

TAHYA Feb. 2008 Distinguished Service Award Acceptance Speech:



First, permit me to say I'm happy to be living in a community that supports dance the way we do here in the Lehigh Valley! How many other communities can boast such a strong consortium of dance presenters and dance instructors ~ not to mention our audiences for dance!

I cannot extend enough thanks to those of you who nominated and voted for me to receive this award, which I share with all of the women and men who have inspired me along the way!

My husband, for his encouragement to follow my passion; my dance guru, Mimi Janislowski, master of classical dances from throughout the world, from Russian ballet to Balinese temple dance; Grant Smith for literally accompanying me, quite brilliantly, as we traverse the poems of Rumi and Hafiz and... all my class participants.

My mission is to educate and elevate awareness of world dance not to mention its early influences on American Modern Dance. My interactions with women of all ages here in the Lehigh Valley have contributed to what I can only describe as an evolving philosophy of beauty....

Because... it is beautiful to witness a young girl scout delicately rotating her wrists for the first time, hinting at the woman soon to bloom...

It is beautiful to see a cancer survivor gently lift a veil so that her spirit once again floats like a butterfly...

And it is beautiful to watch women transcend the life's daily challenges connecting with one another and our common heritage through the circular patterns of Middle and Far Eastern dance traditions.

And to me, there is nothing more beautiful than rediscovering & igniting the creative essence within.

Thirty years ago, when I first heard the intoxicating melodies and hypnotic rhythms of Middle Eastern music, I was swept away on a magic carpet ride. Who knew then that my life-long pursuit and independent study of dances from foreign cultures would lead to my affecting others, a career of performing, teaching and.... now, receiving this award!

THANK YOU with all my heart!