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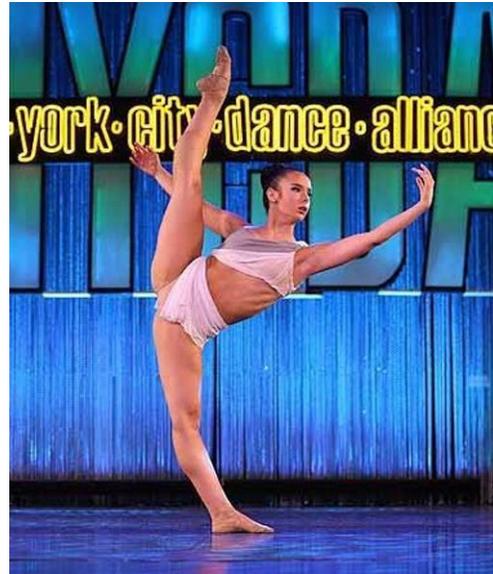
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Locally trained ballerina invited on national 24-city tour

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Sophie Miklosovic of Shelby Township was selected as the Junior Female National New York City Dance Alliance Outstanding Dancer on July 5 in New York City after eight days of auditions, classes, rehearsals and solo performances judged by some of the elite of the NYC dance scene. Miklosovic was one of more than 4,600 junior dancers, ages 11-12, who auditioned in 23 cities for the opportunity to be a part of the Outstanding Dancer program. In addition to her Outstanding Dancer Scholarship, her regional work was awarded ballet scholarships and recognition from three national companies - Complexions Contemporary Ballet, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and Hubbard Street Dance. More than 100 of those regional junior scholarship winners came to NYC vying for the national title and opportunity to tour with NYCDA.



Miklosovic was invited to perform with and assist on the 20th anniversary tour to 24 cities. While presently attending the Faubourg School of Ballet in Hanover Park, Ill., she credits her local teachers with setting her on the path and preparing her for the NYCDA opportunity. Miklosovic continues to take class with Valentina Barsukova at Valentina's School of Ballet in Clawson and Liz Schmidt of Spotlight Dance Works in Chesterfield.

"I listen carefully and try to make every correction my teachers give me so I can get the next correction," Miklosovic said. "I don't think about competing or winning; I just love performing and telling a story while on stage. I lose myself in the music and I try to make the audience feel something. Then, I go and hang out with my dance friends. NYCDA was the best week of my dance life."

No stranger to being away from home and traveling for dance, last summer at age 12 Miklosovic left home to live with a host family while training at a year-round ballet school. This winter, she traveled to Milan, Italy and Istanbul, Turkey as a ballet demonstrator for the school's director.

Her teachers and lots of hard work were key ingredients to preparing her for the opportunity to travel with NYCDA.

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Her technique and love of ballet began with Barsukova. With Barsukova's preparation and blessing, Miklosovic was invited to train at a year-round ballet school in Chicago. In 2012, Barsukova took Sophie to NYC as a soloist to perform at the International Grand Prix.

Spotlight Dance Works also helped prepare Miklosovic for the NYC event. Her movement quality and performance excellence were honed by Schmidt and Meg Paul at the SDW Chesterfield studio. Schmidt also continues to mentor Miklosovic.

Her former duet partner, Alex Souielle, who also trains at SDW with Schmidt, was named the National Senior Outstanding Male Dancer and will join Miklosovic on tour. Souielle, entering his senior year, was awarded \$345,000 in college scholarships and training. He is attending The Juilliard School this summer.