

Crystal River performers take top honors

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Performers from the Sharper Image Dance Studio won awards for the following: My New Philosophy from “You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown,” Broadway Character tap solo by Belle Bedee — first place platinum and runner-up for best dancer 12 and under; TEAM from “You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown,” Broadway Show Group — first place platinum, runner up for Best Musical Theatre Group; and “10 Ways to Lose a Man” from “Wonderful Town,” Broadway Character dance group — first place high gold.

Chronicle Intern

Beth Bedee loves sharing her passion for the performing arts with children.

Unfortunately, she said, kids in the community have limited opportunities to pursue artistic interests; locally, there aren’t a lot of public outlets for young performers to hone their skills.

At Sharper Image Performance Dance Studio, Bedee works with Alyssa Bonomo, nationally recognized dancer and Director of Sharper Image Dance Studio, to give kids the opportunity to not only perform, but also compete, in dance and musical theater.

This past week, the studio’s acting group experienced success at the Access Broadway Competition in Orlando, where they won multiple awards for their performance of “You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown.”

After months of rehearsals, the young actors performed the play at an annual recital this past June. Those who wished to compete performed a handful of scenes in an Orlando regional competition. They did very well, Bedee said, and were able to go a step further. At the national competition, also held in Orlando, they performed scenes from “Charlie Brown” along with a solo and a group dance.

The competition was a big deal, said Alyssa Bonomo. It was a triple- threat competition among hundreds of students from across the nation, performing in a wide range of areas including dance, drama, voice, and modeling. Many of the judges evaluating the students were prestigious actors and dancers with Broadway experience. Bedee even said the owner of the competition was a star in “Cats.”

Her students won first place in the musical theater category and second place overall.

“It’s really good for the students to get this experience,” Bonomo said.

Bedee fell in love with acting when she started teaching drama at Lecanto High School. She taught for seven years — during which she instructed Lecanto-born Hollywood actor Miles Teller. After taking some time off teaching to be with her kids, she met Bonomo, who asked if she was interested in teaching acting classes at her studio. Acting skills such as expression, gestures, and characterization all enhance dancers’ performances, Bonomo told her. Bedee agreed to partner with Bonomo.

At the studio, Bedee and Bonomo combine their expertise in dance and theater to grow their students into well-rounded performers. They teach a variety of dance classes along with acting and voice. “We’ve got a lot of talented kids,” Bedee said.