

## Dance Your Dreams! Program Information

1. The program will be structured like any other regular dance class – classes will be one hour in length and will be held weekly following the Huntsville City Schools calendar.
2. The movements will be primarily ballet, but will also include some modern and creative movement.
3. There will be several performance opportunities made available to the class, including Merrimack Hall's "Evening of Dance" in January and an end-of-the-year recital.
4. Paperwork should be returned to us by September 12. The first orientation class will be held on September 22. We would like for the classes to be held on Mondays or Tuesdays from 4-5, but can be flexible with that time once we see who the interested kids are and what their availability is.
5. Participants should be at least 6 years old and it is open to boys and girls – anyone who has always wanted to take ballet! Should we end up with a wide-range of ages (or ability levels) that necessitate separate classes, we have the flexibility to do that. We would like to wait and see how many initial folks are interested and tailor the schedule to their needs.
6. We would like this first round of participants to be primarily children with gross motor developmental delays. As we become more comfortable and proficient with working with their special needs, we plan to expand the program to include other areas of special needs. Again, based on the response, we have the ability to be flexible with the schedule.
7. Each child will be paired with a trained teenage volunteer. These volunteers will be dancers who will commit to working with each child individually for at least one semester. These children will provide physical assistance as needed for each child.
8. Funding is available to pay for each child's physical therapist to attend class with them once each semester, so that each child's PT can be aware of the movements that the children are learning. Any PT's who are willing to donate their time can receive documentation from Merrimack Hall for their taxes – Merrimack Hall is a 501 (c)(3) organization.
9. Parents are welcome to observe any class at any time – we have an open door visitor's policy. However, we ask that siblings not visit unless it is a designated "visitor's day". We want this class to be just for our participants and for them to have the undivided attention of the dance instructor and volunteers.
10. There are no fees or expenses associated with this program for its participants – Merrimack Hall will provide all instruction, costuming and dance attire necessary.
11. For the first few classes, children may wear any comfortable clothing and shoes that allow for the best range of motion for each child. Once everyone is oriented to the program and acclimated to what we are doing, we will move into leotards, tights and ballet shoes for each student.
12. This program is not intended to be therapeutic, but merely recreational and fun. We are hoping to stimulate each child's creativity through the art of dance and use this program to make the performing arts accessible to as many people as possible.
13. Our building is fully handicap accessible and we have ample handicap parking spaces.
14. We are being advised and assisted by Sidney Underwood. Sidney refers to herself as "handicapable!" She has been wheelchair bound since a spill on the racetrack ended her career as a professional jockey in 1992. Since that time, Sidney has worked as a horse trainer and breeder. She returned to her hometown of Huntsville in 2005, and has worked on a number of programs for children with a variety of disabilities, including her own handicapable riding

program. Sidney is available to discuss with parents any concerns they may regarding our program.

15. Merrimack Hall is working with United Cerebral Palsy to coordinate training for our dance teachers and staff. Please be aware that we may have very limited experience with your child's special needs. Again, this program is recreational and creative in nature, not therapeutic.
16. This program was inspired by "Ballerina Dreams," a program in New York started by physical therapist Joanne Ferrara. The following link can provide you with information on what inspired us to develop our own version of the program:

<http://www.laurenthompson.net/books/ballerina>

At the bottom of this web page are links to two NBC Today show pieces that featured Ballerina Dreams. Seeing these segments is what lead our staff to pursue developing this program.

**Funding for this program has been provided by the generous support of the Jane K. Lowe Charitable Foundation.**



**PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY:**

**Student's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip** \_\_\_\_\_

**Home Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Cell** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date of Birth:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Gender** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mother:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Father:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone** \_\_\_\_\_

**Child's Primary Diagnosis:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Emergency Contact:**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone** \_\_\_\_\_

Please tell us anything you think we should know about your child's special needs, such as dietary restrictions, allergies, heart conditions, mobility, restroom assistance, speech limitations, etc.

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## Release of Liability

The undersigned individually and on behalf of any minor child registering to participate in classes, performances or other activities in connection with the Merrimack Academy for the Performing Arts and Merrimack Hall (collectively Merrimack) hereby agree to waive, indemnify, protect and hold harmless Merrimack, its officers, board members, teachers, agents, servants, employees and all private persons or organizations volunteering services without charge to teach, supervise, or chaperon classes, performances or other activities from any claim or liability whatsoever including, but not limited to, personal injury, property damage, court costs, attorneys fees and interest, however caused, as a result of the participation in the classes, performances and other activities.

## Use Agreement

The undersigned grants permission to Merrimack Academy for the Performing Arts and Merrimack Hall (collectively Merrimack) to videotape and/or photograph portions of classes, auditions, rehearsals, or other artistic endeavors conducted at the facilities of Merrimack. The undersigned hereby grants permission to Merrimack to use any said images for the sole purpose of marketing and promotion for the benefit of Merrimack including without limitation for use in marketing presentations, videos, printed materials and on Merrimack's web site (the Permitted Purpose). The undersigned releases Merrimack, its officers, employees and volunteers from any and all liability in connection with the use by Merrimack of said images for the Permitted Purpose. Merrimack hereby agrees to maintain the images in its sole custody and that all use will be for the Permitted Purpose only.

Sign Name \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

What we need from you:

1. A signed "Release of Liability and Use Agreement" form.
2. A signed registration form.
3. A release from your child's physical therapist or physician – bring with you to the first class on September 22.
4. Write your day/time preference for class – Monday or Tuesday from 3-4 or from 4-5 on this sheet.
5. Please tell us about any concerns you have regarding your child's participation in this program! Use the space on this sheet, or contact either of us:

Debra Jenkins – [djenkins@merrimackhall.com](mailto:djenkins@merrimackhall.com)

Hayley Smith – [hsmith@merrimackhall.com](mailto:hsmith@merrimackhall.com)

Merrimack Hall's Phone – 256-534-6455