



Second Annual

DRUMS ALIVE CONFERENCE

"THE PULSE OF POSSIBILITY: DRUMMING FOR ALL"

JUNE 28 - 29, 2025
PHOENIX, AZ





A LETTER FROM CARRIE

Dear Drums Alive Family,

Welcome to the 2nd Annual Drums Alive Conference!

It is an honor to gather with this extraordinary community in Phoenix, Arizona—home to the Ability360 Sports and Fitness Center, one of the nation's most inspiring hubs for inclusive wellness and advocacy. Ability360 continues a 40-year tradition of empowering people of diverse abilities to live independently and thrive. We are proud to be hosted by such a mission-driven organization whose values so deeply reflect our own.

This conference is more than an event—it's a celebration of everything Drums Alive stands for: inclusivity, creativity, health, empowerment, and joy. Whether you're a long-time instructor, a new enthusiast, or a curious explorer of rhythm and wellness, you belong here.

We're thrilled to welcome our keynote speaker, Kaitlyn Verfuert, a 4-time Paralympian and advocate for access and inclusion in outdoor spaces. Kaitlyn is not only an elite athlete and educator, but also a leader who launched a thriving wheelchair tennis program right here at Ability360. Her commitment to adaptive recreation and her passion for empowering others exemplify the heart of this conference.

Over the course of these two days, you'll participate in energizing sessions, deepen your practice, and make meaningful connections. My team and I are excited to meet you—to learn about your goals, your communities, and the impact you're making. We'll be facilitating conversations and listening carefully—because your voice matters, and your presence shapes the future of this movement.

At Drums Alive, our vision is simple and powerful:

We have a dream to make life better for everyone throughout the world through the healing experience of Drums Alive®.

Through tailored, evidence-based programming, we aim to improve quality of life for every age, every ability, every diverse-ability. EveryBODY comes alive with Drums Alive®!

This vision isn't mine alone—it's ours. Together, we are creating spaces where rhythm leads to resilience, and where joy is a force for inclusion and transformation.

Thank you for being here, for believing in this work, and for bringing your whole self to this experience. Let's make some noise—together.

With love and gratitude,

Carrie Ekins
Founder, Creator, and CEO of Drums Alive

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Day 1

SCHEDULE

7-8AM

CONFERENCE CHECK-IN/BADGE PICK-UP - Outside Conference Room, Floor 1

8-
8:45AM

KEYNOTE - Conference Room, Floor 1

15 MINUTE BREAK

9-10AM

WELCOME MASTER CLASS - Conference Room, Floor 1

30 MINUTE BREAK

10:30-
10:50AM

WEST MUSIC DEMO - Conference Room, Floor 1

11-
11:20AM

DRUMS ALIVE MEMBERSHIP DEMO - Classroom B, Floor 2

11:30AM-
12:30PM

LUNCH - Conference Room, Floor 1

12:30-
1:30PM

WORKSHOPS

- Golden Grooves: Play the Hour Away - Conference Room, Floor 1
- DRUMTASTIC--For Young, Old, and In Between! - Classroom B, Floor 2

15 MINUTE BREAK

1:45-
2:45PM

WORKSHOPS

- Setting the Rhythm: Mastering Warmups and Cooldowns in Drums Alive - Conference Room, Floor 1
- Brain Games with Noodles, Egg Shakers, and Scarves...Oh My! - Classroom B, Floor 2

15 MINUTE BREAK

3-4PM

WORKSHOP

- Drumming with the Legends of Pop - Conference Room, Floor 1

15 MINUTE BREAK

4:15-
5PM

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS - Conference Room, Floor 1

1 HOUR BREAK

6-9PM

EVENING SOCIAL

DAY 1 WORKSHOPS

GOLDEN GROOVES: PLAY THE HOUR AWAY

Conference Room, Floor 1

Get ready to break out your juggling scarves, egg shakers and more to create an engaging experience for your students. Teri will take you through every stage, from the warm-up to the cool down. You'll witness how through modifications, both active seniors and those with limited mobility benefit physically and mentally through a variety of functional exercises, cognitive routines, games, and more. Join us for a fun and dynamic experience that designed for all levels of ability.

DRUMTASTIC: FOR YOUNG, OLD AND IN BETWEEN!

Classroom B, Floor 2

The DRUMTASTIC program isn't just for schoolteachers—you can customize it for all ages and ability levels, offering activities that are fun and beneficial for anyone! DRUMTASTIC lessons are presented in an engaging, game-based format, keeping participants entertained while simultaneously enhancing physical, cognitive, and social-emotional health. Experience a typical Class Design using engaging activities and brain-boosting resources from the DRUMTASTIC Kits. You'll learn how to modify choreography, add advanced tasks, and incorporate new strategies to elevate the experience, making it exciting and effective for all participants.

SETTING THE RHYTHM: MASTERING WARMUPS AND COOLDOWNS IN DRUMS ALIVE

Conference Room, Floor 1

Kick off your Drums Alive class with energy and confidence—and wrap it up with purpose and connection! In this hands-on workshop, you'll learn how to design and deliver safe, effective, and fun warmups and cooldowns that set the tone, support participant safety, and leave a lasting impression. Experience a full warmup and cooldown in real time, then break down the why and how behind each section. We'll explore structure, cueing, music choices, and practical ways to adapt for different audiences, helping you fine-tune your approach no matter who's in your class. Whether you're new to teaching or looking to level up your instructor skills, this session will give you the tools to lead every class from first beat to final breath with confidence and clarity.

BRAIN GAMES WITH NOODLES, EGG SHAKERS, AND SCARVES...OH MY!

Classroom B, Floor 2

This session is designed for Drums Alive Instructors to discover ideas for integrating brain games and brain activities using playing cards, scarves, pool noodles, and egg shakers creatively into a DRUMTASTIC lesson. We will explore a variety of brain games and activities including the game crazy eights, locomotor tag, scarf juggling choreographies, the egg pass game, and egg shaker choreographies. The session will conclude with a fun-filled brain drumming choreography to "Baby Shark!" where participants will have to remember different drum beats and motions that correspond to different parts of the song.

DRUMMING WITH THE LEGENDS OF POP

Conference Room, Floor 1

Get ready to drum, dance, and move to the rhythms that defined a generation! This high-energy workshop celebrates the music of pop icons like Madonna, Michael Jackson, Prince and Whitney Houston with full Drums Alive® choreographies, detailed breakdowns, and fresh teaching tips. Add excitement to your classes with dynamic routines set to timeless hits. Perfect for instructors who want to energize their sessions and connect through the power of pop!

Day 2

SCHEDULE

8-8:30AM

MORNING SOCIAL

8:30-9AM

WELLNESS BEATS MASTER CLASS - Conference Room, Floor 1

15 MINUTE BREAK

9:45-

WORKSHOPS

10:30AM

- Work Smarter, Not Harder: How to Transform Your Existing Choreo With a Simple Change - Conference Room, Floor 1
- Teach, Lead, Inspire: Elevate Your Class Experience - Classroom B, Floor 2

15 MINUTE BREAK

10:45-

WORKSHOP

11:30AM

- Instructor Sharing Workshop - Conference Room, Floor 1

11:30AM-

LUNCH - Conference Room, Floor 1

12:30PM

12:30-

WORKSHOP

1:15PM

- Funding Your Drums Alive Program with Grants-taking the intimidation factor out of grant writing - Conference Room, Floor 1

15 MINUTE BREAK

1:30-

WORKSHOPS

2:15PM

- Drumming With the Brain in Mind - Conference Room, Floor 1
- Build Your Drums Alive Business - Classroom B, Floor 2

15 MINUTE BREAK

3-3:45PM

MASTER CLASS - Conference Room, Floor 1

DAY 2 WORKSHOPS

WORK SMARTER, NOT HARDER: HOW TO TRANSFORM YOUR EXISTING CHOREO WITH A SIMPLE CHANGE

Conference Room, Floor 1

In this workshop, you'll learn how to breathe new life into your existing choreographies with just one simple change! No need to constantly create new routines—by tweaking even a single element, you can make a significant impact on both the brain and body. These small adjustments can activate different areas of the brain, enhancing cognitive engagement while still delivering a powerful physical workout. You will discover how to keep your choreographies fresh and exciting while maximizing their effectiveness, making it easier to achieve both mental and physical benefits without reinventing the wheel every time you teach.

TEACH, LEAD, INSPIRE: ELEVATE YOUR CLASS EXPERIENCE

Classroom B, Floor 2

Whether you're teaching a fitness class or leading a group in another setting, one thing is true—you are the magic that makes it memorable. In this interactive workshop, we'll explore how to tap into your authentic presence and personality to create powerful connections and lasting impressions. From first impressions to final cues, we'll uncover how your delivery, energy, and preparation shape the experience for every participant. You'll leave with new tools, fresh perspective, and the confidence to show up, stand out, and lead in a way that's unmistakably you. Perfect for instructors and presenters of all backgrounds—no choreography required!

INSTRUCTOR SHARING WORKSHOP

Conference Room, Floor 1

This interactive session is designed to spotlight the creativity and passion of our incredible Drums Alive community while celebrating the talent of our instructors. Selected instructors will present a 5-minute routine, answer questions about their choreography, and engage in a collaborative exchange of ideas with fellow professionals.

Experience the power of community as we build connections, share innovative approaches, and learn from each other's unique perspectives. This celebration of collective expertise offers inspiring takeaways, fresh choreographic ideas, and networking opportunities that extend beyond the session. Whether you're seeking new movement combinations, creative teaching strategies, or simply want to connect with like-minded professionals, this dynamic showcase promises to energize your practice and strengthen the bonds within our vibrant Drums Alive family. Come ready to be inspired, collaborate, and celebrate together!

FUNDING YOUR DRUMS ALIVE PROGRAM WITH GRANTS- TAKING THE INTIMIDATION FACTOR OUT OF GRANT WRITING.

Classroom B, Floor 2

This session is designed for anyone interested in learning more about grant writing opportunities that could fund their Drums Alive program and beyond. It will include an overview of my experiences with grant writing that have successfully funded my Physical Education programs including the purchase of two 30-participant Drums Alive sets from West Music. We will dig deep into an example grant application and examine the types of questions that are asked to alleviate the intimidation factor that might set in when thinking about writing a grant.

DRUMMING WITH THE BRAIN IN MIND 🧠

Conference Room, Floor 1

Unlock the transformative power of Drums Alive with fun cognitive games and routines. Discover how drumming boosts brain health with both immediate and long-term benefits. Understanding the WHY we exercise and WHY we teach with INTENTION to insure our clients of all ages and ability maintain good brain health.

BUILD YOUR DRUMS ALIVE BUSINESS

Classroom B, Floor 2

Ready to turn your passion into a powerful brand? This hands-on workshop is perfect for instructors who want to grow their Drums Alive® classes into a thriving business. Learn how to define your brand, choose standout colors, take professional profile pics, and create a consistent social media plan. We'll also cover email list building and how to launch a vibrant Facebook Group to connect with your community. Whether you're just starting out or looking to grow, you'll leave with clear tools to build your business with confidence!

KEYNOTE



KAITLYN VERFUERTH

Kaitlyn Verfuert is a renowned athlete and advocate for inclusion in outdoors spaces. As a 4-time Paralympian in tennis and ParaCanoe, Kaitlyn has demonstrated exceptional skill and dedication in the world of adaptive sports.

Kaitlyn is a 3x Paralympian in wheelchair tennis, ranking in the top 8 in the world. She has earned 2 gold medals, a silver, and a bronze throughout her impressive career. As a tennis professional certified by both USPTA and USPTR, Kaitlyn is dedicated to sharing her expertise and passion for the sport with others.

In 2020, Kaitlyn initiated the wheelchair tennis program at Ability360, which has now grown to include over 50 players in the Phoenix area. Currently serving as the manager of 360outdoors as a recreation therapist, Kaitlyn is committed to utilizing the power of the outdoors to empower individuals with disabilities, helping them achieve greater independence and lead healthy, active lifestyles.

MEET THE INSTRUCTORS



AHMED SELIM

With over 35 years in dance and fitness, Ahmed Selim co-directed NY's Starlight Ballroom DanceStudio and spearheaded diverse programs from classics to modern fitness. As a conference presenter, he showcases expertise in these fields and serves as a Master Trainer for DrumsAlive™ since 2011. Ahmed's dynamic presentations at events nationwide highlight his passion and expertise. Beyond his tech, healthcare, and entertainment roles, he cherishes outdoor adventures in Florida with his family.



CELINA ROYBAL

Celina Roybal is a National Board-Certified Physical Education Teacher in Early and Middle Childhood. She currently teaches elementary Physical Education and is a Drums Alive Master Trainer. Celina strives to provide her students with a wide variety of physical activities in her classes where all students of all abilities can succeed. Her passion is motivating people of all ages and all abilities to incorporate more physical activity into their daily lives with fun and engaging physical activities to lead happy and healthy lives.



KATHERINE FARFAN-SELIM

Katherine is a certified dancer and fitness instructor, specializing in various formats, including Drums Alive® and Golden Beats®. She's a Drums Alive® Master Trainer and member of the Drums Alive® Content Creation Team. Katherine serves as the Drums Alive® Brand Ambassador for the Facebook Membership Group. Her passion lies in spreading the transformative power of dance and fitness worldwide.



KELLY JACKSON

Dr. Kelly Jackson retired as a music educator in 2020, and it was at her most recent school that she successfully implemented the DRUMTASTIC program and helped to train several teachers in her district. She is a Drums Alive Master Trainer, member of the Drums Alive Advisory Board, and frequent editor and video / voiceover presence for the Drums Alive Content Creation Team. She also enjoys collaborating as an accompanist, conference presenter, music director, and performer in her home state of NC and beyond.

MEET THE INSTRUCTORS



MICHELE DELONG

Michele DeLong is an elementary music specialist in Springfield, IL. In addition to teaching K-5 music, she teaches Mini Mustangs Music, a pre-K child/parent music class, and Mustangs in Motion, a special class at her school utilizing DRUMTASTIC. She has a Bachelor of Music from Bowling Green State University (OH) and a Master of Arts from the University of Illinois-Springfield. She began her Drums Alive journey in 2016 and serves as a fantastic Master Trainer for Drums Alive!



TERI LUND

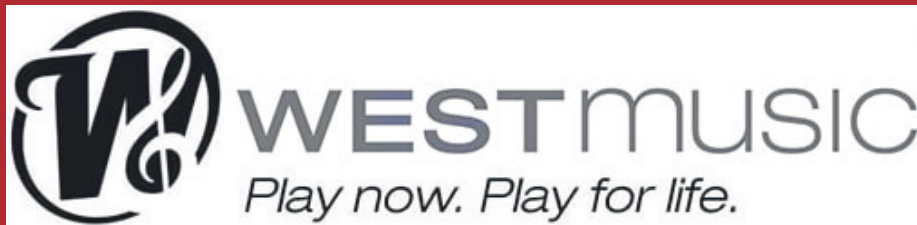
Teri Lund, a recently retired educator with over 30 years of experience in physical education, passionately teaches health and wellness to all ages including youth through Seniors. She's been recognized as both Kansas and Central District's Middle School PE Teacher of the Year. Teri is also a Master Trainer for Drums Alive where she enjoys presenting at conferences, providing content, teaching community classes, and training others. She also finds joy in outdoor adventures with her family.



CARRIE EKINS

DRUMS ALIVE was founded by Carrie Ekins, who in her own moment of adversity, aimed to make a difference in the lives of people and society through empowering individuals to find the passion to embody a positive and healthy lifestyle. Carrie has a Master's degree in Physical Education and Dance with an emphasis in Sports Medicine from Brigham Young University and is a Doctoral Candidate at the University of Chemnitz, Germany.

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West Music is proud to be the exclusive partner of Drums Alive! Offering numerous instruments and accessories to bring this exciting, high-energy program to life for your participants and an authorized re-seller of Drums Alive curricular materials. West Music is also a licensed distributor of REMO and Zildjian, two of the other sponsors of the Drums Alive conference.

Don't miss the West Music Demo on Day 1 — all conference registrants are highly encouraged to attend to learn about the wide variety of products West Music offers that can elevate your Drums Alive sessions.



Rhythm Defines Us.

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For over 65 years, we have been breaking new ground with industry-firsts in drumhead technology, including the first commercially successful synthetic drumhead design, Weatherking®. Our products are used by professional musicians, music educators, and enthusiasts in all genres of percussion, as well as in therapeutic and medical applications. We are committed to promoting the expansion and acceptance of individual and group drumming through recreational, educational, and wellness activities. Remo is also proud to be at the forefront of sustainable manufacturing practices, and we strive to limit our impact on the environment while sustaining jobs and pushing the limits of drumhead and drum technology. Join the global community of drummers and experience the transformative effect of rhythm with Remo.

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The Zildjian Company has been synonymous with setting the standard for the development and manufacture of high performance musical instruments since 1623. As the world's leading maker of cymbals, drumsticks, and percussion mallets, Zildjian products are sold across the globe, under the Zildjian, Vic Firth, and Balter brands, and are the standard to which all other cymbals, drumsticks and mallets are measured. From the beginner to the world's greatest rock stars, jazz performers and concert percussionists, amateurs and pros alike choose Zildjian, Vic Firth, and Balter products to allow them to experience and share the joy of music



Hachya Franklin and Faithfully Fit



Hachya Franklin is a small business owner and fitness instructor pursuing and innovating excellence in the delivery of group fitness services. She is passionately devoted to people and percussion; Committed to making fitness fun for all ages and all abilities within the framework of experiential, interactive, rhythm-based activities. Hachya possesses advanced musical training and education including 20+ years of hands-on experience in the following settings: inpatient and outpatient mental health, adult residential and day treatment, skilled nursing and rehabilitation, senior living and activity centers, community outreach and ministry, public schools, private practice & music studio.