

February 13, 2018

### Two Mount Mercy Sisters Dance to the Trip of a Lifetime

Two Mount Mercy Academy sisters, Alyssa and Madeline Lickfeld of Buffalo, have qualified to compete in the 2018 All-Ireland Dance Championships. The competition is being held in Killarney, Ireland February 11<sup>th</sup> through February 17<sup>th</sup>.

The sisters both dance for Rince Na Tiarna School of Irish Dance. The school is sending a total of 12 students to the competition, including their younger sister Maeve, who is in fifth grade at Notre Dame. Rince Na Tiarna is the only Western New York school that is sending dancers to this competition.

Over 150 dancers will compete in the solo competition for each age group. Dancers are coming from many countries such as the United States, Canada, Ireland, England, Australia, Norway, and Germany. It has been three years since the studio sent competitors to Ireland and one of the current teachers at the school, Kennan Dargan, Alyssa's mentor, won first place in her age group solo competition.

Alyssa, a junior at Mount Mercy, has been dancing for ten years, since she was six years old and Madeline, a freshman, has been dancing for ten years as well, but she started dancing at the age of four. Alyssa's main teacher is Mary Kay Heneghan but valuable instruction is also provided by Dargan, Rachael Grieco, Erin Lunch, Katie Rozek, and Bridget Ryan.

In order to qualify for this competition, Alyssa and Madeline needed to become an Open Championship Dancers, which is the highest level of dancing and they needed to place in the top ten at the Oireachtas, the Regional Championships which were held in November of 2016.

They will compete in the Girls Solo Championships for their age levels and then the sisters and six other teammates will compete in the Ladies Over 19 Ceili Competition, a team dance competition. The team dancers will perform three dances once. Their performance will be rated by judges and then the results will be compared with the other teams.

In the solo competition, the Lickfeld sisters will each dance both a soft shoe and a hard shoe routine and then their two scores from the seven judges will be averaged and the top 50 dancers in each category will advance to the third round. If they advance to this round they will dance alone on the stage for the judges, hoping to impress them with their technique and performance.

Both girls were understandably quite excited to have qualified for this competition. "When I realized that I had qualified, I was over the moon," Madeline exclaimed. "I was so excited to share this incredible experience with my family and friends who qualified as well."

"I was so excited and thankful," Alyssa stated. "All of my hard work had paid off." Alyssa has set her goals for the competition. "I set a goal for myself months before the competition and I have kept it fresh in my mind while I have been training. I want to be recalled for at least one round, but I will be really happy however the day goes because the caliber of dancing is going to be insane," Alyssa commented. "At the end of the day my main goal while competing is to dance the absolute best that I can and make my parents and teachers proud because they have done so much for me and work so hard to help make my dreams come true," Alyssa concluded.

Madeline has also set her goals for the competition. "I am hoping to dance as well as I can. Just being able to say I qualified and competed at this level is enough for me," Madeline commented.

The Mount Mercy community is proud of the Lickfeld sisters and is wishing them the best of luck in the 2018 All-Ireland Dance Championships



Caption: Madeline, Maeve and Alyssa Lickfeld will be competing at the 2018 All-Ireland Dance Championships February 11-17<sup>th</sup>.

### **Mount Mercy Academy**

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