

THE PERFECT GETAWAY

By: Karen Hsu

Dance is typically portrayed as the wondrous art of body movement in a rhythmical pattern. Through my personal experiences, when the word "dance" comes across my mind, I not only visualize myself performing distinctive, yet attractive movements but myself undergoing another life enduring experience. However, my point of view on dance wasn't always like this but the exact opposite. Without the help of a convincing neighbor, I would have never been introduced to this phenomenal world of twists and turns that would soon become my personal haven for my everyday life. Who knew that something I disliked and even jeered about a little more than one and a half years ago would end up being the exact same thing I can't live without today?

I first entered AATF (Asian Art Talent Foundation) as a naïve child eager to experience a new activity at the same time make new friends. Not only have I succeeded in doing so, but I have also learned numerous life values that affect both my performance on the dance floor and my judgments and actions as a young adult. With the help of my determined dance teachers and friends, I was able to overcome my phobia of performing onstage, while feeling proud and confident. Each time I step foot onto the dance floor, a rush of vitality suddenly overwhelms me, forcing my entire body into the state of vigor. Little did I know that along this miraculous journey, that I, like my parents also began to appreciate and understand the Asian culture.

With the fundamental basics that I've learned from AATF, I was able to apply them into the next, huge chapter of my life, joining my high school dance team, Orchesis. Due to many performances, competitions and after school practices I have now experienced the true definition of both determination and hard work. This team has taught me the true meaning of teamwork

and commitment but most importantly serves as a challenge for me, challenging my capability to handle everything and anything life has thrown at me. Being a teenager is the most stressful stage in life; education, parents, friends, one way or another everything revolves around me all at once, adding more to the chaos I normally have. But once I'm dancing, whether it's just bobbing my head or swinging my arm from side to side, all known anxiety and stress is lifted off my shoulders and I'm left in the state of serenity.

Dancing has always been thought of as a valueless pastime and a form of exercise for me until I personally experienced it myself, which has opened my eyes into something greater in the world. I have never predicted dancing to play such a significant part of my life as it does now. Along the way, I've met various types of people and formed many new friendships, with those of all ages, at the same time strengthening old ones. Before I started dancing, I thought it would be a cinch to perform onstage, with or without the skills, but I was proven wrong. I have learned that with perfection comes with strong dedication and effort. Through this type of dedication, precious memories of both laughter and pain have been shared amongst everyone in the AATF group and Orchesis, thus only bringing each and every one of us closer, creating two inseparable families.

Throughout my dancing days, not only has my physical health and flexibility improved but my mental state of mind has also. With all the positive energy surrounding me, I cannot help but become more confident in my own skin and surroundings. Many may say that "laughter is the best medicine," but as for me, "dancing, whether it's on my bedroom floor or on stage, is the perfect getaway."