


Case discounts available!  **Creekside Fine Wines & Spirits**
 2017 East Broadway, Maryville, TN Phone: 865-380-4045

Women's Times

thedailytimes.com



Search The Daily Times: _____

SEARCH

[advanced search](#) | [Subscribe to our daily e-mail headlines](#) | 

| |
|--|
|  83 forecast... |
| Home |
| News |
| Public Records |
| Prep Sports |
| Sports |
| Sports Columnists |
| Opinion/Letters |
| Columnists |
| Family & Faith |
| Weekend |
| Life Times |
| Money Times |
| Women's Times |
| Celebrations |
| Photo store |

Path: [HOME](#) > [WOMENSTIMES](#)

 Print This  Email This

Dance team moves to Christian beat

By Linda Braden Albert
of The Daily Times Staff

Starr Hudson Ross has always loved to dance. Now, she is bringing that passion to children ages 8 to 18 who want to learn ballet, tap, jazz and hip-hop in classes forming in Blount County. Students may choose either regular classes or classes designed to hone their art to compete with other groups on a national level.

Ross has been teaching dance since 2000 in Knox County and formed a competition dance team, Universal Starrs. Both the competition and non-competition classes are unique in that Ross uses primarily Christian music with no suggestive lyrics, dance moves or costumes for her students, including both girls and boys.

"I have danced since I was 4, and sang since I was 8," Ross said. "I've been in church my whole life ... I found about six years ago that dance is becoming very popular in the churches, and I've been able to use my dance for the Lord that way, also. I've been very thankful that I can not only use it in the secular community but I can use it in church now."

Universal Starrs attends three competitions each year as well as dancing at the Foothills Fall Festival in Maryville, Boomsday in Knox County and other community events. The Lyrical Team performs at churches to liturgical music.

Team honors

Seven girls ages 9 to 13 are now taking classes with an eye toward competition. Gabrielle Wells, 13, of Knoxville, is one of those team members. She has taken classes with Ross for three or four years, she said.

"I like a lot of things (about the class)," Gabrielle said. "It gives me a chance to express myself and do what I want to do."

In a recent International Dance Challenge, held in Atlanta, Universal Starrs brought home several trophies. The team was named first runner-up in small group and high gold champion in small group, and received the overall award in both junior duet/trio and a special award in small group in "Awesome 80s."

"We've done pretty good this year," Gabrielle said.

Gabrielle said she likes the wholesome, Christian music the team dances to. "I really like the



Photo courtesy of Starr Hudson Ross

Universal Starrs pose with their numerous trophies won at the International Dance Challenge in Atlanta. The team includes (front, from left) Hannah Livesey, 10, Bailee Overbay, 10, Summer Swail, 10, and (back, from left) Starr Hudson Ross, instructor, and Gabrielle Wells, 13. Although these dancers are all from Knox County, Ross is now offering dance classes, both competition and non-competition, in Blount County.

For more information

Starr Hudson Ross, director/owner of Universal Starrs competition dance teams, is offering instruction in both competition and non-competition dance for students ages 8 to 18. Classes are now forming in Blount County. Music is primarily contemporary Christian with no suggestive dance moves or costumes. The motto is "Dancin'-4-Christ." For more information, contact Ross at 978-0397 or tappdance4@aol.com. You may also visit the Web site, www.universalstarrs.com.

TOWNSEND TRAVELER

 Click here to see the Townsend Traveler online



smartFIX40
 I-40 in Knoxville is changing. Check here for help getting around.

COLDWELL BANKER
 NELSON REALTORS*, INC.

Tennessee REAL ESTATE & Rentals
 Townsend's Premier Real Estate Company

StaffingSolutions*
 1701 Triangle Park Dr.
 Maryville, TN
 (865) 982-0480

Stretch your household budget!
 Click here to start

The Job Network
 Your employment matchmaker

CLASSIFIED MARKETPLACE


[Search Classifieds](#)
[Place Classified Ads](#)
[Browse Classifieds](#)

The
DailyTimes
Advertising
Jobs
About Us
Contact Us
Subscribe!

Real Estate
Times
CLICK HERE

ZAP.com
2 it
WE'RE WATCHING

MS
NBC

MovieLink
777-FILM Online

BLOUNT VOICE
A 24/7 Daily Times
publication
**CLICK
HERE**
to become part of
Blount County's
online voice!

music better than some of the other stuff out there," she said. "Maybe we can inspire others to not listen to some of the nasty music."

Her favorite dance is tap. "Miss Starr inspired me," Gabrielle said. "She's a tap dancer."

Gabrielle said Ross is like a big sister to her. "She pushes hard but I'm glad she does. It makes me a better person."

Dancin'-4-Christ

Classes are currently open in Blount County from 4 to 9:30 p.m. Tuesdays for ages 8 to 17, and, as the class grows, will be split into a junior and a senior division. The focus is on competition teams' technique classes in hip-hop, tap, jazz and ballet, but intermediate and advanced students not interested in competing may take these, as well. Regular classes, non-competition, are set for 4 to 5:30 p.m. Wednesdays and include beginner hip-hop for ages 8 to 18 and beginner jazz for ages 11-18. Previous experience is not required. Senior competition teams -- lyrical, tap and jazz -- will meet from 7:30 to 9 p.m. Thursdays. All classes will be held at Foothills Gymnastics, 919 Cherokee St., Maryville.

"We have a techniques class we begin with that includes all the foundation skills -- ballet, tap, jazz, the whole nine yards," Ross said. "After that class is over, then we start our team classes, and they're just back to back. We start rehearsing the dances one after the other. That way they are still getting the foundations. That's very important, to get the techniques classes. All the kids must be enrolled in technique classes to be on the team."

Cost varies depending on how many hours of instruction the student desires. Those on the competition teams will have other expenses, including competition fees, costumes, etc.

"We try to focus everything around Christ," Hudson said. "That's what I try to instill in them. Between the music we use and the dance styles we use -- we're still competing against all kinds of other dance studios, but we try to focus more on the moral side of things. Our slogan is 'Dancin'-4-Christ.'"

Ross said finding appropriate music has not been difficult. In addition to contemporary Christian, she also chooses music from previous decades. "But, I'm always careful with what I pick. I try to keep 50 percent or more of my music contemporary Christian."

Hudson also teaches voice and musical theater in the Knoxville studio. She plans to offer voice classes in Blount County, as well.

Ross, who moved to Blount County with her family from Florida when she was 13, is a graduate of Heritage High School. She is currently taking courses at Maryville College, majoring in child development with a music minor. Her husband, Keith Ross, is associate pastor at Marble Hill Baptist Church.

Originally published: June 22, 2008 3:01AM

Last modified: June 22, 2008 2:47AM

Other WOMENSTIMES Stories

- [Women's Club News for June 22, 2008](#)
- [Longaberger goes pink for fight](#)
- [Hagar and Sarah: 'flesh' versus 'promise'](#)
- [Fashionable summer styles accessible to all](#)

