



Mundelein Park & Recreation District

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE USE

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THE SHOW MUST GO ON

Park District Finds Creative Way to Hold Dance Performance

MUNDELEIN, IL – Organizers of the Park & Recreation District’s Mundelein School of Dance pulled off quite a feat of working within COVID-19 guidelines and still holding a recital involving over 200 dancers and over 50 routines.

“Our dancers have come so far after first starting their recital dances in January in our studio, and then having to transfer to Zoom classes since March,” said Heather Burnes, Coordinator of Mundelein School of Dance. “Our staff knew we had to push forward and think outside the box to continue classes virtually and develop a strategy to hold the annual recital within the COVID-19 guidelines.”

Think outside the box they did in a big way, devising a plan that would be safe for both dancers and staff alike. After learning the performance choreography over the last few months from

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home via Zoom, Burnes coordinated in-person rehearsals for one group at a time in the District's Community Center gymnasium. The number of dancers was kept well below the recommended limit, and they were able to spread out and safely social distance. It was the first time the groups were together since sheltering in place begun in March. Dancers wore face coverings, and staff worked diligently to disinfect areas between group rehearsals. After two weeks of rehearsals, the Mundelein School of Dance was ready to put on a performance unlike any other. They transformed the Dunbar Recreation Center gymnasium into a performance auditorium, installing special flooring and curtain backdrops. For an entire late-July weekend from 9 am to 9 pm, each group came in during a specified time slot in fully costumed with the addition of face coverings and performed the "Disney" themed routines. The District took measures to ensure safety, including limiting the number of dancers who danced together, instituting a health screening process, creating separate entrance and exits in the building, and disinfecting the entire area between performances. In some instances, large groups were divided in half to maintain safe numbers and recorded separately. Local business KTR Media Group videotaped all performances.

"It took two straight days of coordination and performing to produce a recital that approximately three hours," said Burnes. "We had to come up with a way to honor all the hard work and effort these dancers put in. While the world around us may be uncertain and constantly changing, we can have one constant, dancing, and we were able to dance, regardless of the challenges around us."

The final bow has yet to come when the videotape of the performances is presented to the

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Dance families at a private “Movie in the Park” style screening of the video mid-August.”

Mundelein School of Dance offers instruction in a wide range of dance styles from Jazz and Ballet to Hip Hop and Tap for ages from 1.5 to adult. The next dance session begins in early September and concludes with a spring recital. Both in-person and virtual class options will be available. For more information on classes, visit www.mundeleinparks.org/recreation/dance or contact Heather Burnes at hburnes@mundeleinparks.org.

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