

Good Samaritan Dance Academy

Handbook for Students and Parents



2010-2011 Calendar Year:
September 13 – November 23 / January 2 – March 12 / March 14 – June 4

Christmas Concert: December 3rd
Dress Rehearsal: May 31st
Spring Concert: June 4th

Director: Gwen Prestwood
Good Samaritan Dance Academy
212 West Lancaster Avenue Paoli, PA 19301-1758

The Dance Ministry at the Church of the Good Samaritan in Paoli, PA, has been active since 1983. Classes are held in a professional quality dance studio under the instruction of Christian teachers. Children, teens, and adults are encouraged to pursue excellence and use their gifts to glorify the Savior through service and ministry.

Attendance: It is detrimental to a student's dance training to miss class frequently. Ballet steps build upon one another, both mentally and physically. Please try to attend class faithfully.

- Please notify the school by phone or e-mail if you cannot attend your regular class.
- Punctuality is mandatory. Students who arrive late are frequently "out of step" for the remainder of the class. Teachers and fellow students are hindered when students are missing for even a portion of rehearsal.
- Preteens and above should ALWAYS arrive ten minutes prior to class to allow time to change shoes and stretch before class. It is discourteous to the instructor to enter after plies have started.
- If arriving late because of an emergency, students should wait quietly by the studio door, until invited to enter between exercises.
- Please keep your child home if they are showing signs of illness. Children who develop symptoms during class will be removed to protect the other children.
- Picking up your dancer: It is very important that you pick your child up in a timely manner. Students in the Children's classes will not be allowed to go up the stairs without a responsible adult. If a child is to be picked up by another adult, please send a signed note.
- Attendance at rehearsals, especially in the two weeks prior to a concert, is imperative.

Registration:

- Registration occurs the first class of the semester FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY. Registration cards and legal waiver must be signed by a parent (or adult student) at that time.
- Guest children are permitted to take one sample class if they bring a signed waiver form from their parent. Older students should call the director to discuss mid-year entrance into the school.

Tuition:

- There are three 10 week sessions in our school year. Tuition is due on the first class of each session. A \$10 late fee will be applied for payments more than two weeks late. There will also be a \$35 bounced check fee.
- There are a limited number of needs based scholarships per year. Please see the director if you are interested.
- Our rates are considerably lower than local dance schools. Because our rates are so reasonable (and those fees are used to compensate teachers), refunds are not available for missed classes.
- Please note that local schools charge for costumes and recital tickets or fees, where our burden to parents for costumes is minimal. (Growing children and preteens supply only their own undergarments and shoes. Teens and adults are asked to purchase their own costumes, and those are used year after year)

Promotion Policies: Placement in classes is based on age, attention span *and* ability, at the discretion of the director. Students who take multiple classes per week often advance faster than their peers. All students permitted to take advanced ballet (Ballet II & III, Pointe) are expected to take class a minimum of two days per week. Those who also dance at another studio may discuss an exception with the director. The Saturday "open" class or the Tuesday adult class are acceptable options as a second class.

Code of conduct

- Respect for fellow students is required. Any student mocking or hitting a fellow student will be corrected. Repeat offenders will be removed from class.
- No gum chewing, hard candy or inappropriate language in studio or rehearsals.
- Talking during class is disruptive, and should be held to a minimum.
- Only water bottles should be brought into the studio. Cell phones, toys and other personal items must remain in the dressing room.
- Observers, parents and friends should remain outside the studio during classes. There is also seating available on the 2nd floor, above the round lobby.
- Snacks are not permitted in the studio, lobby or dressing room. If a teen or adult has multiple hours of classes and rehearsals, the instructor will allow them a few minutes to eat in the lobby. Snacks may not be opened anywhere in the dance school.

Concerts and Services - The teen and adult dance choirs minister in Sunday and Holy Day services. The choirs also serve at other churches and nursing homes. Students in the children's classes share their dances at the Christmas and Spring concerts and also participate in church services. Please let your teacher know as soon as possible if you will not be dancing with your class in a concert or service.

- Arrival at the stated call time before a concert is required (normally two hours prior for preteens, teens and adults, one hour prior for children) to allow adequate time for rehearsal and costuming.
- Non-flash photography is permitted at concerts, but NEVER during a church service. Photographs of children other than your own should not be posted online unless password protected.
- Dance Choirs (Preteen and above) students are expected to attend the services in which they minister. Parents may attend the service, or drop the student off an hour before the service, and arrange transportation after.
- Children's classes: If your child is participating in a service and you will need to leave before the service concludes, please sit in the back pew and leave discreetly, preferably during a hymn.
- All families are expected to volunteer in some capacity during the year and all families are asked to contribute to the receptions following the concerts. (please note we do not have recital fees and ticket fees that are standard in most studios)

Church Building Etiquette: Whether rehearsal, concert or service, proper etiquette is required of all students, parents and siblings when in the church sanctuary:

- Students are only to enter the altar rails when asked by a teacher
- No students should be under or behind the altar
- No running in the church
- No food or cell phone use in the church
- Outside of the Sanctuary, please treat the rest of the building with respect – pick up any trash, don't run and scream, etc.

Weather Closures – GSDA cancels classes when the church closes the building. Parents will be notified by email. Please check your email frequently if snow or ice is possible. Parents with questions may call the church office or the director, Gwen Prestwood (610-644-2038).

Dress Code: We appreciate your cooperation in dressing appropriately while dancing and worshipping the Lord. Because we feel that God has shown us the importance of modesty in this ministry, and because we meet and dance on church premises, we have adopted the following dress code.

Preteen, Teen and Adult Students:

- Leotard and tights
- Solid color long or short sleeve t-shirt
- Loose-fitting culottes, gaucho, or palazzo pants, or LOOSE fitting exercise pants
- Hair tied back neatly in a bun (hair too short for a bun should be secured with a
 - headband or pins)
- Please, no visible underarms, midriffs, low-cut tops, excessively clingy clothing, or
 - clothing otherwise intended to reveal more than it conceals.



Children's Classes:

- Leotard and tights
- T-shirt
- Full skirts with bike shorts, *or* loose-fitting culottes, gaucho, or palazzo pants for girls
- If desired, a sheer dance skirt may be worn OVER culottes or skirt
- Loose shorts or athletic pants for boys (no writing)
- Hair tied back neatly in a ponytail or bun
- Please, no princess costumes, or other "dress-up" play dresses
- Please label your children's shoes and any other garment that is removed/changed at the studio with their name.



Shoes

- Children and Preteen girls will wear pink shoes for class, concerts and services. Boys will wear black ballet shoes.
- Teen and Adult Dance choirs may wear any color for class, but will need pink and white for performances.

Costuming:

- Costumes for Children and Preteen Classes are provided by the dance studio. Parents provide undergarments (leotard, tights, shoes). Parents are responsible for styling hair and make-up as instructed.
- Teens and adults who become members of the dance choir will eventually be asked to have our standard costume pieces made by a seamstress (patterns are available). (These costumes are worn throughout the year and for many years):
 - a cream dress (silk essence dress and culottes)
 - "whites" (white georgette skirt, blouse and culottes)
 - Long black culottes
- Other costume accessories (overlays, sashes, headpieces) are bought and provided by the church.

If you have any questions about the suitability of an article of clothing, please ask. Several dance outfitters now carry worship dance clothes at reasonable prices; please contact *Gwen Prestwood* (610.644.4040 x773) for more information.

Teachers & Choreographers:

- Gwen Prestwood, Director Gwen trained in the Cecchetti style of Classical Ballet. She has studied under Jeanne Hansberry, James Kenny, and Andrew Pap, Mikhael Murnane, Pam Smith, Randall Bane, Karen Seran and Yvonne Peters, and is a former member of the Devon Festival Ballet. She has danced at Good Samaritan since 1985, first as assistant director; and as director since 1996. As assistant to founding director, Valerie Henry, she was exposed to such diverse dance styles as Modern, Folk, Character, Lyrical and Mime. Throughout her career, Gwen has been privileged to dance with Steve Fry and Alyosha Ryabinov, to teach at various Christian dance conferences and workshops, and to reset and stage Valerie's innovative choreography for Handel's "Messiah".
- Emilee Carey has been dancing at GSDA almost since she learned to walk. In addition to being trained as a dancer, she has been actively discipled as a teacher the past two years. She has also taught dance to children at Covenant Fellowship church, served as a teacher at the Good Samaritan Fine Arts Camp and choreographed for student theater productions.
- Megan Dutil has been dancing at GSDA since 2003, and before that had several years of classical training in the Cecchetti style under Marie Hamilton. She has also studied ballroom dance from Lee and Ashley Phaneuf, ballet at Penn State University. She enjoys a variety of styles, including character and tap, and as a dancer in musicals. She has also served as a dance teacher at the Good Samaritan's Fine Arts camp.
- Elrena Evans has been dancing at the Church of the Good Samaritan since 1990, and elsewhere since 1982. In addition to classical ballet, she has studied modern, jazz, tap, and various styles of folk including Israeli, Scottish, and African. As a teenager she trained and toured with Valerie Henry, and then continued her dance studies while at Bucknell University and Penn State. She holds a Masters of Fine Arts in Creative Writing, and when not dancing or mothering her three young children, can be found writing for publications like Christianity Today and Books & Culture or working on her next book.
- Heather Murain is a senior pursuing her B.A. in Dance at Eastern University. She has studied dance under Jane Bittner and Patricia Berrend, both of the Washington Ballet. Heather has appeared in Mary Day's "The Nutcracker." She interned with Dancefusion and also worked with choreographer Stephen Welsh. She has most recently appeared in a performance at the American Dance College Festival and taught a summer dance camp at Feet First Center in Phoenixville. This is Heather's second year teaching at GSDA.
- Jessina Leonard has been blessed to dance for four years with the Good Samaritan Dance Academy, though she has been dancing ever since she was five years old. She also enjoys photography, reading, writing, traveling, interior design, and anytime spent outdoors. Jessina has served as a teacher for both GSDA and the Good Samaritan Fine Arts Camp.
- Hannah Shepard has been dancing at GSDA since 2007. She studied for 2 years with Deneen McCarraher and has had the privilege of studying character, ballet, pointe and other different styles of dance. She has been an assistant teacher at the Good Samaritan Fine Arts Camp and at GSDA since 2009.
- Melody Stanert has been involved with GSDA since 1997. She began by taking the children's classes and continued through to adult. In addition to dancing at GSDA, Melody had been trained at many studios, including The Dance Center, and Koresh School of Dance. She has extensive theater experience, and is currently pursuing her BA in Dance Pedagogy.
- Karen Watkins has been dancing at GSDA since 1991. She trained extensively with Valerie Henry, and has also studied at West Chester University, Paul Klocke Dance, American Academy of Ballet, and Master Classes under Elbert Watson, Cynthia Gregory, Pam Smith, Randall Bane and the At Marah Dance Company. In addition to studying folk, character, lyrical, pointe, ballet and modern, she has served as choreographer for theater productions, participated in community theater, and taught dance at Crossroads Community Church, Bethlehem Methodist Church and Faith Baptist Church.