

5/12/2016

To the Spotlight on Sherwood Awards committee,

My family has been members of Sherwood Dance Academy (SDA) for over four years. If someone told me then, how SDA would affect my family in such a positive way, I couldn't have believed it. The owners, instructors, and fellow dancers have become like family to us. I am thankful to have such amazing, wonderful people for my two daughters to grow up with.

My youngest daughter, Shea, was born with a rare genetic disorder called neurofibromatosis (NF). NF causes tumors to grow on any nerve throughout the body, including the spinal cord and brain. My husband and I signed Shea up for dance classes as a way to help build her strength, endurance, balance, and to meet kids her age. Since that time, Shea has enjoyed being in classes weekly.

In November of last year Liana, the studio owner, informed me that the Sherwood Dance Academy's annual fundraiser will be benefitting the Children's Tumor Foundation in honor of Shea. I didn't know how to react to this news; all I could think to do was cry. My daughter has been through a lot these past couple of years, but to know that there is a community supporting her and cheering her on, makes the tough times so much easier.

Sherwood Dance Academy has successfully collected over 40 donated items for the silent auction at the event. The SDA Showstoppers, the performance group, helped in collecting monetary donations and ticket sales. SDA reached out for the community to get involved. Because of this, Scramble-a Sherwood based jiu-jitsu gym, There is No Mountain-a Portland based duo music group, and of course the Showstoppers, will all be performing at the show. The Hungry Hero is also participating in the event by selling cookies at the concession table. All proceeds from ticket sales, concessions, and donations will be donated directly to the Children's Tumor Foundation (CTF). CTF is a non-profit organization that provides support and research to those with NF, not just locally, but around the world. SDA is putting on this fundraiser in honor of Shea, but it will also affect those involved with CTF.

Sherwood Dance Academy is more than just a dance studio; it's a home away from home, a place to learn to accept differences, and a place to understand how giving to others makes a difference. SDA deserves to receive the Small Business of the Year Award because they inspire students to excel in all they do; they bring the community together to support local events; and they keep loyal members coming back due to the non-competitive, family-friendly atmosphere they provide.

Thank you so much for your consideration and good luck on your selection.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Torres