

# Springfield Reporter

Continuing a Century-Old Hometown Tradition

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## Sharing Passions and Strengthening Family Bonds Several Mother-Child Connections at The Dance Factory

**By Suzanne Stern**

On contemplating The Dance Factory's Spring Recital, held annually over Mother's Day weekend, owner/teacher Kate Frizzell-DeRosia sees an unplanned but meaningful connection.

"The relationship between The Dance Factory and the moms who dance here is really the heart of the studio," she explains.

The community-centered dance school has been long known for its inclusivity, but for the many mothers and children who dance there together, it engenders a unique bond. These cross-generational dyads share encouragement,

inspiration, and sometimes the same classes.

Chief among them is Kate and daughter Jessie DeRosia. "Jessie actually started classes at The Dance Factory when I was pregnant with her," laughs Kate. "I was doing 18 classes a week so it's no wonder she came out as a ball of energy!"

As a child, Jessie was a student in Kate's classes. By her teen years, she advanced to the same ballet and jazz classes as her mom.

"I loved being in classes with my kids," says Kate, whose other daughter Alexandra also danced. "I think they liked it too. It was special having them learn with me. As a parent,

this doesn't happen very often."

Kate assumed ownership of the studio in 2015, and Jessie returned to teach. The pair completed their 200 hour yoga teacher training together and take classes from one another when their schedules allow.

Jessie believes that: "Teaching and dancing together has allowed us to bond not only as mother/daughter but also as dancers and friends."

Ashley Hensel-Browning also grew up at The Dance Factory and returned to teach after completing graduate school. Like Jessie, her daughters Aurora (11) and Leona (8) began dancing

in utero. As infants, the girls took classes strapped to Ashley's chest before graduating to preschool dance at age two.

While having a parent as a teacher can be challenging for some, Leona enjoys it because, "I always get to see my mom there and it's fun to dance with her." For Aurora, value of the relationship extends outside of the studio. "I like having my mom as one of my teachers because I can ask questions about class later," she says.

Ballet, tap, and preschool dance teacher Dana Blake performed as a teen with The Pennsylvania Ballet Company, and her

daughter, Bonnie, is following in her footsteps. Bonnie completed her early dance training at The Dance Factory, taking Dana's ballet and tap classes before moving to a studio closer to her high school.

"It was quite beautiful watching her grow as a dancer," remembers Dana.

Mothers Erica Yuengling and Alysia Wolf not only provide the studio with organizational support, they attend weekly ballet classes with their teenage daughters, Anneka Yuengling and Madailein Wolf. (Alysia's younger daughter, Francesca, also dances.)

"With teenagers, it's a  
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delicate balance between independence and togetherness," says Erica. "I feel so honored that Anneka invites me into this part of her world, and that we can dance together and cheer each other on."

The girls are equally appreciative of the opportunity to dance with their mothers.

"It's nice to share my passion with someone I know," says Madailein. "I've been talking about ballet my whole life, and now my mom understands."

"I really love having my mom in class and sharing performances with her," Anneka agrees.

A trio of moms in the Monday night tap class—Meredith Kelley, Laura Rounds, and Killy Bascom—were inspired by their young dancers to begin classes again.

Meredith danced through her teen years and sporadically as an adult, but it was her ten-year-old daughter, Gwendelyn, who encouraged her to resume regular classes. "We are so happy to be in the studio dancing together," says Meredith, who also oversees costuming for the studio's annual production of *The Nutcracker*.

Laura, mother to hip-hop students Madeline (8) and Ellie (6) chose to return to dance classes "because I wanted to show my girls that it's never too late to get back into something you loved."

"As a mother, I feel so lucky that my girls have such positive female influences in their lives," says Killy, whose daughters Ava (10) and Clara (8) study yoga, acro, and hip-hop.

Springfield resident Colleen Bachinski joined Matthew, Danny, and McKenzie, ages 4 through 14, when she returned to ballet classes last year. "I loved Kate as my

dance teacher when I was little, and I loved the community of The Dance Factory," says Colleen. "It's a fun place for all of us to share something we enjoy doing."

One Springfield family has three generations of Dance Factory dancers. Watching her daughter and granddaughter dance and perform led Kathi Stern to begin yoga and yoga-dance classes.

"I love sharing the joy of dancing with them," she says. "After watching my daughter go from beginning ballet to dancing the Sugar Plum Fairy in *The Nutcracker*, it makes my heart happy to have her dancing again and bringing that joy to my granddaughter," she says.

Of her mother and grandmother dancing at the same studio, Rachel (6) says, "It feels awesome. We are a family of dancers."

"The Dance Factory really is an extended family unit," says Kate Frizzell-DeRosia. "There are not very many opportunities for moms and children to be involved in the same activity at the same time. It is a special relationship to share this experience with your children!"

The Dance Factory's Spring Recital will be performed at Springfield High School on Saturday, May 7 at 2:00 and 6:00 p.m. For more information, visit [www.dancefactoryvt.com](http://www.dancefactoryvt.com).