

## **Katie, former student and company dancer, sophomore at the University of California, San Diego**

September 8, 2013

Dear Ballet des Amériques,

I hope all is well in Port Chester and everyone is happy and healthy. I have missed you all very much since I graduated and think of you all the time. I hope the students are working hard and realize how lucky they are to be training at BdA. My experience at BdA was so precious to me, and what I learned there I brought with me to college.

Here's a little bit of what I've been up to this past year since I graduated. This year was a great success for me, I learned so much at UCSD, I grew as a dancer, made friends, and I began volunteering for the American Cancer society. My major is molecular biology so to start off my college career I took classes in math, chemistry, physics, and biology. The classes were certainly very challenging and required a lot of time and dedication. But I'm happy I chose UCSD because I learned so much in my classes, in addition to learning how to study well. While studying hard I took ballet and contemporary dance classes with the Dance Department at UCSD. In terms of the ballet, the classes were not as strict as I was used to, but that gave me a chance to use what I learned at BdA to push myself. In terms of contemporary dance and improvisation, the instruction at UCSD is incredible and I really enjoyed it. In addition to taking dance classes at UCSD I took classes with local modern dance companies, specifically Malashock Dance and San Diego Dance Theater.

Malashock Dance is fairly interested in me and would like me to train at their school until I would be ready to potentially be in their company. But I have not yet decided whether I would want to join Malashock Dance. Another great thing that came from this year was my discovering College Against Cancer and the American Cancer Society. I was introduced to College Against Cancer by a friend and began volunteering. I loved it so much that this year I applied to be Survivorship Chair of the College Against Cancer Chapter of UCSD, and I got the position. In the end I graduated my freshman year with a 3.75 gpa, some good friends, and a lot more modern dance experience under my belt. There isn't one dance class I take that I don't hear Mr. Alexis counseling and correcting me in my mind. I cherished my experience, at BdA and I hang on to every bit of wisdom I learned there. Ms. Alexis, you taught me more than technique and style, you taught me strength, wisdom, and character; traits that set me apart from dancers I met in San Diego. Even though I have moved on to college, I carry BdA around with me

I miss everyone so much and hope all is well. I would very much like to visit sometime soon. I'm sure I would be proud of how much the students have grown. Stay healthy everyone, and never stop dancing!

Sending all my love,

Katie

To the students specifically: work hard everyone! Do not waste your time. Your time as a ballet student is limited, and will come to close much faster than you can imagine. You are at a ballet academy that is one in a million, there is nothing stopping you from excelling. Listen to Ms. Alexis, she is the best teacher I have ever seen, and extremely wise and kind-hearted. Learn from her. If you love to dance, don't waste one second, chase your dream and don't look back.