

Pazzazz Dance Team Earned Two State Championships at the 2010 Team Dance Illinois State Championship

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Depending on your political perspective, it may or may not take a village to raise a child. But there is no debate – at least in Madison County, Illinois – that it takes a village to raise the roof at the Peoria Civic Center, where 16 girls representing the village of Bethalto danced their way into earning two state championships at the 2010 Team Dance Illinois State Championship.

On March 7, the Pazzazz Dance Team of Civic Memorial High School earned its first state title in Open Dance and its third consecutive state title in Lyrical Dance, outscoring dozens of teams from throughout the state.

Even more impressive than State Championships, perhaps, are the scores these small-town girls post, which rival even the largest schools in the state whose student population would equal half of Bethalto's entire population.

Yet in spite of its modest size, the village and its rural residents who sprinkle the rolling prairies surrounding Bethalto have boasted one of the midwest's top high school dance teams for more than two decades.

The Pazzazz have been spinning, jumping and kicking their competition under Head Coach Calvin Soong and Choreographer Craig Wilson since 2003 but have been involved with the team since 1996. The men are regarded within high school competitive dance circles as two of the best coaches in the nation-As the team has also previously earned two National Championship Titles in California.

“Oh, I wouldn't say that,” says Soong, a 1989 Fox High School graduate who owns and operates a salon in Bethalto. “We are blessed with exceptional young ladies and supportive parents. It's their dedication that makes them so successful.”

Wilson, a 1987 Civic Memorial alumni, says “We are proud to bring positive recognition to our community and hope to continue to do so. The girls and parents work tremendously hard to earn this type of success.”

Next year will be no exception. Last month’s middle school informational meeting drew a record number of girls interested in dancing for the Pazzazz. Considering the team will lose only three squad members to graduation this year, chances look good for yet another trip from the village of Bethalto to the state championships.

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