

Helping Hearts Dance

Seniors take the stage in dance recital.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

Helping Hearts Dance with Seniors, an 8-week movement program, culminated with a dance recital performance Nov. 21, 2024, at the Nannie J. Lee Recreation Center.

A component of Helping Hearts Through the Arts, Helping Hearts Dance volunteer dancers work with seniors, who learn dance movements while seated in chairs.

“Helping Hearts Dance has been working with seniors with Alexandria Day Services,” said volunteer Rachel Goldberg. “We’ve been doing a seated dance program for two months and will open our show with the dance the seniors have prepared.”

Founded in 2013, the mission of Helping Hearts Through the Arts is to inspire life-long movement and foster a love of the arts through dance programs, live musical performances, and movement activities. Performances are geared toward reaching senior communities throughout the Washington, D.C., Metropolitan area.

The City of Alexandria awarded a Fiscal Year 2025 grant to support HHA’s Helping Hearts Dance with Seniors project with the Alexandria Adult Day Services.

The dancers, aged 40 to over 75, demonstrate that high-quality dance performance is possible at all ages. Performances include a variety of styles of dance including tap, musical theater, modern, ballet and contemporary dance.

“A big thank you goes to the City of Alexandria for the program grant,” said Helping Hearts Dance founder Sue Skadden. “We are thrilled to be here.”

For more information on Helping Hearts Through the Arts, visit www.helpingheartsthroughthearts.com.



PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

Led by their instructor, seniors perform a chair dance recital with Helping Hearts Dance Nov. 21, 2024, at the Nannie J. Lee Recreation Center.



Volunteer dancers with Helping Hearts Dance perform Nov. 21, 2024, at the Nannie J. Lee Recreation Center.



Seniors perform a chair dance recital as part of the performance by Helping Hearts Dance Nov. 21, 2024, at the Nannie J. Lee Recreation Center.

End of an Era



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Sitting at my desk at home with my golden retriever Burton lying at my feet, unwrapping Christmas-colors-wrapped milk Chocolate Hershey’s Kisses, I feel compelled to make an admission (not that any of you should care): I don’t like Mars M&Ms anymore. And considering I’ve been eating them my entire life, Mars is losing one of their best customers.

To put this loss in some context, though it’s impossible to quantify; let’s just say for the sake of this column, I’ve consumed over a million M&Ms. Almost exclusively the plain M&Ms until the “peanut butter (orange bag) came along. Peanut M&Ms despite their lofty position atop various “most eaten candies” lists never appealed to me. Neither did any of the newer varieties which have appeared on the shelves over the last decade or two except the mint M&Ms. Whenever I see that green bag, I’m buyin’. Delicious but hard to find for some reason. To summarize then the percentages eaten over the years: 97% plain, 2.5% peanut butter, .5% mint. (As the peanut butter and mint flavors are somewhat new creations, comparatively speaking, their newness is reflected in these percentages.)

As to the reason for this rather drastic change in my candy consumption, I can’t really remember the “Oh no”-moment when I took a handful, which had not melted in my hand, and tossed them into my mouth where they indeed melted (after I had crunched them all down to more eatable size). Nevertheless, me and my tastebuds have come to the same conclusion: our love affair with M&Ms was over. Though I finished whatever bag I had started, we parted as friends. Never again will I eat M&Ms unless there are extenuating circumstances (“extenuations” you might call them) as in the M&Ms are in plain sight, within arm’s length and relatively unguarded. But my days as an intentional buyer are over.

I’ve had a similar falling out, though not nearly as definitive/life changing, with 3 Musketeers and Milky Way bars. For years, make that decades/half centuries even, these two bars were my go-to preferences (along with the M&Ms); now they’re merely memories of a recent past. Unlike my M&M stoppage for which I had no specific event, I do indeed have one sort of, for the end of my similar love affair for 3 Musketeers/Milky Way bars. It was Halloween a few years back. Naturally, I had prepared a bowl of snack-size candies for the year’s lucky participants: 3 Musketeers, Milky Way and Snickers. But few trick-or-treaters showed that year, so I was left with an ample-sized bowl brimming with chocolate goodies. And needless to say, or I wouldn’t be writing this column, I overwhelmed their defenses and over the next few days (not weeks), rapidly (not slowly) and surely, I emptied that bowl. By week’s end, the bowl was a shell of its former holiday self. I wouldn’t say I was proud of myself, but other than my brother who could have accomplished what I did? (This was a rhetorical question. Those that know me, know the answer: no one.) To invoke curly Howard of The Three Stooges: “I seen my duty and I done it.” However, my overeating had a consequence that overindulging often has: swearing off of the presumptive cause. For me, it was most definitely the 3 Musketeers and Milky Way snack/fun size bars originally meant for the neighborhood kids. In lieu thereof, I picked up the slack and haven’t had a 3 Musketeers or Milky Way bar since. Added to the M&M loss, Mars must be feeling the pinch. One that a smaller company might not have survived.

Kenny Lourie is an Advertising Representative for The Potomac Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.