



McKeever School of Irish Dance Newsletter

JANUARY - APRIL 2023

Over 100 Dancers Perform on Stage!



The biggest McKeever School Cast EVER graced the stage of Hiram Johnson High School on Saturday March 18, 2023. Students of all ages and levels put on a show for the community and we had over 650 seats filled. An incredible team of volunteers helped to make the day possible. Especially those backstage helpers! With only an hour and a half to rehearse directly after the Saint Patrick's day parade there was added pressure for all. Somehow it all came together and it was such a positive and memorable experience. We were able to fundraise for 9 dancers who will be attending major championships like Worlds, All Irelands and Nationals. We also had Tony Nguyen photographing the event and a DVD that is for sale on our website for a limited time.

We can't wait to make this an annual tradition and see it evolve into a staple part of Sacramento's Saint Patrick's Day tradition.





MCKEEVER SCHOOL OF IRISH DANCE
STUDENT SHOWCASE 2023
CELEBRATE SAINT PATRICK'S DAY AND WATCH US DANCE!
SATURDAY MARCH 18 @ 6:30 PM
HIRAM JOHNSON HIGH SCHOOL, SACRAMENTO
PURCHASE TICKETS ONLINE AT
MCKEEVERDANCE.COM



CLARA Gets a BIG Gift

On Dec 20th dancers performed for a very special luncheon to celebrate and announce a huge gift. CLARA Midtown announced it would be receiving a gift of \$1M from Assemblyman Kevin McCarty for expansion! This will help facilitate long overdue roof repairs on the building and much more. Congrats to dancer Henrietta on performing in her first performance with the McKeever School at this event. These beautiful photos are credited to @tonynguyenphoto



10th Annual Irishpalooza is a HIT!

Irishpalooza 2023 was such an incredible experience as always! On the evening of January 14th dancers opened the big show at Harlow's Nightclub with musical accompaniment by James Wilson and Stephen Davis from Stepping Stone. This event happily celebrated its 10th year, and its first time back in action since 2019! After the McKeever School performed dancers and families stayed and rocked out to the music of One Eyed Reilly, Stout Rebellion and the Pint Thieves. Congrats to dancer Annie H. On her first McKeever performance. We can't wait for next year!

"It's a night of musical friends enjoying musical friends - epic in its simplicity." - James Wilson (Irishpalooza Creator)



Harlow's Presents...
10th Annual IRISHPALOOZA 2023
THE LAST CEILI
McKeever School of Irish Dance
One-Eyed Reilly
Stout Rebellion
The Pikeys

January 14 6:00-9:00 pm
Doors open at 5:30
\$20 advance/ \$25 door

Music for dancers by members of Stepping Stone



Kennelly Feis in San Francisco



Huge congratulations to all our beautiful hardworking dancers who competed at the Kennelly Feis in San Francisco the weekend of January 14th! You make our team look strong Keep up the great work!! Congratulations Abigail B. On your first preliminary championships!!!

West Coast Teachers Charity Feis



The McKeever team enjoyed competing in San Francisco at the end of March at the West Coast Teacher's Charity Feis. All levels of dancers shined on stage regardless of their competitive results, but we saw an incredible amount of success in the grade levels. We are extra proud of Ruby Kincaid who earned first in preliminary championships and has only one more to go before open championship!! Olive Kincaid received 2nd in Open Championships as she set her sights on the World Championships the next weekend. Dancer Abigail B. Earned her first top 3 placement in Preliminary Championships. Most importantly there were a lot of wonderful memories made, and time well spent with family and friends doing what we love!



Honoring our Longest Enrolled Students

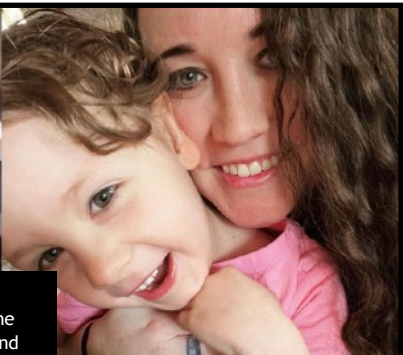
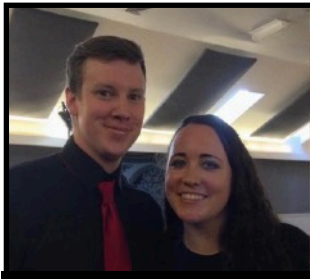
This October 2023 we will hit a landmark of 10 years as a school! So many wonderful people have come through our doors over the years and we feel each student is important no matter how long they are with us. However the time had come to recognize and honor some of our longest enrolled students. Having the chance to teach dancers for potentially a decade or longer, as well as multiple generations is such a special aspect of running an Irish Dance School and we do not take it for granted! We have come a long way since our early days of running classes out of studios like the Firehouse Five and Step One. Thank you for being with us for all these years.



**Original Adult Students!
Longest Enrollment Award**



**We will celebrate 10 years as a school this year!
It's time to recognize our dancers who
have been with us since classes at Step One
and Firehouse Five, before we got our own studio!**



Tarra LaValley joined one of our First adult classes with her mom! She recruited her partner Chel, her friend Tim and her cute son Morgan.



"My favorite dance memory is actually the first day of class! I grew up watching Lord of the Dance and listening to the soundtrack on repeat. Fulfilling my childhood dream of learning Irish Step was such a surreal and wonderful feeling, and having a *REAL LIFE* Riverdancer as a teacher was icing on the cake. Now that Morgan has started taking lessons, I have a newfound joy for Irish dance, and I'm grateful everything has come full circle."

The first being a photo with you, Kyle, and Jenny at what I believe was the first show booked soon after starting your school (private Irish-themed party in Auburn, CA). The second photo was from the recent Western US Regional Irish Dance Championships. Never in my dreams did I think that an Adult Category would be included at this level and be given the opportunity to compete. I was just hoping to complete the dances without too many mistakes, much less recall. Who knew I would be in the top 10 in the Western US Region for Adults 40+?! Thanks to you and Natalie for getting me to that level, for having the confidence in me that I could not find, and for your continued guidance.

Sherry Toutges

Sherry was our 4th student in the school and has never stopped!

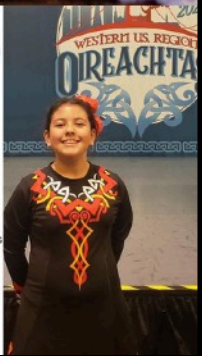


Ciara Bishop, our first tiny tot and continuous student since 2014 attended her first Regionals this year!



I started dancing with Nicole before I could hop on one foot. I was a little young to start in the beginners 1 class, but I gave it a try. I had a hard time staying focused for the whole hour. I was only 2.5 years old. But there was no need to fear, Nicole had a solution. She started the tiny tot's class. I hop on one foot far better now a days. I keep going to dance class because I like hanging out with my friends, improving my skills, and I like listening to the Irish music. Although, the "Everybody Dance Now" song is fun too. It is a nice treat when Tumbleweed comes to visit. I still get nervous when I get on stage but it helps a lot to have all the other celi dancing Collini by my side. I look forward to making more friends and one day getting my first solo dress. Thank you so much Nicole and Natalie.

Ciara Bishop



Favorite new Irish Dance memory: watching Alina compete in the 4-hand reel at the Oireachtas and seeing that Russell Beaton

(legendary adjudicator) was sitting on the panel.

He was my first judge at my first competition as a kid!

(Yes Alina was technically with me dancing a few times in 2014!!)



Florence Chau, a former champion, joined our adult classes in 2015 but soon had to take a break when little dancer Alina was on the way!

"Choosing a favorite memory is hard; I think everything is so fun and I love all of it. I think it's a tie between the first McKeever feis and this year's Oireachtas. I love the atmosphere when everyone is so collectively excited and working towards such a big goal like the first feis and being part of it felt really special. Oireachtas was exciting because it was my first regionals and first time on a team. I really enjoyed practicing with everyone and watching the dances come together - especially my 4-hand's late-night practices and increasingly silly team building."

**Tara Rankin Nyberg
Dancing with us continuously
Since 2014! Now competing in Adult Championships
Her son Ryker just joined Tiny Tots**



**Amber Rankin
Original student dancing
with us since 2014 nonstop
Now competing in adult championships**



**Ireland McKiernan joined
one of our first beginner classes
at the firehouse five and
has never stopped dancing!**



**Original continuous student
Erica Mendoza**



**"Favorite Irish dance memory:
Dancing on stage with Alasdair Fraser and friends
in Paradise."**



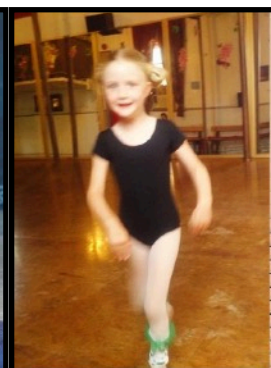
Ann Raftery joined our very first adult classes! She has continuously kept her dance training going even with a demanding career and a long drive to class 🍀

As a high school student, Anna Cutshall joined our first classes at Step One with her friend Amy. She loved dance and all things Celtic! Anna came back to classes after college and the pandemic. We are so glad she is back and starting her competitive journey 🍀

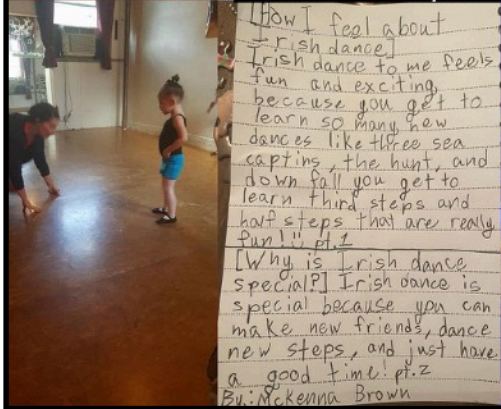




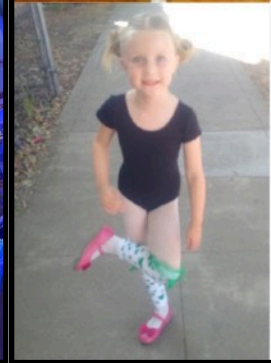
McKenna Brown joined us at age 3 at the Firehouse. She joined us again when we moved into CLARA and us now a champion!!



Elizabeth Berryman
Original Continuous Student
Since our first classes at the Firehouse



How I feel about Irish dance] Irish dance to me feels fun and exciting, because you get to learn so many new dances like three sea captains, the hunt, and down fall you get to learn three steps and half steps that are really fun!! pt.1
[Why is Irish dance special?] Irish dance is special because you can make new friends, dance new steps, and just have a good time! pt.2
By: McKenna Brown



"What Irish Dance Means to Me"
"I like the agility and the freedom of Irish Dance. I love the little world I go in when I dance."



"My favorite Irish dance memories were either when we did the day of dance show, or back when the school moved from Fire House Five to Clara. It was amazing to go to a full studio."

Chiara Karagianes
Original Continuous Student



Emma Taylor
Original student joined in early 2014 and just came back to dance at the McKeever feis 2022

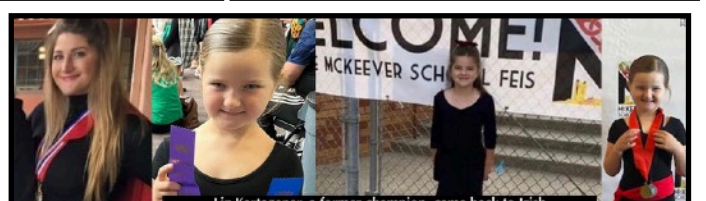
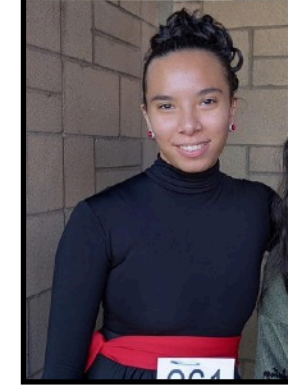


Maggie Oehmke Started with us back at the Firehouse in 2014 and came back to Irish dance after the pandemic. Now training towards champ and on teams at Regionals



Maya Tucker
Dancing with us since 2014!

Maya's favorite Irish Dance memory was when she did the Reel at the Silver State Feis. It was their first feis and they forgot to pull a few dancers in during the competitions and Maya was one of them. So, they did some makeups and Maya had to dance front and center by herself with no one else on the stages and all eyes were on her. She was a little nervous, but she did it and won second place. She was so happy.



Liz Kartagener, a former champion, came back to Irish dance in our early adult classes. Soon her daughters joined our school!



Two Champions Make McKeever School History in Ireland

Two champions made McKeever School history in February when they competed in Killarney, Ireland at the 2023 All Ireland Championships. Sophia Teves and Morgan Martin made the 6000 mile journey to Ireland to represent the team and show off their incredible talents. We got to watch them live on FeisTV which was extra exciting. Sophia is technically the first McKeever dancer to ever compete in this championships or in Ireland!!!

Both girls competed on the very stage their teacher Nicole competed at her first Worlds and performed with Riverdance for the first time which made it extra special. We are so proud of both girls for paving the way and inspiring so many other dancers in our school! You both looked beautiful up there!



Performing at the Sacramento Kings Game



What a night! McKeever Champions braved the rain and hailstorms and had the chance to perform in front of a roaring crowd at the Golden One Center on March 21st for the Kings vs Celtics game. They were accompanied by live music from the local band Anam Cara and had rehearsed the best they could together but had no idea what to expect. Dancers walked out onto the court after the National Anthem and the sound of the crowd was so loud there was absolutely no way to hear the music! Funnily enough their dance began just as the Celtics walked out onto the court and there was a definite audible “boo”, possibly our first ever! At least we know it wasn’t meant for us! Boy did these dancers pull it together quickly figuring out how to stay in unison despite having no way to hear the lovely reels by Anam Cara. It was a memorable experience filled with adrenaline!

Feis Fun in Seattle



Congrats to our 4 champs Abbey, Devin, Olive and Ruby who had some great results at the Pacific Northwest Championships and Valerie's Feis in Seattle hosted by The Comerford School. They all received some helpful and encouraging feedback, along with valuable experiences and we are so proud of them! You girls work so hard! Thank you for representing the team

Getting Some Saint Patrick's Day Press

We got to be a part of an amazing news piece by ABC10 and John Bartell the week of Saint Patrick's Day! John interviewed Joe McNamara and Nicole McKeever and got a sense for what the Irish American story is here in Sacramento! It came out so great! We linked the full video on the front page of our website if you haven't seen it yet. We also got to be a part of an amazing interview by Kitty O'Neal on iHeartRadio. Kitty interviewed Joe McNamara and Nicole McKeever to get an inside scoop on all the fun Saint Patrick's Day events happening in Sacramento. This full podcast is also linked on the front page of our website



Irish Celebrations in Sacramento with Joe McNamara and Nicole McKeever
March 16, 2023 • 9 min

Irish Celebrations in Sacramento with Joe McNamara and Nicole McKeever



A Day Dancing at the State Capitol

The McKeever School had the incredible opportunity to perform at the historic State Capitol the week leading up to Saint Patrick's Day in order to celebrate Irish American Heritage Month! Dancers got to meet Assemblyman Matt Haney, Assemblyman James Gallagher, and Eloise Gómez Reyes Majority Leader of the California State Assembly. This amazing opportunity came to us through former McKeever student Claire Conlon de Vries, Chief of Staff for Assemblywoman Cottie Petrie-Noris.

We also got to visit the Assembly floor and watch a special welcoming of the Consulate General of Ireland in San Francisco, Michael Smith. This was a memorable day and such a beautiful setting for a performance!



How the McKeever School Celebrated Saint Patrick's Day

Our Dancers had a busy and fun day celebrating Saint Patricks Day and dancing for retirement communities and an amazing crowd at the Sacramento Irish Social put on by the Limelight Bar and Restaurant in East Sacramento!! We got to share our talents, hopefully brighten some days as well as raise money for an incredible scholarship fund! Congrats on your first McKeever performance Charlotte and Maryanna!



Friday March 17 2023

Limelight

SACRAMENTO
Irish Social

Your presence and support at this special event will directly contribute to the McNamara Brothers' Scholarship Fund at Christian Brothers High School, keeping Mugs' legacy alive for generations to come. So, grab your tickets today and be a part of the celebration!

Live Music by:

Clemon Ratlin Boys Ceili Band LVVS

Special Performance by The McKeever School Of Dance 4:30pm

Event Time: 3pm-8:30pm 1014 Alhambra Blvd Sacramento Ca Phone (916) 416-2236



captain_mor



LIMELIGHT BAR & CAFE

@mckeverschoolofdance



2023 Saint Patrick's Day Parade

One of the best events of the year for our dancers is the Saint Patrick's Parade in Old Sacramento. This year we had some incredible weather and a team of 50 dancers who performed and marched at the event. Miss McKeever got to be the honorary Grand Marshall thanks to the Shamrock Club of Sacramento. She rode in a car in front of a sea of her dancers and wore a bespoke hat made by artist and former McKeever student Shannan O'Rourke McKee (aka @shammybunsart). Tumbleweed our furry school mascot could not attend the event as per usual, but luckily a three legged adorable dog named Riley stepped up to the plate (thanks to owner Morgan Martin).



The queen of St. Patrick's day herself @mckeeverchoolofirishdance



Training Turnout With the Help of Balanced Body

balanced_body

New on The CORE!

ST. PATRICK'S DAY: PERFECTING THE "TURNOUT" IN IRISH DANCING



Nicole McKeever
Director | McKeever School
of Irish Dance



balanced_body This St. Patrick's Day, we're celebrating with Irish dance and Precision Rotator Discs!...

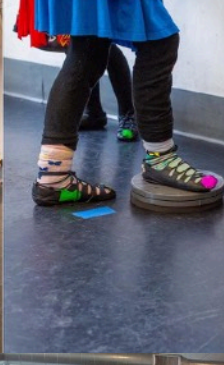


St. Patrick's Day: Perfecting the "Turnout" in Irish Dance

by NICOLE MCKEEVER 17 MARCH [CHOOSE YOUR EQUIPMENT](#)
[CULTURE](#) [EXERCISES](#) [FITNESS](#) [LIFE](#) [PEOPLE](#)

It's working!! In a very short amount of time using **Balanced Body Precision Rotator Discs** my students are uttering sentences like "Wow, I didn't even know that muscle existed!" As an Irish Dance teacher, adjudicator and former Riverdance cast member my career is built on identifying and helping others to build their skills and technique.

In Irish Dance specifically, part of that skill set is



We were so lucky to be asked to write a blog piece for Balanced Body after discovering what their Precision Rotator Discs could do for our students. These amazing devices are now available for use at the studio and come in two levels of resistance. We hope to continue to discover ways these new tools can help us strengthen and bring awareness to a select grouping of muscles responsible for turning out our leg from the hip. Balanced Body photographer Scott Kartagener (Jane and Grace's Dad) came to the studio and took some great pictures for the piece! Feel free to use the precision rotator disks the next time you're in the studio and just ask your teachers how to properly use them!

Olive Competes at the World Championships



At the young age of 12, McKeever Champion Olive Kincaid has now competed at the 2023 World Championships of Irish Dance in Montreal, Canada. Representing herself, her school and the Western US Region at this truly International competition is such a huge deal in any dancer's career. Olive had to qualify at the Regional Championships where she placed 8th. The standard was inspiring and challenging and Olive performed two gorgeous rounds. We are excited to see where you go next Olive, Miss McKeever started dancing at your age so the world is truly yours! Thank you for inspiring your team.