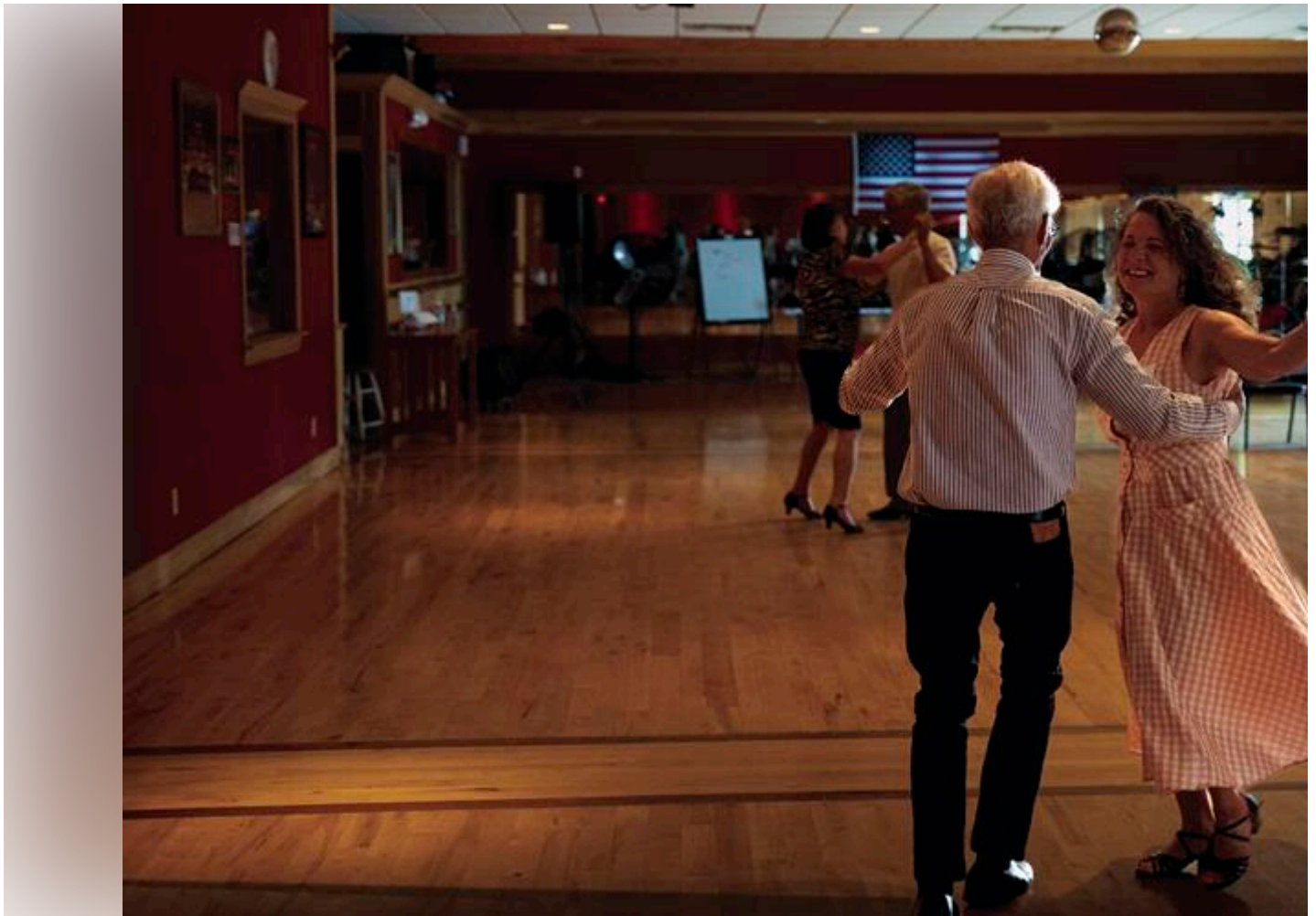


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# ERS: Dancing to Remember

Written by Mike Rutledge | Photography provided by ERS  
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Several couples recently participated in a dance program for people with dementia and savored the lessons with loved ones. “We did the rumba and the hustle, and we did the waltz,” says one participant, who took the lessons with her beau of 26 years. “I loved it. I loved it.”

The free program, “Dancing to Remember,” returns for six Thursdays from Oct. 27 through Dec. 8 (skipping Thanksgiving). After the final program, the Cincinnati Opera will perform an aria and a dynamic selection of holiday songs for participants.

### **Relaxing Fun, Pleasant Reminiscing**

“Dancing to Remember” lets people with memory issues and their caregivers enjoy dancing, easing the stress of their everyday lives, explains Shannon Braun, director of Episcopal Retirement Services’ Center for Memory Support and Inclusion. People with dementia and their caregivers can learn together. Lessons are fun and easygoing, and all dancing levels are welcome.

The program is sponsored by ERS in partnership with the Giving Voice Foundation and A-Marika Dance Company in Sharonville.

### **Dancing Queens and Kings**

The waltz was the favorite dance for one couple because “it’s more romantic,” the woman says, the dancing made their relationship more fun. “Even though we’ve been dating for 26 years, it did bring us closer,” she adds. “I grew up in the ’60s, so I’ve been dancing my whole life. But he did very little of it.”

Vivian Leavell enjoyed dancing on different days with her twin sons, Pierre Leavell and the Rev. Pierce Leavell. “It was good exercise for me,” she says. “I enjoyed it very much. Growing up, I enjoyed dancing. It’s still fun; I love it.”

When her sons were children, they all would dance while cleaning the house.

“We’ve always enjoyed putting some music on,” Pierre Leavell says.

“And twirlin’ around a little while,” his mom adds.

### **Next Steps?**

Being a care partner for someone living with dementia can be challenging and, at times, overwhelming, says Braun. When caring for others, spending time out and recharging is crucial. Programs like “Dancing to Remember” offer the care partner and the person living with dementia a change of pace and some much-needed stress relief.

If you have a loved one who is struggling, ERS created “A Guide to Better Understand Dementia” that has answers for the most frequently asked questions at [erslife.info/dementiaguide](http://erslife.info/dementiaguide).

If it is time to consider a residential placement, a dignified memory care household at Marjorie P. Lee may be an option. The specially trained staff provide engaging individual and group memory therapies.

ERS’ premier communities include the Marjorie P. Lee Retirement Community and Deupree House, both in Hyde Park. At those campuses, ERS promises residents that they will never be asked to leave due to financial hardship as part of its not-for-profit, person-centered care mission. Care for elders who outlive their resources is subsidized by generous community donations to ERS’ Good Samaritan Mission Fund.

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*Care to dance? “Dancing to Remember” happens at A-Marika Dance Company, 10831 Sharondale Rd., Cincinnati, Ohio 45241. To register, contact Shannon Braun at [sbraun@erslife.org](mailto:sbraun@erslife.org) or call 513-979-2302.*