

A Desire to Dance

By MARIA IANNUCCI

Like many little girls, Tammy Carpenter Tetting grew up dancing. "I did ballet, tap, jazz, and tumbling starting at age 6. I took studio classes and danced with the Palm Beach Ballet Company," said Tammy from her South Lakeland studio. "My family moved to Polk County in 1984. When we arrived, I wanted to find a place to dance. I finally found a place and started with a few classes. I saw a real need for a proper dance studio right away. There was really very little around back then," Tammy added.

Since she already had years of dance experience, Tammy auditioned with a tour group in Central Florida. She was accepted, and was preparing to leave for Japan in 1987 when her boyfriend, Tim Tetting, asked her to marry him. "I definitely decided to stay," said Tammy.

Tammy began teaching dance in a studio, but says she was terminated from her position because she was teaching tumbling. "They thought I was endangering students," Tammy said. In light of this, and knowing Tammy's passion for dance, they spoke with their neighbors; then converted their two car garage on a quiet cul-de-sac into a small studio. As residents discovered it, the front yard became a tumbling mat for many local children. A couple of months later, Tammy's first dance recital was held at Lake Mirror. It was so well received that Tammy and Tim started looking for a permanent studio.

Their first location was in North Lakeland where it remained for 13 years. The Tetting's would move the studio to its current North Lakeland location in 2002; and because demand was so high, opened a South Lakeland location in 2010. "I saw the need and decided to expand," said Tammy. "My husband supported my dream all the way through."

Today, Tammy teaches dance in a variety of disciplines to children and young adults, both boys and girls, (and even a few moms), ranging in age from two and a half to 21. Their daughters, Tara, 17, and Taelor, 15, are students also, and love every moment on the studio floor. Tim has a full-time job, but willingly heads to whichever studio in which Tammy is not teaching and running the operation each night. (That, readers, is love.) Tammy's sister, Crystal, who is a professor at Southeastern University, runs the competitive division of the studio, as well as all the costume design.



above:
Tammy Carpenter Tetting, owner of Tammy's Dance Company.

Taelor, 15, and Tara, 17