

Cause/Dancing to Live

BY SAMANTHA WULFF

So often, we hear about another fundraiser, another benefit, another cause. But we may not know the real-life incident that inspired the effort to raise money. Making that human connection adds another dimension. Here's the story behind Dancing to Live, a ballet-themed benefit taking place on May 22.

It's a cold winter's day when Clare Poth welcomes me inside her home. She leads me through a hallway into the kitchen and asks what type of tea I like. She fills a kettle, sets it on the stove, and walks back to the table to take a seat, all the while talking about her brother's love for dance, especially Neglia Ballet. "All his life, Paul was an avid supporter of Neglia," she says.

Neglia Ballet was formed in 1994 by

Heidi Halt and Sergio Neglia. The group is composed of artists dedicated to enriching dance culture and providing classical training to students in Western New York. Dancing to Live will serve as the premiere of their fifteenth anniversary mixed repertoire performance.

Poth continues with her story, explaining how her brother danced



during his time at Nichols School and continued to stay engaged in the art after graduation. From time to time, though, her storyline becomes interrupted by what appear to be moments of reflection, entangled with a deep longing for something that has been gone for far too long. "The nice thing about working with dance as an art form is that it's so alive," she says.

Paul Poth was diagnosed with cholangiocarcinoma at the age of thirty-seven. This rare form of cancer, also known as bile duct cancer, produces a relatively small number of cases nationwide—between 2,000 and 3,000 each year, according to the American Cancer Society. The rarity of the disease, coupled with the fact that world's top oncologists know little about how to cure it,

From top to bottom: Paul Poth and Kristen Palma Poth, views of Paul Poth as a young dancer, and Jim Palma onstage at the 2013 TargetCancer gala.

