



## OPENING NEWSLETTER 2021-2022

### **WELCOME!**

We are so excited to be returning to the studio and are looking forward to sharing another wonderful year with our dancers and dance families! While the past year and a half has been a challenge, we are extremely proud to have created a studio that has strong sense of community, connection and caring. We are confident that the 2021-2022 season will be one filled with happy days of learning and dancing together!

As was the case last year, we plan to be flexible and adaptable to change, as we move forward and the Covid-19 pandemic and health protocols continue to evolve. We will communicate regularly with all of our families so that everyone is up to date on all that is happening at the studio.

As always, Grace Academy is looking forward to continuing to develop a strong technical foundation in each of our dancers, while instilling a natural love of movement and creativity. **This year marks our 19<sup>th</sup> year of excellence in dance!** At Grace Academy, we are proud to offer the finest in dance and theatrical training, where students are given opportunity to learn in an environment of artistic and technical excellence. As one of Oakville's only non-competitive studios, we are proud to offer an environment that is caring, and where dancers learn to be encouraging, supportive and respectful of each other. Age appropriate syllabus work, music and costuming is chosen with great care so that parents can always be assured of the very best for their child!

We are proud to be members of the **International Dance Entrepreneurs Association!**

"I.D.E.A. schools adhere to a Code of Ethics for fairness, respect and integrity in business and the classroom. You will find a well-qualified and compassionate faculty and staff committed to providing your child with the highest quality dance education possible while helping them grow in the passion for dance and life."

## **REGISTRATION**

Registration now takes place in our Family Portal. You can create an account (new dancers) or sign in on the homepage of our website ([graceacademy.ca](http://graceacademy.ca)). Once classes are chosen, you will receive an email acknowledging that your portal has been set up and a 2nd email acknowledging your class selections. At that time, we will review your class selections (to ensure you have chosen the correct levels) and then confirm your fees owing. To secure your place, a \$100 non-refundable deposit should be paid immediately, with the balance of 1st Term Fees due on August 28th. This deposit is made up of a \$25 registration fee and \$75 deposit towards 1st term fees. **Please refer to the attached Fee Structure for all fee policies.**

FEES ARE PAYABLE BY E-TRANSFER, CASH OR CHEQUE MADE OUT TO GRACE ACADEMY OF DANCE AND PERFORMING ARTS (Families paying by cheque MUST provide the studio with post dated cheques for each term)

If you are paying by cheques, these can be mailed to:

785 Pacific Road, Unit 1  
Oakville, On  
L6L 6M3

(or dropped off through the slot on our front door)

This 'Family Portal' will be your place to look for monthly newsletters, class music, zoom links and fees owing as we continue through the year. Access will be through the studio website, please be sure to record your password.

## **TIMETABLE**

The proposed timetable for the 2021/2022 season can be found on our website under 'Schedules'. This timetable is subject to change based on registration numbers and any changes in COVID-19 protocols. Where there is insufficient registration for any class, this may be cancelled and an alternative given.

Students will be watched carefully to ensure that they have been placed in the correct level. Teachers will discuss this with the parents, should a problem arise. Every effort is made to do only what will be of benefit to each individual child. Parents should remember that because dance is a physical activity all students will develop and progress at different rates.

In studio class sizes will be restricted to maintain physical distance and to keep within the gathering limits set by the Ontario Government. At this point in time, we anticipate that all of our classes will be running in person. If necessary (due to

changes in provincial restrictions), a hybrid system of virtual/in person learning may be set up, or a move to completely virtual classes may occur. **Please refer to your registration waiver - no refunds or discounts will be given.** Any such changes will be communicated clearly when/if it becomes necessary to implement them.

**If you are uncomfortable returning to in person learning for any reason, dancers may also choose to learn exclusively at home on Zoom. If this is your preference, please indicate this on the 'special needs' section of your registration or email Miss Knapp.**

A virtual option will also be available for dancers or family members who may be ill, to help keep our studio safe and healthy.

## **AGE RESTRICTIONS**

### **MINIMUM AGE REQUIREMENTS:**

**Discover with me** - 18 months by September 1st 2021

**Ballet** – 3 years by September 1<sup>st</sup> 2021

**Tap**– 7 years by September 1<sup>st</sup> 2021 OR 3 years of dance at Grace Academy – at Miss Knapp's discretion

**Musical Theatre** – 7 years by September 1<sup>st</sup> 2021

All students must be taking one form of dance. Dancers will be divided based on age and dance level

**Modern jazz** – 6 years by January 31<sup>ST</sup> 2022 OR 2 years of ballet at Grace Academy

**Junior Hip Hop** - 6 years by September 1st 2021 AND taking Grade 1,2 or 3 Modern

- ALL STUDENTS wishing to enrol in Grade 4 Hip Hop or higher MUST also be attending the corresponding modern class. It is strongly recommended that Junior Hip Hop dancers also enrol in grade 1, 2 or 3 modern depending on their age

- Intermediate foundation ballet 1<sup>st</sup> year students must attend 2 classes of ballet per week in order to be considered for pointe work.

-Intermediate foundation ballet 2<sup>nd</sup> year students and above MUST be attending 2 regular ballet classes per week to work on pointe.

**-We recommend that students in grade 1 ballet 2<sup>nd</sup> year and above attend 2 classes per week in order to progress through the level in 1 year (please discuss this with Miss Knapp if you have questions). Students who do not attend twice a week will not necessarily be ready to move ahead to the next**

**grade level. We HIGHLY RECOMMEND ATTENDANCE IN 2 CLASSES A WEEK IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE A GOOD STANDARD**

- Musical theatre students must be taking at least one form of dance
- Those interested in The Spirit Moves Christian Dance Company or Pure Grace Performing Company should speak to Miss Knapp
- Leaps and Turns 1 dancers should be enrolled in either INTER OR ADV 1 1ST YEAR MODERN
- Leaps and Turns 2 dancers should be enrolled in either ADV 1 2ND YEAR OR ADV 2 MODERN
- Stretch and Strength for Dancers students should be enrolled in INTER MODERN OR IF 2ND YEAR BALLET AND ABOVE
- Senior Pointe/PBT is open to dancers in Adv 1 or Senior Ballet

**THE SPIRIT MOVES CHRISTIAN DANCE COMPANY**

The Spirit Moves Christian Dance Company was founded by Miss Knapp in the year 2000.

Using contemporary Christian worship music, dancers learn a large repertoire of choreography throughout the year. This year, practices will continue to be held every other Friday. In past seasons, we have taken part in a variety of worship services in the community. Last year, we were able to provide video recordings of our dances to many churches to use as a part of their virtual services. We will continue with this as we begin our new season, with a hope to add in person performances later in the year. Families who participate in this program will be updated on any potential performances as they come up, and all performance participation will be optional.

This is a fabulous opportunity for your dancer to learn about giving back to others and to share their talents in a way that brings joy to those around them. If you are interested in learning more, please speak to Miss Knapp.

**PURE GRACE -PERFORMING COMPANY**

Pure Grace is a non-competitive performance based company. It is a wonderful way for dancers to enhance their performance skills, while increasing their technique and knowledge of a variety of dance styles.

Pure Grace is offered to the **serious dancer, who is committed to challenging themselves with new work, enhancing their technique, and performing at a high standard.** While this is a non-auditioned group, dancers should attend a minimum of 2 ballet classes and 1 modern class per week in order to participate. The group is open to dancers enrolled in grade 2 ballet and above, and will be sub-divided according to dance grade level.

In past years, our dancers have participated in events such as Run for the Cure, Oak Park Neighbourhood Fall Fair, Oakville Children's Festival, Fundraising Gala for Kerr Street Mission, Film.Ca Cinemas, Palermo Village Retirement Community and Disney World!

We look forward to finding new performance opportunities for our dancers this coming season as the community continues to open up! Participating families will be updated closer to September.

We are so proud of what our dancers have accomplished by being a part of this program and see an enormous change in them both technically and in performance standard.

### **NEW FOR THE 2021-2022 SEASON! - DISCOVERDANCE**

We are so excited to announce that we are now an official DISCOVERDANCE studio! As you know, we take great pride in offering programs for our littlest dancers that allow them to explore their creativity and imagination, develop an appreciation of music , and enhance their motor skills and body and spatial awareness. Over the past year, Miss Knapp has been furthering her training in early childhood dance, and is so excited to enhance our programs with the use of DiscoverDance!

**“The DiscoverDance approach to early childhood dance education is the perfect blend of discovery and development that leads to a lifelong appreciation for the ART of dance. We are dedicated to teaching the developing child FIRST, the dancer second. Through this lens, we meet every child's individual needs at their developmental stage.”**

DISCOVER WITH ME - A program for the little dancer and a grown up! Geared to age 2, but appropriate for dancers ages 18 months to 3 years who may need the extra security of having an adult with them. We will dance, sing, and play in both one-on-one activities and group activities. Through circle songs, open exploration, and gross motor development exercises, children will blossom with each passing class as they grow with their caregiver during this precious time together!

DISCOVER BALLET - This will be a new approach to our past 'Nursery Ballet' program for 3 and 4 year olds who are new to dance!

If you know a little one, please let them know about these exciting new/adapted programs!

### **ADULT CLASSES!**

Have you always wanted to try a dance class? Did you dance as a child and miss the joy that it brings? Are you looking for a fun way to exercise? JOIN ONE OF OUR ADULT CLASSES!!

We offer classes at the following times:

MONDAY 8:30PM TAP (for those with past tap experience)

WEDNESDAY 8:45PM JAZZ (beginners are welcome but also for those with past experience - incorporating jazz, lyrical and hip hop styles)

THURSDAY 9:15AM BALLET (appropriate for all levels of experience!)

THURSDAY 10:15AM TAP ( for beginners or those with less experience)

FRIDAY 9:15AM STRETCH AND TONE WITH JAZZ (for all levels)

Ask us for more information!

### **FACULTY**

**Heidi Knapp** is a Fellow and past examiner with the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing. She holds qualifications that specialize in Classical Ballet, Modern Theatre Dance and Tap, as well as intermediate training in National Dance. In addition, to this, she holds a B.A. in Drama with a specialization in Stage Management and has completed the Foundations Course with DiscoverDance for Early Childhood Dance Educators. Heidi is a firm believer that dance should be experienced by everyone. Her teaching experience of 30 years covers work in dance, drama and musical theatre with dancers aged 3 to 85!

Heidi is the Director of the Spirit Moves Christian Dance Company, for which she was nominated for the Oakville Community Spirit Awards in 2005. She also teaches dance to seniors and is the choreographer for The Oakville Happy Tappers.

In November of 2017, Heidi received the Canada 150 Sesquicentennial Citizenship Award for engaging and inspiring youth in the community. Grace Academy was also recently nominated as small business of the year in the Oakville Awards for Business Excellence.

Heidi takes pride in offering dance to all ages and fostering creativity, a strong work ethic, integrity and a sense of community in all of her students.

### **Sarah Vanduyvenvoorde**

Grace Academy is very fortunate to have Sarah VanDuyvenvoorde on staff. She has been teaching modern, jazz, hip hop, tap and ballet for 28 years and is an Associate of the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing. Sarah also holds advanced certificates in ballet, modern, tap and national dance. For those of you new to the school – our dancers call Sarah “Mrs. Van Dunk” – a combination of her maiden and married name- and much easier to pronounce!

Sarah brings creativity, energy and a genuine love of children to all of her classes! She is dedicated to excellence, and has been an important member of our faculty since we opened!

### **Ali Daly**

A graduate of Grace Academy, Ali Daly returned to join our faculty in 2017. Ali is a Ryerson University graduate with a B.A in Creative Industries. She specializes in hip hop dance and has trained with various projects in Toronto including: O.I.P Dance Company, Professional division at BOSS Dance Company and is co-director of The Clique Dance Crew. Ali also co-produces a dance workshop and event series called The Industry Toronto. Ali has performed in Toronto showcases including: Fever After Dark, The Industry Season 2, Choreoball, The Dance Teacher Expo, Bazaar, The Beatdown, G.O.A.T Dance Competition and many more.

In 2018, Ali worked at da Costa talent management to continue to expand her knowledge of the performing arts industry. In 2019 she joined the team of the popular “Mini Pop Kids” as a content producer and tour assistant. She currently works at the creative studio “ Somewhereelse” as a digital content creator while continuing to be an advocate for the Toronto dance community.

### **Paige Sayles**

Paige Sayles is a Toronto based dance artist originally from Calgary, AB. Since graduating from York University’s BFA Dance program in 2017, she has danced across the country, being credited as “some of the inspiring

talent flourishing in the Canadian dance community,” ( David Silverberg, Now Magazine). Paige has also used her creativity to collaborate with top choreographers in creating original works and independent dance projects, most recently choreographing a piece for a music video for the 2022 Canada Games. She is currently pursuing a career as a dance artist, scholar, teacher and choreographer. We are thrilled to welcome Paige to our teaching faculty for the 2021/2022 season!

### **Natasha Wandel**

Vocals - Musical Theatre

Natasha is a familiar face at Grace Academy, having danced at the studio since its opening in 2003, reaching advanced levels in all styles of dance, and graduating in 2018. Natasha is currently in her 4th year at McMaster University, studying classical voice and music cognition. She began private vocal lessons with Natalie Spurrell at the age of 10 and currently holds her grade 9 certificate with the Royal Conservatory of Music. She was also a part of the award winning Spurrell Studio Choir until 2018. Natasha is experienced in teaching RCM theory, piano and voice. She is currently a Teaching Assistant for various courses at McMaster University, as well as being responsible for leading sectionals within the McMaster University Choir.

### **Natalie Spurrell**

Resident Guest Teacher, Vocals – Musical Theatre

Natalie Spurrell is a frequent guest teacher and advisor for musical theatre class. She holds a Bachelor of Music and a Bachelor of Music Education, majoring in voice, and also recently completed her Masters in Music Education with Boston University. She is the owner and director of Spurrell Singing Studio in Oakville. She has directed many musicals and award winning choirs – most recently, the Spurrell Studio Choir was chosen to attend International Choral Kathaumixw in Powell River, British Columbia and received The Elmer Iseler Award for the best performance of an original Canadian choral composition. They have also achieved 1st place at Nationals with the FCMF (Federation of Canadian Music Festivals) and a gold standing at MusicFest Canada.

### **TERM DATES/HOLIDAYS**

AUTUMN TERM: Saturday, September 11<sup>th</sup> – Monday, November 29<sup>th</sup>

WINTER TERM: Tuesday, November 30<sup>th</sup>- Sunday, March 6<sup>th</sup> 2022

SPRING TERM: Monday, March 7<sup>th</sup> – Saturday, June 4<sup>th</sup> 2022



**No classes will be held during the following holidays:**

Saturday, October 9th, Sunday, October 10th and Monday October 11<sup>th</sup>  
(Thanksgiving)

Monday, December 13th - Sunday, January 2nd inclusive (Christmas Break)

Saturday, February 19th, Sunday, February 20th and Monday February 21st  
(Family Day Weekend)

Saturday, March 12th - March 20th inclusive (March break)

Friday, April 15th - Good Friday

**CLASSES WILL RUN ON THE SATURDAY and MONDAY OF EASTER WEEKEND AS WELL AS ON MAY LONG WEEKEND (May 21ST -23RD ) AS USUAL.**

**In studio community building events and theme months will continue as in past years. Please watch for updates in your monthly newsletters!**

**\*\*ALL HOLIDAY DATES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE \*\***

**UNIFORMS**

Each style/level of dance has a uniform that is required for class. This allows the dancers and teachers to focus on the body alignment and technique needed to learn, eliminates distractions, and creates a special sense of occasion. Please refer to the attached list for the correct uniform. We ask that you check this list carefully. All uniforms, including shoes can be purchased from INSTEP ACTIVEWEAR in Oakville (905) 844-4415/[www.instepactivewear.com](http://www.instepactivewear.com) . Please contact the Academy if you have any questions. NOT ALL ITEMS ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE- PLEASE CALL OR VISIT THE STORE.

Students should attend class in the appropriate uniform with their hair neatly off the face. **Buns** are required from grade 1 ballet onwards; pony tails are appropriate for other subjects. No jewellery is to be worn to class. Older dancers should choose appropriate undergarments to wear under their bodysuits. **Proper grooming is an important part of each dancer's training and shows respect for the art of dance. PLEASE ENSURE THAT UNIFORM IS CLEAN AND IN GOOD REPAIR (NO RIPPED TIGHTS!)**

**NEAT AND TIDY HAIR IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO MAINTAINING GOOD HAND HYGENE, SO THAT DANCERS DO NOT FEEL THE NEED TO TOUCH THEIR FACE TO BRUSH HAIR OUT OF THE WAY.**

**HIP HOP DANCERS** - Please make special note of the attached uniform list! In past years, we found that throughout the year, dancers gradually started coming in outfits that were not appropriate for class. While this uniform is more casual, it is important to take note of the requirements!

**Dancers who have ballet and modern or tap classes that run back to back should wear convertible ballet tights and ballet bodysuits for their modern/tap class (in place of black tights). DANCERS WILL NOT BE ABLE TO CHANGE FULL UNIFORMS BETWEEN CLASSES, BUT CAN CHANGE SHOES/REMOVE SKIRTS AS NEEDED**

**BALLET SWEATERS** - Erica Gilby, our resident costume specialist has knit beautiful pink and lilac ballet sweaters that can be purchased for \$30 for our younger dancers. Please ask Miss Knapp if you are interested!

### **GRACE ACADEMY DANCEWEAR!**

Grace Academy jackets, tops and sweatpants will once again be available for purchase this year! Look for more information to follow by email and on social media - **we will be ordering in mid September (usual delivery time is 6-8 weeks)**

### **STUDENT AMBASSADORS AND CLASS ASSISTANTS**

We are always grateful for the help of our older students in the little ones' classes each year, and last year, we had a wonderful group who assisted us as 'student ambassadors' to supervise arrival and dismissal times.

If your dancer is age 12 or older and would like to assist in some way, please have them email Miss Knapp with their availability. Ambassadors should ideally be in Grade 10 and above, and be available to stay at the studio for 2 hours.

Thank you in advance!

### **EXAMINATIONS**

In past years, students have been encouraged to take examinations with The Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing in their course of study. **Due to changes in the examination process during this time of Covid-19, we will not be offering examinations this year. Dancers will continue to work at the**

**same level of excellence that we always offer, and will follow the syllabus of the ISTD in their class work.** We hope to return to offering the exam process in the future, but for now will focus on learning and growing in ways that better serve our dancers during these ever changing days.

### **ABSENCES**

Parents are asked to inform the studio if their dancer is absent for any reason. This is particularly important if their dancer falls ill for any reason.

**Please remember that regular attendance is extremely beneficial to all dancers, allowing them to feel comfortable and perform at their highest level. Regular attendance when classes run virtually is equally important to in studio training. Virtual options will be in place to assist dancers who may not be able to attend due to illness in the family etc.**

### **YEAR END PERFORMANCE**

Our year end performance is always the most exciting time of year for the dancers. Grace Academy prides itself on presenting a high quality, professional performance each year and feels that this is an extremely important part of our dancers' training! Dance is a performance art and our year end production gives our students the opportunity to perform on a professional stage in a positive and educational atmosphere. Being a part of our production instills self confidence, responsibility, self discipline, co-operation and team work in all of our students. Dancers will also learn about theatre etiquette and various aspects of what goes on 'behind the scenes' to create a production. And – it is a lot of fun and creates memories that will last a lifetime!

Last year, we were unable to have our usual on stage performance, however, we had an incredible week of 'Live Zoom Shows' and filming for our virtual production "Heroes Save the Day". Our dancers proved that 'the show must go on', and made us very proud with their enthusiasm, dedication and excellent performances. While it was different than our 'normal' experience, the dedication and teamwork we experienced created memories that will last forever.

**Our hope and plan for this season is to be back in the theatre!**

**PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR MAY 29th to June 4th 2022!**

**Details will be confirmed at a later date.**

**\*\*Are you still reading this letter? We know it is long!! If you have read this far, keep reading and then send us an email to let us know you have read all the information - your name will be entered into a draw to winner a Chapters gift card!!! You must email us by August 11th! \*\***

### **GRADUATES 2021**

We are extremely proud of our 2021 graduates and want to wish them all wonderful days ahead as they move on to new adventures. In a year of challenge, this group never failed to be positive and enthusiastic. Their resilience and dedication will carry them so far. Congratulations to the following girls:

Cassie Howse

Ellie McGowan-Hill

Katelyn Weinstein

Laura Hammond

Chloe Chambers

Sierra Campbell

Kathryn Patton

Lynley McIntee

Shaelynn James

Lilly Wilkinson

Ugne Stankevicius

Lauren Smith

### **LEAH BATTISTA MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP**

In November of 2017, we were extremely sad to have one of our Grace Alumni pass away suddenly. In her honour, we have established The Leah Battista Memorial Scholarship. This yearly award is presented to the dancer who most embodies Leah's passion, energy, joy of dance and hard work, and is to be used towards the cost of their dance training. This year, it gave us great pride to

present the Leah Battista Memorial Scholarship to **Zoe Williams** at our virtual performance/graduation night in June Through this award, and through a random acts of kindness initiative that takes place on her birthday each year (#bekind4leah), we hope to keep Leah's memory and her legacy of kindness and giving alive at Grace Academy. Congratulations to Zoe for her hard work, her kindness and caring towards younger dancers, and for her ability to make others feel included and welcome.

## **NUTS**

Grace Academy strives to be a nut free environment. Please note that we do have dancers with severe nut allergies When sending snacks with dancers who have 2 classes in a row please do not send nut products.

## **RESPONSIBILITY**

Grace Academy is proud to have had students who have shown kindness and respect for others at all times and is confident that this will continue in the coming year!

Please take time to review the COVID-19 SAFETY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (once they are updated!) with your dancer and remind them of their responsibility in helping to keep our studio safe.

We are so grateful to all of our families for your continued support . We are taking every measure possible to keep our dancers and faculty healthy and safe. Thank you for continuing to do your part to help prevent the spread of Covid-19.

## **PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS WAIVER**

From time to time, we publish photographs of our dancers (on our website and in our advertising, on our Facebook/Instagram page or on our bulletin board). Upon registering, you will have completed a waiver to allow us to use photos of your dancer. Names will never be used without additional permission. If you prefer not to have photos published, once you have set up your parent portal, please select the 'opt out' option.

## **COMMUNICATION**

Please do not hesitate to contact the Academy at any time with any questions or concerns that you may have. Good communication between Grace Academy and all of our dancing families is extremely important to us. Newsletters will be

posted on the new Parent Portal on a regular basis to keep everyone up to date – please take the time to read these carefully. Newsletters will also be posted regularly on our website [www.graceacademy.ca](http://www.graceacademy.ca) on the Latest News page. We will NOT hand out paper copies this year.

Please remember to have a look at (and like!) our Facebook and Instagram pages. You will be able to find our page under Grace Academy of Dance and Performing Arts (facebook) and @graceacademyofdance (instagram). Watch here for interesting dancing facts –beautiful pictures – inspirational quotes and more! We will share Grace Academy news and important reminders throughout the year and, it will be your first place to look in case of a “snow day”!

We do ask that you please continue to use our email **graceacademy@sympatico.ca** and phone number, **905 338-0210** to communicate with us for all questions and information that you need us to be aware of. We may not be on Facebook/Instagram page daily!

During class time Miss Knapp carries her cell phone with her so that she may contact parents if a child is ill. If you need to reach your dancer (or their teacher) in an emergency you may call this number **(905) 301- 9409**. Please do not use it to contact the school on a regular basis as it will interrupt class time. Messages can be left at the Academy’s regular number **(905) 338 – 0210**.

WE WELCOME YOU TO A WONDERFUL YEAR AHEAD!