



‘It’s so many feelings at once.’

**Molly Schwartz, 15, is a serious dance student at the Petit Papillon dance school in Concord. Above, fellow dancer Rebecca Kitchen rubs her shoulders. Schwartz, a sophomore at Hopkinton High School, is going to Africa this summer to attend an environmental education camp. She talks about the role of dance in her life.**

I started creative movement when I was two. I started ballet when I was seven or eight. I really liked it and just kept doing it.

The first classes weren’t very intense at the beginning. Once I moved up levels that’s when I had to get in shape. A lot of it is dealing with the frustration of getting each new skill. You really have to work at it in order to do it correctly. Pain can be the hard part. Especially with pointe. You get a lot of blisters. Toenails are bruised, falling off. Both of my big toenails fell off. It was so gross. I kept dancing anyway because I love it so much. How many hours a week do I dance? Um, let’s see . . . seven-and-a-half hours of classes. And then if I have a rehearsal Friday and Saturday, that’s another five hours. So, it can be up to twelve-and-a-half hours a week.

When I’m dancing, I’m alone focusing on my skills. I’m concentrating on what I’m doing. But when I’m performing with a group it’s really the whole group that makes the performance great. We’re so close. We’re like a family. It’s always really sad when some of the older kids will graduate and leave. Everyone is crying. We see each other almost every day of the week,



and we all suffer together. We share the same passion for what we do.

I’ve heard that dancers are really aware of the space around them, and that may be true. But I’ve also found that dancers are very, very clumsy. All the dancers I know trip over themselves and run into things. I run into doors! But, ummm, we’re graceful about it. We fall gracefully! We’re so used to dancing across the studio. We come home and we can’t just go across the room. We have to go around different pieces of furniture. Or maybe we just notice that we’re more clumsy because dancers are known to be really graceful.

I know I want to dance in high school and college, too. I’m still debating if I want to do it as a profession. There are so many things you can do with it in your future. I probably wouldn’t go in to the prima ballerina thing. It’s really hard to make a career out of it. And if I wanted to do that, I should have started when I was a lot younger. You could do things like what my dance teachers do. They teach, they have a company. And I think it would be a lot of fun to be a choreographer and to help other people get the same experience I’ve had.

It’s an amazing art form. It ties everything together. It’s challenging. It’s difficult on your muscles. But you get strong from it. It’s a great

way to express yourself through movement and music. And you feel like you’re achieving something with everything that you do. When I’m performing I feel like I bring something to the community. It’s so many feelings at once. It’s always joyful.

photo and interview by Ken Williams

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