet to become.

Let's dance,

Sarah Robichaud

Sarah Robichaud
Founder & CEO

Mission & Vision



Mission

We provide accessible dance classes and artistic experiences that enrich the lives of people living with Parkinson's and others who would benefit from our transformative program.

Vision

A world where people living with Parkinson's experience the social, emotional, and physical benefits of dance in an artistic and inclusive community.



Classes



Since March 2020, we have been offering free, online dance classes 365 days a year for people living with Parkinson's as well as seniors across Canada. In September of 2022, when it was safe to gather, we immediately re-launched our in-studio classes. In addition to our ongoing virtual programming, we now have 14 in-person locations in full operation, including our first class in Winnipeg in partnership with U-Turn Parkinson's!

14

**in-person classes
across the GTA**

1

**in-person class
in Winnipeg**

125

**participants
online daily**

25

**classes in LTC and
seniors' residences**

5

**PD Support
Groups**



YOU GOT ME DANCING



On Sunday, March 5th, DWP turned 15! We celebrated this important milestone with a very special event in conjunction with the Leonard Cohen exhibition at the Art Gallery of Ontario. Over 350 people danced with us online and in-person, and we met many participants “in real life” for the first time!

It was completely magical to come together with friends, family and partners who have been such important supporters of DWP over the years. Our honorary Chair, the original inspiration, and our great friend, Andy Barrie, was there for the celebration!



Click below to enjoy the highlights of this very special event.



The "Bridging Generations Through Dance" Project

In collaboration with dancers, visual artists, writers, poets and multidisciplinary arts organizations, DWP has developed and hosted ground-breaking intergenerational dance projects since 2010. Through the artistry of dance, these collaborative workshops encourage greater understanding and connection between seniors, those living with disabilities, and our youth.

This year, we welcomed grade 1 and 2 students from Rosedale Day School and Forest Hill Public School to dance in-person and online with DWP dancers. This workshop series involved students sharing stories and experiences from a "place from which they come". Working with our seasoned dancers, they combined movements and gestures to make phrases.



It was incredibly powerful to witness the impact of moving together to music as a way to foster connection and compassion between generations.

[Click here](#) to watch the highlight reel or [click here](#) to watch the full video.

Very special thanks to the grades 1 and 2 students and teachers from the Rosedale Day School and Forest Hill Public School, and all of DWP's dancers for your participation and your commitment to being beautifully open, willing and enthusiastic.



We Do So Much More Than Dance!



Available both online and in-person, our “extracurricular” arts experiences invite our dancers to participate in accessible field trips, creative workshops, and performances.

Highlights Include:

- Exploring the potential of our own artistry through poetry, writing and movement workshops
- An in-person field trip to the ROM
- A guided yoga, breathwork and meditation practice
- Cooking demonstrations with the Neighbours Group
- Music and singing at our virtual pub nights
- Discovering the power of singing and mime to help with Parkinson’s symptoms
- Conversations with professional dancers and performers





A SLICE OF LIFE

Our “Slice of Life” series was inspired by our participants’ enthusiasm to share more about themselves and create deeper connections. Led by DWP dancers and funded by the Government of Canada’s New Horizons for Seniors program, “A Slice of Life” invites participants to share lived experiences, stories, interests, and skills with their fellow dancers.

This bi-weekly informal conversation series encourages meaningful dialogue, social interactions, and connections, and provides a unique opportunity for our online community to get to know one another better, share knowledge, and sometimes even learn new skills!

Some of our wonderful presentations are included below. To read more, [click here](#).



Sharon, “Befriending our Mind and Body”

As a person living with young onset Parkinson’s, Sharon provided some very helpful and thoughtful tools to support us during moments of stress. She highlighted the importance of checking in with ourselves throughout the day through “micro-boosts” such as intentional breathing, mindful movement and gratitude to help shift our energy and mood.

Alan, “My Career in Print and Packaging Design”

Alan is an accomplished artist with thirty-five years as a Packaging Designer, Print Designer, Illustrator. He collects comic books dating back to the early 60’s and loves watercolour painting. Now, as a retired person living in Lindsay, Ontario, you will find Alan and his wife gardening in the summer.



Lydia, “Teachings from her Father: Holistic Chinese Healing”

Lydia, originally from Hong Kong, immigrated to Toronto in 1976. One thread that has woven through her personal and professional life is her commitment to helping people feel better. She believes deeply in the benefits of Chinese healing which includes movement for whole-body wellness.

World Parkinson Congress in Barcelona



ABOUT THE... I AM DANCE - PD DANCE PROJECT

The I Am Dance - PD Dance Project was a creative dance project created by and for the Parkinson's community-at-large. In association with the Mark Morris Dance Group, Dance for PD® Program, this project invited the global community to participate in a worldwide celebration and collaboration of dance. All dance artists of every level were given an opportunity to express themselves by capturing on video their own creative and unique dance pieces to be collected and shown at the 6th World Parkinson Congress as part of the Art Walk in Barcelona, Spain.

This project is shown alongside the WPC Tulip Garden as an extension of the Parkinson's Tulip Project and the I Am Power Project, both of which were designed to inspire members of the community with photographs and poetry reminding everyone that we are connected, no matter where we are, and that no one is alone with Parkinson's.

The I Am Dance - PD Dance Project combines elements from both of these projects through the element of dance. Research has repeatedly concluded that movement such as dance is vital to the well-being of a person living with Parkinson's. This project allows viewers to witness the dynamic value that exists for people with Parkinson's through choreography.

In June 2023, DWP's Founder, Sarah Robichaud and Director of Outreach and Engagement, Jessica Dargo Caplan, were thrilled to join over 2,600 attendees, clinicians and researchers at the 6th World Parkinson Congress in Barcelona! It was an important opportunity to learn about new and innovative ways to provide support for those living with Parkinson's and their care partners.

In addition to participating in a wide variety of relevant and fascinating workshops and lectures, DWP was invited to share our latest evaluation and research, reporting on the impact of our Daily Dance Connect program for people living with Parkinson's. DWP also contributed to the "I AM DANCE" PD Dance Project with a video submission that highlighted the way we engage the DWP community to share the benefits and joy of dance for those living with Parkinson's.

The Congress offered opportunities to connect with existing and prospective partners, including Parkinson Canada, Dance for PD®, U-Turn Parkinson's and PD Avengers, among others. Together, we will continue to collaborate to develop and promote innovative approaches that will support people living with Parkinson's and their care partners.



Community Connections



In the spring of 2023, DWP started a new initiative: leading our online Daily Dance Connect from locations where participants live. Doing so has offered us a wonderful opportunity to meet some of our Zoom dancers in-person for the first time.

We danced with Ruth van Horne at her retirement residence in Hamilton. Through the pandemic, Heather Cozens, the Recreation Manager at the Caroline Place Retirement Residence where Ruth lives, facilitated access to our Daily Dance Connect both from the comfort of the residents own space and also from the common room.

The DWP team travelled north to teach the Daily Dance Connect from the home of dedicated dancer, Loranna. While in the area, Sarah led classes with our valued partners at Sunset Manor long term care home, Living Better with Parkinson's and Active Living Innisfil.

Through the fall of 2023, new in-person classes are launching in Winnipeg, Ottawa and PEI, all of which present meaningful opportunities to make contact with our online dancers.

This type of engagement is at the heart of our work, and why we are so passionate about what we do. This is our future as we work to broaden and deepen our connection to more people living with Parkinson's and seniors across the country.



*"DWP helped my dad find motivation, confidence as well as meaningful friendships."
~ Caregiver*

Partnerships



DWP's community partners are integral in helping us share the joy and benefits of dance with participants from coast to coast. Together we are committed to engaging the most underserved and vulnerable populations, including those living with Parkinson's Disease and other neurological and movement disorders, as well as isolated seniors.

Our roster of 25 partners includes Parkinson's support groups, health and wellness advocacy and service organizations, and community-based/ethno-cultural organizations. These valuable partnerships provide DWP with vital information to support and enhance our ongoing growth and expansion.

Key Partners

- Parkinson Canada
- Ontario Brain Institute
- Woodgreen Community Services
- U-Turn Parkinson's (Winnipeg)
- Friends of Regent Park
- Art Gallery of Ontario
- Neighbours Project (Health Commons Solutions Lab)
- Living Better with Parkinson's
- Longterm care homes
- Seniors' organizations
- Pinecrest - Queensway Community Health Services (Ottawa)
- Dance for PD® Network Canada
- Dance for PD® NY
- Evaluation Centre for Complex Health Interventions



25
key partners

Our Team



Sarah Robichaud with Andy Barrie, Honorary Co-Chair

Over the past 12 months we've recruited the team we need to support our ambitious goals. DWP's instructors, volunteers and staff are more committed than ever to help take DWP to the next level. We will continue to dance together in-person and online while increasing access to opportunities for participants to experience connection, hope and transformation.

Made up of 9 dedicated Board members, 9 accomplished dance instructors and 5 full-time and 2 part-time employees, the DWP team brings industry expertise, commitment and passion to achieving DWP's mission and vision.

DWP Instructors



Sarah Robichaud



Phoebe Chu



Laetitia Clément



Brenda Gorlick



Lainie Magidshon



Robin McPhail-Dempsey



Jianna Neufeld



Sarah Murphy-Dyson



Paloma Olan



Claire Wootten



Teacher Training

In April 2023 we offered an intensive teacher training weekend growing our team of DWP instructors to a total of 16! As DWP embarks on our national expansion, building our team of certified Dance for PD® Method teachers will allow us to run in-person dance classes across Canada.

Our Volunteers



We really could not do the work we do without our dedicated team of passionate, caring and talented volunteers.

Joining us for our online and in-person classes, our volunteers are key players in ensuring that our dancers feel seen, heard and supported. Returning to the studio this year meant that we needed to increase our number of volunteers for our 14 locations around the GTA, in addition to our daily, online classes.

We now have 42 incredibly generous and enthusiastic volunteers who join us for classes, events and outings.

Thank you to our wonderfully kind and committed volunteers — we greatly appreciate all that you do!



42
volunteers



In the Spotlight



This past year we were delighted to be profiled on the following media outlets, highlighting our return to in-person classes and the expansion of our programming.

toronto.com

Alleviating social isolation for seniors through dance
October 2022



CityNews Everywhere

Dancing with Parkinson's at the AGO
February 2023



I am amazed by and grateful for how much I have benefited from being part of the DWP community.
~ Louisa, DWP Dancer

CTV NEWS

Dancing with Parkinson's free in-person and online classes
November 2022



I saw my doctor recently, and she told me that I am doing better than she had anticipated. I gave full credit to you and the DWP team. Many, many thanks!
~ Sheila, DWP Dancer

Disastershock

"Dance for Health" - Movement Stories Project with Disastershock.com affirms the power of movement to engage the mind-body and spirit
July 2023



BEACH METRO COMMUNITY NEWS

DWP classes in East Toronto
December 2022



EVERYTHING ZOOMER

Music and Movement: How Dancing Helps to Ease the Symptoms of Parkinson's Disease
February 2023



Zoomer Radio

Free dance classes for those with Parkinson's set to expand
June 2023

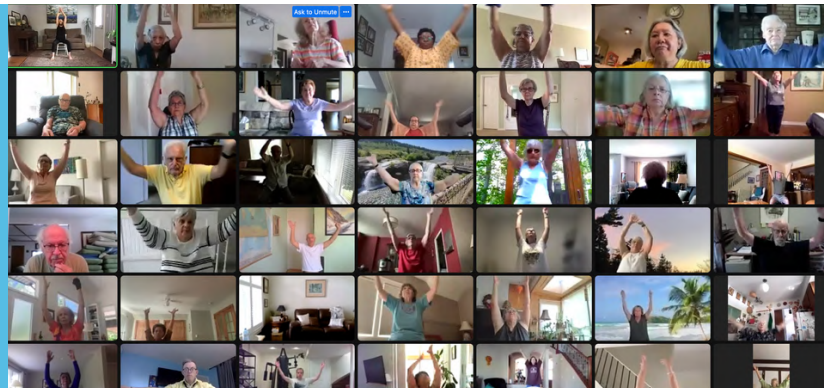


THE GLOBE AND MAIL*

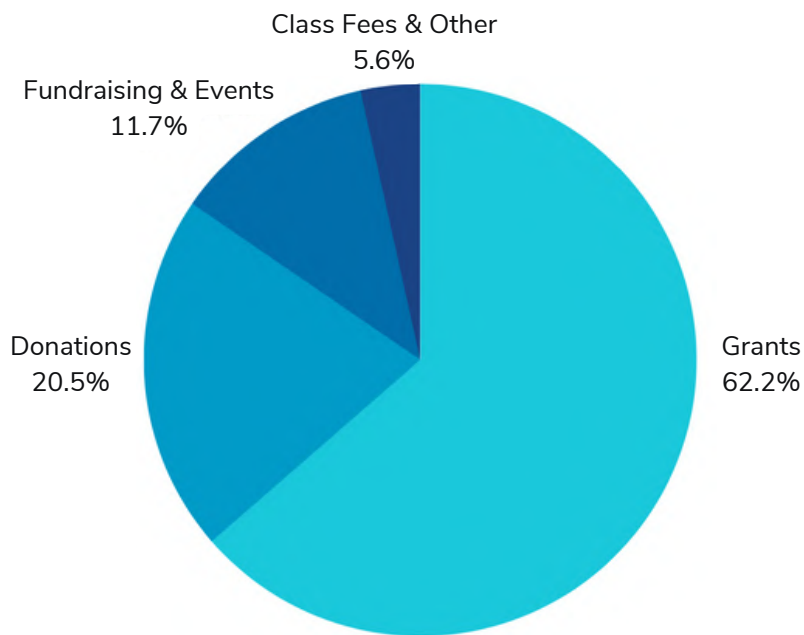
One Secret to Happy Aging? Learn to Stop Fearing It
September 2023



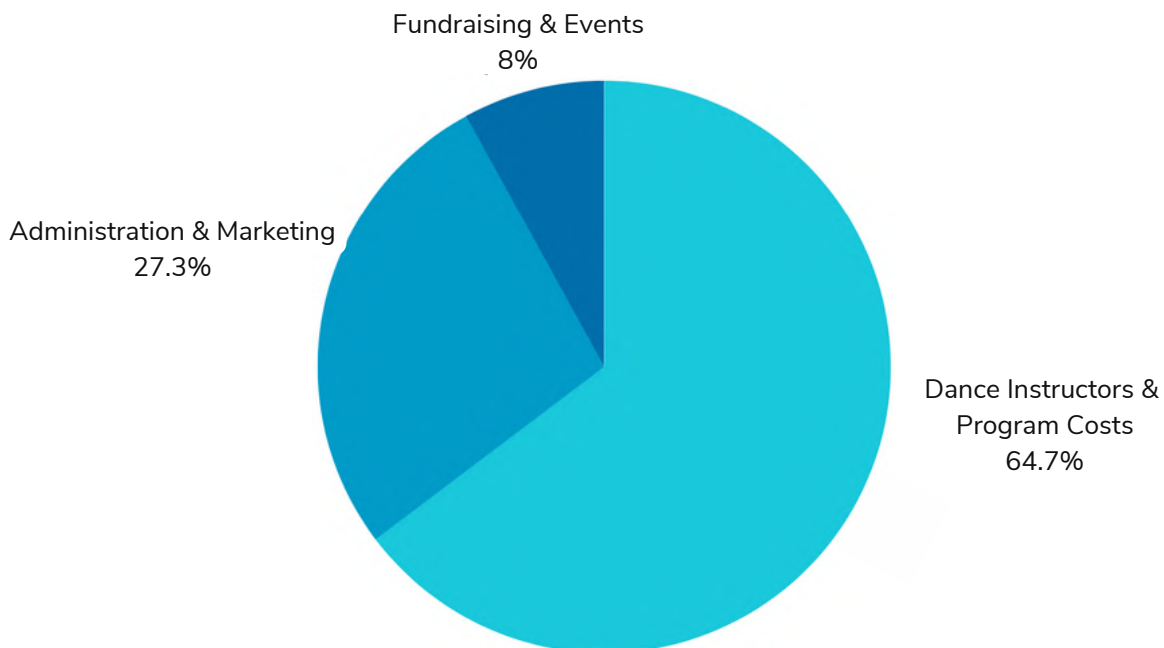
Financials



Revenue 2022 - 2023



Expenses 2022 - 2023



What's to Come



DWP is expanding! We are traveling west and east to train new dance instructors and volunteers; we are connecting with new friends and many of DWP's current online dancers from different parts of the country. In the process, we are continuing to learn — learning how to scale up, replicate and increase access to DWP's online and in-person classes so that new communities can benefit from our research-backed dance and movement program.

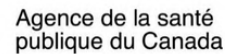
Our weekly class in Winnipeg, in partnership with U-Turn Parkinson's, is well underway. This is a meaningful opportunity for Winnipeg-based dancers to come together as a community on a regular basis. In Ottawa, we connected with local partners to deliver demo classes, planting the seed for a new in-person program to start this fall. DWP has launched a new in-studio class in Thornhill to serve participants from North Toronto and beyond. And we aren't slowing down — next stop: PEI!

We are hard at work establishing partnerships and opportunities to meet dancers where they are, and to provide in-person access to the joy and benefits of moving together to music. Stay with us as we continue to expand our reach from coast to coast and beyond, sharing moments of magic that remind us of the transformative power of dance.



Thank you for supporting our work!

With the generous support of our sponsors and partners, DWP is able to continue increasing access to our classes by keeping them free of charge for all participants across Canada. We would also like to thank the countless individual donors who support our work. We couldn't do this without you!





Dancing with Parkinson's
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