

New preschool caters to art lovers

The owners of Dance Extreme have opened a new performing arts preschool.

Budding writers often are told to write about what they know.

Rebecca Brettingham's career thus far has followed the same philosophy, mirroring her own life to a tee.

At the age of 21, she formed her own dance school, reflecting a life of performing and teaching dance. Dance Extreme opened in 1997 and today is a beehive of activity, one of the more popular schools in the city.

Hundreds of dancers, children and adults, attend classes there every week.

Two years ago, Brettingham married Tony Filice and started a family. Toddler Christiano is big brother to three-month-old Isabela.

Now that she is a mother, Brettingham, who sometimes goes by Filice, is expanding her business to include the Performing Arts Preschool, again a reflection of where she is in her own life.

It will operate in the Dance Extreme studios during weekdays when few dance classes are scheduled. Dance Extreme will not be affected.

"I've always thought there is a need for a performing arts preschool. It's so important for children to learn these disciplines before the age of five. It enriches them for the rest of their lives."

The couple began talking seriously about opening the school in March while on vacation in St. Martin.

"We sat there and planned the whole thing," Bretingham recalls.

Husband Tony is operations manager of both the dance school and preschool, in addition to his full-time job with Canada Post.

He merely laughs when asked if he knew before marriage how deeply he would become involved with the business.

Both parents have seen first hand how much their son loves music and dance, and they are convinced kids of all backgrounds can benefit from an arts oriented preschool.

The school gives children ages two-and-half to five the chance to experience music, dance, drama and art, attending two or three half-days a week.

Classes begin today, and there are openings in the morning and afternoon.

Children attend Monday and Wednesday or Tuesday and Thursday, from 9:00-11:30am or 1:00-3:30pm.

The cost of the two-day program is \$149 per month. The three-day program adds Friday morning or afternoon and costs \$199 per month.

One of the first things the couple did upon their return from St. Martin was to hire a program director for the preschool, Kim Engel.

The school will hire between four and eight more people, depending on how many children enrol this first year. The school is certified with the Ministry of Community and Social Services, a process that took several months and is required for childcare facilities with more than five children under the age of 10.

This is the second time that Brettingham has started a business and she noticed a change this time around.

“I’m older and I have a family, and people take me more seriously now. When I started Dance Extreme I was 21, and I had a hard time being taken seriously by some people. I can overcome those doubts more easily now because I’m older and have some experience.”

Written by Christopher Clark, freelance writer
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