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WEDNESDAY'S WOMAN

Love of dance brings Bennett home

ANDREW CRITCHELOW The News-Enterprise Jul 3, 2019 Updated 2 hrs ago



Katie Bennett operates Elizabethtown dance studio Studio One-Eleven. An Elizabethtown native, Bennett started the studio last year.

ANDREW CRITCHELOW/The News-Enterprise

Katie Bennett has been dancing since she was 3, learning her moves at Center Stage School of Dance in Elizabethtown.

“Even when I was a child it felt comfortable to me,” she said. “It felt like the right place for me to be.”

Now at 34, Bennett has an Elizabethtown studio of her own: Studio One-Eleven, at 909 N. Mulberry St., Suite 100.

An Elizabethtown native, Bennett graduated from Elizabethtown High School in 2003 and earned a degree in dance from Western Kentucky University in 2007. Following graduation, Bennett began teaching at various dance studios in Louisville.

She decided to open her own studio in March 2018. She said teaching dance in her hometown has proven to be a rewarding experience.

“I have parents that I graduated with and their kids are in my class now,” she said. “Being able to come full circle and give back to the community through my love of dance and the arts, it’s just been wonderful.”

For Bennett, being an educator and public speaker comes naturally. In fact, she used these skills every day for seven months while taking on an internship with Walt Disney World Resort during her sophomore year of college. Bennett provided tours of the park’s animation studio for large crowds during her time there.

“I remember thinking after that experience ‘well, if I can do that, I can teach a room full of 2-year-olds,’” she said.

Studio One-Eleven offers a variety of classes including ballet, tap, jazz, gymnastics, hip hop, Zumba, yoga, strength training and more. Bennett said one of the studio’s most popular classes is a creative movement class, which includes toddlers and their parents.

The studio offers classes for children as young as 18 months and adults. Like with children, adult students at the studio range from those with some background in dance to complete beginners, Bennett said.

“As an adult, I enjoy taking classes myself and it’s very hard to find a place that offers that,” Bennett said of the studio’s adult classes.

The studio hosts two recitals throughout the year, one in the spring and one in the winter. The studio’s first two recitals have been held at The State Theater in Elizabethtown.

Over the summer, Bennett has collaborated with Heather Heim-Lawson, founder of the Lawson School of Musical Development in Elizabethtown, on a performing arts camp. Bennett said her and Heim-Lawson were childhood friends and recently reconnected to form the camp.

The camp’s first session took place for a week in June and included dancing, singing, acting, painting, stage makeup, costuming and more. The camp also included guest speakers from the Kentucky Opera and The Stephen Foster Story.

The campers were given the opportunity to put on their own performance for their families at the end of the camp. The next camp week will be July 8-12 and will be designed for children 5 to 9 years old. The camp is located at the studio and is from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

“You have kids that want to do this stuff but they either don’t know where their passion lies or they don’t know how to get started,” Bennett said.

Heim-Lawson said it was easy to see Bennett’s passion for working with students through the camp.

“You can clearly see her passion for the arts and how it affects people of all ages when she is teaching her classes,” she said.

As for the future of studio, Bennett said she hopes to add a musical production class, pop-up workshops and hopes to further grow her existing classes.

“I want to grow out of this space,” she said. “I want to grow out of the next space and I’m not even in there yet.”

Getting know Katie Bennett

Hobbies: Spending time with family and friends, traveling.

Family: Her fiancé, Justin, and son, Luca.

Pets: Four cats.

Music: Show tunes.

Television/Film: Anything in the horror and mystery genre.