

# CDA STAFF



Sarah Pieper  
**Artistic Director**

Sarah has had the joy of serving as Artistic Director of CDA for the past 11 years. She began her dance training at Celebrate in its debut year in 2001 and has continued dancing ever since. Sarah holds a B.A. in Dance from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point as well as her Pilates Mat training through Balanced Body. Sarah has performed professionally for over 12 years, and currently performs with Concerto Dance by Jolene Konkel and Vivid Artistry Dance Co. Past credits include Artistry Theatre, Eclectic Edge Ensemble, and Alternative Motion Project. Sarah serves as adjunct faculty and choreographs the musicals at the University of Northwestern. She seeks to use art as a way to create space for the Holy Spirit to bring about hope and healing. Globally, this has led Sarah to perform and teach dance in missions in Mexico, Costa Rica, India, and China.

Beyond CDA, Sarah's choreography has been performed at Crown College, North Central University, and the University of Northwestern St. Paul, YWAM school of dance, and a variety of high schools throughout MN. Sarah leads the Level Dancers programming, the Conservatory Track, and Mosaics Dance Co. She is continually inspired by the wonder of her 3 year old son, the beauty of the outdoors, and a good cup of coffee. Sarah is grateful to embody joy through dance and for the opportunity to share that gift at CDA!



Mary Smith  
**Managing Director**

Involved with Celebrate since its inaugural year in 2001, Mary is overjoyed to continue bringing instruction and discipleship to Celebrate dancers. With nearly 20 years of experience teaching dance, Mary believes that a love for movement and dance can be fostered at any age and works to make CDA accessible to everyone -regardless of ability level or background. Mary is especially passionate about our youngest dancers and absolutely loves introducing children to the joy of dancing! In addition to teaching many of CDA's children's classes, Mary also oversees the curriculum and instruction of non-level classes and leads the Teaching Assistant program.



Rachel Bonkougou  
**Instructor**

Rachel, a native Minnesotan holds a B.A. in Dance from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. She has performed with multiple dance companies including Bakersfield City Ballet, Eclectic Edge Ensemble, Rhythmically Speaking, Concerto Dance by Jolene Konkel as well as having produced four of her own evening length works. A ballerina turned jazz and modern dancer, she has also had the privilege of teaching dance to all ages and genres for the past 15 years and was the Artistic Director of Waconia Center for Dance Arts in Waconia for six years. Outside of dance, she has a growing family, a growing garden and a growing love of other creative projects including both videography and textile creations. She recently received her 200 hour yoga teacher certification and holds a level 1 certification in the Progressing Ballet Technique.



Carrie Josephson  
**Financial Manager**

Carrie has been working in the office since 2011 and brings so much to this studio with her detailed administration and serving heart! Her journey at Celebrate goes back to 2004 when her daughter began dancing. Her daughter danced at Celebrate from kindergarten all the way through high school graduation. Carrie holds a Bachelor's in Psychology from Bethel University and has served as an office administrator for many years. When Carrie is not busy keeping the office on track, she enjoys meeting up with her daughter or reading.

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Siri Drontle  
**Instructor**



Siri began her ballet training at age thirteen at Saint Anthony Park School of Dance. She received training in the Russian method of ballet, as well as jazz, character, and sacred dance under teachers including Wilor Bluege and Gabriela Komleva. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Biblical Studies from the Lutheran Bible Institute of Seattle, and a Master's of Education from the University of Minnesota Twin Cities. Siri has performed with Saint Anthony Sacred Dance, Saint Paul City Ballet, Continental Ballet, and Omaha Dance Project. In 2001 Siri taught and performed with Christian Outreach International's Performing Arts School in Czech Republic and England. In 2016 and 2021 she attended the Creative Dance Center's Summer Institute for teachers studying brain-compatible dance education and creative dance for all ages. Siri has taught the joy of dance to toddlers through adults since 1995, with an emphasis on preschool teaching and beginning levels. Siri is the lead teacher for Fusion Dance Academy. She lives in Saint Paul with her husband and daughter. Siri is excited to be teaching ballet classes at Celebrate Dance Academy.

Mallory Dykema  
**Instructor**



Mallory began her training in ballet, jazz, and modern at the Performing Arts Center in Waconia, MN. She went on to receive a BFA in Dance from the University of Minnesota where she performed notable works by modern pioneers. Mallory has choreographed musicals and taught dance classes at North Central University. At Prairie School of Dance in Eden Prairie, she taught sacred dance and created an evening length show for the students based on Psalm 139. Pursuing her first love of the stage, she has performed with various modern and jazz choreographers and was a member of the local theatrical jazz company, Eclectic Edge Ensemble, for over 10 years. Other fun facts about Mallory include: she dabbles in makeup artistry, enjoys interior design, homeschools her four children and has been married to Traivis for nearly 15 years. Mallory loves storytelling through music and dance and is excited to tell some stories with the lovely CDA dancers this year!

Jessie Gale  
**Instructor**



Jessie started dancing at 11 years old through Celebrate. She has participated in ballet, pointe, modern, jazz, contemporary, and musical theater. She has danced in the Mosaics Company for the past few years, and loves being on stage. This will be her first official year of teaching, but she has been a teaching assistant for the past 5 years. She is currently attending the University of Northwestern, and plans to graduate with her bachelor's degree in 2025. Her goal is to go into event planning and eventually run a business. Teaching dance has always inspired Jessie to invest in younger dancers and help them grow! Being a part of Celebrate for so long has helped her gain deep relationships and she is excited to continue in this. Ballet has always been especially important to Jessie since it was her first style, and the technique influenced how she danced in every other class.

Lindsey Jacobson  
**Instructor**



Lindsey has been dancing since the age of 6 and on into her college years from California to Minnesota and back! (Most recently in the kitchen with her kiddos). With decades of experience teaching children, she's excited to do so with her dancing shoes ON!! Lindsey is humbled and excited for this opportunity to join the Celebrate family, and cannot wait to show God's creativity through dancing and grow together!! Outside of the studio Lindsey enjoys crafting and all things handmade, painting and photography, fruits of the spirit, homeschooling her crazy crew of 4, and has been married to Paul for over 10 years! She cannot wait to meet you all this upcoming season!!

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Libby John  
**Instructor**  
**Mosaics Co-Artistic Director**

Libby holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Kinesiology from the University of MN with an emphasis in dance. She's been teaching dance for 20+ years and implemented modern dance and hip hop dance classes at Celebrate when she joined the staff in 2006. She is also co-founder and co-director of the Conservatory program and Mosaics Dance Co. here at CDA. Libby does free lance choreography for local schools, universities and churches. She's been a guest choreographer for YWAM-University of the Nations in Kona and YWAM Lakeside Montana. Her work has been performed at the MN Fringe Festival, Project Dance NYC and YWAM School of Dance Studies. Also a singer/songwriter, Libby has released two albums of original music since 2016. Pursuing God's calling of encouraging artists at the intersection of art & faith, Libby founded the non-profit Vivid Artistry Co. for the purpose of gathering and connecting others in creative community through media, workshops, retreats and the professional dance company, Vivid Artistry Dance Co. In 2017 Libby launched the podcast "Art & Faith Conversations" which continues to be one of the leading podcasts for Christian artists all over the world. She recently completed an artist residency through the Brehm Center of Fuller Seminary where she continues to serve as a facilitator for other artists in residence. She resides in Woodbury with her husband, three daughters and their two crazy dogs, Sage and Dakota.



Kelly Rice  
**Instructor**

Kelly started dancing at seven years old and grew up at Celebrate! Growing up at Celebrate she got the opportunity to student teach where she first fell in love with teaching dance. Having all of her dance training at Celebrate, she is happy to continue on her journey at the studio as an instructor. This is her third year teaching at Celebrate, and she is ecstatic to see what God has planned for her at Celebrate! As a teacher she hopes to not only help young dancers develop as dancers but also as people of God.



Grace Norman  
**Instructor**

Grace has 20 years of dance experience in a variety of styles, including several years of teaching experience. Growing up in the St. Cloud area, she danced in both the competitive and noncompetitive field. She has received training in tap, jazz, lyrical, contemporary, and pointe- with a strong emphasis in ballet technique. Grace went on to receive her B.A. in Family Science from Concordia University St. Paul. During her time at Concordia, she choreographed and performed in multiple theater and dance productions. At the end of her college career, she received the Pro Artibus Award in Theater and Dance for her significant contributions to the department. In 2019, she also completed the YWAM Montana Summer of Dance Program where she traveled and shared dance ministry cross-culturally. Grace is very excited to share her heart for teaching with the CDA community!



Elly Stahlke  
**Instructor**

Elly grew up dancing both competitively and non-competitively at various Twin Cities dance studios. She graduated from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, studying Theatre Arts and Dance, finishing with a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Performance. Elly is currently a performer and teaching artist in various capacities throughout the Twin Cities. She teaches and choreographs for several studios in the area, as well as teaching theatre and dance for several companies like Chanhassen Dinner Theatres and Hennepin Theatre Trust. Elly is eager to not only share her love of dance, but her love for the Lord with the students at Celebrate!

# CDA STAFF

## Teaching Assistants and Student Teachers :

We are so grateful for our teaching assistants! Teaching assistants (TA's) are current CDA dancers who display leadership in both their character and dancing skills. They care for our youngest dancers while supporting our instructors with each of our age 10 and under classes. Teaching assistants help enhance CDA's youngest dancers have a positive learning experience by offering additional one to one assistance.

Students Teachers are marked by an asterisk\*. Student teachers are experienced Teaching Assistants who have chosen to take their involvement to the next step and receive further training in lesson planning, teaching, and choreography. These Student Teachers were selected based on their demonstrated level of strong work ethic, godly character, and desire to pursue a future in dance instruction.

We are excited to welcome them to the team!

### Our 2023-2024 Team:

Anna Lawrence\*, Anna Wallerstedt, Elianna Kendrick, Gracie Muehlbach,  
Greta Lunstad, Gwendolyn Haas, Katelyn Suiter, Kennedy Carney\*,  
Katherine Lawrence\*, Maddie Crenshaw, Maddie Kube, Maggie Chmiekeski,  
Megan DeFrance, Mira Bardal, Rebekah Stokes, Rebekah Wallerstedt,  
Ruby Boxrud, Sammi Odegaard\*, Taylor McDowell, Zoe Pignatello