

# Whitehouse Dance Center Director Inspires Passion For Dance

**BY KAREN BERGER**  
MIRROR REPORTER

Fostering a passion for dance has been Carol Dorfmeier-Huster's goal for 25 years.

The biographies of 2007 graduates, printed in the program for the year-end recital of her dance studio, were evidence that she's done just that.

Of the eight seniors, many have been with the Dance Centre of Northwest Ohio for over a decade, starting as young as 3.

In addition to classes at the dance center, several teens were active on the Anthony Wayne High School dance team and plan to incorporate dance into college life.

On Tuesday night, a group of girls met for an impromptu pointe class led by assistant director Melissa Noe. As the teens geared up for the hour-long class, Victoria Nowak, a 17-year-old Notre Dame Academy junior, explained why she's danced since she was a child.

"I just love it so much," she smiled.

For those who stick with dance, it becomes a part of them, Dorfmeier-Huster said.

"It's like singing, acting or the visual arts. We have a passion for dance," she said.

That passion brings her high school girls to the studio several nights a week, but the dance center is not exclusively for the very serious, Dorfmeier-Huster said.

Ballet, tap and jazz are taught to ages 3 to 18, but often the youngsters start with the KinderKore program. It's during the sixth through eighth grade when most girls decide whether they want to remain in dance or become involved in volleyball, basketball or cheerleading.

A solid foundation and technique builds in versatility, so students can easily expand into street dancing, funk, hip-hop and other forms.

Dorfmeier-Huster began teaching dance classes at the Wauseon VFW in 1979. In



Students practice pointe at the Dance Centre of Northwest Ohio. The center is holding an open house Monday and Tuesday, August 20-21, from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. at 6662 Providence St. in Whitehouse.

MIRROR PHOTO BY KAREN BERGER

1981 she took over the program, which she taught for 17 years. Then a friend asked if she'd want to purchase a dance studio in Waterville, where she remained until 1997, when she moved to the larger Whitehouse location.

June's recital celebrated 25 years of the Dance Centre of Northwest Ohio, but was also bittersweet: it was the last recital her father, Curt Dorfmeier, attended before his death.

Dorfmeier-Huster credits her father with being her inspiration and helper throughout the years.

"My father was a salesman for years. He always said you have to know your customers," Dorfmeier-Huster said.

She gets to know not only her students, but the parents as well. She encourages them to come to classes to observe.

"I find that whether it's a 3-year-old or a senior in high school, the child who does well

is the one whose parents come in on a regular basis," she said. "Often they'll come very young. If they're serious, they'll stay with us until they graduate."

A few years ago, several fathers did more than observe. On Dorfmeier-Huster's desk is a photo of the fathers and their daughters, who practiced for eight weeks to perform "Young At Heart" during the end-of-the-year recital.

That recital is one of the few performances during the year. The school also performs at the Cherry Festival and Roche de Boeuf Festival.

Competitions are not high on her priority list, as they are both time-consuming and expensive. The single mother of 16-year-old Ryan, Dorfmeier-Huster didn't want to drag him to weekend-long events as a toddler.

"If you love dancing, have talent and persevere, competitions are not always going to take you there," said

Dorfmeier-Huster, who instead stresses college for its connections and opportunities.

An Ottawa Hills High School graduate, Dorfmeier-Huster earned a degree in medical technology and education from The University of Toledo. She didn't want to travel away from family to perform, yet she didn't want to quit dancing.

"I found a niche in teaching," she said.

A few of her students have gone on to perform to a wider audience. A 2006 graduate has danced in several productions with Eastern Michigan University. Another graduated from the University of Akron with a bachelor of fine arts in dance. And a Wauseon student attended the American Academy of Dramatic and Musical Arts in New York City and spent many years dancing in shows, including one with Tommy Tune.

"Over a teacher's career —

which could be 50 years — if a half-dozen make a career out of dance, that's a lot."

The Dance Centre of Northwest Ohio, located at 6662 Providence St. in

Whitehouse, will hold an open house on Monday and Tuesday, August 20-21 from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. For more information, call (419) 877-3272.

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