

Swing Dancing *and* Your Health



THE MAD ACADEMY

Debbie Ramsey, Dr. Fera's gifted guide to fun and better health through dancing, is the long-time co-director of Mad About Dance Academy in Raleigh, with her husband, Wesley Boz.

Both have a long list of awards and achievements in the world of dance, and their Academy was voted *Best in the Triangle* in 2009 and 2011.

Debbie Ramsey has studied and worked with some of the most gifted choreographers and performers in Hollywood, both as an actress and dancer, and has been featured in many films and television shows. Her partners and students have included Donald Sutherland, Brendon Frasier, Sylvester Stallone and Dolly Parton.

She has choreographed for dance teams, competitors, Vegas acts, commercials and film, and has extensive film and television dance credits. She is a three-time winner of the Feather Award for "Top Female Teacher in The United States," and has twice been recognized for her impact and support of the Swing Dance Communities across the Nation. Ms. Ramsey is a three-time inductee into the California Swing Dance Hall of Fame.

Wesley Boz has been teaching dance full-time for 16 years, and produces the longest running weekly swing dance in the Triangle on Sunday nights at the Elks Lodge in Raleigh. He, too, has many television, movie, and dance credits.

If you want to experience the fun and health benefits of bringing dance into your life, you will find creative guidance with a visit to the MAD (Mad About Dance) Academy on the web at: www.musicanddance.com, or call for more information: (919) 494-2300.

Dr. Fera with his swing dance partner, Debbie Ramsey.



“I find time to continue my swing dance lessons. It’s a fun aerobic activity that is proven to be highly effective in maintaining cognitive functioning as we age.”

Dr. Dennis Fera freely admits he was living on borrowed money when he opened his holistic medical practice in Hillsborough more than a decade ago.

“It was an exceptionally stressful period, and I was consumed by work and worry,” he recalls. “I went off to a conference, and two Chinese medical doctors were doing quick tongue and nail diagnoses upon request, independently of one another. Always interested in new ideas, I did their quick little exams, and they both said the same thing: ‘Your heart is stressed! You need a vacation!’

“I took that advice to heart.”

Choices we make sometimes set us on paths with amazing outcomes, he observes. “A former staff person in my office was wild about dancing, and was always encouraging me to take lessons and get involved. And in fact, I love music. I played string bass and bass guitar in a jazz band in high school and college. So I thought I might step out from my somewhat quiet, introverted lifestyle and actually give dancing a chance.

“My office worker urged me to contact Debbie Ramsey, who she described as ‘an unbelievably good dancer and teacher.’ So I did that; I signed up for swing dance lessons, and 10 years later, I’m still dancing and I still love it.” (*for more about Debbie Ramsey, see box*)

In fact, with Debbie Ramsey as his partner, Dr. Fera has gone on to do a limited amount of successful competitive swing dancing.

DANCE FOR HEALTH

Dancing is not only fun, it’s also good for your health, notes Dr. Fera—especially as we age.

“The *New England Journal of Medicine* reported on a 21-year study of senior citizens—led by the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York City—to determine if any physical or cognitive recreational activities influence mental acuity. Some activities had a significant beneficial effect—most notably dancing—and some, such as golf, bicycling, and swimming, had none.

“One of the surprises of the study was that almost none of the physical activities appeared to offer any protection against dementia—and the focus of this study was mental acuity. Frequent dancing was the one notable exception. Reading offered a 35 percent reduced risk of dementia, bicycling, swimming, and golf, zero percent protection, and

frequent dancing, 76 percent, the greatest risk reduction of any activity studied, both cognitive or physical.

“There have been other studies that clearly show that we increase our mental capacity by exercising our cognitive processes. It’s an age-old formula—intelligence: use it or lose it.

“The essence of intelligence is making decisions, and we keep that ability sharp by engaging in activities which require split-second rapid-fire decision making—such as swing dancing! Dancing integrates several brain functions at once, and it involves kinesthetic, perceptual, rational, musical, and emotional processes. It was Jean Piaget who said that intelligence is what we use when we don’t already know what to do! And that’s what precise, involved, ‘lead and follow communication’ swing dancing is all about!”

HEALING POWER OF DANCE

Debbie Ramsey, Dr. Fera’s instructor, has been a master teacher for more than 30 years, and time and again she has witnessed the healing power of dance.

“I’m reminded, for example, of a man who was in a terrible automobile accident. At one point he was told he might never walk again. But he made good progress in physical therapy, and his life really changed when he started taking dance lessons. He began working different muscle groups, first the right side, then the left side, and within months he made amazing strides both as a walker and a dancer! I’ve seen people who are visually or hearing impaired benefit from dancing. I had a girl on my dance team who was totally deaf, but she felt the dance rhythms through her partner and she went on to become a championship dancer.

“Dancing offers a multi-generational social activity that is difficult to find today. People literally of all ages come together and share this wonderful common interest. Parents and their teenagers are often at the same dance, having a wonderful time and learning new skills.”

EXERCISE AND HEALTH

Notes Dr. Fera, “I practice holistic medicine, and offer a variety of therapies including detoxification and nutritional therapies, optimizing biochemistry, adjusting hormone levels, and a good deal more.

“We also have a Power Plate in our practice, offering our patients highly effective vibrational resistance exercise. It’s true that in our fast-paced, often frenetic modern society, we often neglect the importance of simple movement and exercise.

“As we age, we tend to lose muscle mass and gain more fat. To counter that, it’s essential to have a regular aerobic and resistance training exercise program. Resistance exercise is especially important to maintain muscle mass. The more muscle mass you have, the less likely that you will gain adipose (fatty) tissue in your body.

“I’m a very busy person, and I don’t have an inordinate amount of time to spend exercising. It’s a discipline for me to exercise, and the reality is, I have other things to do than go to the gym. There’s always work waiting to be done.

“But I know that the vehicle that I’m operating in this life, that is my human body, can’t be exchanged for a new one. If I don’t maintain this vehicle I’m not going to accomplish much of what I need and want to do. So I have figured out the minimal amount of exercise I need to maintain myself at a significantly healthy level.

“It’s not unlike maintaining my car. My car doesn’t break down, it runs well, and it’s very reliable. I follow the maintenance schedule, replace all worn parts as needed, and that’s about all the energy I’m going to put into my car. I’m not planning to race at Daytona.

“I’m not planning to become a competitive weight-lifter or body builder with my body, either. I’ve found that if I do three to four hours of resistance training each week, and aerobic exercise like fast walking and swing dancing a few times a week, I’m maintaining my body at a healthy level. Because of what I do and what I care about, I have a special interest in maintaining cognitive functioning. And that is an important reason why, in my busy life, I find time to continue my swing dance lessons and attend social dancing events. It’s a fun aerobic activity, and it’s also proven to be highly effective in maintaining cognitive functioning as we age.” *h&h*

For more information about the practice, contact:

DENNIS W. FERA, MD

HOLISTIC HEALTH & MEDICINE

1000 Corporate Drive, Suite 209, Hillsborough, NC 27278

Telephone: (919) 732-2287

info@holistic-health-med.com www.holistic-health-med.com

MANY PATHS TO HEALING

Dr. Fera offers his patients a range of “non-traditional” therapies to help overcome toxic burdens, relieve pain, and achieve organic balance and robust good health. His therapeutic approaches include:

➔ **CHELATION THERAPY.** A safe, effective IV detoxification process that is also increasingly used to restore the blood flow in victims of arteriosclerosis without surgery. Often used to remove concentrations of mercury, lead, and other toxic metals from the body.

➔ **OXIDATION THERAPY.** Another IV procedure that rapidly relieves allergic reactions, influenza symptoms, and acute viral infections. Tumor cells, bacteria, and other unwanted foreign elements in the blood can usually be destroyed with hydrogen peroxide treatment.

➔ **ULTRAVIOLET LIGHT THERAPY.** A procedure called “photoluminescence,” is beneficial in the treatment and cure of an extremely broad range of ailments, from colds and flu to kidney diseases, osteoporosis pain, tinnitus, certain dermatological problems, and many others.

➔ **PROLOTHERAPY.** Used for treatment of painful joints (back, neck, shoulders, knees, etc.). An injection procedure that is often beneficial, particularly when other treatments don’t work and X-ray findings are negative.

➔ **NEURAL THERAPY.** Scars and other traumas to the body can cause areas of disturbed energy flow known as “interference fields.” Neural therapy eliminates the interference field, restoring normal energy flow and balance to the nervous system.

➔ **NATURAL HORMONE THERAPY.** Used to address a wide range of problems including fatigue, weak bones, frequent joint injury or chronic pain, weakened immunity, thyroid problems, unsatisfying sleep, and skin problems.

➔ **NUTRITIONAL MEDICINE,** including IV therapies and a strong emphasis on nutritional balance and proper use of vitamins and supplements.

➔ **STOMACH AND INTESTINAL SCREENING AND TREATMENTS.** Used to discover the presence of pathogens such as bacteria, fungi, yeast, and various parasites, and to overcome digestive related problems, GI irritation, and inflammation.

➔ **MERIDIAN STRESS ASSESSMENT TESTING** to evaluate imbalances in glands and organ systems, and help the body achieve optimal balance.

➔ **THERMOGRAPHIC INFRARED IMAGING,** a non-contact, non-invasive procedure to visualize the body’s physiologic response to pain and disease states.