



McKeever School of Irish Dance Newsletter

SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER 2020

Parking Lot Party ... The Sequel



On Saturday, September 19th we hosted another free and super fun parking lot party, but this time it was for a good cause! Donations and raffle baskets helped raise money for Room Redux Sacramento which transforms the bedrooms of children who have faced physical and/or sexual abuse. By recreating children's rooms and removing triggers, Room Redux Sacramento fosters the mental health and healing process for these children. Our event raised enough for half a room transformation!

That day the weather was beautiful and we danced outside for an hour with challenges such as the Funniest Duet, Champion Treble Reel, Team Spirit Parade and the infamous Stamina Challenge! Dancers received Dublin Crystal trophies and had some wonderful food from the Brazil Center at CLARA!

One little dancer was celebrating her 6th birthday that day and the entire parking lot sang "Happy Birthday" to little Lucy B. We also had tons of fun McKeever Masks for sale thanks to the talented Dr. Linda Hurley. Portions of the mask proceeds also went to her non-profit called GeoGems. The intention behind GeoGems is to expose young people to high quality science regardless of what they look like or where they live. For more information on both these organizations please look below

Website: www.sacramento.roomredux.org

Website: magnetic-moment-llc.square.site

International Irish Dance Day



This year Irish dancers across the Globe took part in the first International Irish Dance day. September 17th is usually “Halfway to Saint Patrick’s Day” so this was a great chance to connect digitally and post about how we are keeping Irish Dance alive during challenging times. The McKeever School had both their digital and outdoor students take a few video clips to share online.

McKeever School Hosts Grade Exams



We were very sad not to host our McKeever School Feis in its second year. It would have occurred on October 3rd and 4th at Hiram Johnson High School and we eagerly look forward to hosting it in 2021! Luckily we were still able to host CLRG Grade Exams at the Auditorium in CLARA that same weekend. For many of our dancers this was an important opportunity during a time when progressing in their dance careers competitively has been paused. We hired an SDCRG (or a judge of judges!) Vinny O'Connor to examine

Dancers from all different schools, some traveling as far as Texas. There were a total of 86 exams taken over 2 days and 30 of them McKeever! With the exam format we were able to space out dancers in small groups and keep people safe with masks and social distancing. Thank you to all the volunteers who helped us check in dancers and run this event so smoothly. We got a lot of compliments on how the event ran professionally and safely. We had dancers as young as 6 taking their first exams (Lucy B and Eliana S) and some of our senior dancers Moriah Payne and Natalie McKeever passed grades 11 and 12 with top marks. These exams are required in order to sit your TCRG exam to become a dance teacher. We hope to host these every year so that tons of McKeever dancers who may dream of teaching one day will have the chance to be certified. Congrats to all the dancers who passed each and every exam, this was not an easy feat!

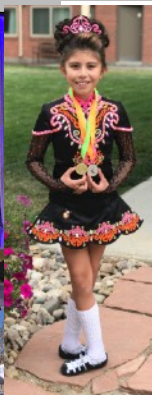


natmckdigital Something to celebrate in 2020!! I took this Grade 11 Exam back in February right before it all hit the fan and finally got the ratified results mailed from Dublin! I was able to take Grade Exam 12 in October and now have 12/12 exams complete!! This means I now have a “diploma of Irish Dance” and am now eligible to take my TCRG exam to officially become a teacher with CLRG. I have a few more competitive goals to wrap up before I do that but I will be ready whenever the opportunity arises!! Thank you so much @nicmckdance for training me for these exams! It took me 2 years + covid abyss and I travelled all over from Salt Lake City, Ventura, Sacramento, Lancaster, and the final one in Sacramento to get this completed!! Cheers!!

Sophia and Savannah Determined to Reach Their Goals



For Preliminary Champions there is no way to move up to the top level of Open Champion unless you attend a real feis. This is the one competitive level that teachers discretion does not apply. So this has been exceptionally hard for ALL our hardworking Prelim Champs. Two of our dancers, Sophia and Savannah, have shown unwavering dedication to training and learning new material that we wanted to applaud their achievements these past few months. We understand it has not been possible for everyone to travel to competitions and that is ok, even Miss Natalie who only needs one more first to get to Open has not been able to travel and compete since February. With so few competitions being held dancers are driving long hours to places like Wyoming, Utah and Arizona just for a chance to achieve their dreams. This also means the competitions are pretty stiff and both girls have been up against the best dancers in their age groups. On Sept 6th both girls travelled to Arizona Sophia placing 3rd in Under 9 and 4th in Under 10 age group Savannah won a 2nd in Under 15 and 4th in Under 16. Then on September 19th Sophia travelled to Wyoming and got first both days in her hardshoe and second in softshoe in the round awards and she won the blind treble reel challenge!! Then on November 21st and 22nd Sophia and Savannah both won second place in stiff competitions at the Las Vegas Championships! Showing up and looking your best during these times is such a huge deal for our school and we are very thankful for how both of you are representing yourselves and team McKeever.



Outdoor Holiday Market

One of our annual school events is the festive McKeever Holiday Market, and I personally love this event because dancers and their family members get to show us their talents and sell a myriad of handmade items. This year we held the event outdoors on the front lawn of CLARA and it actually turned out even better than ever. The festive event was held on Saturday November 21 from 11-2pm and McKeever dancers McKenna B, Lena M. Devin P, Lina R, Kaleigh H, Paloma H, Darla S, Delilah S, Allie M and Summer L all had booths with extremely unique handmade items! Thank you to everyone who stopped by to support these budding small business owners.



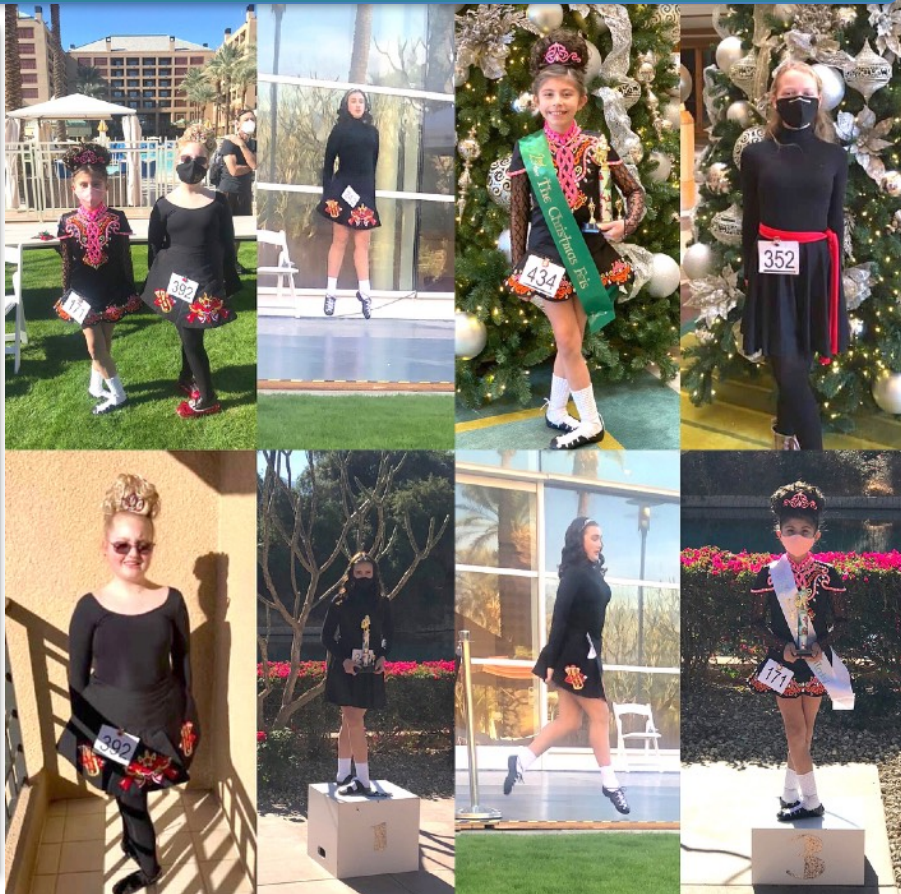
CLRG International Coloring Contest



Our dance organization, CLRG has been trying to think of unique ways to keep dancers engaged during these challenging times. Ireland and the UK have been on lockdown three times and it's been so hard for kids. Dance teacher and illustrator Shelley Locklier created two fun characters Clara and Connor, Irish Dance fairies who promote wearing masks and staying safe. An international coloring contest was held and Miss McKeever was asked to be one of the adjudicators. Dancers as young as age 5 took part and seeing all the unique submissions was really fun and very hard to judge. Some age groups had almost 100 entries! Check out @StylishSketchesbyShelley and @ClaraandConor on Instagram!

Indian Wells Christmas Feis

Our dancers had a great time competing at the start of December at the Indian Wells Feile na Nollaig hosted by the Claddagh School in Palm Springs. Huge shoutouts to our three Prizewinners who never stopped learning this year Dahlia G, Devin P and Hannah D. Congrats also go out to U9 champion Sophia who came home with a 2nd a 3rd overall in her two day championships. I also forgot to mention that our dancer Sarah L who competed over Halloween weekend at the CIDA Championships winning many of her Prizewinner dances and moving them into the Champion level. Great job girls!!



December Digital Feis - Ending the Year on a High Note!



On December 12th we hosted another Digital Class Feis thanks to the help and support of VideoFeis. Over 42 dancers competed and we had a seriously amazing panel of judges (check out their bios to the right)! Every dancer received detailed commentary and will get a beautiful green rosette ribbon to add to their collection. Everyone moved something up too!

It also was a chance for us to solidify the decision to move 4 dancers up to the Champion level. This means despite all the craziness of 2020 we still have 5 new Champions! Sarah L, Megan L, Devin P, Ruby K and Eleni K!!! Sarah went from a beginner at the start of the year and blew us away with her rapid growth as a dancer! Megan earned her Champion title despite having to work and attend college digitally! Devin learned so much material on her own from videos at such a young age that we were awestruck. Little Ruby showed us she had the heart of Champion and moved her last dance up with an amazing performance! Lastly Eleni has excelled completely learning and developing her skills online through zoom and video instruction. We haven't even seen Eleni or Megan in person since March!

Congrats also go out to the 19 dancers passed who passed 74 IDTANA Traditional Set Dance Proficiency Awards! There were three dancers who earned all 7 awards and will get the Presidential Award from the Irish Dance Teachers Association of North America! Amy Sinead Dodd, Arabelle Jones and Devin Powell will receive a special certificate (artwork by Miss McKeever) that is signed by the IDTANA president Russel Beaton. The Traditional Set Dances are varying levels of difficulty and always danced to a specific melody. They are dances choreographed by dance masters over 100 years ago and very important in the preservation of our Irish Dance heritage.



We had a star cast of esteemed Judges!
 Above: Riverdance Lead, star of the latest Riverdance 25th Anniversary movie and World Champion AmyMae Dolan.
 Above to the Right: Lisa Power-Steinmetz who operates the Power Academy in Southern California and is an outstanding teacher and ADCRG or certified adjudicator.
 To the Right: Michael Gardiner also a World Champion and part of the social media Irish Dance Sensation "Gardiner Brothers". These guys are seriously helping spread Irish Dance to the next generation.
 These are talented but also very genuinely decent people who really enjoyed watching you dance! Print out those judge comments for your scrapbook you will want to look back on these when you're my age LOL



Dancer's Corner

OFFERS **OUTDOOR STAGE + SEAN O'BRIEN = 😊**



@mckeeverschoolofirishdance



Some fun images from these past few months! To the far left dancer Amy D flies across the stage in a video that was reposted by the Feisapp!! So excited the world could see your beautiful dancing this year. Above a drawing by new beginner Madelyn M that was just too cute not to share! On the top right two adorable gifts from dancers during our outdoor classes this past month. Little Andrea G and Jaxson R thanks for brightening our day. To the middle left Miss McKeever and Tumbleweed show off all the fun McKeever Masks made by Dr. Linda Hurley. To the bottom left an amazing stat from our Youtube Channel and proof that McKeever Dancers excelled this year. Finally an amazing McKeever wreath by Brittany Brown who made all our McKeever items this year! Check out her page @bmc.mckeeper and @BeeMichaeCrafts



Viewers spent **35,850 minutes** watching your videos in 2020!



Getting in the Christmas Spirit and Performing Safely



In December we found ourselves surprisingly with three opportunities to perform! On December 12th Champion Morgan Martin performed with 8 other top Northern Californian dancers in front of the Golden Gate Bridge. This fun treble reel routine was part of the Digital Christmas production of a "Christmas Card from San Francisco" Top Irish music and dance acts from across the globe joined together for over an hour of entertainment! Even Tik Tok sensations Cairde joined in! Proceeds helped to support to the Irish Cultural Center in SF.

Throughout the months of November and December Miss Nicole had fun choreographing for the Sacramento Ballet Trainee Christmas Program. She was asked to create a routine to "Constant Billy" a traditional Morris or English folk tune which is also a jig. The dancers were so much fun to work with and found skipping SUPER strenuous! They also bow to their teacher at the end of class which surprised Miss McKeever at first! Unfortunate Covid related shutdowns at the ballet made things difficult for everyone involved in the production. But in the end the dancers who remained pulled off a beautiful jig routine.

On December 19th we had 8 dancers perform outside with masks on at a Christmas concert called "Tinsel and Tidings" at Lifepointe church in Rio Linda. It was the first time we performed as a school since March! Definitely made us feel like Christmas was just around the corner! Thank you to adult McKeever dancer Summer Lopez who helped organize the event and to Darla, Delilah, Millie, Mollyann, Lucy, Winnie Ha, and Erica Jones who performed :)



Dancing Outside and Inside and Outside Again

You did it dancers! Cheers to our outdoor students who starting in August braved 100 degree plus heat, in September a month or more of fire and ash. They danced in the dark, on concrete and in the rain. They moved inside for two weeks at the start of November only to move back outside again a few weeks later! All the while keeping a good attitude and staying safe with masks and social distancing! January will no doubt throw us some rainy days but we can get through this. Thank you dancers you are determined and destined for great things!

