

# Pickering student wins chance to study dance at Disney

**Musical theatre routine leads to magical opportunity**

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**PICKERING** — One Pickering resident is getting ready to enjoy a magical summer after winning a Disney dance scholarship.

Bryanne Leslie, 12, will be singing, dancing and acting her way through several Disney productions during a dance scholarship program this July. Bryanne won the scholarship with a particularly strong musical theatre routine that saw her acting the part of Disney princess Belle, from the movie *Beauty and the Beast*, during the Starcatchers Dance Festival Competition, held in Richmond Hill in March.

"I felt really happy because I felt like it was the best I ever did," Bryanne said of her winning routine.

The Grade 6 student, who takes classes in everything from acro to ballet to tap, spends up to 15 hours a week at the Denise



**JASON LIEBREGTS / METROLAND**

**PICKERING** — Bryanne Leslie won a dance scholarship to Disney this summer in a competition called Starcatchers.

Lester Dance Studio perfecting her craft.

"I like the emotion in dancing

noting dance is something she's always loved.

"When I was little there's videos of me in a ballet costume making up my own dances in the kitchen. I always imagined myself dancing."

Denise Lester, who has been teaching Bryanne for about seven years, said she could tell the Starcatchers competition was different.

"I think she enjoyed it more this year because her confidence is building, she's not as nervous anymore," she explained. "She's a great actress and she did a great job, but she does a great job every time."

During the week-long Summer in L.A. Juniors Disney Intensive program, which begins July 9, Bryanne will train with professional choreographers and perform in parades and musical shows at California's Disneyland.

While she's excited for the opportunity, Bryanne is also looking forward to meeting some Disney favourites.

"I think the program will be a lot of fun, but I'm also look-

ing forward to getting to eat lunch with all the characters," she said, noting her favourite is Belle.

Ms. Lester calls the scholarship a rare opportunity.

"It's a great opportunity to take classes she wouldn't get here and train with teachers she wouldn't normally have access to," she explained.

"She'll be working with people in the business and it's all about connections. Plus it's Disney so you know it will be high quality."

For Bryanne, it could be a stepping stone to her dream of a future on Broadway, but of course that will be after she attends Juilliard, and in addition to her day job.

"I call myself the dancing dentist because I want to dance and be a dentist," she explained.