

USA DANCE NATIONAL AWARDS

Every year, USA Dance recognizes the exceptional achievements and progress of its chapters and volunteers. District Directors are asked to submit nominations from their regions for Chapter and Volunteer of the Year. USA Dance Social Dance Council has awarded USA Dance Chapter of the Year to Southwest Florida Chapter 6049/District 9 and Volunteer of the Year to Dorit Tomandl, Heartland (IN) Chapter 2022.

Volunteer of the Year 2016/17 Dorit Tomandl

Tribute by Anna Kovalyova, Heartland IN Chapter #2022

Dorit Tomandl joined the Heartland Chapter board in the capacity of Volunteer Coordinator at the beginning of 2016. Prior to joining the Board, Dorit has been and remains an invaluable Chapter volunteer who helps with the sales of raffle tickets at Heartland parties, and takes part in numerous Heartland community exhibitions.

Dorit quickly became a constant presence at the Heartland's exhibitions and special events, and she is in charge of a host of preparations necessary to support each special event. Dorit is full of ideas and is very enthusiastic about her volunteerism. Ever since she has assumed the role of Volunteer Coordinator, Dorit has brought her boundless energy and her "will do" attitude to Heartland's programs.

She quickly connected with Heartland's dance performers and became responsible for putting together dance programs at various venues, including exhibitions at social groups, retirement centers, nursing homes, hospitals, indoor and outdoor venues, shopping malls and others.

Dorit gained tremendous respect among Heartland dancers, as she is very mindful of people's time, is eager to support them with a quick smile, and is generous in her praises of their efforts. Most of Heartland's exhibitions have an educational component, where we dance with the members of the audience and/or have a dance lesson during the event. Dorit loves teaching others, and gladly takes the role of coordinator and instructor when the opportunity arises to teach the dance steps to the general public.

Dorit is very new to the world of ballroom. She began taking ballroom dance lessons about two years ago. As her circle of dance friends increased, she quickly discovered other local dance venues, and eagerly joined the Heartland Chapter.



CHAPTER OF THE YEAR 2016/17: SOUTHWEST FLORIDA #6049

District 9 Chapter Formed: 1995 **Members:** 246

Annual Activities: Dances/Class 24, Special Events 7, Beginner Lessons 2X Week, Intermediate Lessons 1X Week

Special Events: Black-tie Holiday Ball, co-hosted with Naples Chapter at Naples Country Club; Military Museum Ball in Cape Coral; Special Populations Celebration at Kennedy Senior Center, Cape Coral; Membership Appreciation Dance; Riverside Community Center, Fort Myers; Olympics Celebration, Cape Coral; National Ballroom Dance Week - "Festival of Dance," Edison Mall, Fort Myers.

By Don Davenport, Chapter President

During the 2015 USA Dance 50th Anniversary Celebration held in Fort Myers, it was resolved that a re-energizing of the Chapter was needed to keep the chapter from slipping into the doldrums.

After the election of the 2016-2017 Board of Directors, a concept of vision, priorities and goals was introduced to take the chapter forward and grow its slowly diminishing membership. A “back to basics” approach was followed, reviewing the USA Dance documents library to adapt proven procedures to the chapter operation.



Randy Finley, Wayne Manning, Amy Maneval, Robin Deo, Mary Bonnette, Carol Davis and Don Davenport

The large geographic area covered by the chapter was organized into “Satellite Locations” to increase the span of control of the chapter and bring more opportunities to outlying areas not served.... Attendance flourished and membership grew and subsequently a weekly beginner/intermediate lesson program....

This method of taking dance into the underserved areas of our surrounding communities rather than expecting dancers to find us, has worked well, from December 2015 to present 2017 membership has increased from 166 to 246 (67%) making the Southwest Florida Chapter the largest (membership wise) of the 19 chapters in the State of Florida.

To elaborate on the other programs such as the Special Populations weekly lesson program in Cape Coral, our partnership with the Cotillion Chapter in Southwest Florida or our expanded Dance Education program, each would be another story!

Needless to say, we are proud to receive the USA Dance “Chapter of the Year” Award.