

Madison Verhelst

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Madison Elizabeth Verhelst

How Dance has Impacted my Life

Ever since I was a young child, I have been dancing. Even my name was influenced by a dancer. I took dance lessons, starting when I was just three years old. Even at this young of an age, I found that this was something I loved. I took dance classes for the next nine years of my life, up until the end of sixth grade.

Because I live in a very small town, our high school was so small that as a seventh grader, I was able to try out for the varsity dance team. I remember being so nervous, and not knowing many people. None of my other friends were trying out for the team, so this made me even more anxious. As a seventh grader, I made the varsity high kick team. This was an extremely exciting, but daunting and intimidating task, all at the same time. I put everything I had into it, and it became my passion.

The relationship that I have formed with the girls on the Canby-Minnesota Dance Team is unbreakable. We have seen each other at our bests, but also at our worsts, and this just made us that much closer. They were truly like my second family. We all spent so much time together, even in the off season. The hours of team practices, camps and team bonding helped to form this amazingly strong bond. This team has brought me some of my best friends, and I know that I can love and trust each and every one of them with anything that I need.

Being on the dance team has motivated me for both my personal as well as academic goals. Personally, I was always trying new skills and dance moves, working extremely hard especially in the off season so that I would be able to do it in a routine later in the year. I feel that I have truly learned the meaning of hard work throughout my time on the dance team, and I have

brought this aspect into my schoolwork. I always strive to do the absolute best that I possibly can.

Dance has taught me so many things. It has taught me what it's like to be team; we worked so hard at each and every practice, but we very quickly found out that if we didn't work together as a team, it wouldn't work at all. I learned how to lead; I was chosen as a varsity jazz captain as a sophomore, and then as a double varsity (high kick and jazz) captain for the following two seasons. The girls on this team put all of their trust in me as a captain, and I learned how to encourage and motivate. Dance has influenced my life in all of these ways, and so many more that I cannot possibly explain in 500 words or less. Dance will forever hold a special place in my heart.