

FROM STUDENT TO TEACHER TO OWNER: 1 DANCER'S JOURNEY AT TDI

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The student has become the teacher at an Acton dance studio.

The new owner of Acton's TDI - formerly Total Dance Innovation - Meagan Speakman, has been with the studio from the age of 11. She started as a dancer, then became a teacher, and eventually took ownership of the studio.

Growing up in Acton, Speakman said she stayed at the studio when her family moved to Milton.

"My best friends are the people I graduated with here," she said. "They work with me as well, and they were my roommates when I was in college, you kind of develop that bond."

The personal bonds formed through dance kept Speakman involved.

"You're in the thick of it with people," she said. "You have inside jokes and you share the same tears. It's a unique experience that brings people together."

From TDI, Speakman studied commercial dance at George Brown College, a program that expanded her skill set into singing and acting.

"It was like jumping into the deep end of what the dance industry would be like," Speakman said, adding her program would prepare her for work in musicals, music videos, and other dance-centric roles.

But dance was more than just a profession for Speakman.

"It changed me as a person," she said. "It taught me confidence, emotion, and artistry."

"You come here and you're focused and work your butt off but have so much fun at the same time," she said.

While Speakman found work as a coach and dancer for Toronto Wolfpack, the city's rugby team, and Toronto Rock, the city's lacrosse team, she continued to teach in Acton.

"I kept coming back," Speakman said. "I can't duplicate what I have here, it's such a great community."



Bryan Myers/Torstar

Meagan Speakman, new owner of TDI in Acton, poses in the dance studio's new space. Speakman started at TDI as a student, became a teacher, and now owns the studio.

And when the opportunity came up, she purchased the studio.

While the initials will remain the same, Speakman is rebranding the studio as The Dance Impact.

"It's unbelievable how it can influence you as an artist, a person, even as an employee or student," Speakman said. "It's not just discipline but patience and time management."

The Dance Impact offers clas-

ses from pre-dance (for ages two and up), to adult classes.

The Dance Impact is located at 15 Mill St. W. and is hosting an open house on Aug. 20. More information available at www.the-danceimpact.com.



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