

RIM FOUNDATION

GO BEYOND IMPOSSIBLE

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The World's Best Wheelchair Ballroom Dancers are Coming to the U.S.

DETROIT (July 16, 2024) The United States is set to stage the first sanctioned Para Dance Sport (wheelchair ballroom dancing) competition in North America.

RIM Foundation is excited to announce a partnership with Visit Detroit to bring the Dearborn 2024 Para Dance Sport International Competition & USA Open to the Ford Community & Performing Arts Centers on August 10-11, 2024. This historic event will welcome over 80 of the world's best wheelchair ballroom dancers from 15 countries to Dearborn, MI.

Para Dance Sport is an extremely elegant, graceful and stylish sport which involves athletes who use a manual or power wheelchair due to a physical disability. Para Dance competitions have been hosted throughout Europe and Asia since the 1970's, but never in North America, until now. Take a look at our sizzle reel for a taste of what people will see and experience in August. <https://vimeo.com/808857957>

Cheryl Angelelli never imagined one day she would be twirling across the dance floor in a wheelchair as a ballroom dancer, after a diving accident at the age of 14 left her a quadriplegic. Angelelli along with her dance partner, Tamerlan Gadirov, are the top ranked USA Para Dance couple in their class and have been competing in Para Dance since 2017. Angelelli who hails from Clinton Township, MI is the captain of the 22 member USA Para Dance Team that will be competing in August. The USA team is comprised of Para Dancers from across the U.S., many of whom will be competing for the first time.

"I am thrilled to not only be competing in a Para Dance International competition in the U.S. for the first time, but it makes it all the more special that it is happening in Metro Detroit, where I live and train," says Angelelli. Spectators are going to be blown away when they see the level of skill and artistry these dancers bring to the dance floor. We continue to push the limits of what is possible and show people that there are no limitations in life or dance."

Para Dance Sport is governed globally by World Abilitysport, a founding member of the Paralympic movement that has been promoting sport for people with physical disabilities for more than 70 years. World Abilitysport ensures the worldwide growth and development of Para Dance Sport and its entry into new countries, like the USA, under the banner of World Para Dance Sport.

Para dancers compete in two categories, which includes a wheelchair dancer with a standing partner (Combi), or two athletes in wheelchairs (Duo). Athletes compete in all ballroom dances including Waltz, Foxtrot, Tango, Cha Cha, Samba, Jive and others. Freestyle events can include everything from hip hop to contemporary to ballet or folk dancing.

"We are delighted to partner with the RIM Foundation and welcome competitors from across the globe to our great city," said Claude Molinari, Visit Detroit CEO. "Promoting Detroit and surrounding communities is a key element to the event. It will be thrilling to be able to showcase our great city and highlight the importance of promoting mobility through adaptive sports and recreational activities. The international spotlight on Para Dance will help grow the sport here in Michigan and throughout the country, but more importantly, improve the physical and mental well-being that dance has proven to show for a marginalized sector of our community."

"We could not be more excited to welcome Para Dancers from around the world to Dearborn and the surrounding Detroit area. More importantly, we look forward to showcasing the talents and skills of these amazing athletes, who truly embody what it means to defy limitations. We hope this event will be a springboard to show others what is possible and grow the sport of Para Dance in the United States," says Katie Spillane, President, RIM Foundation.

As the host of the competition, the RIM Foundation is extremely grateful to our presenting sponsor, Life Beyond Barriers, and other local and national sponsors including, Fred Astaire Dance Studios, FITTEAM Global, Visit Detroit, Athletes Unlimited and the DTE Foundation for sharing our mission and bringing this one-of-a-kind event to Metro Detroit.

About the RIM Foundation

The RIM Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to empowering and improving the quality of life of persons living with a physical or cognitive disability through adaptive sports, research, and technology.

About Visit Detroit

Visit Detroit is the official destination marketing organization for the city of Detroit, dedicated to promoting Detroit as a world-class destination for leisure and business travelers. With a focus on showcasing the city's vibrant culture, rich history, and diverse attractions, Visit Detroit aims to drive tourism, economic growth, and community pride. More than 700 businesses are represented in the Visit Detroit membership. Visit Detroit was founded in 1896 as the world's first convention and visitors bureau, and more than 700 businesses are represented in the membership. For more information go to visitdetroit.com.

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