

SCHOOL & FAMILY
TLH
LOCAL

YOUNG DANCERS FIND INSPIRATION IN 'WHAT STIRS THEIR OWN HEART' AT 'STAR WARS' CAMP



PHOTOS BY AMANDA THOMPSON
Star Wars campers follow along with instructor Hope Gaines.

AMANDA KARIOTH THOMPSON
COUNCIL ON CULTURE & ARTS

“Star Wars” is an undeniable cultural phenomenon. When the first film was released nearly 40 years ago, it captured the imaginations of millions of moviegoers. The most recent additions to the sci-fi franchise have created a new generation of fans, many of whom are finding unexpected ways to show their enthusiasm.

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CREATIVE FORCE



Star Wars dance campers practice at the barre.

AMANDA THOMPSON

Dance

Continued from Page 1C

Ten-year-old Julia Jenkins is one of them. "Star Wars is awesome. 'Return of the Jedi' is my favorite." Only one thing can trump her love for these action packed epics. "I really like dancing," she said and with the help of Tallahassee Ballet's "Star Wars" summer dance camp, she can enjoy both.

Kayleigh Stuart, 9, is also a fan of the films and with several years of dance training under her belt, she particularly enjoyed the theme of this camp. "I like how, in our jazz dance, we're storm troopers. We march in and we do a lot of marching. For ballet, we're dancing to the Star Wars music."

While the pairing of "Star Wars" and dance may seem unusual, there is at least one significant commonality, "the Force." With rigorous training and courage, those who are able to harness its power can achieve extraordinary things. In fact, this is what originally drew camp instructor Hope Gaines to her profession.

"When I was little I just really enjoyed the structure of ballet, the discipline it took. You have to give so much of yourself to the art form but it gives so much back at the same time." Gaines stared dancing when she was 6 years old and went on to study at a performing arts high school. She earned a BFA in dance from FSU and now works with Tallahassee Ballet as a soloist in the company and as an instructor in the school.

The Star Wars camp provided instruction in a variety of dance genres supplemented with tumbling, drama, and crafts. It was a new addition to Tallahassee Ballet's numerous summer programs.

Roslyn Goram, 7, has taken full advantage of the plentiful offerings and said she has attended Tallahassee Ballet camps "like, a hundred times." Many dancers come back year after year, including 9-year-old Jessie Nelson.

"The first time I was here," she whispered, "I was kind of shy because I was worried that people might not like me but last time, I made friends. I wanted to come back here because I wanted to make more friends."

Chloe Harbin, 12, served as a Star Wars camp volunteer. She started dancing at age 2 and when she reached the second grade, she began training with Tallahassee Ballet. Since



Star Wars dance campers listen to instructor Hope Gaines.

AMANDA THOMPSON



then, she's become a trusted assistant. "It's really fun being a helper because you get to see how they train the younger kids. When I grow up, I want to teach dance classes."

One of the things that Chloe likes most about dance is the impact it can have on others. "You can do certain movements that will just make people feel something and that's really amazing. It's amazing to be able to express myself through movement and not just words."

One of Gaines' main objectives is for emerging dancers to find that power within themselves.

She says, "when you're little, sometimes it feels like you're not being heard, that people aren't listening. I want them to feel they can express themselves and I want them to have the

freedom to show what they're inspired by and what stirs their own heart."

Echoing the overarching themes in "Star Wars," these campers were encouraged to believe in themselves and their own physical strength and agility. Through movement, they were challenged to seek knowledge and personal growth. They experienced the joys of friendship and the guidance of a wise mentor and, ultimately, campers learned that dance can awaken the creative force in us all.

Amanda Karioth Thompson is the Education and Exhibitions Director for the Council on Culture & Arts. COCA is the capital area's umbrella agency for arts and culture (www.tallahasseearts.org).

DEPARTMENT
ENV

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APPLICATION REVIEW

NEW BUSINESS

1:45 p.m.

Project Name: Crown
Review Level: Type I
Project ID#: LSP11
Applicant: Jimmi
Agent: Jim Si
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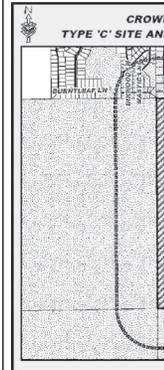
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