

THE MIRROR *Weekend Section*



The On Q senior competitive dance team includes Lauren Anderson, Taylor Brown, Emily Dannenberger, Lauren Every, Katie Gendaszek, Lauren Guthrie, Kaela Kuderik, Megan McGarry, Shelby Perkins, Jessica Shepard, Elizabeth Szozda, Jill Burkhardt, Katie Dunphy, Brittany Hotchkiss, Alexis Macino, Tiffany Pettee, Carly Swope, Liana Toth, Lauren Przybylski and Elle Finch.



Dance instructor Tammy McCully (center) is surrounded by the On Q junior competitive dance team that includes Jordyn Barber, Miranda Camp, Kelsey Furman, Emily Hosler, Micaela Marshall, Nicole Gagnet, Brooke Munsoke, Abby Weber, Morgan Brunsmann, Delanie Crider, Abby Finch, Madison Jensen, Richelle Myers, Allie Pinkelman, Elli Thatcher, Bethany Dubell, Gina Managhan, Anna Pauken, Brooklynne Smith and Laura Kennedy.

Dance Fundamentals Provide Foundation For Successful Maumee Studio

BY NANCY GAGNET
MIRROR REPORTER

"Dream it, believe it, achieve it" are the words by which dance instructor Tammy McCully built her career as a dancer.

The ultimate dream of owning her own studio was fulfilled three years ago when she opened On Q Dance Center in Maumee.

A Michigan native, McCully, or "Mrs. Tammy" as her students affectionately call her, opened her dance studio doors after performing many years on stages throughout the country and working as adjudicated judge and master teacher on tour for competition firms.

With more than 20 years of experience in a ballet repertoire, the slender 5-foot, 9-inch dance teacher puts an emphasis on dance technique.

"You don't have to be a ballerina and you don't have to love ballet, but you do have to have the fundamentals of ballet for body control and technique in your other forms of dance," she explained.

Since its inception, the studio has grown from 95 students in the first year to 170 this year.

Even with the growth, Mrs. Tammy ensures that students receive quality instruction.

"I'm the educator and I want to make sure that each class is getting the best," she said.

The studio offers a variety of classes in ballet, jazz, tap, point, lyrical, Tahitian and hip-hop for students as young as 2 years old through young adults.

Students may enroll in studio classes or perform with competitive dance teams. At every level, Mrs. Tammy is dedicated to helping dancers achieve their goals.

"There's really no differ-



On Q Dance Center students Tiffany Pettee, Kaela Kuderik and Jill Burkhardt stretch during a class at the center's Maumee studio. The dance center offers competitive teams and non-competitive classes in a variety of styles.

ence in training between the students that compete and the students that don't, except for the amount of time they spend on it," she said. "I don't treat my students that come once a week any different from those that come three to four times a week. They get the same technical training."

The competitive dancers will head south this summer to Disney World, where they have been accepted to be Magic Land performers. Basketball fans will see them perform this spring at a Detroit Pistons NBA game and this summer at a Detroit Shock WNBA game.

The studio will also perform a tribute to Broadway show in June.

Mrs. Tammy emphasizes teamwork with her competitive groups. Bonnie Crider, whose daughter Delanie dances on the junior team,

says the students form great camaraderie because the focus is always on working together.

"The focus for the competition team is not to win a popularity contest. (Tammy is) very big about team spirit and even proper dance etiquette," she said.

Although the studio comprises many dancers with a wide range of styles and abilities, Mrs. Tammy believes each is special.

"The art of dance comes through every individual in a different way and nobody's wrong and nobody's incorrect, and they are all beautiful," she said.

Finding the unique quality in each dancer is a goal the teacher strives to achieve.

"Everybody is different and everybody is special in their own way and you have to find what is special about each of your children and

bring that out in them," she said.

Many parents appreciate Mrs. Tammy's ability to relate to each student.

"Tammy is extremely creative in her choreography and she always seems to bring out the best attributes in the girls," said Cathi Camp, whose 9-year-old daughter Miranda is on the competitive team.

"It's not just, 'This is what move I want here.' She puts the move there that the girls do well that flatters them and makes them look good," Camp said. "I also love her caring attitude and the nurturing environment of the studio."

Other parents agree, saying that attitude and arrogance are left at the door.

"What's nice is that you never feel like anyone is being singled out or treated differently in either a positive or

MIRROR PHOTO BY NANCY GAGNET

negative fashion. It's like we're all one big family. There isn't a favorite child and that's been very nice," said Mary Marshall, a parent new to the studio.

Her daughter Micaela, who has several years of dance experience, recently began dancing at On Q.

"One of the things I was looking for in a studio was a wholesome family atmosphere where my daughter's values weren't going to be compromised, and On Q provides that for her," Marshall said. "It's also been good that she is learning proper dance technique, and even though she had dance before at another studio, she really wasn't exposed to it."

Although Mrs. Tammy's studio does emphasize dance technique, other lessons are also acquired through the art of dance.

"I think that dance gives

children more than just ability," Mrs. Tammy said. "It gives them lifelong friendships, self-esteem, confidence, poise. It's just positive in every aspect of their life as they grow; it stays with them forever."

Her commitment to making the dance experience available to all children prompted her to create the "A Dancer's Wish" program.

Through Big Brothers and Big Sisters a child who aspires to dance but can't afford lessons, will receive a free year of dance lessons, costumes and an opportunity to perform.

She is also extending the program to other parents or groups of parents at the studio who may have the financial ability to provide "A Dancer's Wish" as well.

"I just think there are so many kids who never get the opportunity to do anything because of their circumstances and it breaks my heart. This would give them something positive and a new directive in their life," she said.

Although she is modest when asked about her dance background, she admits that at the age of 3 she began taking dance from Margaret Nichols, who became her mentor and taught her dance throughout her life, and for whom she later worked.

"(Nichols) was a phenomenal dancer," she said. "She had a great heart and a great work ethic. She taught me so much."

Mrs. Tammy also trained with other renowned teachers, including Madam Richardo, and attended top schools throughout the country. She will further her dance education through Dance Masters of America and Dance Educators of America.

Next fall she plans to bring dancer Leonard Wilson

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