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MONDAY, JAN. 22

Lessons by Lexe studio owner selected as national ambassador for Global Game Changers



Miss Maricopa County and Lessons by Lexe dance studio owner Alexes Niekamp sitting in front of her studio window that will be part of the studio's holiday performance "Nutracker Snow Globe Experience" the weekend of Dec. 15-17 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. The experience offers 15-minute, rotating scenes from the holiday ballet. (Nanci Hutson/Courier)

"Lessons by Lexe studio owner selected as national ambassador for Global Game Changers" by Nanci Hutson from *The Daily Courier*. Originally published 12/07/2023. <https://www.dcourier.com/news/2023/dec/07/lessons-lexe-studio-owner-selected-national-ambass/>



By Nanci Hutson | HutsonNanci
Originally Published: December 7, 2023 8:38 p.m.

From the time she was a four-year-old starting dance school in California as a bi-racial scholarship student of a single mother, Miss Maricopa County Alexes Niekamp in Prescott was taught to embrace every opportunity no matter the obstacle and never let anyone define her talent or ambition.

“I had some odds against me, but I had a lot of people who believed in me,” declares Niekamp credited with an unrelenting and contagious “can-do” spirit she models for children and adults.

At 27, the Tri-City College Prep High School/Northern Arizona University graduate is a seven-year owner of the 150-family strong Lessons by Lexe dance studio at the Prescott Gateway Mall. She, too, operates a side business titled Quest Character Parties; her “superhero” characters even pay visits to young patients at the Phoenix Children’s Hospital. Niekamp, too, is the coach for the Mustangs, the Northern Arizona Wranglers dance team.

The lifelong dancer, entrepreneur and five-time Miss America franchise beauty pageant title holder who intends to compete in the Miss Arizona competition in June 2024 has accumulated an impressive resume of accomplishments that this fall incorporated selection as the second national ambassador for the Global Game Changers Student Empowerment Program.

“At Global Game Changers, we recognize that learning can happen in a traditional classroom, but it can also happen in community spaces like after school or sum programs, museums, or dance studios,” said Global Game Chahngerse Board Chairperson Jan Helson.

Global Game Changers is an education program that provides free pre-K to fifth grade curriculum and resources to those who rely on “service learning and talent development to nurture children’s social, emotional, leadership and academic growth.” The project-based endeavor serves 250,000 students in 50 states and 13 countries.

“We want our curriculum to be a resource for individuals committed to children across all of these spaces, and we’re thrilled to welcome Alexes as a national ambassador in honor of all of those non-traditional educators,” Helson said.

Niekamp said she connected with the Global Game Changers program because their “super power equation” embraces her beliefs about the importance of inclusivity.

She routinely echoes to school-aged students the Global Game Changers equation: My talent + My Heart = My Superpower.”

Niekamp’s studio promotes inclusivity in every class; children with autism or Down Syndrome dance and perform with their same age peers rather than be separated into their own special classes.

“How do we live in harmony with others if we don’t ever have the chance to interact with each other?” Niekamp queries.

The statuesque, full-bodied woman who as a young dancer was told she did not have the body to become a professional dancer said she was forced to tune out those negative voices. Her mother Tamee, her most loyal cheerleader and teacher, instilled in her the ability to be respectful even when others may deem to be otherwise.

As a now-successful adult, Niekamp said she wants to impart to children that no dream is beyond their reach given the will to work hard and figure out ways to hurdle the obstacles that come their way.

“Every day, I use my talent to make the world a better place, and I’m excited to represent this amazing program (Global Game Changers) so that kids understand the power that they have to do the same,” Niekamp said.

The naysayers in her life forced her to stand taller and be ever more determined to make a positive difference in the world.

“They made me a stronger person,” Niekamp said. “I knew who I DIDN’T want to be.”

Beyond the Label founder Joanna Sweeney, a Prescott mother of four children, two of whom are nonverbal autistic young adults, praises Niekamp as someone who recognizes, and endorses, the notion that everyone is better when their individual talents are pooled together.

“She is a visionary; a global game changer, Sweeney said. “She invests in our kids who are our future.

“Working with (Niekamp) we are able to focus on a population of young people that have been given limits before they have even been offered the opportunity to share their thoughts.

“Being nonverbal is tough! Nonverbal individuals, and their loved ones, are looking for a bridge to a place where they can belong. Lexe is that bridge, and the arts are that place.”

Niekamp’s studio prominently displays augmentative and alternative communication boards to assist those who need that means to express themselves.

One of Niekamp’s Miss America pageant-related inventions is a program she titled :”A.R.T.T.S. in Action (Applying Remarkable Talents to Succeed).” Her mantra with those who tell her they have no talent is that there is no such thing – a talent can be “absolutely anything” even if that is simply the way one makes their bed.

As a successful Miss America pageant competitor in recent years, Niekamp said she hopes her final year will see her earn the title of both Miss Arizona and Miss America. She, too, said she intends to pursue graduate school to earn a master’s degree in business administration and marketing. Her undergraduate degree was in applied human behavior with additional certificates in community service and development, sustainability, entrepreneurship and dance medicine.

Beyond that, Niekamp said she wants to travel as a youth-focused ambassador focused on helping them with the skills they need to become leaders of tomorrow.

“I know from my own experiences that if you invest in youth then you have stronger success in the world, and success in the future.”

Of course, Niekamp will continue to dance – for herself and others. Maybe one day teaching her own children to dance.

Niekamp’s studio logo expresses her vision: “Don’t just dance with your feet, dance with your heart.

Original Article available here: <https://www.dcourier.com/news/2023/dec/07/lessons-lexe-studio-owner-selected-national-ambass/>