

Dancer reclaims passion

By Nahia Powell

Under the bright lights at Syracuse University, the applause feels much different. For Rebecca Lipset, dancing is no longer the high-pressure environment she once experienced. After several years of partaking in competitive dance, Lipset has found a place where joy replaces the stress of her past, through DanceWorks.

Lipset's love for dance, especially tap, began at a young age. By fourth grade, she was immersed in the world of competitive dance, spending long hours in practices and rehearsals. Lipset admitted that the competitive dance scene was intense and demanding, with immense pressure on the dancers. Although the toxicity of dance prompted much stress and pressure on Lipset, her love for the art kept her going. After long hours of continuous rehearsals, Lipset won Best Musical in New Jersey, the state in which she grew up. She felt the long hours of work and dedication paid off and were apparent through this recognition. This experience was incredibly rewarding, especially after years in such a rigorous dance world. This award was not just about winning, but the performance allowed her to connect with the audience and showcase what she loves.

As Lipset was deciding where she would pursue her studies in college, she was torn between Northeastern University and Syracuse. While her family was edging for her to choose a path in STEM at Northeastern, she ultimately felt studying communications at the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communication was the best fit. As she was entering this new step, she did not know if and how dance would still fit into her life.

While Lipset was settling into her new life at SU as a freshman, she discovered a student-run dance organization, DanceWorks. Lipset tried out for the dance team, where she

ended up earning a position. Although Lipset did not make her college decision based on dance, she was relieved and happily surprised that Syracuse University offers an organization that allows her to pursue her passion. Lipset feels this organization is such a joy compared to the toxic and competitive environment of dance she experienced in high school. “Everyone in DanceWorks truly wants to be there. No one is forcing them to dance. No one is forcing them to work hard. It truly is a group of talented dancers that have a true love and passion for dance,” she said. The supportive environment was a refreshing contrast to her earlier experiences and restored her connection to dance.

Today, Lipset is not only an active performer in DanceWorks, but she serves as cast relations on the club’s board. The role has given her a new perspective on dance, one that involves organizing, collaborating and contributing behind the scenes as much as performing. Although she does not plan to pursue dance professionally, it remains a meaningful part of her college life and a creative outlet she values. For Lipset, dance is now seen as a source of expression, belonging and community. “After high school I felt dance was slowly starting to slip out of my life. I owe it to the DanceWorks community and the experiences I have had there for reminding me of my passion for dance,” she said.

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