



IDTA

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IDTA Honorary Member Ken Dodd was knighted in the 2017 New Years honours list, see editorial in this issue.

dementia and dance

A few years ago I was inspired by an American lady, Hazel Minnick, who is suffering from dementia and who uses Ballroom dance to help her get through this terrible disease. Since getting to know Hazel she has become an author "Living in My Shadow - My Journey with Alzheimer's" - Alzheimer's Awareness and "Unlikely Dancer."

At this time when so many people are suffering from this disease, I wanted to let dance teachers know how important they can be in the fight against it. How their school can get involved, our pupils have dance to raise money for the disease, and we have started a Tea Dance for Older Persons focusing on dementia and our staff have attended courses through the local council for training to work with people with Dementia. We have all found it very rewarding and it reminds us why we started dancing in the first place.

I was honoured earlier this year to be asked by Hazel Minnick to contribute to one of her books;

"As a Ballroom dancer, I find that when I am stressed or mentally tired I just need to get onto the floor and start dancing and I feel so much better, I'm sure we have all had friends that say "dancing, lets them forget their worries" well it certainly does for me.

As a disabled dancer "I'm profoundly deaf" the act of movement is more important than the sound and rhythms but they play apart. Sometimes I dance with, and sometimes without my aids, as the mood takes me. Over the year I have worked with many disabled dancers from, deaf, blind to those with dementia and I find dance is a great leveller, something we can all enjoy in our own way.

Recently I was at a Dementia Awareness day at the Tower Ballroom Blackpool, I had been asked to dance with some of the visitors, it was wonderful to see the way the music and steps brought back memories and how people of all abilities were able to join in, in their own way.



Through the school, I help run we visit nursing homes and run dancers mixing old familiar rhythms and song to provoke memories with new exciting rhythms to engage the mind. I think most people know that dancing offers a great workout and many health benefits, it works, all major muscle groups and requires coordination, flexibility and strength; but we often forget that it is an act of methodically repeating of what you just saw or you've committed it to memory which is good for the brain and that it is an enjoyment a release personal expression, and for many an act of pure joy.

I hope that it inspires schools to get involved as dance really can help a person suffering from Dementia.

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