

Dancers learn a variety of dance styles, including ballet at DanzForce Extreme.

# Dance, Competition, and Fun

At DanzForce Extreme, children from preschool age to 19 can exercise, make friends and compete nationally.

Walk into DanzForce Extreme (called DFX for short) and the first thing you'll notice are the trophies. They are everywhere. Some are six feet tall. Owner Ruthe Advena says she is proud of her teachers and teams that have won national competitions. But DanzForce Extreme is not only about competing; it's about having fun, getting some exercise and making friends too.

"We meet the children at their level. If you want to compete we have classes for that, but if you just want to learn ballet or have some fun, we have what you are looking for too," Miss Ruthe says.

First opening in 1999, DanzForce started with only 1,000 square feet and has since grown to 4,000 square feet, with over 60 classes offered a week. Just this month, Miss Ruthe added another 1,500 square foot studio to allow for the

new professional Cuban ballet program (ENBC), which is unique to Central Florida and will be under the direction of Elaine Garavelo, and ballroom dance classes and dance socials. Miss Ruthe knows she's blessed to be growing. "In a down economy, I know dance classes are not a necessity. I'm so grateful my families are staying with us and telling others about us."

### Simple Beginnings

Opening in 1999, DanzForce was originally owned by a dancer/owner. Miss Ruthe was a dance mom who brought her two daughters to the studio. It wasn't too long after that she started helping the owner out from time to time, doing front office work. Then in 2004, the owner sold the studio to Miss Ruthe and her business partner Jenny Nelson, another dance mom.

"As non-dancers, we had more time to dedicate to running the studio," Miss

Ruthe says. Spending years watching her daughters practice, Miss Ruthe has a lot of admiration for dancers and dance teachers, but a dance studio needs the benefit of someone who can give all their time to running it.

### Winning Attitude

With highly educated dance teachers heading classes, it's no surprise DanzForce Extreme turns out so many winners. According to Miss Ruthe, the staff of seven teachers are deeply dedicated to the students.

"I couldn't do this without my teachers. They are amazing. The kids love them," Miss Ruthe says.

DanzForce Extreme's 2011 team won entertainment, choreography and passion awards at a national competition. The team also received three Federation of Dance Competition (FDC) Judges' Choice Awards, and the teen group won the Showbiz Talent Competition.

However, one of Miss Ruthe's proudest moments came in May, when the competition team was honored with an invitation to the first FDC World Dance Championship Series and placed 5th overall in the Teen Small Group Category with the number called "The Wood Song." Miss Ruthe credits Elite Team director Jaime Reid and Mini Team director Shannon Leli for leading the girls to such a victory and bringing the studio to the success it is today.

A defining moment for the studio was first-place wins with one performance called "Circus" and another called "Drums" at 2012 national competitions.

### More Than Dance

One of the things that make DFX different than most dance studios is its after-school program. As a former dance mom, Miss Ruthe tried to set up an after-school program that would help families spend more quality time together. To that end, DFX picks up children from nearby schools, helps them with homework, gives them a snack and of course dance instruction and practice. Then when parents come to pick up their children, all that's left to do is eat dinner and spend time with family.

"I remember having to drive all over town to take my daughters here, there and then get them home and get their homework done and dinner made. It was

a nightmare. I wanted to provide something that would take the work out of it for parents," Miss Ruthe says.

A dedicated homework/snack room allows kids to take the time they need before or after dance class to get what they need done. Large windows with comfy seats for little ones and parents also allow parents to come and watch their children. "Before, there were no seats and little kids would be fidgety and parents would not be able to see the class. I thought it would make everyone happier to have a viewing window that was actually made for viewing." Of course there is a curtain for the teacher to end viewing when and if the class needs it. But the convenience Miss Ruthe brings to parents is just another thing that sets her studio apart.

### A Legacy

A humble woman, Miss Ruthe says she owes a lot of DFX's beginning success to her business partner, Miss Jenny. "I didn't want to do this on my own. I was grateful Jenny was there with me all along the way." Miss Jenny worked side by side with Miss Ruthe helping the studio grow. Unfortunately, Miss Jenny was diagnosed with cancer and passed away in 2007 and did not get to see the studio's biggest successes.

"I still miss her," Miss Ruthe says. "All our 'dance family' misses her. She was such an inspiration."



Studio owner Ruthe Advena (middle, back row) says the dance teachers at DFX are dedicated to their students.



Homework help is part of the after school program.

## Classes Offered

- Conditioning
- Combo
- Ballet
- Pointe
- Jazz
- Tap
- Acro
- Leaps and Turns
- Contemporary
- Repertoire
- Aerial Arts
- Stretch
- Lyrical
- Hip Hop
- Pre School Ballet & Tap
- College Dance
- Latin Dance
- Latin & American Ballroom
- American Rhythm
- Modern and Musical Theater
- Zumba
- Professional Cuban Ballet

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