

Golden Doors

Chinese cultural dance opened golden doors of opportunities that have led me to where I am now. I've been dedicated to Chinese dancing for the last ten years of my life. In the meantime, I have encountered many different genres of dance including contemporary, jazz, hip hop, ballet, and tap. I perform at small community events such as parades, glamorous show cases, the magical Disneyland, and even out of the country! Asian Arts has greatly impacted me because it is a representation of who I am and what I am. Here I stand today, with experience, knowledge, and culture.

I've been a part of AATF (Asian Arts Talents Foundation) since I was eight years old. Practices are held on weekends for at least two hours. We have up to thirty performances a year. There were multiple of times when I was given a last minute routine and I would be expected to perfect it at the performance the next day. The surprises never stop coming; however, it encourages me to be a much stronger dancer. Every year I participate in competitions and compete with girls my age. Most recently, in November, I placed platinum with a partner. And in September I also participated in Junior's Got Talent and made it into Top 15 Finalist! Overall, I earned almost thirty gold and platinum awards. Competition is a whole new learning experience. Observing other extraordinary dancers engage in the same passion as mine intrigues me to learn more cultural dances.

Chinese dancing, a unique form of art showed me the other side of the world I never got the chance to see. Although I can't physically experience the beautiful grasslands in Mongolia or the peaceful Tibetan tribes climb up the white mountains every morning, but I can profoundly feel and imagine these sceneries all because of Chinese dancing. Before we start learning choreography, our teachers will provide us with background information on the routine. Knowing the story behind the dance allows me to better portray my character. For instance, as I represent a warrior leaving her family, I express courage and heroic actions throughout the piece. I'm not simply walking onto a stage with bright shining lights and amused audience; instead I am walking onto a beat-up battle field with my mind set to save my country and my people. After all, dancing isn't about doing the movements, but telling a story through each elegant and precise move.

Folk dancing also gave me the opportunity to join Mark Keppel's Dance Team in 2011. Out of seventy-five students, I was one of the five that made it onto the team. Being on the team gave me the privilege to expand my expertise in jazz and hip hop. I was chosen as one of the nine members to compete at Miss Drill Dance Team USA. In addition, we placed second internationally against Japan and many other schools in the United States!

Being involved in dance has also shaped me into a leader. I have always wanted to teach little kids how to dance. This year, my teachers gave me the opportunity. I assist the instructors

and even taught a couple of classes myself! I train kids between the ages of 5-10. Working with little kids helped me determine my dreams for the future. I plan to establish an organization that train young children with mental disabilities how to dance. As an experienced dancer, I am well familiar with responsibility, collaboration, dedication, and sacrifice. Having inherited these qualities, it has transformed me into a determined and confident leader in my personal and academic life as well as in dance.

All in all, Asian Arts is a major part of my life. Having over twenty hours of practices at school per week and running low on sleep due to continuous school work, I still find time to attend weekend practices and performances. In addition, I find ways to improve my technique and expand my expertise in even more areas of dance. Although this is my last year on AATF's dance team, it is not my last year representing my culture and passion. I am looking forward to promoting Chinese heritage even in my later years of life. I am very lucky to be active in such a powerful and inspiring Asian Art. And it is an honor to spread the knowledge and simple happiness of Chinese cultural dance.