

Young entrepreneurs help local leaders get over last-minute jitters ahead of Dancing with the Stars



By Brock Weir

The women preparing to hit the dance floor next week to help send kids to summer camp are in the zone and ready to go, but the men? Well, they're a little terrified.

No, they're just reserved.

Either way, according to their dance instructors, even if they are a little reserved, they're still doing fantastic and everyone is taking dance boot camp by storm.

Community leaders are lacing up their dance shoes for next week's Dancing With The Easter Seals Stars Aurora/Newmarket, the second-annual gala aimed at raising money to send disabled children to camp. Leading the leaders are Anastasia Trutneva, Kelly Stacey and Patrick Derry, the young entrepreneurs behind the Aurora-based Artistica Ballroom Dance Studios.

We have been a little harder on them this time around because last year was our first time doing it, says Kelly of this year's progress. We have amped up the level of their dancing and they have actually done really well so far.

We make them sweat during the 45 minutes they're here, adds Anastasia on what they are doing to get the guys in the game. They usually walk in all nice and collected, but they usually walk out sweating and needing a change of clothes. They now know they need to bring at least three shirts to class!

Perhaps the guys can look to Patrick for some inspiration. For him, it's all about the performance and having a good time on the floor.

It's about putting on a show for the people who are there because, as much as the purpose of the night is to raise money for Easter Seals, it is a top notch event in itself, says Patrick of the evening, which will be held at King's The Manor at Carrying Place.

Everybody who went last year was raving about how fun it was and usually with these fundraisers, people can't wait to leave but people didn't want it to end. We want to uphold the reputation from last year where people get a good show and have a great time while they are there.

Helping ramp up the fun and helping the dancers get over the last-minute jitters is a new feature this year: a group dance to kick off the night. The Artistica team likens what they've prepared to dancing down the line on Soul Train, a chance to introduce the dancers to the audience and show off their fancy footwork in a group setting.

Everyone gets their moment to shine! says Patrick.

The Artistica dancers formally opened their doors earlier this year after several months in business. They came together as ballroom dance instructors at another local studio but they had a meeting of the minds on how they wanted to forge ahead together.

We were approached by friends who were students and still are and they helped us with the backing of it about two years ago, says Kelly. Aurora was the number one choice on our radar when we were looking to open a business. We really like it, it is really

welcoming and it is a really good town with the right clientele we're looking for.?

Adds Anastasia: ?We really focus on the clientele and their needs and wants. We try to stylize and program everything to the desires of every person who walks in here. We find sometimes people come in here and they just want to learn a single dance and we want to give them exactly what we want. Our structure is probably one of the most flexible that is out there because we really focus on giving a student what they want, what they desire at the rate that they want it.?

It is important, says Anastasia, to define what they want to get out of their dancing and they find the most positive way for anyone to make that decision is to come to it on their own. Once they do, then they are able to flourish and develop in ways they always wanted to.

?We all have very different stories in our dancing life, but our stories all follow a similar path,? says Patrick.? We have all had someone in our life that taught us dance [in a way] that really changed how we looked at dance, the way we approached it and the way we teach and work. We're not just a studio that is here to just teach dance, but we all want to hopefully impart some of that gift we receive in our lives to the people who come in here.?