

When She Walks Into A Room, Everybody Notices...

The Duluth School of Ballet

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It seems like just yesterday that Linda watched her toddler Emily twirl around the room and collapse in dizziness and fits of laughter. Now, as an older and more graceful Emily exits the stage, Linda muses, "How does Peter produce his dancers?" In retrospect, the elements all fall into place. Is it a group of pre-schoolers, some bashful, some rowdy, some even attentive, all coming out of a class smiling with joy? Is it small classes, with fully-trained, professional instructors who can care about each and every child? Is it all youngsters gaining the joy of dance and developing a love of classical music? Is it the friendship of peers, learning in a non-competitive environment? Is it the confidence of dancing in a professional production choreographed for children on a real stage in front of adoring family and friends?

Linda knows that since 1990, the Duluth School of Ballet (DSB) represents all of the above. As the Director at DSB, Peter Garick nurtures dedication and a warm family environment at the school. He develops his youngsters into graceful, poised young ladies, ready to confidently take on the challenges of our complex world. Fun mixed with discipline is paramount for the education of his students. Just as important, Peter ensures the safety and health of his dancers. The specially-laid wood floors give the proper amount of "cushion" dancers need to prevent developing bones from acquiring shin-splints, knee injuries and other problems.

In the beginning, in creative movement and pre-ballet classes, the girls take familiar games and apply them to learning dance basics. They rock a doll back and forth to learn how to balance with music. They learn how to leap over a "pond" for proper technique. His skilled instructors even have them imagine their ankles are stuck together with peanut butter to realize proper stance. With classical music throughout, they understand the beauty of this form of music as an elegant part of the dance. Even at this early level of learning, the youngest get to perform a simple dance specially choreographed for their skills into the year-end production.

When they are able to stay focused and master the movements, the students enter the first formal ballet class, Ballet-I in the first grade. From this point forward, Linda notices the growing poise and grace with each passing year from Emily, through Ballet-III. For the most part, promotion to the next level is age-based upon demonstration of the essential elements.

Ballet is not the only focus at DSB. With a foundation of solid ballet movements in their toolkit, several of the girls, including Emily expanded their repertoire by learning more freedom of expression in rousing jazz dance classes.

With the strength required to both learn and execute ballet and jazz movements, the girls develop balance and focus, easily transferring to other activities and sports. As the skills sharpen by the years of lessons, Emily demonstrates confidence in whatever activity comes along. Linda even notices that Emily rarely slouches.

The non-competitive nature of early life dancing focuses on mastering the fundamentals and learning dance complexities. Each year, the discipline for the next level increases for Emily. Emily actually enjoys her hard work and delights in the results. With more frequent weekly meetings of dance classes at the higher levels, she learns valuable time-management skills between academic school work, other activities and her dance classes. She finds herself usually in the top-half students and a stand out in other walks of life. Emily forms bonds stronger than most with her dancing peer group pushing her to excel.

Pointe, dancing on tip-toes, rounds out the last major learning stage in dance. Wow, what an exciting day that was! Carefully monitored by Peter and all his staff, they make sure Emily demonstrates enough discipline and meets the physical challenges required to safely perform these beautiful movements. Peter and his instructors actually go to the dance supply store with Emily to make sure her shoes fit properly.

So today, Linda watches with pride as Emily floats across the floor, years of practice making it seem so effortless. Yes, Linda is very pleased with starting her child in dance. Emily exudes confidence, grace, confidence & poise in her every step, all while staying healthy and appreciating the arts.

Emily represents a cross section of several long-term students at The Duluth School of Ballet. For a similar experience for your daughter, please contact Peter Garick at (770) 476-4306 or visit him at www.duluthballet.com.