

KATY'S Dance

Dance moms are a special group of women who offer endless support so the dancers they love can reach their dreams



“I would never have thought that dance mom would be a title I held, but over time it has been amazing to see my girls find their passion for dance. It fills our house and there is never a dull moment.”

- Ashley Fuori

Moms

Katy moms support their dancing daughters no matter the cost

Written by Debbie McDaniel | Photography by Layla Zakaria

With every aspiring dancer, you'll likely find one thing they share in common - a great mom cheering them on. Dedication, help, encouragement, and the willingness to log countless hours driving to and from rehearsals and classes, are just a few of the things you may notice about many dance moms. Some dance moms never had formal dance instruction themselves but, knew from early on their kids wanted to dance, so they found a studio and signed them up for classes. To others, dance has been a crucial part of the family.

Dancing Runs in the Family

Janet Lomonte, mom to dancer Kelly, learned early on, "If your child is serious about dance and performing, it takes a complete family commitment."

Rocio Braggiato, owner and artistic director of Intempo Dance, says, "My mother was a professional dancer in Mexico, and she inspired me to follow my dreams of becoming a ballerina." Rocio not only achieved that dream, but has been teaching dance for more than 30 years. She's raising two dancers, Coco, who also teaches at the studio and is perusing a bachelor of fine arts in dance, and Alessia, who spends most of her time dancing at the studio.

Just like her daughter Jensen, Ashley Vann grew up dancing at Connolly Dance Arts, under the direction of Kathleen Connolly. "Though our kids could do a lot of dance responsibilities without us, we are stronger as a team."

Benefits and Challenges

Rebecca Gibson, mom to Holly who has been dancing for 11 years, shares, "Learning about success and failure through the hard work of dance is a great character builder."

Unlike seasonal sports, dancers often perform or take classes year-round. One challenge is staying organized while keeping the whole family on track. Vacations and family schedules are frequently



worked around competitions and dance commitments. “We often do homework and study for tests in the car,” says Gibson.

Ashley Fuori says she loves being a dance mom, though with three daughters who all dance, it can be demanding at times. “Our family is at the dance studio four days a week for classes. It’s a family effort, many days you might find me up at the studio rhinestoning and steaming costumes. We’re at every performance cheering them on; my husband has even been called a dance dad! The camaraderie among fellow students and with their teachers is amazing. The other moms are just as important to me as the other dancers are to my girls.”

Braggiato says from a dance mom perspective it sometimes becomes a challenge to also be her daughters’ teacher. “It is difficult maintaining a teacher-student relationship at the studio and a mother-daughter relationship at home.” She also adds that dance is more than just a sport. “It gives you discipline, develops multiple parts of the brain, and builds team working abilities.” Organization and commitment are key when it comes to busy dance families. “In between classes Alessia has a thing she does called ‘stretch and study,’ and we almost never have vacations because we usually work around the holidays. That is when our big productions and fundraising events are.”

Ashlee’s mom, Brenda Allen, says that she works from 6 a.m. to 3 p.m. so that she can pick Ashlee up from school. “We head straight to the library to get as much homework done as we can, the rest gets done in the car on the way to dance or on the way back home.”


Reaching for Their Dreams

Kelly has danced since she was 4 years old. After many classes and lots of hard work, she reached her dream of dancing on the big stage at Theatre Under the Stars. Janet shares, “I’m proud of the dedication and effort Kelly puts into all of her classes and performances.”


Gibson says that one of her proudest moments was watching her daughter Holly place second in Nationals. Braggiato shares, “One of the most satisfying things about dance is when I’m able to watch my daughters’ and students’ hard work pay off. I love seeing their faces light up when they achieve their goals!” Allen soaks up every moment, “They go by so fast and soon enough they are doing their own hair and makeup, then driving, then off to college.”

At whatever stage or level their dancer may be in, dancers and their moms can be proud of the hard work and effort that goes into every step and routine. Through all the late nights, long drives, blood, sweat, and cheers, the support from these dedicated moms is making a difference in their daughters’ lives. **KM**


DEBBIE MCDANIEL is a writer, mom to three kids, and a dance mom to 9-year-old Gracie, who’s been twirling since she was 2.



Delaney Fuori takes classes at Pointe of Grace



Ashlee Allen has been dancing since she was 3 years old



Lily Fuori, along with her three sisters, studies dance

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