

# Dance Like no one's watching

BY ELLIE WEBSTER

"OUR bodies are like an old car, you can't expect the car to be in perfect condition if you just leave it in the garage."

A Birkdale woman is advocating dancing to keep our body engines running smoothly after donning her dancing shoes and experiencing the impressive physical and mental benefits firsthand.

Sonya Graham's urge to dance began in childhood, but it wasn't until her children were leaving home that she began to dance.

Now, the local senior has been dancing for 20 years and said it was the best decision she had ever made.

"Dancing is my happy place," Sonya said.

"It will amaze you how much serotonin you get from moving your body just for an hour or two."

Sonya said that rock and roll dancing held a special place in her heart and has been dancing alongside Cleveland resident Herb Shapcott for 15 years as dance partners.

"Herb is entering his late 90s now and never fails to

impress me each time we dance together," she said.

After his wife's passing, Herb experienced a void in his life. Dancing lessons helped him through this period.

"Dancing has been an escape for both of us, helping us through the tough times," Sonya said.

Together with many physical benefits, Sonya said dancing enhanced mental well-being.

"Dancing involves significant multitasking by having to remember the steps to the rhythm and I think it is a great way to put your brain to work," she said.

"It is too easy to stay home, but each time you go dancing you gain that incredible sense of accomplishment."

Sonya emphasized the critical role of keeping seniors active, suggesting there was no better way to do so than by adding a splash of fun through dancing.

"If you dance for an hour or two with your friends a week, you will notice how much your physical health and mobility will improve," she said.



Sonya Graham and Herb Shapcott on the dancefloor.