

# Red Mountain Ranch Up Close

Bringing neighbors closer to their community

July 2011

## CHEERFUL DANCE STEPS PERFORMED WITH GRACEFUL ENTHUSIASM

By AnnElise Makin

This year's *Night to Remember* was called *Stories of Love*, and during the event, Red Mountain Ranch ballerinas danced their hearts out.

Stars of all sizes, sparkling in colorful costumes, cavorted gracefully across the stage. Elle Eckardt-Hutchings and her daughter, Lindsay Kertesz, had arranged a delightful potpourri of nearly 30 choreographies.

"Let's try that again!" exhorted Elle to her team of coryphées in the dressing room. "I couldn't hear you!" As was tradition, the *Smile, smile, smile* chant coaxed the fun into the ensemble before the fear of the limelight could sneak backstage.

This kind of pep talk and year-end recital was a first for VIP guest Cupid Xander Bischoff, Elle's 20-month-old grandson. His important job was to present the flowers.

Cupid cared little about how to finagle the foot part of the tights, but loved to play pat-a-cake with the older girls. Then the *Business of Love* called him and his entourage on stage.

Soon the Starlettes, Star Brights, Super Stars, Rising Stars and Twinkle Stars lit the plain backdrop up with magic. Parents were amazed by the brilliant, advanced choreographies of the senior dancers, and they chuckled at the cute factor of the littles dolls. Some dancers were cast in up to 10 performances. They had to change costumes in a New York minute.

"This is the first year for my youngest, Emma," said Julie Brown with butterfly Emma on her arm. "Dance class is the first thing she wants to do. Dancing also has been very good for her older sister, Katie, as far as grace."

Katie, a third-year student with Elle, had four dances with the Starlettes that night. When

Katie performed last year, she attracted her friend, Megan Harmon, a quite mature dancer, to the Red Mountain Ranch Dance Studio.

"Megan saw Katie last year and loved the show,"

mom Lori Harmon recalled. "Megan has taken classes before, also played soccer for a year, but with Elle, they get a lot more dances. And kids like Megan want to be out there on stage."

While Zoe Wikfors, a Super Star, changed costumes, mom Christine helped with professional acumen. "Zoe has always loved dance class," Christine said, pinning an accessory in place. An instant later, mom rushed out to the theater to see Zoe on stage.

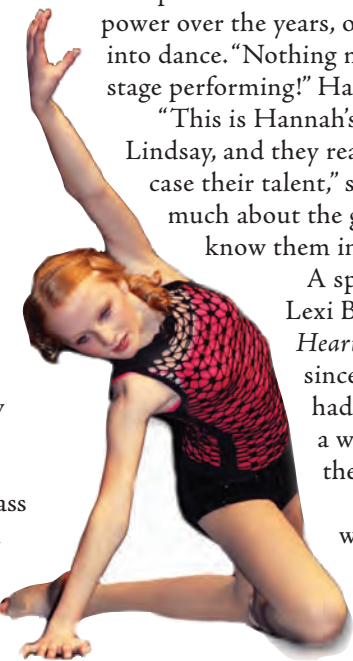


Super Star Hannah Ruckle, who has radiated star power over the years, obviously put all her passion into dance. "Nothing makes me happier than being on stage performing!" Hannah said.

"This is Hannah's sixth year with Elle and Lindsay, and they really allow the dancers to showcase their talent," said mom Lisa. "They also care much about the girls, and take time to get to know them individually."

A special performance treat was Lexi Bailey's solo in red, *A Jar of Hearts*. Lexi had been with Elle since the beginning in 2005. She had moved to Corpus Christi for a while, but came back in time for the dance classes.

The *Stories of Love* had been written by dedicated instructors and caring mothers. At the recital, they culminated in a dazzling show. ■



### SPECIAL THANKS GOES TO

Lindsay for having the heart she has for dance and her students, and for all her hard work all year; the Red Mountain Community Church for the generous use of their auditorium; and to Kelly Michael and Jerry Wilson from the Red Mountain Ranch Country Club for their continued support.

### PRODUCTION CREDITS

Elle Eckardt-Hutchings, Director, Choreography, Costumes; Lindsay Kertesz, Assistant Director, Choreography, Costumes; Mark Reinholz, Music Mix and Program Design; Craig Herrman, Sound; Greg Mills, Lighting; Digital Video Productions, Recital DVDs; Ashleigh Lyle, On-Stage Line Up and Make Up; Vicki Lagermeier, Stage/Entry Decorating; Tobi Hancock, Photography; Mary Lambourne, Backstage Line Up; Ashley Adams and Caitlin West, Backstage Assistants; Michael Baker, Curtain; and all the dancers and their families!

### CONGRATULATIONS

Four students, coached by Lindsay Kertesz, were chosen for the Elite Dance Team at Shepherd Middle School in 2012. Congratulations to Hannah Ruckle, Caroline Tani, Megan Harmon and Andrea Saum.

### DONATE TO THE CARE BEAR FUND

The Care Bear Scholarship Fund, a financial emergency resource for tuition and costuming, was named after Cari Lagermeier. Cari, a beautiful dancer with Elle, passed away from a chronic illness in 2006 at the age of 21.

Help the Red Mountain Ranch Dance Studio fill these empty shoes and donate. Contact Elle121@aol.com.

### SIGN UP FOR THE FALL

Registration will be held at Red Mountain Ranch Country Club Fitness Center on Aug. 6, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Classes will begin the week of Aug. 15.

If you are interested in private lessons, or have questions about upcoming classes, contact Elle at Elle121@aol.com.

## ARIZONA AQUA STARS compete nationally

By Dawn Abbey

A pair of Mesa Arizona Aqua Stars (AAS) synchronized swim teams won gold medals at the USA Synchro Region D Championships Meet in Las Vegas in May, and have advanced to compete in the national meet in Seattle this month.

"Not only are we the No. 1 Team in the state, but we are also the only team in Arizona to have swimmers qualify for National Teams," exclaimed team recruiter TerriLynne Collins.

The qualifying swimmers are Eryn Schmisser (11/12) and Monica Velasquez-Stiak (13/15). Both girls will attend a national training camp for potential future members of U.S. National Team 1, which represents the U.S. at the Olympics and other international competitions. "Also, we are proud that Aimee Liou, Lindsey Anderson and Sydney Schmisser qualified and attended National Team trials," TerriLynne said.

"Synchronized swimming is a unique combination of swimming, dance and gymnastics performed in water to music," she further explained. The Aqua Stars club offers girls' swimming in teams, from ages 8 to 18, through classes and summer camps.

The girls train at Kino Aquatic Center, located at 850 N. Horne. The center is under the direction of head coach Jill Parr, who has been named 2008 West Zone Coach of the Year, 2009 13-15 National Team Assistant Coach and 2010 Junior Team Development Coach of the Year. The local coaching staff all are former nationally ranked swimmers.

"This nationally recognized, local year-round club is an independent, non-profit organization operated by



the Arizona Aqua Star Parent Association," said TerriLynne.

Linda Witter started AAS in 1983. Linda is the current head coach of the Ohio State Collegiate National Champions, and former head coach of the U.S. Olympic Synchronized Swimming Team.

Registration is now open for classes and summer camps. Classes and clinics are available for all ages and proficiency levels. Girls should

be 6 years or older, possess basic swimming skills and feel comfortable in deep water without a flotation device. ■

To register, call TerriLynne at (480) 654-8508, or send an e-mail to collins\_526@msn.com. Further information can be found at [www.azaquastars.org](http://www.azaquastars.org).

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