

Grease is the word for Dancing with the Easter Seals Stars



Grease is the word that's groove, that's got meaning ? and it has extra special meaning for the community leaders who have decided to lace up their dancing shoes this year on behalf of kids who can't at this year's Dancing with the Easter Seals Stars Aurora Newmarket.

Dancing with the Easter Seals Stars, the popular annual fundraiser that regularly raises close to \$100,000 each year to help send children with mobility challenges to summer camp, is set to return to the Royal Venetian Mansion on Thursday, October 6.

Now training under the expertise of Artistica Ballroom Dance Studios, ready to hit the dance floor on the big day are coach and advocate Viv Agretsi, Aurora Minor Hockey's Joe Bentolila, business owner and TV host Kasie Colbeck, realtor and business owner Wasim Jarrah, realtor Julien Laurion, restaurateur Jennifer McLachlan, Christine Seidman of Upper Canada Mall, and Aurora Historical Society president Patricia Wallace.

?When I was asked to be a part of this event, I thought it was a great opportunity to help promote awareness for kids who need special equipment just to be kids, the answer for those kids who can't,? says Wallace. ?I happen to have a great nephew who is born with Angelman's Syndrome; he's two and already has a little walker and will need [mobility aids] for the rest of his life. When I think about him and other kids who wouldn't otherwise be able to go to camp or wouldn't be able to do the activities of daily living without the struggles that other people don't have, it makes me want to support Easter Seals as much as I can, and this is a fun way to do it!?

The same views were shared by Laurion who says when he was first asked to take part in Dancing with the Easter Seals Stars, he thought the email asking him to dance was a joke.

?When I looked into it, I thought it was a really worthy cause and I love helping people and will do what I can to give back to my community and give back where I can. When I saw the great work they did, it was a no-brainer. And it's just about fun. Life's too serious these days and I think if we can find a way to make people laugh, clap, and put some smiles on faces, that's it. I'm going into this wholeheartedly knowing I might look like a fool, but if it makes people smile and it makes people have a good time, it was all worth it.?

This year's celebs are not, of course, professional dancers and helping them find their fancy footwork and fun on the dancefloor are Artistica owners Patrick Derry, Kelly Stacey, and Anastasia Trutneva.

It feels ?awesome? to be back for the event and Stacey says having a theme this year of Grease, the iconic 1978 musical starring John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John, is the icing on the cake.

?It has been a joy to choreograph to something that I grew up watching and made such an impact on me as a kid,? she says. ?Now those songs play over and over and they have a different meaning now that you're doing this for the event.?

?We've added a lot of theatre performance into this, which I think made people a lot more comfortable because they can get into the song, the movie, the acting portions of it and not worry too much about the technical elements of the dance, which, I think is really good because nobody knows what they're supposed to be doing otherwise!? laughs Trutneva.

In addition to a theme, new this year will be a group dance with the Easter Seals ambassadors, which will serve as the event's opening number.

?It really sets the bar for the way the night is going to go and these kids are so beyond thrilled to be doing this,? says Stacey. ?We're doing a very high-energy number with all the stars, too. There's a lot of people all on the floor at once.?

Adds Derry: ?I feel like a big part of what we strive for every day in the studio is being able to bring out the best in people that walk through here, no matter what their ability level is. We get people who come in here every day who vary from barely being able to balance on their feet to being already elite-level dancers. This is just another layer for us seeing their skills, their special abilities, and how we can help highlight those things and bring them out.

?At the end of the day, we have some abilities and some things we're less able to do and it is just a matter of finding those things in the kids and helping to bring them out.?

That, in the end, is what this evening is all about, and integral in helping bring that out of kids is what the Easter Seals camps are all about as well.

?Easter Seals does a great job in introducing the kids to us,? says Seidman. ?It's really great to have the opportunity to connect with these kids and see how amazing and happy they are for the support Easter Seals has given them over the years. We're raising money, dancing and doing all these things because they can't and it's so much fun and such a great event. But, at the end of it, it is all for such an amazing cause and purpose ? and it is bringing the community together as well.?

For more on Dancing with the Easter Seals Stars Aurora Newmarket 2022, the cause, the stars, the dance instructors, and, of course, tickets and how to support the individual contestants, visit eastersealsdancing.org/newmarket.

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