

Arts & Entertainment

Local duo takes love of ballet to the next level

Dance Shoppe graduates Carly Miller (left) and Kelsey-Lynn Corradetti and are keeping busy as newcomers to the prestigious Quinte Ballet School of Canada in Belleville.

Photo by GRAHAM PAINE



By STEPHANIE THIESSEN
The Champion

When Carly Miller was a little girl, her grandparents took her to see The Nutcracker. It was while she sat in that plush seat, eyes sparkling, that she knew.

One day she was going to be a ballerina. "That's where I got my start," said the 18-year-old Milton resident.

Back for the holidays from Quinte Ballet School of Canada in Belleville, Ms Miller took a few moments to reflect on her first season at the school, which concluded this month with her dancing in the school's production of The Nutcracker — a dream come true.

Both Ms Miller and 12-year-old Milton resident Kelsey-Lynn Corradetti trained at The Dance Shoppe on Main Street and left Milton to start at Quinte just a few months ago.

After watching The Nutcracker as an eight-year-old, Ms Miller said it didn't take her long to start working towards the goal of becoming a professional dancer. She enrolled at The Dance Shoppe, owned by Ruth-Ann Gray, the following month.

That was 10 years ago. "Ruth-Ann is always so supportive," Ms Miller said. "She's always there pushing me to try different auditions, and giving me opportunities to teach."

Ms Miller said she hopes to teach dance but wants to keep her options open, so she's taking the teachers' training and professional programs.

"I was always watching her (Ms Gray) teach and the way she taught. I wanted to be just like her," she said.

Ms Miller and Kelsey-Lynn, a former

student at Holy Rosary Separate School, both toured with The Nutcracker, performing in Belleville, Kingston and Toronto.

Both mentioned that one of the tour's highlights was the Toronto performance, where busloads of Dance Shoppe students, instructors and parents showed up to offer their support.

While Ms Miller graduated from high school last year, Kelsey-Lynn is continuing to take regular classes at Quinte. Each day, she must balance her workload to get everything done. And that's no small feat.

For the first half of the day she takes regular classes, while the second half — until 6 or 7 p.m. — is filled with dance classes.

Kelsey-Lynn said the biggest challenge she's had to face at Quinte is homesickness. She and Ms Miller live with billets who act as their families away from home.

"I had to leave all my friends. At first it was hard, but as I went along, it became easier as I made more friends," she said, adding she had to get used to billeting. "I'm used to my own family, not someone else's."

Kelsey-Lynn's mom, Tosca Corradetti, said although she knew she'd miss her daughter if accepted into Quinte, she didn't want to hold her back. And she feels Quinte is where Kelsey-Lynn is supposed to be.

"Though it's full of challenges, it would be such a shame for her not to use her gifts," Ms Corradetti said.

Ms Gray said she's proud of both her former students.

"They both seem to be living up to the challenge. They're used to being surrounded by their own families, so that's been a tough aspect. And it's a lot of work. But they're definitely where they want to be."

Stephanie Thiessen can be reached at sthiessen@miltoncanadianchampion.com.

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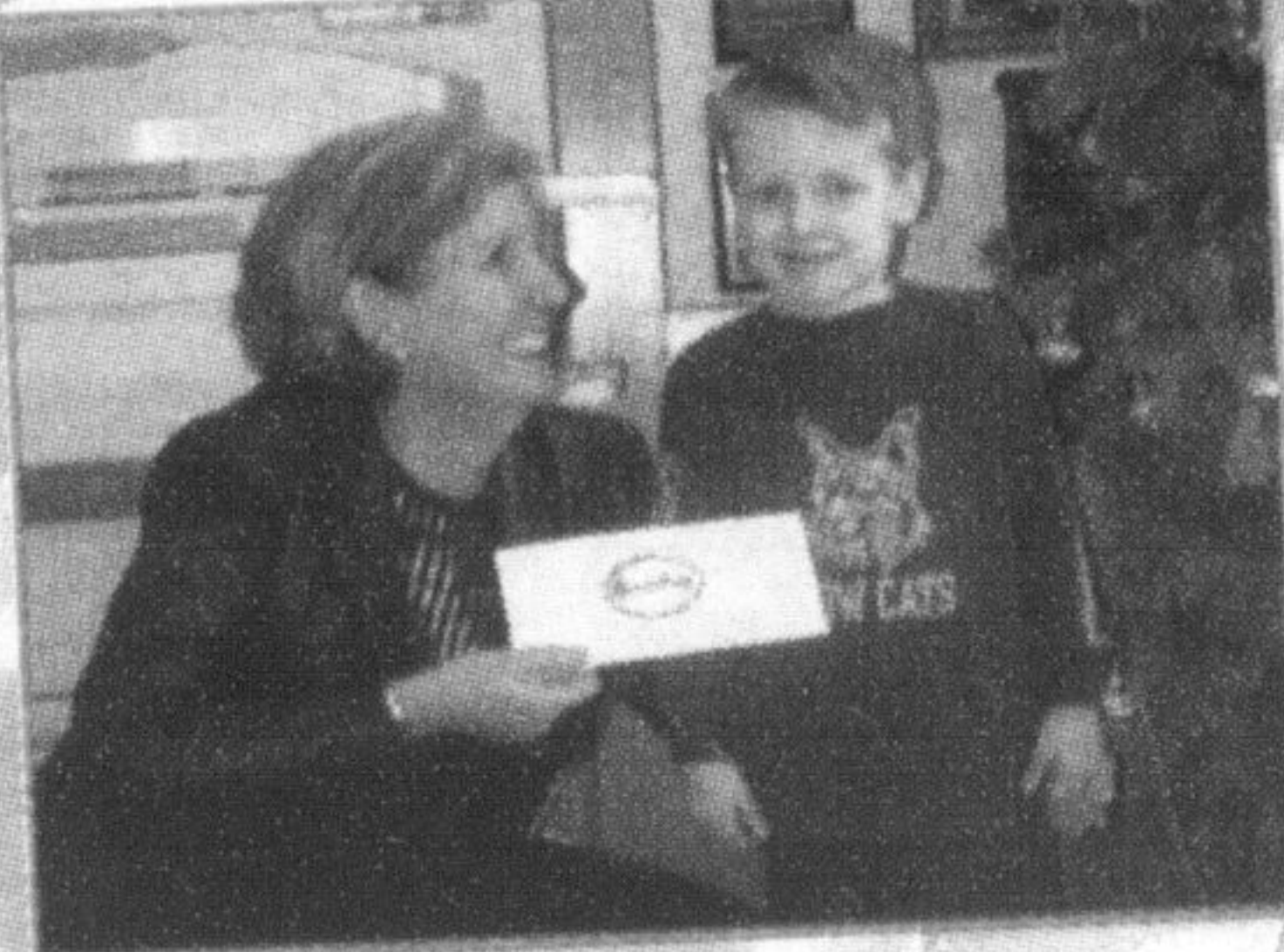


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