

## **My Asian Arts Adventure**

As I step on stage, the spotlight hits me. My heart is ready to beat out of my chest and butterflies are racing through my stomach, but I just put on a dazzling smile for the audience. When the music begins to play, I can feel the rhythm coursing through my body while every move is precise and full of emotion. My movements are speaking for me, allowing the audience to understand the story behind my actions. Chinese Folk dance is how I express my Asian culture, and without a doubt, my involvement in the Asian Arts has helped shape me into the person I am today.

As a child, I have been exposed to various types of dance including ballet, Hawaiian, lyrical, and jazz. When I first joined AATF (Asian Arts Talent Foundation), I assumed that it would be the typical, learn the steps and perform, but through the years I have grown to understand the history, significance, and emotion behind it. Experiencing the different music and dance genres furthered my abilities of becoming a well-rounded dancer; I see the dances in a whole new perspective and it forms the different components that are my character.

Through the years, my family has always been on the sidelines rooting for me, which makes me feel more confident in myself and my dancing. Whenever I'm onstage and I look out into the audience, I always see my parents smiling back at me, which makes my performance a hundred times better. I can't thank them enough for all the times that they spent encouraging and supporting me to where I am now.

Being a part of AATF for many years, I have been fortunate enough to dance under three wonderful dance teachers, Donna, Ling Mei, and Jennifer 老師. With their constant support and guidance, they have given me amazing opportunities to become a beautiful dancer.

They have taught me so much during the past years and I want to thank them for all they've done to shape me into the artist I am today.

AATF has provided me with fantastic opportunities, such as performing at parades, banquets, and even Disneyland! What I also enjoy doing besides dancing on the big stage is performing for the elderly in Vista Cove nursing home, where the stage is their biggest dining room and the music is playing from a radio. My grandma suffered a stroke in 2009 and ever since, she has been living in this nursing home that I visit frequently. With that, on multiple occasions, the activities director gave me the honor to come in to entertain for the elderly, especially on major holidays because many of the residents were too ill to go home to be with their families. Without hesitating, I agreed to perform my Hawaiian and Folk dances, along with playing songs on the piano. I do this because it makes me so happy whenever I see smiles and hear the laughter coming from their frail bodies, because I know that I am bringing some joy and excitement into their lives. Also, it takes their minds off the loneliness that they have to endure. Learning the fundamentals of AATF and performing for the community makes me proudly appreciate the fact that I get to share the beauty of Asian Arts with everyone.

Dance has influenced an enormous part of my life. It has taught me to see the connection of music, dance, and oneself. I have experienced different types of dances, but I have to say that Asian Arts is number one on my list of favorites. Chinese Folk dancing is a part of my past, present, and future. Without it, I would not have had such a chance to learn about the magnificent culture that we share. My joining of AATF has had a great impact on my life, because it has led me to once-in-a-lifetime opportunities and the meeting of fantastic people, or as I like to call them, my second family.