



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 2, 2011

CONTACTS:

Kimberly Flaherty, Mercy Behavioral Health
412.488.4067; kflaherty@mercybh.org

Linda K. Ross, Pittsburgh Mercy Health System
412.578.6224; LRoss@mercy.pmhs.org

**PUT ON YOUR DANCING SHOES
FOR MAD HOT BALLROOM PITTSBURGH, JUNE 12**

**Event will support growth of Mercy Behavioral Health's youth program,
Dancing Classrooms Pittsburgh**

PITTSBURGH, PA (June 2, 2011) — On Sunday June 12, 2011, from 4 until 8 p.m., Pittsburgh Mercy Health System will host Mad Hot Ballroom Pittsburgh, an exciting new event to benefit Dancing Classrooms Pittsburgh, an in-school prevention program of [Mercy Behavioral Health](#), part of the [Pittsburgh Mercy Health System](#).

Guests at [The Westin Convention Center, Pittsburgh](#) will enjoy a ballroom dance competition, silent auction, buffet dinner, cocktails, and special performances by students from Pittsburgh Linden K-5, recently crowned champions of Dancing Classrooms Pittsburgh 2010-2011 "Colors of the Rainbow" team match.

Mr. Pierre Dulaine, international ballroom champion, teacher, and founding director of [Dancing Classrooms](#), will serve as master of ceremonies and offer an informal and lively group dance lesson for all in attendance. Best known as a ballroom champion and Broadway star, Dulaine was the inspiration for the 2005 film [Take The Lead](#), starring Antonio Banderas as Dulaine. His program, Dancing Classrooms, was also the inspiration for [Mad Hot Ballroom](#), the 2006 documentary that chronicles the journey of New York City school children into the world of ballroom dancing.

One of the evening's highlights is a ballroom dance competition among 12 newly trained dancers representing Pittsburgh businesses and organizations. All are undergoing eight weeks of group lessons from Dancing Classrooms Pittsburgh teaching artists Terry and Rozana Sweeney at [Art & Style Dance Studio](#) on Pittsburgh's South Side. Instruction, which began in April, is following the Dancing Classrooms curriculum.

Like the children who participate in the program, the adults learned the Merengue, Foxtrot, Rumba, Tango, and Swing. At Mad Hot Ballroom Pittsburgh, they will show what they've learned before a panel of celebrity judges, all in support of Dancing Classrooms Pittsburgh.

-more-

MAD HOT BALLROOM, JUNE 12

-2-

The six “teams” scheduled to compete at Mad Hot Ballroom Pittsburgh on June 12 are:

- **Patrick Flynn and Lisa Florian**, Team Yellow, representing Riverset Credit Union
- **Stephen and Melissa Goda**, Team Blue, representing Lamar Advertising
- **Jeff and Julia Igims**, Team Green, representing Pittsburgh Public Schools
- **Leland and Amber Koehler**, Team Purple, representing McAuley Ministries, part of Pittsburgh Mercy Health System
- **Marcus Poindexter and Kathy Dozzi**, Team Orange, representing Tobacco Free Allegheny.
- **Anthony Venturino and Elizabeth Graham**, Team Red, representing Community Care Behavioral Health/UPMC Health Plan

Judges for the ballroom competition are:

- **Ian Rosenberger**, emerging media and business development for Strategic Images and contestant on “CBS Survivor: Palau”
- **Tall Cathy**, radio personality, 96.1 KISS
- **Virginia Montanez**, also known as “PittGirl,” writer, humor columnist and blogger, <http://thatschurch.com/> and <http://www.pittsburghmagazine.com>

Due to the success of the program in other cities, Mercy Behavioral Health’s prevention unit introduced Dancing Classrooms in six public schools in the fall 2009 semester. Dancing Classrooms Pittsburgh has since expanded to include 1,100 children in 33 fifth-grade classrooms and 16 schools in both Pittsburgh Public Schools and the Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh.

Administrators at participating schools have noted a decrease in behavior management problems, an increase in parental involvement, and positive impacts on academics, school climate, and in the way the students treat one another.

Support of Mad Hot Ballroom Pittsburgh will help Mercy Behavioral Health bring the program to more Pittsburgh youth.

Individual tickets are \$75; benefactor tickets are \$150. Both may be purchased online at www.pmhs.org/events.

For more information about Dancing Classrooms Pittsburgh and Mad Hot Ballroom Pittsburgh, visit <http://dancingclassroomspgh.org/>.

ABOUT

Mercy Behavioral Health provides recovery-oriented, community-based, mental health and drug treatment and prevention services. We also offer programs for people with intellectual disabilities in Southwestern Pennsylvania. Mercy Behavioral Health is part of the Pittsburgh Mercy Health System and Catholic Health East, sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy.

Dancing Classrooms is an international, in-school program designed to build social awareness, confidence and self-esteem in children through the practice of social dance. The program creates an atmosphere that allows students who are typically introverted and reserved to step out and shine. It focuses physical energy and increases health through the joy of movement. It builds self-esteem and social skills as it improves children’s confidence and their ability to relate to others.

###