

DK Dance Productions opens new studio in Alton with high regards for both dance and community

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
December 21 2017 9:08 PM



ALTON - Established in Florissant in 2006, DK Dance Productions has recently moved across the river to open a new studio in Alton, Illinois.

Owner Darci Ward said the Florissant studio is already well-established, with dance teams placing in national competitions, and recitals outgrowing studio space - now filling Lewis and Clark Community College halls to capacity. The Alton studio, however, located at 2600 State Street near Joe K's and Walgreens, is relatively new, having opened in November. Ward is hoping the new location grows, so she can provide the same level of service to the Riverbend she has for North County and the St. Louis area.

That service goes well beyond dancing, despite the dance instruction being a constantly-evolving mechanism keeping with the most recent trends and techniques. Students of DK Dance Productions are looked at as more than dancers, and are instructed as full human beings, Ward said. They are expected to assist with the studio, keep up with their practice and even do community outreach and service.

"We, the faculty, staff, dancers and parents of DK Dance Productions, are a vibrant community of people who have high regard for each other, the art of dance and the respectability and value of the work we do," Ward said in an email to Riverbender.com. "All who participate are requested to demonstrate the willingness to be held accountable to uphold the values and ethics we declare as the fundamental guidelines. In all our endeavors to study and perform as an expression of our love of dance, we show respect to the parents, our peers, the facility, the staff and faculty of DK Dance Productions and all of the wider dancer community - including our competition. We consider it a privilege to participate in a worldwide community for the performance art of dance, exemplifying the values of integrity, character, leadership, responsibility and professionalism."

Instructors at DK Dance Productions are all adults, and Ward said they attend training across the country from international hot spots such as New York City and Los Angeles to regional centers for dance in Wisconsin to keep pace with current trends and choreography. She said her instructors train once a year at least and attend conventions in St. Louis regarding the international competitive dance community as well.

Despite being a dance studio, however, Ward said she is extremely dedicated on a full spectrum instruction for her students. The production company hosts a chapter of the National Honors Society for Dance Art, which has similar stipulations as the National Honors Society for high school students, including maintaining an acceptable GPA and committing hours to service projects. Recently, Ward said her students hosted a fundraiser for a food bank in St. Louis.

"We're also a part of More Than Great Dancing, which holds us to a higher standard," Ward said. "We teach dance techniques as well as life skills. We assist our students with time management. We're building on things we've seen as teachers over the last few years. I've been teaching dance for the last 20 years, and over that course of time, I have seen a shift in kids. Everyone is on their phone all the time, and they don't sit down and eat dinner with their families. So, we're trying to bring discipline, structure and accountability through art."

DK Dance Productions also strives to be accessible for all. A program called SPARK, created by DK Dance Productions Assistant Director Mary Gegg, is open to children of all abilities. Gegg is a pediatric occupational therapist by day and a dance teacher by night. She built the program based on principles of Autism Movement Therapy.

Upcoming events include a Holiday Spectacular Show this Saturday at Lewis and Clark Community College as well as a promotion called "Tutu Under the Tree," which offers a free class to see what a potential student may like, and, upon registration for January classes, those students will receive a wrapped tutu and free ballet shoes.