

Rediscovering joy of movement

Dance for Parkinson's program keeps participants moving, fosters community

CHARLOTTE DE ARANTES OLIVEIRA
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

Movement is woven into the fabric of our daily lives — whether that means walking down the street, getting dressed or joining an exercise class.

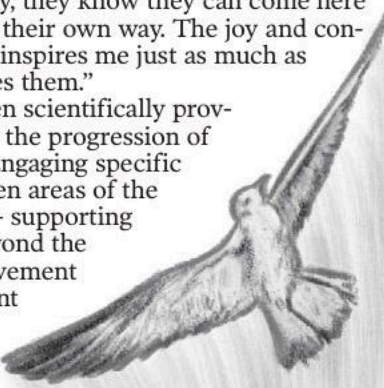
For most of us, these actions feel natural and effortless. But for those living with Parkinson's disease, even the simplest motions — like blinking, writing or smiling — can gradually become more difficult. Parkinson's is more than a medical condition; it's a daily challenge that touches movement, confidence, independence and connection with others.

Rebecca Miller Stalcup, founder and artistic director of the Arkansas Festival Ballet:Arkansas Academy of Dance, is using the power of movement and creativity to help people with Parkinson's disease rediscover confidence, strength and joy. Through the class, participants aren't just exercising — they're reclaiming pieces of themselves that the disease tries to take away.

"This class has changed my life in so many ways. Yes, I'm making an impact on them, but really — they're the heroes," Stalcup says of the participants. "They don't let their diagnosis define them. Every Thursday and Monday, they know they can come here and use their body in their own way. The joy and confidence I see in them inspires me just as much as the movement inspires them."

Movement has been scientifically proven to help slow down the progression of Parkinson's disease. Engaging specific muscles can strengthen areas of the body most affected — supporting physical mobility. Beyond the physical benefits, movement also plays an important role in mental health.

Participating in group exercise classes not only builds strength but also fosters a sense of community, help-



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