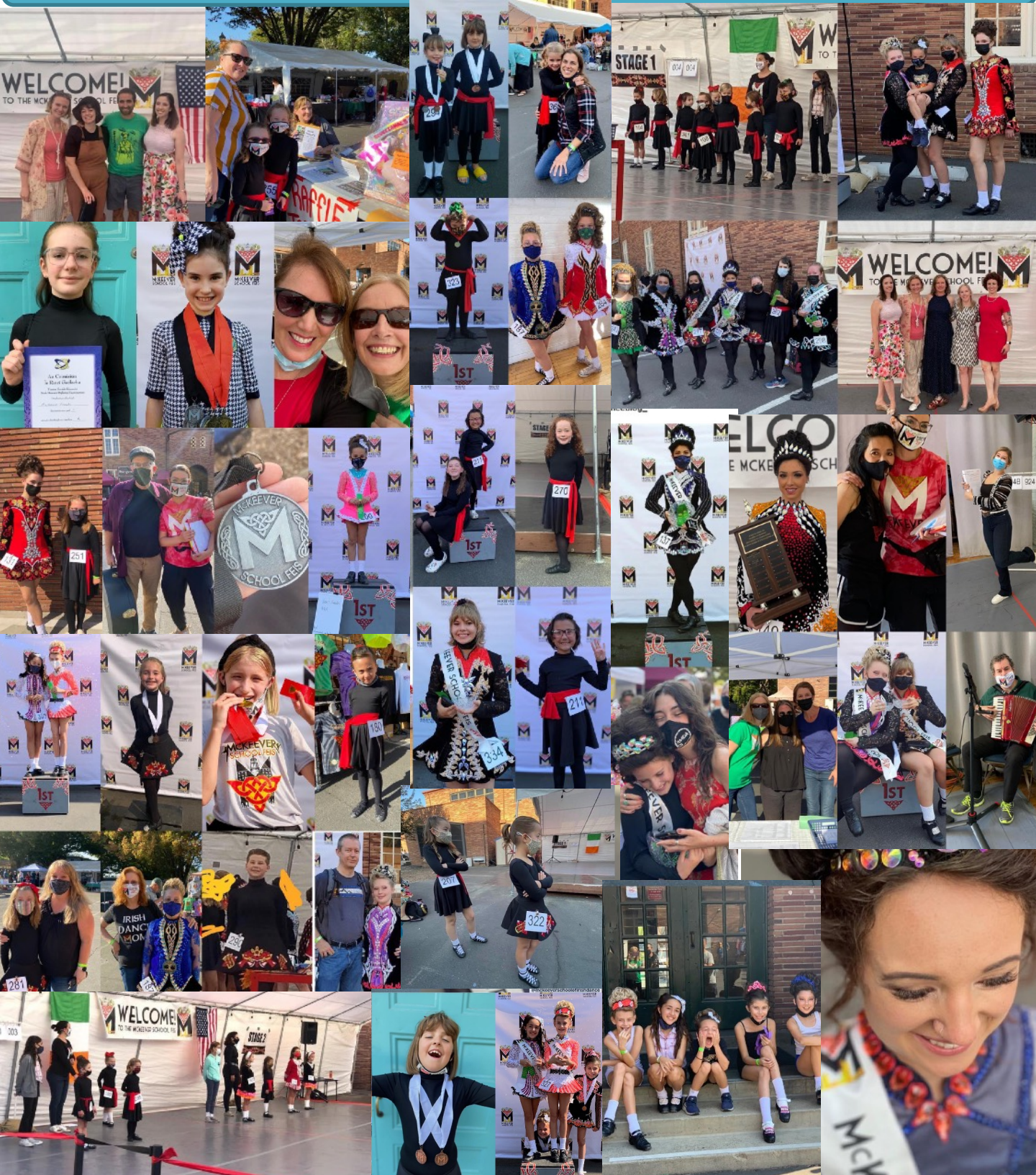




McKeever School of Irish Dance Newsletter

September - November 2021

McKeever Feis a Success!



On October 3rd and 4th we held the McKeever School Feis and Grade Exams at CLARA Midtown. It was a beautiful day with dancers from all over California and even some neighboring states coming together to compete in person. This is the second time we have hosted this event as a school, and its really an important opportunity for our whole Irish Dance Community. This year was especially tricky for planning purposes since a month out we had to change our venue from Hiram Johnson High School to CLARA Midtown. CLARA Midtown staff helped us secure the Auditorium and we worked with the Sacramento Ballet who was so kind to let us use their outdoor stage. This was an absolute lifesaver!

We had such a wonderful group of volunteers, and every person who donated to the raffles or participated in the event in anyway was essential to making it happen! This year our musicians were Niall O'Leary from NYC and Darcy Noonan from San Francisco. Our judges were Daryl Goldes from LA, Anne Hall from Denver, Tara Reid from Las Vegas. Johanna Lambert from Salt Lake City and Lexa Hickey from New Jersey. Sound technicians Adrian Baxmeyer and Patrick Hennessy worked hard to make sure our musicians were sounding great all day long. Feisworx Tabulation was on site to keep our scores tabulated fast and efficiently.

The Auditorium was transformed into a space for the Champions and Adults to compete and the outdoor stage was for all the Grade Level dancers. Our vendors really added to the day with Savour the Moment food truck by the Teves family providing amazing food on site. Room Redux Sacramento sold beverages and raised \$600 for their charity that helps transform the rooms of children who have been victims of abuse. Our 50/50 raffle also raised \$135 for our dancers in Hollywood Park Elementary School that Miss McKeever teaches Irish Dance to for 10 weeks as part of CLARA's Art outreach program.

The McKeever School celebrates every dancer who graced the stage! There were 74 of you that competed that day!!! Shout out to our first time feis dancers Grace L. Izzy and Gwen H. Felicity S. Eilis Nally, Saoirse H. Alice D. Abigail B. Teresa H. Olivia M. Iris M. Clare M. Mia N. Taygan R. Darla S. Delilah S. Erin S. Grace W.

Champion of Champions that day went to Gina McGhee from the Micheal Dillon School.

McKeever School Champion highlights include

Morgan Martin 2nd Open Champs

Amy Dodd 1st Open Champs

Olive Kincaid 2nd in Open Champs

Sarah Lindholm 1st Prelim Champs

Ruby Kincaid 2nd Prelim Champs

Millie Kinnaird 3rd Prelim Champs

Madilyn Whitefleet 3rd Prelim Champs

Sherry Toutges 3rd Adult Champs

Erica Mendoza 4th Adult Champs

Congrats on your first Open competition Sophia Teves and your first Prelims Lina Romine-Casteel and Hannah Dunbar

AND WELCOME TO CHAMPS JUNA ANDERSON



Dance For Life Feis Creates New Prelim and Open Champs!

In late July and Early August we had 15 dancers compete at the Dance for Life Feis hosted by the Haley Prendergast School of Irish Dance! This was another amazing opportunity to compete against dancers across 13 states on a digital platform. We feel so grateful for these opportunities and the amazing judges feedback our dancers received.

Some huge announcements!

Sophia Teves Welcome to Open Championships!

Olive Kincaid Welcome to Open Championships!

Lina R-C. Welcome to Preliminary Championships (you needed one more win and got three!)

Amy Dodd first Place in Open Champs!

Ruby 4th in Preliminary Champs!

Savannah 2nd in Preliminary Champs!

Lena, Eva, Millie, MollyAnn, Lucy, Guin, Madeline, Abbey, Chiara you made us so proud



Releasing Tension, An Essential Free Workshop for Dancers

In an effort to thank our students for sticking with us during tough times we offered two free workshops to help relieve tension and manage anxiety. In September, yoga instructor Kate McKinney helped us understand Myofascial tissue relief. It was a relaxing and informative experience for everyone who attended. A huge thank you to Kate for offering her skills as a yoga instructor to our dancers that day. Kate works at the Summer Moon Yoga Studio if you are interested in learning more from her.

<https://thesummermoon.com/the-summer-moon-class-schedule/>



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Welcome to SCSP by Dr.
Ethan Bregman

Dr. Ethan Isaac Bregman is a clinical
psychologist specializing in sport psychology.
He works with adolescents and adults of all
competitive/participation levels. Dr. Bregman
is a graduate of the APA (American
Psychological Association) accredited Pacific
Graduate School of Psychology. He is a
professional member of the APA, Div 47 and
the AASP (Association for Applied Sport
Psychology). Dr. Bregman is also an
approved provider for the Safe4Athletes
program. Licenses: California PSY21864,
Oregon 3152



Thank you Dr. Bregman for coming to the CLARA Auditorium and speaking with our students back in August. This was part of our free workshops series to help dancers come out of a very difficult time. We hope it helped many of you since as we all know dance is both physical and mental. The mental part is sometimes the hardest aspect too!

Nothing Stops These Dancers From Performing



We had a fun time performing in August for Race for the Park in Land Park. This was our first performance since March! The air was unfortunately really bad that day and it came on all of a sudden that morning. Dancers were desperate to perform and many chose to stick it out and dance! We met some of our zoom students Olivia and Felicity for the very first time in person that day too! Thank you dancers for putting on such a great show even during those difficult conditions.

Feis in the Vines

At the end of August we had an amazing weekend in Santa Rosa at the first Annual Feis in the Vines. Thank you to the Michael Dillon School for hosting such a beautiful event. Congrats to all the McKeever Dancers! Whether it was your first in person feis EVER or your first one in 18 months, we are so proud of your performances.

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDED

Grade level dancers moving up the ranks (Lucy, Eliana, Quinn, McKenna, Maggie, Norah)

Dancer earning one more win towards champion (Estela, Abbey, Murrin, Hannah, Guin)

Champions Eva, Madilyn, Olive and Dahlia dancing their best on stage.

Congrats Dahlia at your first championship feis and Olive on your first Open!

Adults looking strong, Nora, Erica and Erica!

Morgan Martin -1st Open Champ

Amy Dodd -2nd Open Champ

Savannah Carranza - 1st and 1st in Preliminary. WELCOME TO OPEN CHAMP!! (You've worked so hard during the toughest of days!!)

Sarah Lindholm-1st place Preliminary (your first time competing at an in person champion feis! You blew us away!)

Ruby Kincaid - 2nd and 3rd in the youngest Prelim Champ age group

We will be back next year!!!



Help Save the Planet Feis

On September 17th and 18th dancers from the McKeever School went to the Irish Cultural Center in San Francisco to compete in the first annual Help Save the Planet Feis hosted by the Michael Dillon School. Not only did they make efforts to be environmentally conscious but they held a fun two day event. Dancers were encouraged to dance in blackout gear and no wigs or electrical tape on the shoes. Trophies were reusable water bottles and the event made donations to help offset the carbon footprint of judges travel. Congrats to every McKeever dancer who took part and represented our team that day. Highlights included...

Amy Dodd 1st Open

Natalie McKeever 3rd Open

Savannah Carranza 3rd Open

Millie Kinnaird 8th in Prelim

Sarah Lindholm 5th in Prelim

Ruby Kincaid 3rd in Prelim

Hannah Dunbar WELCOME TO PRELIM CHAMPIONS!



Headed off to College!



Pictured above was the last class for our two champions Ana and Audrey before they headed off to college! So many fond memories of shows, competitions and successes with you girls! Ana was one of my very first students and 8 years later you're now an adult and studying at Chico State! We wish you both continued growth and success and can't wait to hear all about your new chapter. Audrey has been training for the Regional Championships and is actually making her way to class each weekend from Merced to train! Once an Irish Dancer always an Irish Dancer :)

Celebrating 8 years as a School!



On October 15th we celebrated 8 years as a school! We have grown so much over the years figuratively and literally. In year 8 I feel like our school has concretely established a positive school culture that celebrates teamwork, individuality and positivity. As we come out of some of the hardest times in a while we are so grateful for our dancers who have stuck with us, and or joined us during this time. May the McKeever School continue to leave a positive impact in people's lives through Irish Dance. We are so grateful for all our wonderful dancers and families over these past 8 years!



Champion Sophia Gets a Full Page Interview

We are so incredibly proud of Open Champion Sophia Teves (Age 10) who took part in the Go Irish Dance Competition earlier this year. She won several categories for her creative choreography and videography and was chosen to have an inspiring full page interview in the October Issue of Irish Dancing Magazine. This contest and the magazine were international opportunities for her to promote herself and the school! There is no doubt she inspiration to all her teammates at the McKeever School and now hopefully to many dancers across the World. Thank you Sophia for being such a model student and Irish Dance Ambassador!



Go Irish Dance Update

SOPHIA ELIZABETH TEVES 10, MCKEEVER SCHOOL SACRAMENTO, CA, USA

When did you start Irish Dancing?
I started dancing when I was four and a half years old. My dad was a fan of Riverdance, and he had a VHS tape that we watched. My mum looked up to see if there were any classes in Sacramento and found the McKeever School of Irish Dance and saw that Nicole McKeever was a former member of Riverdance. Once I started dancing, I discovered I loved it. It has become a big part of my life. I feel happy, and so excited when I dance. I am thankful that my parents found this unique dance for me.

Which Irish Dancing achievement are you most proud of thus far?
My greatest achievement so far is moving up to Open Championships a few weeks ago. It was a long, hard journey going to a lot of competitions in many different states and even in Mexico City, Mexico. I am very proud of myself for this because I thought it would happen when I was a teenager. Now I feel that I must work even harder!

Tell us about your dance teacher:
My dance teacher is Nicole McKeever. She is such an amazing dancer. She is not too pushy with me, but she likes to challenge me with difficult steps with a lot of details and technique. I always try my best to try to make her proud of me. Natalie McKeever is becoming a teacher and helps me too. She is a great dancer and



Sophia won multiple prizes in the Go Irish Dance comp and recently moved up to Open Champs!

is so nice to all the students. Natalie and I do a special hard step in our hornpipe that no one else does in our school. She also designed my Irish Dance dress. I feel like I have a dance family at their school. I love my friends and always have fun and look forward to going to my class.

How did you feel when you found out you had won a prize in the Go Irish Dance – Global Talent Search and how did you celebrate?
I felt very surprised that my videos placed, and I started jumping up and down! I couldn't believe it and couldn't wait to tell my teacher! We celebrated by going to my favourite Thai restaurant for dinner and then ate a delicious dessert! I called all my family and friends, and they were so happy for me.

What is your goal for your dancing in the upcoming months?
I recently moved up to Open Champs. My goal is to keep practising hard and try to get a first place in Open Champs which I haven't had a chance to do yet. I also have a goal to get my birdie just right. My other goal is to recall at the Western US Regional Oireachtas in November this year.



Sophia is now training hard for her regional Oireachtas!

What's your favourite dance?
Right now, my favourite dance is the hornpipe because I love hard shoe and this dance has a lot of challenging steps that I like to do. I also love St. Patrick's Day even though I don't have to dance it anymore.

What is your favourite TV show?
My favourite TV show is Heartland. It's a series about horses and a nice family living on a ranch in Canada. Horses are my favourite animals because they are smart and beautiful. I wish I had a horse as a pet. My parents and I watch it together.

If you could be a Disney character, who would you be and why?
I think I would be Ariel because she is the Little Mermaid. I love to swim and have a mermaid tail that I swim with underwater. I like to imagine that I'm a mermaid when I swim with it. I love mermaids so much that my grandparents (Papa and Lita) call me 'Sirenita' which means mermaid in Spanish. They had a mural painted for me on their wall in their backyard pool with three mermaids and the ocean. I love it!

Champs celebrate their teammate before class starts :)



Champions Morgan and Dominic Perform to Thousands



We are very proud of our dancers Morgan Martin and Dominic Martin who performed on December 8th in Siamsa a Celtic Christmas Show at the the Grand Sierra Resort!! We hope you had the time of your lives at such an incredible venue. You put in so much work and are an inspiration to your teammates!

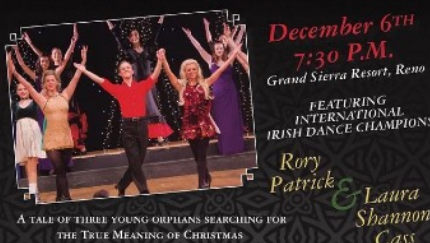
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Giving Back With Dance in Hollywood Park



Dancers Compete in Palm Springs

Congrats to all our beautiful dancers who went down to Palm Springs to the Claddagh School Feis. Ruby, Olive, Sophia, Amy, Devin, Juna, Finola and Brittany!!! Juna's first Preliminary Champion competition. We are so proud of how all of you danced and how strong you make our school look. Congrats to Ruby and Amy on your Prelim and Open champion placements!



The start of December was our tenth and final week working with two third grade classes at Hollywood Park Elementary as part of the CLARA Arts Outreach Program with Sacramento City Unified School District.

Dancers got on stage and performed and entire jig full speed. They are officially Irish Dancers! We were able to give them these awards as proof and some well earned candy. I love working with these sweet kids and I am honestly impressed, lots of natural talent! Irish Dance can really give so much joy to dancers of all ages and backgrounds and I hope these kids will remember their experience in a positive light for years to come.



Regional Championships in Phoenix, Arizona





The McKeever School sent 20 dancers to compete in Phoenix, Arizona the weekend before Thanksgiving. We had not had a regional championships in two years so this was incredibly exciting for everyone. We had champion soloists Morgan Martin, Natalie McKeever, Sarah Lindholm (first Oireachtas), Millie Kinnaird, Savannah Carranza (first Oireachtas), Audrey Pettengill, Dahlia Gregor (first Oireachtas), Sophia Teves (first Oireachtas), Devin Powell (first Oireachtas) Amy Dodd, Olive Kincaid, Ruby Kincaid. Soloists in Traditional set category were Nora Onopa, Sherry Toutges, Madeline Groppo and Abbey Galiotto. Competing in Adult Championships for the first time was Christine Fleischmann. We also sent three wonderful 4 hand teams on stage with many of the dancers mentioned above and including Estela Garcia, Sara Reece and Moriah Payne.

This exciting three day competition was against dancers from 13 states and will be held next year in San Francisco! This competition will most likely be the last Oireachtas for assistant teacher Natalie McKeever since she will soon take her TCRG exam to become a registered dance teacher. Once she is a registered teacher she is no longer eligible to compete. Natalie danced the strongest I have ever seen her dance on stage so this was a beautiful way to show her skills of to the Irish Dance Community. She even got a cheer from some fellow teachers in the crowd at the end of her reel. Fellow Senior Lady Morgan Martin walked away with an outstanding 15th place in an incredibly strong 22 and over age group! Morgan has been training tirelessly and has never looked better, she even made me cry in her set round. Putting your best on stage is the main goal and every dancer achieved that this year, however here are some of our other outstanding results from the Oireachtas we are proud to mention.

Sherry Toutges 1st in Adult Traditional Set! (First 1st for a McKeever student at a Regionals)

Nora Onopa 11th in Adult Traditional Set

Abbey G. 5th in Over 15 Trad set!

Madeline G. 8th in U14 Trad set!

3rd Place in Ladies Over 40 4 hand Team

17th in Under 15 4 hand Team

Christine F. Dancing in her first adult championships!

Ruby Kincaid 8th place U9

Sophia Teves 17th place U10

Olive Kincaid 14th place U11

Amy Dodd 11th place U11

Thank you all for representing our school on such an important and big stage!
Its not easy and you did it!

Dancers Perform for the Rotary Club



We had such a wonderful time performing for the Rotary Club of Sacramento on December 14th. The Holiday event was held at the Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation in East Sacramento. Dancers took time out of their school day to participate which we really appreciate. Thank you parents! Special Shout out to Winnie who is back from college in British Columbia, Canada and to Grace W. Who performed in her first McKeever Show! Great job!!

McKeever School Holiday Market Fun!



On a sunny Saturday at the start of December we held the annual McKeever School Market. Last year we were pushed to host the event outside and realized its even more fun when its on the front lawn of CLARA. In years past we hosted this event in our studio space. We had 13 creative and unique vendors set up shop. Musicians James Wilson and Stephan Davis from Stepping Stone Irish Band came by to play a few tunes as well. It was a fun social day with many friendly faces. Thank you all for supporting our fellow McKeever families and artists! Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!!

Four Champions Get to Grace The Professional Stage



Four of our McKeever Champs will perform at the Vacaville Performing Arts Center on December 19th in the Kerry Productions Show “Christmas from a Celtic Table” This will be the second year for Audrey Pettengill Performing with this dance company, but the first for dancers Savannah C. Sarah L. And Madilyn W. They can now all boast they were hired professionally as Irish Dancers.

You can still get tickets to the show if you are interested please click on this link!

<https://vpat.net/event/christmas-from-a-celtic-table/>



Always Part of the Team!



Two of our Champions will be starting new chapters with different schools due to location. But as we all know, in Irish Dance this is not goodbye and we will see both of them hopefully for years to come. We would like to formally wish our Champion Megan Lehmkuhl the very best of luck as she continues her Irish Dance journey with the J Flynn Academy in the Bay Area. Megan has danced with us for many years after first coming to us as a student in Sacramento State. She lives in San Jose so it's not easy to keep dancing with the McKeever School. We are excited that she gets to continue dance and we know she will always be a part of our team

We are also very excited for one of our top open champion dancers Amy Dodd age 11, who is moving back to Ireland in the new year. She has been with us since we opened the Clara studio space in March of 2016! Her mom Marie and dad Paul are originally from Ireland and you may know them as well

We are excited for her future as she goes on to attend a prestigious dance school in Galway. We have no doubt she will do amazing things and we will run into her at all the Major Championships in years to come!

Before she changes over to her new dance school she will be competing as a McKeever dancer one last time at the all Ireland championships at the end of February. Our first ever dancer to compete at this Championships (on the same stage as my first worlds and my first Riverdance performance at the INEC in Killarney!).

We will Miss you in class Megan and Amy but we know this is not goodbye