

DanceCentre remains in experienced local, hands, feet

BY HANNELORE VOLPE
Staff Writer

Although the ownership has changed at a dance school that's become a Stouffville institution, the students will keep right on dancing.

Stouffville dance teacher Deborah Radbourne, who ran The DanceCentre in the heart of Stouffville for the past five years, recently made the difficult decision to focus on her teaching career at Unionville High School in the Arts York Program.

Ballantrae resident Angela Tucker, who runs the York Dance Academy in Aurora and Newmarket, has taken over the school at 10 Commercial St. in Stouffville.

Alumni of The DanceCentre includes Blair Puente, who dances with the National Ballet, and Kristie Kennedy, who is with the Toronto Dance Theatre.

The school's name has been changed to the York Dance Academy. Dancing since the age of



ANGELA TUCKER: Ballantrae resident buys and renames Stouffville's DanceCentre.

three, Mrs. Tucker became a professional ballet dancer for a short time.

Before starting her dance schools 20 years ago, she developed the dance program for Seneca College and was in the outdoor education program at Green Acres.

"Dancing is something you can do all your life," Mrs. Tucker said. "You might just have to change what you do."

She also teaches social dance at Stouffville District Secondary School's night school.

The York Dance Academy has more than 1,000 students in Newmarket and Aurora.

"You feel you have been a part of so many people's lives," she said of her years

of teaching dance.

There are a significant number of adult students in ballet, jazz and tap in the York Dance Academy's Aurora and Newmarket locations. Some of them even perform in the year-end recitals.

Faced with the prospect of continuing to juggle two jobs she loved, Mrs. Radbourne believes she made the right decision, even though it was a very difficult one.

Students have already registered for summer camp

and next fall's dance classes at the York Dance Academy.

Both Mrs. Radbourne and Mrs. Tucker have a connection with Stouffville's avante-garde dance company, Motus O. Members of the company have performed at the school's year-end shows and have run student workshops at The DanceCentre.

There are close to 150 students at the school, from three-year-olds to adults. For adults, there was a stretch and strength class and a small jazz class,

but the majority of her time was "devoted to the children's program", Mrs. Radbourne said. "It has been a very rewarding experience working with the students in this community and the families."

The outpouring of good feelings and appreciation for her work, when she announced that she would no longer be at the dance school, was "overwhelming", Mrs. Radbourne said.

The school offers ballet, classical ballet, modern dance, jazz, musical theatre

and creative movement classes.

Alumni of The DanceCentre include Blair Puente, who dances with the National Ballet, and Kristie Kennedy, who is with the Toronto Dance Theatre. Jessica Burrows attends the National Ballet School.

A number of graduates from The DanceCentre have gone on to the dance program at Unionville High School and some come back to teach the young students at the school.



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