

*Dance Arts  
Now!*

The NHSDA Newsletter for Middle and High School Students  
Summer 2015, Vol. 3

~ *Summertime* ~

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*Then you'll spread your wings  
And you'll take to the sky...*

from the Musical *Porgy and Bess*

Music, George Gershwin

Lyrics, Ira Gershwin and DuBose Heyward

*F*irst and foremost, we congratulate all of our 2015 NHSDA graduates!

Whether we perform, travel the world, secure an internship, or volunteer in our local community, *now* is an exciting time to explore all kinds of dance styles and cultures.

Check out our News for information on the arts site ACCEPTED plus summer dance programs. Discover here an adventurous poem and perceptive discussions about dancer comradery and studio life ~ *all Moving from the Heart*.

*The Dance Arts Now! Editorial Staff*

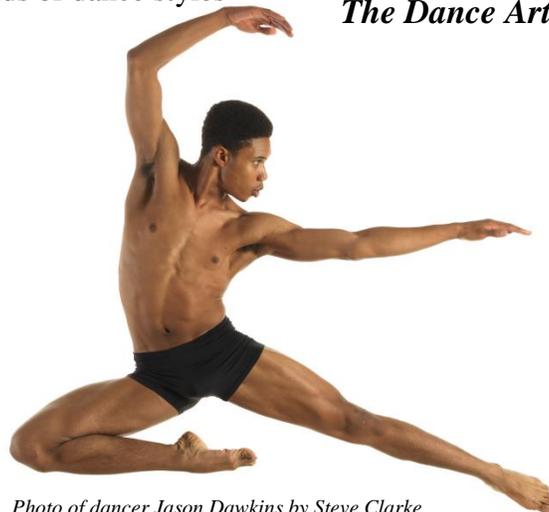


Photo of dancer Jason Dawkins by Steve Clarke.

## NEWS

### ACCEPTED

*A*ccess hundreds of universities, festivals, and scholarships - link to NDEO partner, ACCEPTED, one of the world's largest arts networks: [www.getacceptd.com](http://www.getacceptd.com). ACCEPTED also offers tips on how to audition, how to write a resume, and much more.

### SUMMER DANCE PROGRAMS

*T*his summer, there are many dance programs offered for high school students. Here are just a few highlights...

Columbia College, SC, annual Columbia Dance and Improvisation Festival:  
<http://www.thepowercompanycollaborative.org>

Coker College, SC, summer dance:  
<https://www.coker.edu/academic-programs/dept-dmt/dance>

Paul Taylor's American Modern Dance Summer Intensive, Baltimore, MD:  
<http://www.ptamd.org/school/intensives/summer-intensive/baltimore-md>

New York University, Tisch Department of Dance:  
<http://specialprograms.tisch.nyu.edu/object/sumdance.html>

Young Dancers Workshop, Bates College, Portland, ME:  
<https://www.batesdancefestival.org/education/young-dancers-workshop-2/general-information-ydw/>

Request information on additional dance workshops through the NHSDA forum, [nhsda.forum@ndeo.net](mailto:nhsda.forum@ndeo.net)



*Photo courtesy of Coker College.*



File Photo.

## THE SISTERHOOD OF THE TRAVELING POINTE SHOE

By: Sophia DeMarchi  
Advisor/Sponsor: Rachel Miranda  
Ridge High School

*Sophia is an 11th grade honors student who has been dancing since age 4; she participates in the Ridge Dance Collective, her dance studio's ballet company, and has performed in many productions, including Nutcracker, Swan Lake and Giselle.*

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3 girls

1 shoe

Containing their dreams and hopes of making it to a professional stage  
All started in a simple ballet workshop  
One was the prestigious owner's daughter from the Upper East Side  
The other a suburban teen just following her heart  
And the last a street performer from Central Park on scholarship

3 different backgrounds

1 passion

3 different days

1 friendship

Fate landed these ladies into one cramped room  
All trying to finagle their ways to reach their beds  
Bobby pins galore  
And ribbons of silky slippers lined the floor

Classes began on the dot at ten  
A vigorous barre of tendus and degagé  
Graceful glissade in centre  
Staggering leaps of force and magnitude launched across the floor  
3 times repeated equals  
1 tiring day

3 minutes of awkwardness that first night triggered  
1 intense conversation  
Connecting their talents  
Seeing that every one of them was there for the same reason  
All in it together  
To make it big on Broadway and beyond  
Discussion flowed seamlessly  
Laughs entered and exited these girls mouths like clockwork  
Before sundown there were  
3 hours of stories shared and  
1 important decision made

3 months of wearing one pair of pointe shoes would lead to  
1 swap  
Rinse and repeat  
Until all the girls got a chance to find their story  
Record it  
Make their mark on the world  
Meet new friends  
Create lasting memories  
Letters would be written on the satin lining of the shoes  
Stickers and movie stubs pasted to the outside  
Collages of smiling faces would bring it life  
Splashes of color vibrantly bringing it to life  
So that in  
3 years there would be  
1 beautiful masterpiece

All completed by  
3 teenage girls with  
1 large heart filled to the brim with

**DANCE**





## Judging Art

By: Abby Merritt  
All That Dance  
Advisor/Sponsor: Mary Pisegna Gorder  
Director: Maygan Wurzer  
All That Dance

*Abby has been dancing at ATD for fourteen years. She studies tap, jazz, lyrical, ballet and pointe, and is a member of her studio's performing company and NHSDA chapter. A senior at Roosevelt High School, she is on the swim team and a member of the tap club.*

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The first time I saw my high school dance team perform, I knew I wanted to be a member. I wanted to have the opportunity to perform more, and I wanted to show school spirit through my favorite activity: dancing. But, once the competition season started I questioned whether or not dance competitions were right for me.

I love to dance. I have loved it since I was just two years old. When I came home from day care as a toddler I couldn't wait to put on a pale pink leotard and tights. I have grown up at my dance studio, and my life would be completely different without it. Dance defines who I am ~ this is an important reason why I wanted to join dance team. If I loved dance so much, why not do it more?

I auditioned for the dance team during the end of my freshman year and was thrilled to be selected for the team! In my Sophomore year, before the competition season, practices were always fun. I learned a lot about dance in a way that was different from what I had been taught before.

I learned to pick up choreography quickly and to pay closer attention to details.

However, when competition season started, the team leadership started to focus less on how we were dancing and more on "over the top" facial expressions. At first I thought it was fun to see dance from a different angle, but when we received our scores, I was surprised that we weren't judged much for our artistry or choreography, but rather on clean formations and extravagant makeup.

Last year, at the end of junior year and my second year on the dance team, I thought a lot about my place within the group. I loved being part of the team last year as I had made amazing friends and loved getting the chance to perform more. However, I have realized that I prefer to be at my Saturday technique classes at my studio than in a high school gym waiting for the opportunity to perform for two and-a-half minutes. Furthermore, I was troubled that other teams were getting more points than ours because they had more elaborate costumes or a longer list of tricks.

To me, dance should be about telling a story, expressing myself and escaping to another world. Dancing for a score is different than dancing as an artist. Competition dance teams are not judged solely on artistry.

I have to come to the realization that I do not think it is possible to judge art so precisely. For me, dance says what words cannot. Dance is more than just a passion. It will always be part of my life, but maybe without the glitter eye shadow and false lashes.



*Abby performs. Photo courtesy of ATD.*

## **Moving From the Heart**

By: Natalie Lynam  
Advisor/Sponsor: Mary Pisegna Gorder  
Director: Maygan Wurzer  
All That Dance



*Natalie Lynam with her biggest fan, her dad!  
Photo courtesy of ATD*

*Natalie, a senior at Seattle Preparatory School, has been dancing since age 3 and now studies many techniques. Her activities: ATD performing company, student-teaching program, NHSDA chapter secretary. She has a passion for choreographing, and plans to dance in college with a double major.*

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**D**ancers are forced to be comfortable with their bodies. At my studio, we are in a very supportive, loving environment that teaches us that healthy is beautiful. I often find myself able to see the beautiful, shining moments of every other dancer. Any flaws are hidden behind the ways they strive. Why is it so hard to support and love ourselves in the same environment? Whether it's the way we use the mirror as an addiction, or the fact that a leotard and tights is the required dress code, how can we truly love our bodies?

The hardest and most humbling part of dance is that you can never stop growing or getting better. The mirror can be used as a helpful tool for corrections, but it can also turn into a distorted way to see everything wrong with a dancer's body. I often find myself sacrificing what feels good for what looks good.

Still, what I have learned through years of dance is that there is never going to be one right way to dance, or one "correct" dancer. It's an individual journey finding the way you move, because there is no way we could

ever move the same. I know that I sometimes get caught up in the idea that there's one way my foot or my arm needs to look, and can't help but get frustrated when my body cannot deliver. The truth is, even the people you think look perfect doing everything, are self-conscious and think you look perfect doing everything, which turns into a big cycle of wasting time and energy worrying that you don't look perfect, rather than recognizing that there is pure beauty in the way we all move. There must be a harmony between mind and body.

It is very possible for our minds to take over our bodies and affect the way we move. My thoughts may get entrapped by self-deprecation, and at times I am not even grateful for all the ways I have moved and flourished in my fourteen years as a dancer. "You are your biggest critic" is the hard truth. It's about perspective because I always thought that the only thing people would notice was what I was doing wrong, when it may be the complete opposite.

My dad, also known as my biggest fan, asked me after my final recital last year that sums it all up: “How do you move with your heart like that?”

The reason to dance that trumps all others ~ its impact...on others, an audience, and on oneself. I’ve become a better person because of the presence of dance in my life. It’s taught me to love; to love others and myself, and something even bigger. It is so important to see self-growth, and know that the most important aspect to dance is not beautiful feet or beautiful legs. It is, has always been, and always will be about loving dance, and everything that goes along with that fiery passion. It is about the impact, and the impact we can individually give to create a whole community.

I feel more than blessed to have the dance studio that I do. We annually put on a very special week called “Love Your Body Week” where older dancers talk to every class about how we can promote healthy body image. In my lifetime, this week has helped me so much. I had the pleasure of leading conversations with classes from age three to adults. It’s a staggering experience hearing what little 10-year-old girls say when it comes to their bodies and the environments of negativity they are in at school. I found myself sitting in pure shock that any of these young girls would feel any sort of self-consciousness because all I see is their beautiful smiles and their newfound love for dance, and there’s nothing I love more than that.

Dancers are forced to be comfortable with their bodies. Our bodies are our instruments, our equipment, our canvases. What an

audience watches on stage is our bodies. It’s a scary thing, but it’s such an unbelievable wonder to see a healthy dancer dance.

Many of my non-dancer friends assume that it’s easier for me to hate my body because I dance. Upon pondering this, I think it’s the complete opposite. Dance has taught me to work hard. Sweat. Breathe. Focus. Sure, it’s easy to get frustrated with the mirror, and what we might think it’s saying we look like. The reality is dance is about the way it feels and the way our bodies move to “wow”. This has taught me to love my body, and to really be thankful for everything it does in connection to my mind and heart.

***Who else besides dancers can move their bodies with their hearts?***



*Natalie dances. Photo courtesy of ATD.*



Photo courtesy of VSCHS.

## The Dance Room

By: Monik Walters  
Advisor/Sponsor: Kristin Martine  
Valley Stream Central High School

*A senior at Valley Stream Central High School, in her 4th year in the Performing Arts program, Monik will make her dance career a permanent part of her life because it is fundamental to all disciplines.*

It all started in the dance room. Little did I know then, that this space would impact my life permanently...

My passion for dance and life multiplied from the moment I walked into this room. In the 8th grade when I was accepted into my school's Performing Arts program, I was thrilled. I had never tried anything like this before and hoped to have fun while making worthwhile memories along the way.

After completing Level 1, in which we were required to take classes in all of the arts disciplines, we were assigned specific concentrations that best exemplified our talents. I was beyond ecstatic when placed in the *dance concentration* group; however, I was apprehensive since I was the only one without formal training. This challenge only motivated me to strengthen my technique, so at first I had to rely on my emotional attachment to get through class.

I describe dance as my most difficult class because other than the intense work and determination, it forces me to build character. Every day that I dance is a blessing; every day I don't dance is a learning experience. What enlightens me in the studio transfers to other classes, and even outside of school. My dance teacher inspires me to "aim higher, to never settle, be simply comfortable, in dance" – this theme resonates positively through me in everything that I do.

I always try to improve and expand upon what I learn to help me grow as a student and as a dancer. Dance teaches me how to be resilient, how to be confident in my insecurities or shortcomings, because with persistence these will transform into strengths. It helps interpret life situations through a different lens and through this lens my life's goals become clear.

I want to lead a life that will not only keep me motivated but will allow me to inspire others to build upon their toils and dreams ~ destined for greatness.



*Photos courtesy of CHS.*

## **FEATURE STORY** **A Fairy Tale – Crazy But True** **Creating Dance for Camera**

By: Hayden Barry  
Advisor/Sponsor: Emily Donohue  
Cranford High School

*Hayden, a senior, is a member of the Academy of Performing Arts Dance Division and color guard. She will attend Syracuse University in the fall to study Creative Writing.*

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Each fairy tale begins with a once upon a time, each rainy day begins with a clouded sky, and each school field trip begins with a yellow school bus. If that's really the case, then, the Cranford High School Dance Academy uses the term *field trip* leniently.

Instead, we'd find ourselves declaring that we were taking a ninety minute lunch break as we bounded down the streets of our town, sporting our beloved black dress socks, tan "potato sack" dresses, and trusty braided rope worn as belts. Those who witnessed the parade of fifteen girls probably thought we looked insane, but it was just another day for us in the CHSDA.

Our goal for that year? To create a dance for camera called *NaNuNay*.

It sounded crazy at first. There were people like Merce Cunningham who were capable of putting a dance like that together, but who were we to follow suit? Nevertheless, we kept our dream of dancing with projections of ourselves on the big screen.



Once we had all of our phrases perfected, we set dates for our infamous extended lunch periods, although only ten percent included eating sandwiches. There were four of them in total: the emptied house of an academy member's grandmother, a raised pathway in Lenape Park, a break during an arts festival at Union County College, a bridge, and another pathway at Nomahegan Park.

Truthfully, it was a miracle that our dresses were intact by the time we performed the completed dance in our May Show. There was nothing we didn't do while wearing those garments. In addition to rolling down hills repeatedly, we

All in all, it was a learning experience. After a while, we were comfortable dancing around in public. We said, "Yeah, sure, let's get dressed in the middle of the parking lot so we can frolic around this tree," and became surprised when we realized we were serious. All of a sudden, it was easy to embrace dancing in public!

danced in muddy grass as we walked around in the rain.

In total, the two-part dance took around nineteen minutes: five minutes for *Robots*, the "prequel" to the main portion of the dance and fourteen minutes for *NaNuNay*. The video consisted of the class dancing, emerging out of nowhere over hills, rolling down stairs in slow motion, and much more. Occasionally, we'd even throw in a game of slide or braiding someone's hair. Towards the end, a dancer performed a main phrase on video in sync with what she was doing on stage — it went without saying that none of us could believe our eyes (or luck) when we saw that for the first time.

People always say that it's more enjoyable to dance with an audience, so imagine how much more extraordinary it is when our audience consists of people who are plainly going about their day...*Just walking down the street.*





**EXTRA! EXTRA! EXTRA!**



NDEO is pleased to announce the award recipients for the **2015 Artistic Merit, Leadership, and Academic Achievement Awards** as selected by the NHSDA adjudication committee. To learn more about the NHSDA visit our website at [www.ndeo.org/nhsdasp](http://www.ndeo.org/nhsdasp) and [www.ndeo.org/nhsdaaward2015](http://www.ndeo.org/nhsdaaward2015).

<b>Recipient</b>	<b>Award</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>NHSDA Chapter</b>
Rachel Spitzmiller	Winner	SC	Fine Arts Center
Joy Giuffre	Finalist	NJ	Passaic County Technical Institute
Damani Van Rensalier	Finalist	NJ	Passaic County Technical Institute
Mariah Bucher	Honorable Mention	PA	Pittsburgh CAPA 6-12
Morgan Furnari	Honorable Mention	FL	Gulliver Preparatory High School
Greta Gasswint	Honorable Mention	PA	Pittsburgh CAPA 6-12
Isabel Giacomazzi	Honorable Mention	CA	The Branson School
Jennifer Klammer	Honorable Mention	FL	Miami Arts Charter School
Mary Larkin	Honorable Mention	VA	Studio Bleu Dance Center
Kyla Makovsky	Honorable Mention	PA	The Lehigh Valley Charter High School for the Arts
Victoria Roman	Honorable Mention	AZ	Desert Ridge High School

The recipients have all been inducted into the NHSDA and excelled equally in all three categories:

- ✚ **Artistic Merit:** The candidate demonstrates technical and artistic excellence in dance as evidenced by performing original choreography and submitting an essay describing the intent, inspiration and challenges of their choreography.
- ✚ **Leadership:** The candidate demonstrates outstanding leadership in and outside the field of dance at the school, community, state, and/or national level as evidenced by a strong resume, recommendation letter and leadership essay.
- ✚ **Academic Achievement:** The candidate demonstrates academic excellence with a high cumulative grade point average and two essays detailing future plans and the impact of dance.



*Congratulations, Class of 2015!*

***Dance Arts Now!***  
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