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## CAPA dance performance nets sizable donation to Children's Health Guild

By Vera Kochan



CAPA dancers surround Children's Health Guild past president Michelle Berolzheimer (left), CHG Beneficiary Chair Andrea Brown (middle) and CAPA's General Manager A.J. Brown (right). Photo Vera Kochan

California Academy of Performing Arts in Moraga held its annual June Showcase at Campolindo's Performing Arts Center between June 10-15, with proceeds from their lobby sales of bottled water and flowers during six performances benefiting Children's Health Guild.

CAPA was founded in 1981 by Joan Borchers and Ronn Guidi, who at that time was the artistic director with the Oakland Ballet. Guidi eventually bowed out and let Borchers continue their dream of bringing quality dance instruction to the suburbs of Moraga. CAPA's General Manager and Borchers's daughter, A.J. Brown, became involved with the dance studio nine years ago.

Her 10-year-old daughter, Finley, who is a student, was stricken with kidney cancer four years ago, but is happily in remission. Brown became associated with the Children's Health Guild when her daughter was battling cancer. She decided to reciprocate the support her family received by donating the lobby sales to CHG, whose function is to raise funds for George Mark Children's House and UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland. Concessions volunteer Liz Ludwig, whose 10-year-old daughter Violet danced in the show, said that the final

tally from lobby sales came to \$5,545.

CHG is comprised of approximately 50 women in the Lamorinda area whose organization has raised \$2 million in financial support for GMCH and UBCHO. Representatives for CHG, past president Michelle Berolzheimer and Beneficiary Chair Andrea Brown (no relation), were on hand to accept the check. Andrea Brown stated, "One hundred percent of proceeds go to GMCH and UBCHO to support all expenses that every child will receive at every level of care that they need."

This year's CAPA June Showcase had dance performances worthy of a Broadway musical. The two-hour show demonstrated spectacular choreography using ballet, contemporary, tap and folk styles ("Fiddler on the Roof"), to exhibit the students' amazing skills. Beautiful costumes for each dance number elicited expressions of approval from the audience as the dancers stepped onto the stage for each number.

Beginning with a roster of 110 students, CAPA has grown to count over 400 dancers, between the ages of 3 and 18 years, currently under their guidance. With a philosophy whose main goals include: "Teaching our art; teaching life skills through our art; and creating a safe and nurturing environment for our students" they stress that "[t]he product is important, but the emphasis is on the process."

There are five boys enrolled at CAPA. Philip, who is 12 and a half, likes all forms of dance: "I've been dancing since I was 1." AJ Brown's son Cooper, age 7, is also a student. When asked how long he's been dancing, Cooper replied, "I think since 3."

While Brown is so proud of all of the students, she feels that the June shows are bittersweet. For several 18-year-old dancers this was their final performance. She explained, "It's emotional to see the 18-year-olds leave, because they've been with us since they were little."

Graduate Katie Clare has been with the program since she was 4 years old. "I just like to dance. I do it as a hobby and want to join a dance club in college." Clare heads to Boston's Northeastern University in the fall. Another graduate, Hillary Weaver, who has been dancing since she was 6, said, "I want to keep dance in my life." She will attend University of Colorado, Boulder.

Info: For more information about California Academy of Performing Arts visit [www.capadance.net](http://www.capadance.net) or call (925) 376-2454.

For more information about Children's Health Guild visit [www.childrenshealthguild.org](http://www.childrenshealthguild.org)

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[back](#)

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