

Three teen dancers help Team Canada win bronze at world championships

Three Center Stage dancers were part of an award-winning Canadian Showdance team in Germany.

Julia Bonifacio, 12, Abigail Dillon, 12, and Alyssa Gibbons, 14, traveled to Germany, Nov. 21-28 to compete as part of Team Canada in the junior division of Showdance world championships. According to Julia, this is a dance style that tells a story. The judges look at technique and style, but more importantly, they look at the formations on stage.

The girls had won places in the competition after auditioning for famed singer, dancer and choreographer Blake McGrath this summer. Alyssa said while many of the teams trained together all year to prepare for this competition, the Canadian team met only five times prior to the competition for choreography and rehearsals.

The Canadian team placed third among 22 teams competing—two teams from Slovenia won the gold and silver. Julia said Canada had very strong technique compared to the other teams, but others had some very creative ideas. Members of the Slovenia team

that won were all chess pieces and they played out a game of chess as they danced, she said.

“When we were first getting on the stage we were all very nervous,” said Alyssa, “but after that it was all excitement and the urge to nail our dance. We believe our performance was awesome. We know we did the best we could.”

Abigail said, “We think our performance went very well and we really pulled it together out there! ...We were very technically strong and we definitely stood out because we had a different style than the other teams, but there was definitely some very strong teams—very stiff competition. It was very close.”

“I was very excited but a little bit nervous to be performing for live television in front of the entire world,” agreed Ju-



Alyssa Gibbons, Julia Bonifacio and Abigail Dillon—all Center Stage dancers—were part of the Team Canada that danced to a bronze medal in the junior division of the Showdance world championships.

lia. “After the performance we were able to watch the dance on a video screen backstage. The whole team was very excited and thrilled to hear our marks.”

Both Abigail and Alyssa hope to repeat the experience in the future.

“It was the most memorable trip and experience I’ve ever had. Next time I would like to try the tap team. I really loved the experience,” said Abigail.

“For me, dance is a huge part of who I am. I have danced with Kelly and Claudia (Center Stage owners) for 10 years. I cannot

imagine a life without dance and Center Stage. It is a like a second family to me. Dance fills my soul!

Alyssa agreed. “It was an awesome experience, although now I would like to audition for other things as well,” she said. “Dance has become my greatest passion. I have been dancing since the age of four and loved it ever since. It has given me discipline, talent and amazing friends. Dance is my escape. It has helped me through the difficult times in my life and I hope I can continue to pursue dance all life long.”

“Dance has helped me show everyone who I really am. It has brought me out of my shell, allowed me to make wonderful friendships and has given me many incredible opportunities,” said Julia, but at the same time, she wouldn’t want to do this again. “I want to keep this

as a very special memory and so I don’t want to do it again. It would be different.”

The girls traded Halton Hills pins with many dancers from other countries, especially the girls from South Africa because they stayed in the same hotel as the Canadian team. Julia traded her Mom’s Canada jacket with one of the South African dancers. The girls even joined in on the South African team’s warm-up at the competition.

“We are so proud of these young ladies! Not only are they wonderful dancers but they are great role models and ambassadors for the Town of Halton Hills,” say Kelly Paddle and Claudia Caicedo, owners/Artistic Directors of Center Stage School of the Arts. “Having the opportunity to travel and dance abroad allows these girls the chance to see beyond their own experience, be inspired and be an inspiration to others. Trips and experiences like this can broaden their scope of the kinds of possibilities that are achievable and attainable in the future, either in the field of dance or any other pathway they choose to follow.”

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