

# ***What Dance has Done for Me***

## ***Kara Nelson***

“I can’t...I have dance” is probably one of the most appropriate quotes to explain my life and the way it revolves around the magnificent art form that is dance. At the age of four, I was enrolled in my first dance class at my local studio for one hour a week. Little did I, or my parents, know that the dance studio would be my second home for the next twelve years. While it’s true that I’ve had to miss events because of my dance training, there is nothing I’d rather be doing than dancing.

It has been said many times that dance is a way of expression, or the soul’s way of communicating. Though this may be true, there is so much more to dance than communication. Throughout my life, dance has taught me determination, perseverance, how to reach towards a goal, and how to work as a team. Most of all, dance has taught me about having a passion. I’ve learned that being frustrated is ok sometimes as long as it pushes you to become the best dancer possible. I’ve learned that the bonds created in a dance studio are ones that can never be broken no matter how far each graduate travels to pursue their career. I truly believe I would not nearly be the person I am today had dance not been a big part of my life.

During my sophomore year in high school, I discovered I had a stress fracture in my left foot. This required me to be put in a walking boot and also hear the most dreaded words from the doctor; “no dancing.” I sat in classes for six weeks and watched my friends do the thing I loved most while I was prohibited from it. However, this taught me patience and only made me more eager to get back on the floor and dance when my foot fully recovered.

To say “dance is my life” would be quite the understatement. I’m at the studio five days a week for several hours each day. My high school is very small and doesn’t present any dance opportunities. Fortunately, a bigger neighboring high school let me audition for their dance team and this will now be my third year as part of Middletown High School’s Varsity Dance Team. I’m also a member of Nu Delta Alpha, the National Dance Honor Society at MHS. I apprenticed at my studio for three years and then was blessed with being able to teach classes of my own. This enabled me to share my love of dance with young aspiring dancers and I was able to choreograph recital pieces for them to perform.

While I look forward to graduating high school in the spring and starting the next chapter of my life, it saddens me to realize that this requires me to leave the dance studio and the family I have there. The best memories I have of my seventeen years all include dance and the people I’ve grown to love. It seems unreal that thirteen years dancing have flown by. There is no way to emphasize exactly what dance has done for me. I can’t imagine my life any other way by not knowing the precision of dance, or the people that have influenced me in so many ways. I hope to pursue my career in dance by still training and performing in college, but it will be different; different studio, different styles, different people. I welcome the future, but am in no way ready to leave my second home. I will embrace the few months I have left and I will always take with me and appreciate what dance has done for me.