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## Drawing Memories - Put on your dancing shoes

### ADVERTISING FEATURE

Everybody knows getting out on the dance floor for a bit of a jig to your favourite music can get those feel good juices flowing.

Increasingly research is providing the scientific evidence of the positive effects dancing can have on our emotional and physical wellbeing, particularly as we age.

At the SummitCare Wallsend residential aged care home the wide-ranging benefits dancing offers are being harnessed to improve the lives of elderly people, as well as those suffering from conditions like dementia and Parkinson's Disease.

"Not only is dancing a lot of fun to be involved in, it's really good for your health," said Jessica Conneely, a Newcastle-based dancer and teacher who is taking the benefits of dance to the home's residents.

"Dance is unique because it uses and strengthens your emotions, cognitive skills, physical abilities and social connections - it's a mind and body workout.

"It ticks all the boxes - it combines exercise, music, maybe some singing - and is being recognised as one of the best activities that can engage the brain and the body in so many ways."

Ms Conneely is the founder of Dance4Wellbeing. She specialises in carefully-designed dance and movement programs for adults and mature-aged people.

They are programs being embraced by the residents of SummitCare's residential aged care homes in Wallsend and the Sydney metro region.

General Manager of SummitCare Wallsend, Robyn Blackwell, noticed the immediate benefits just by observing the sessions. Some of the SummitCare Leadership teams have also joined a session and agreed it was quite a work out and lots of fun.

"Dancing is such a fantastic thing in so many ways," Ms Blackwell said. "It's great for the brain, for your breathing, your core body strength, coordination, your balance.

"And with dance there is music and that stimulates another whole area of the brain. There's lots of research about how powerful that is as well. It's also just really good fun for residents."

For the older generation, dancing was an especially powerful way of tapping into "historical joy", Ms Blackwell said.

"More so than for any generation, they come from a time when dance was something that was really celebrated; it was a special thing that everyone enjoyed. Men and women would go out to the Friday night dances.



Let's dance: Jessica Conneely helps SummitCare's residents benefit from dancing.



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"It's pretty powerful, potent and poignant tapping into that historical joy. All of those very important recall and reminiscing properties mean the motivation is much greater and the outcomes enormously beneficial.

"As with all things that are enjoyable you don't even realise what great things you are doing for your body.

"I would just love anybody who would like to try it to come and have a look"