



**Ballet Austin Guild hosts 17th Annual
"Women on Their Toes"
Luncheon Honors Outstanding Community Volunteers**

Who: Ballet Austin Guild

What: "Women on Their Toes", annual spring luncheon honoring outstanding volunteers and benefiting Ballet Austin

Theme: "Making Magic"

When: April 7 from 10:00 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Where: Austin Hyatt Regency

Tickets: Start at \$100. Sponsorships are available starting at \$1000. For more information, contact Ballet Austin Guild at 512.476.9151, ext. 200 or balletguild@aol.com or visit www.balletaustinguild.org

AUSTIN, TX -- The Ballet Austin Guild is proud to announce 11 outstanding volunteers to be honored at the 17th annual *Women on Their Toes* Spring luncheon event benefiting Ballet Austin. The event draws attention to and focuses on the tremendous value of the work that volunteers contribute to the community and the organizations they serve.

The volunteers selected for recognition are **JoAnn Jentz**, Assistance League of Austin; **Sandra Batlouni**, Autism Society of Greater Austin; **Maria Groten** and **Mary Herr Tally**, Center of Child Protection; **Dee Kurtzer**, Heart House; **Eileen Van Den Berg**, Helping Hand Home for Children; **Lauren Paver**, Impact Austin; **Carolyn Dyer**, Marathon Kids; **Judith Lindfors**, Meals on Wheels and More; **Diane Kearns**, Sammy's House; and **Nancy Young**, Women's Symphony League of Austin.

Motivational speaker, **Janet Sue Rush**, has entertained and inspired corporations, civic leaders, universities, health care organizations, and non-profit organizations for years. Rush will serve as the keynote speaker at the 400 person event. KVUE News Anchor, **Tyler Sieswerda**, will serve as guest emcee.

This year's theme, "Making Magic" is in reference to Ballet Austin's final production, "The Magic Flute" and the "magic" that happens when people give of their time and talents to non-profit organizations.

About the Honorees

JoAnn Jentz: As a charter member of the Assistance Guild of Austin, and later, Assistance League of Austin, JoAnn Jentz helped create a "Library and Craft Cart" to deliver reading materials and craft kits to hospitalized patients. She has worked for more than 37 years with Seton Hospital as the program evolved into Dell Children's Medical Center of Central Texas. Now the program is known as the "Toy Cart" for the distribution of new books, games, and activities for children and magazines for parents.

As the Assistance League grew, she initiated successful fundraising projects to support its philanthropic programs including the Holiday Home Tour and the Community Calendar. In 1978, when she was President of Assistance League of Austin, she worked to establish the Bus with Us Program to provide local excursions and day trips for seniors, and has served on that committee for 32 years. Each year, she mentors an Austin Community College student who participates in Assistance League's Scholarship program. Alice Davis, Vice President of Philanthropic Programs, writes that "She is simply an amazing woman who always has new ideas and is willing to pitch in to accomplish goals."

Sandra Batlouni: Sandra Batlouni has been one of the Autism Society's most committed volunteers. As the mother of twin girls on the autism spectrum, she has her hands very full at home but she still finds time to moderate the society's daytime support group, serve on its board, and chair its annual fundraiser, the Austin Autism Society Bike Ride which has also increased the society's visibility in the community. "Sandra is the inspiration for the "can do" spirit that we present to the world," writes Ann Hart, President of the Autism Society of Greater Austin.

Maria Groten and Mary Herr Tally: These two women co-chaired *Dancing with the Stars* Austin in 2009 and took on the role again in 2010. The event was the biggest and most successful fundraising benefit that the Center for Child Protection had ever attempted. "Through their efforts, children's lives are being changed forever" writes Sandra Martin, Chief Executive Office. "The Center provided 3,838 services to 2,078 children."

As a member of the ZACH Board of Directors, Mary also chaired the 2010 Red Hot & Soul gala. She also supports a wide range of other Austin area institutions including St. David's Community Health Care Foundation, the Austin Children's Shelter, the Palmer Drug Abuse Program, and Caritas. She is a founding member of "The Women's Trust" benefitting the Dell Children's Hospital, and has served on the Board of the Downtown Austin Alliance, was an active member of the Association of Fund Raising Professionals, and the Business & the Arts Committee of the Austin Chamber of Commerce. Throughout her years as a professional fundraiser and as a community volunteer, Mary has focused on helping abused and underserved children, bringing the arts to all segments of our community, and protecting canine companions as well.

Maria Groten has bountiful energy, a love of her community, and a zest for giving back that led her to a deeper involvement with local philanthropy. The Center for Child Protection, ZACH Scott Theatre and Ballet Austin are the primary organizations with which she has been involved.

Dee Kurtzer: Dee Kurtzer started her involvement by teaching art programs to Heart House children in their after-school and summer programs and transitioned into being a program leader for an additional two years. During this time, she established important relationships with the at-risk youths the Heart House serves, serving as a role model and trusted adult the children could turn to. She was invited to serve on the Board of Directors of the organization and has taken on additional leadership roles including chairing the organization's fund-raising event, *Grape Escape*.

"Dee has served as a positive role model for hundreds of children in the Austin Community," writes Jackie Collett, Development Director for Heart House. "Dee sees the importance of teaching children to be thankful for what they have, and she makes it clear to the children that she is thankful to have them in her life . . . Dee Kurtzer is helping create a generation that values hard work, education and perseverance and is teaching generations across the board about the importance of helping those who need it the most."

Eileen Van Den Berg: Eileen Van Den Berg came to Helping Hand Home for Children in 1999 to start a weekly story time hour. Twelve years later, she still visits the home -- which serves, abused, neglected, or abandoned children -- every week. Now her story times have evolved into amazing experiences for the children and her mission has grown into a foundation fueled by her passion to lead future volunteers.

"Anyone who's had the privilege of attending a Thursday night story time hosted by Ms. Eileen has experienced first hand the therapeutic nature of the event," comments Ted Keyser, Executive Director of Helping Hand Home.

As the children get placed in foster homes and leave Helping Hand Home, Ms. Eileen continues to be part of each of their lives. She currently keeps in contact with over 400 of the children from Helping Hand Home. As her connections with HHH grew, so did her need for space. Several years ago she and her husband purchased a warehouse and dedicated their lives full time to ensuring the kids of HHH past and present are looked after. Her space is a real-life Santa's workshop, boasting a room filled with toys, games and shelves lined with boxes of backpacks, pajamas, scarves, shoes, flip flops, handmade quilts, pillows, and t-shirts with inspiring slogans such as "I can do anything when I believe." Everything that leaves the warehouse is wrapped beautifully for the children to open.

Lauren Paver: Lauren Paver serves on the Marketing Committee for Impact Austin, and organization of women who donate \$1000 each annually to be used in making grants to local, worthy causes selected by its members. Using her exceptional team-building abilities, she helped increase the membership of Impact Austin to 542.

“With timely media placements, we attracted new women to our mission that had not known of us before,” states Rebecca Powers, Founder and CEO of Impact Austin.

“That translates to increased dollars Impact Austin can put in the community to serve those in need. In June, we will award five \$108,400 grants. It sends a strong message to the non-profits in Central Texas that we believe in their missions and want to support them.”

Carolyn Dyer: Carolyn Dyer was the very first volunteer when Marathon Kids began its program in 1996. The program is a free, six month, running/walking/nutrition and gardening program for K-5th graders who are most vulnerable to type 2 diabetes and sedentary lifestyles. She began by engaging school administrators, physical educators, children and their families. During her first year, the program had 6,000 children participating. In 2010, Austin area Marathon Kids has almost 70,000 registered area K-5th graders.

“With Carolyn’s early, vital help, the free Austin grassroots initiative took on a life of its own, engaging almost one million Austin young children, families and volunteers over our 13 years,” states Kay Morris, Executive Director. “In addition to helping launch the Austin program, Carolyn was also instrumental in establishing the free six month program in six other USA cities.”

Judith Lindfors: On Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, Judith Lindfors meal manages at one of the largest Meals on Wheels and More distributions sites, ensuring that 30 routes are completed successfully. She handles the task with ease, making sure that the volunteers get in and out quickly and that the clients receive their meals on time. On Wednesdays, she volunteers as a greeter and a “buddy” to participants at Mike’s Place, an activity center for individuals with Alzheimer’s and dementia. Whether it’s playing piano, singing, or getting the participants to get up and dance, Judith’s lively nature makes everyone feel welcome and encourages more participation.

“We, the staff, at Meals on Wheels and More, feel so fortunate to have volunteers like Judith who so freely give of their time, talents, and energy. She, along with others, is helping to make Mike’s Place an important program, bringing joy to participants and their caregivers.” writes Suellen Mills, Volunteer Manager, Mike’s Place.

Diane Kearns: Sammy’s House is a non-profit organization whose programs serve children with special needs. The service started in 1999 in the home of Isabel and Julian

Huerta, serving four medically fragile infants and is named for their child, Sammy, who was born with Down syndrome complicated by multiple birth defects.

Diane Kearns and her husband, Don, have 3 children, twins Dean & Vivian, and Beck. Dean has cerebral palsy and is visually impaired. Through his disability, Diane was introduced to Sammy's House, and has been a volunteer since 2004.

Through Diane's leadership, the organization is reaching more children and families, especially through the Equipment Loan Program. Often families with children with special needs can't afford the specialized equipment these children need, such as wheelchairs, standers, and walkers. With Diane's help and contacts at AT&T, Sammy's House has started to get their computers and database set up so that they can inventory and document the specialized equipment that is available, and get it out to the kids who need it. She has also recruited and organized volunteers for fund-raising events that raised in excess of \$100,000 for Sammy's House.

Nancy Young: Over a course of 40 years, Nancy Young has held every position on the Women's Symphony League Board, including president. She has steadfastly championed the goal of music education for all children, and she has served as a model for the role volunteers can play in realizing that goal.

Past-President Joan Holtzman cannot imagine the WSL without Nancy. "Nancy has a very special way of working with people. Her creativity, great enthusiasm, unbounded energy, and zest for life make even the hardest tasks seem like fun," she stated.

Austin-area lawyer, businessman, and philanthropist Joe R. Long is grateful for Nancy Young's years of service. He describes her as "the absolute epitome of creative volunteerism and a great example, not only for our organization, but for other organizations as well, evidencing what a volunteer can do for our community."

About Ballet Austin Guild

The Ballet Austin Guild is a volunteer organization whose mission is to work together to support and promote the interests of Ballet Austin in Greater Austin and surrounding communities through educational programs, fundraising and special events. The Guild's largest fundraiser of the year is Women On Their Toes.

About Ballet Austin

As distinctive and dynamic as the city it calls home, Ballet Austin welcomes audiences near and far to participate in its "classically innovative" vision for the democratization of dance. With a rich history spanning five decades, acclaimed productions, and one of the nation's largest classical ballet academies, the organization is poised for an even

greater future. From their home at the Butler Dance Education Center and Community School in downtown Austin, Ballet Austin and artistic director Stephen Mills actively engage the community, dancers, and audiences alike. The New York Times proclaims Ballet Austin “a company with big ambitions” originating work that is “absorbing.”

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