

Member Profile



Justine Lennane from Gumnut Dance

When was Gumnut Dance established?

Gumnut Dance was established in Canberra in July 2013.

What styles of dance are offered through Gumnut Dance?

Children learn creative movement and the 3-7 year olds basic technique, in particular, jazz, ballet, contemporary and hip-hop. Other dance styles such as tap, folk and musical theatre are also taught depending on the theme for the term.

What do you love about teaching and sharing dance?

I love seeing the improvement in children's confidence, dancing and social skills. The joy children experience when they realise their hard work is paying off is wonderful. There is a real sense of accomplishment when they can perform a certain step or we create a class dance together.



I particularly enjoy offering children an opportunity to help create 'class' dances which gives them a sense of ownership of the dances that are created. They quite often feel very proud of their achievements, as do I!

I enjoy the challenge of creating the programs so that children learn about dance elements and also about a particular topic through dance. I have fun teaching children about the world through dance. I can safely claim that the Gumnut Dance program is unique and not a copy of a commercial syllabus.

What does a typical class with Gumnut Dance look like?

A typical class includes lots of fun, laughter and encouragement, with loads of learning! Each level of class has a different theme for the term which is appropriate and interesting for the age group.

Children are taught why safe dance practices such as warm-up and cool-down are included in class. Stimulus such as poems, pictures, stories, props, songs, instruments and music are often used to enhance learning. Older children also have the opportunity for choreographic exercises.

Has Gumnut Dance faced any challenges since its inception?

The hardest part of starting the business was the cost of Public Liability Insurance (the actual purchasing of was easy, thanks to the agreement between AoN and Ausdance) and finding a cost-effective venue. I would love to see more affordable performing arts space in Canberra that is available for small businesses like Gumnut Dance and independent dance artists.

What do you find inspiring?

The joy children experience when dancing. I'm pleased to be able to offer children an opportunity to learn through dance and have fun at the same time! I feel very lucky to be able to work with young, creative dancers. I tailor the classes to accommodate everyone's abilities and needs, and find it inspiring to guide children to have confidence in themselves to achieve, no matter what their abilities.

Have there been any particularly proud moments for your dancers?

The last lesson of each term is an open class where family and friends watch what the dancers have been doing. Children feel really proud of what they have learnt and love to share their dances.

What will Gumnut Dance be up to in 2014?

2014 has proved to be very busy already for Gumnut Dance! In 2013, classes for 3-5 year olds grew from one to three within a few short months. This year, classes have been expanded to include 2-3 year olds (Spinning Gumnuts) and 5-7 year olds (Scribbly Gumnuts) as well as more classes for the 3-5 year olds (Rainbow Gumnuts).

More studio classes will be added to meet demand and the dance program will be expanded to day care centres and preschools. In the not too distant future, Gumnut Dance will be looking for like-minded, motivated dance teachers to come on board!

Gumnut Dance will be striving to continue to inspire young children to learn and love dance in a supportive, fun environment.

You can find out more about Gumnut Dance at www.gumnutdance.com.au or on Facebook.