

Red Mountain Ranch Up Close

Bringing neighbors closer to their community

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RED MOUNTAIN DANCERS Win Numerous Trophies

By AnnElise Makin

With their endurance and passion for dance recently rewarded with gold, this group of Red Mountain Ranch teenagers was visibly elated.

Hannah Ruckle, Megan Harmon, Bailey Fowler and Kayla Burgher achieved high gold trophies for their solos at the MOVE competition at the Mesa Arts Center. In team, the dancers scored *high gold* and *gold* for their excellent performances in the small group category. This was a wonderful success for L's Dance Studio.

"There were 486 entries and 12 large Arizona dance studios at the MOVE competition," reported Director Elle Hutchings, with a bigger smile than usual, during rehearsal at the Red Mountain Ranch Fitness Center. "For us this was a big step up as a learning ensemble."

Some of the girls have studied under Elle for seven years or more, starting instruction as early as kindergarten. The impressive golden cups they received at the MOVE event were a validation of their mastery and skill.

"It was a lot of work, but it was so worth it, because we did so well," beamed choreographer and co-instructor Lindsay Kertesz. "The only expectation we had," she said, "was to do the very best we can."

Before the event, dance teacher Lindsay had spent countless hours puzzling together all the steps, moves and poses. Meanwhile, the group members rehearsed and displayed excitement about the brand new L's Studio team jackets.

Although this small studio presents an outstanding recital every year, competitions are not the norm at L's Dance Studio. The last one happened in 2008. So, for most of these young dancers, the MOVE event was the

first competition, as such.

The high MOVE placements, as well as the excellent performances, at the earlier Cathy Roe Ultimate Dance Competition, showed the girls and their supporters how good they actually are. Obviously, they all have a natural passion for dance.



MOVE DANCE COMPETITION RESULTS

High Gold, Solos: Hannah Ruckle, *All That Jazz* (268.8); Megan Harmon, *Skyscraper* (263.4); Bailey Fowler, *Turning Tables* (262.2); and Kayla Burgher, *Wildflower* (262).

High Gold, Small Group: Kayla Burgher, Bailey Fowler, Megan Harmon, Hannah Ruckle, Brittany Sanford and Tristin Zimmerman in *Vogue*.

Gold, Small Group: Kayla Burgher, Bailey Fowler, Megan Harmon, Meghan Reinholz and Hannah Ruckle in *Someone Like You*.

"Dance is a great stress reliever for me," stated Megan Harmon, age 13, who started with Elle nearly two years ago. "I love learning new stuff and tricks and being on stage." Megan practices at least three hours a week at the Red Mountain Ranch Fitness Center studio and one hour every day on her own.

"When I come here, I can let all my worries go away," 14-year-old Hannah Ruckle confided. She has been training at L's Studio for seven years. Hannah feels amazing when she is able to entertain.

"I really like this studio," she continued. "We are like a big happy family here. It's like my whole life." Hannah has set her eyes on a career in dance. She wants to become a Rockette chorus girl, and later open her own dance studio.

"Dance is my favorite thing," said Kayla Burgher, age 13. "It is really fun, cools me down, and I get rid of stress." She loves to perform on stage and to dance fun stuff, like jazz numbers. "We are like best friends here and share. I never had a bad time."

"I didn't know about L's Studio until last year," Brittany Sanford, age 14, stated. "I was inspired when I saw Hannah dancing, and noticed how much she had progressed. Lindsay and Miss Elle have helped me improve a lot, as well."

L's Studio has made these dancers feel close and connected. "We check our attitude at the door," Brittany said, "and then everybody gets equal attention, unlike at other dance schools, where favoritism factors in."

It is sure good to be nice, but it is even better to win. Being a cohesive unit and staying in tune helped these girls to the top. "It felt good to be recognized," Kayla admitted.

Hannah agreed. "We may not be the biggest studio, but we loved showing off our dances and the new jackets," she beamed.

Congratulations, Red Mountain Ranch dancers! ■

If you would like to find out more about L's Dance Studio, located at the Red Mountain Ranch Fitness Center, and the upcoming programs for the fall season, contact Elle at (480) 244-3344, or send an e-mail to elle121@aol.com.

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