



Posted on Sun, Nov. 15, 2009

Dancer from Kendall pursues dreams on TV show competition

BY JENNA FARMER

jfarmer@MiamiHerald.com

With only five years of formal dance training, Victor Smalley of Kendall channeled his love for dance by trying out for Fox's *So You Think You Can Dance* twice.

He now has advanced to the top 14 out of the thousands across the country who tried out for the weekly television show.

To support his effort, more than 50 dance students, family and friends gather every week in STARS Dance Studio in Doral, where Smalley, 21, teaches, to watch the show.

The dancers' parents, as well as Smalley's mother, Myra, help organize the support party every week.

"I am so proud of him; I see my dream come true through him," said Myra, who has been dancing since she was 2.

Smalley also shows support for her son by flying to Los Angeles every weekend to see him.

"He is very disciplined," she said.

Victor Smalley spends eight hours in the dance studio daily and dedicated even more time to prepare for his second audition in Atlanta in May after getting cut at the Miami audition months earlier.

"He took the critiques the judges gave him and worked very hard to improve over the next year," she said.

He co-owns and has been teaching dance at STARS Dance Studio for the last three years, where he specializes in contemporary dance.

"He's a super great teacher, especially in contemporary, and he treats us all like we're his family as dancers," said Alexa Perez, 13, who also began dancing at Smalley's studio three years ago.

"He always tells us to never give up because he always has hope for us," said Kiara Bird, 14, another dancer also in attendance for the show.

Smalley has taken his never-give-up attitude to Los Angeles, where his grueling dancing schedule made it hard to adjust.

"We have only a few days to learn three routines," Smalley said.

In addition to his schedule, Smalley also had to endure losing a dance partner at the last elimination and has had to quickly bounce back and connect with a new partner this week.

Smalley takes this as part of a learning experience.

“I’m growing here, and I love spending time with the other dancers and learning different styles of dance,” he said.

One of the studio’s co-owners, Loida Garcia, was also at the studio for support.

“I think this is great,” Garcia said. “This is why I started the studio with him, because I saw the drive in him to pursue his dream in dance.”

Although confident, Smalley said that the show makes him nervous.

“You dance your life off, but you never know what the outcome is going to be; it’s up to the judges and the voters at home,” he said.

Smalley will be dancing for a spot in the top 12 next week.

So You Think You Can Dance airs on WSVN-Fox 7, at 8 p.m. Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

© 2009 Miami Herald Media Company. All Rights Reserved.
<http://www.miamiherald.com>