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Athlete, studio blazing trail for Paralympic dance in US

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COURTESY OF CHERYL ANGELELLI

A Detroit-area dance studio is blazing the trail for wheelchair ballroom dancing in the U.S. - with the help of a retired Paralympic swimming world champion-turned-dancer.

Cheryl Angelelli and her dance partner, Tamerlan Gadirov, are among the people leading what's billed as the first U.S. training for Para Dance Instruction. The sessions will be held at the Fred Astaire Dance Studio in Bloomfield Township, where Gadirov is an instructor and the pair teaches a Dance Mobility class.

Angelelli and Gadirov, who took second place last year in an international competition in Germany, say the training should help build a national pipeline of instructors as advocates hope to make Para Dance part of the 2028 Paralympics in Los Angeles.

Beyond the skill-building, the goal is to spread awareness of a sport that's more popular in Europe and Asia.