


The Advertiser-Gleam

KAPA Dancer Receives Opportunity of a Lifetime

By Haley Cotter Jul 28, 2018  0



A young dancer with the Kohl Academy of Performing Arts recently got the opportunity of a lifetime.

Lila Jane Bonds is 11 years old and entering Douglas Middle School this fall. She has a passion for dance, and that was recognized at an invitational showcase and class in Marietta, Georgia, called Jazz on Tap.

“I was in a class when some teachers called me over,” Bonds said. “They told me that I had a scholarship for that camp, so they asked for my name and my age.”

The camp was at the **Gus Giordano Dance School** in Chicago. Gus Giordano is a legend in the dance world, according to Jane Kohl, owner of KAPA. He dedicated his life to teaching dance across the world. His daughter, Amy Giordano, is Executive Director of the School and founder of The Gus Giordano Jazz Legacy Foundation. Gus Giordano also wanted to serve underprivileged areas and reach talent and train those who wanted to do dance, which The Gus Giordano Jazz Legacy Foundation continues to do today.

Jazz on Tap is something they do every year with KAPA. Bonds was actually taking a class where Lauren Giordano Curran, a granddaughter of Gus Giordano, was teaching.

“She just noticed her love for dance and offered her the scholarship,” Lila Jane’s mother Janna Bonds said.

At first, Janna was skeptical of the scholarship until she googled Gus Giordano Dance School.

“I thought about this and asked myself, ‘Is this something we can do?’ and ‘Can we really go to Chicago?’” Bonds said.

After discussing it thoroughly with her husband, and asking Kohl, they made their 10-hour drive to Chicago.

“I think Jane kind of teared up,” Janna said. “She said ‘Go! Go! Go!’”

Lila Jane took classes in jazz, contemporary, ballet and hip-hop dance throughout her week at the famous studio. On Friday, she performed three dances in jazz, contemporary and hip-hop.

“My favorite was definitely jazz,” Bonds said.

She even performed to Elvis Presley’s song “Hound Dog.”

Her teachers were also far from ordinary. Her ballet teacher trained with Olympic athletes, while her jazz teacher was another granddaughter of Giordano, Sarah Giordano Curran. Curran is a student at the University of Alabama studying dance as her major.

Janna said that all students were treated the same in the studio, and people couldn’t tell who was on scholarship and who wasn’t.

“She (Lila Jane) is such a fortunate lady to be able to come to KAPA,” Janna said. “But there are some children out there who don’t get those same opportunities.”

Some girls had to travel far and wide to get to the studio, even up to an hour ride. “The Gus Giordano Jazz Legacy Foundation helps kids come in and train in this studio,” Janna said

She was also able to make friends in her classes that were mainly from the Chicago area.

“One girl asked me ‘Is there even anything to do in Alabama?’” Lila Jane said, laughing.

Kohl said she was ecstatic that Lila Jane was given the opportunity.

“When I learned it was for Gus Giordano, I thought ‘Yay!’” Kohl said. “He is such a legend.”

Lila Jane and her family also got to spend time sightseeing the “Windy City.” When they arrived in Chicago, they went to straight to a Chicago Cubs baseball game.

“It was freezing though,” Bonds said. “It had been raining, and we weren’t prepared for that.”

She also got to see the Chicago White Sox play as well. She went atop the Willis Tower, down Navy Pier, Millennium Park and had some deep-dish Chicago pizza. “Oh, my gosh,” Bonds said. “It was amazing.”

Lila Jane hopes she can go back to Gus Giordano Dance School every year.

“If it works out, we will definitely go back,” Janna said.