



America's Ballet School is making young dancers' dreams come true

World's Largest Student Ballet Competition, YAGP recognizes the talent at local school

The world's largest student ballet competition, Youth American Grand Prix (YAGP), was held in Tampa for the first time last week and ballet schools from across the State came to compete. The YAGP is open to dance students of all nationalities 9-19 years old and awards more than \$250,000 annually in scholarships to leading dance schools worldwide.

America's Ballet School, a hidden gem in New Tampa, where serious dancers train in ballet, sent 20 of its top pre-professional dancers to the competition. The school has been very successful at this competition in the past and this year was no exception; fifteen students ranked in the top 12 with two of those ranking in the top two and for the fourth year in a row, America's Ballet School received the prestigious "Outstanding School" award from the YAGP. As a result, the entire team has been invited to the YAGP national competitions in New York City and two of her students were invited to compete in Paris.

"The YAGP competitions provide a platform where young dancers can get discovered by national ballet companies. We train our students with this expectation in mind." said Paula Nunez, founder and instructor at America's Ballet School and a former Prima Ballerina herself. Paula's dance career spans over 30 years and she has graced stages throughout the world. Paula believes that the best dance training has classical ballet as the base and through this instruction, her students are achieving great successes throughout the international ballet community.

Because professional scouts watch the competitions closely, a medal from the Youth American Grand Prix can change a ballet student's career. Brandon Carpio, a student with America's Ballet School for only three years, won first place in the Juniors Classical division at the YAGP last year and was subsequently invited to audition on Broadway in New York for the leading role in Billy Elliot. Olivia Kabat, another student at America's Ballet School, placed third in the same division last year and is now attending the exclusive Ellison Ballet School in New York City which admits students by invitation only.

However, these success stories do not come without rigorous dedication and training. To prepare for the competition, America's Ballet School's students have a very demanding schedule that includes a summer intensive course, many workshops throughout the year and often more than 40 hours per week of dance. With such dedication, also comes great reward.

Training for ballet helps students develop many physical traits including elongated muscles, superior posture and stamina. However, many do not realize the personal character traits that are also achieved. Trust, ambition and drive are common elements that these young adults exhibit.

It is exciting and fascinating to see that throughout Tampa Bay the arts and love for classical ballet continues to blossom. Right here in Tampa's backyard America's Ballet School is discovering and cultivating new talent every day and helping childhood dreams come true.

You can meet the students of America's Ballet School at their holiday open house scheduled for November 18. There are also three performances of the holiday classic, The Nutcracker scheduled for December 11 & 12. For more information, please visit <http://www.americasballet.com>.