

## ALL-AMERICAN WINNERS

Four team members win the opportunity to dance worldwide from summer dance camp



photo by Madelyn Augustine



photo by Katie Muller



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**POINTING THE WAY** Performing in the front row, senior **KATELYN WILLIAMS** helps lead her team in their pep rally routine. After a year off from high school dance, Williams returned with her best foot forward to set an example for the underclassmen at the UDA Summer Camp. "Winning All-American made me feel great since I wasn't on the team last season," Williams said. "I feel like winning helped secure my place as a leader and made the underclassmen feel comfortable coming to me with questions."

**DOUBLE OR NOTHING** Smiling from ear to ear, senior **CAROLINE UNGER** captivates the crowd during the first performance of the season. For the past two years Unger won the opportunity to dance on an international stage. "When I received the award again senior year I was proud because it was an exciting opportunity to have two years in a row," Unger said. "Going into my second year of competing, I was still nervous, but having experience from junior year helped me get over my nerves."

**PERSONAL SPIN** Hitting her mark, junior **ANNA HALLETT** dances with confidence at the Homecoming pep rally. Over the summer Hallett was one of four Wildcats to perform her own choreography in front of other high school dance teams and judges at camp to win the All-American award. "I got to be who I was and show what I was capable of and good at," Hallett said. "The fact that the people who were judging liked it meant a lot to me and boosted my self confidence in my dancing."

**LEAPING AHEAD** Reaching forward, sophomore **MOLLY KOCA** executes the choreography at the pep rally. Chosen to enter in a contest typically just for seniors at UDA Summer Camp, Koca crushed the competition. "Usually only seniors get to compete in the All-American competition, so I felt honored to be entered," Koca said. "I was proud to have won and represent my team as a sophomore with the other three winners from Millard West."

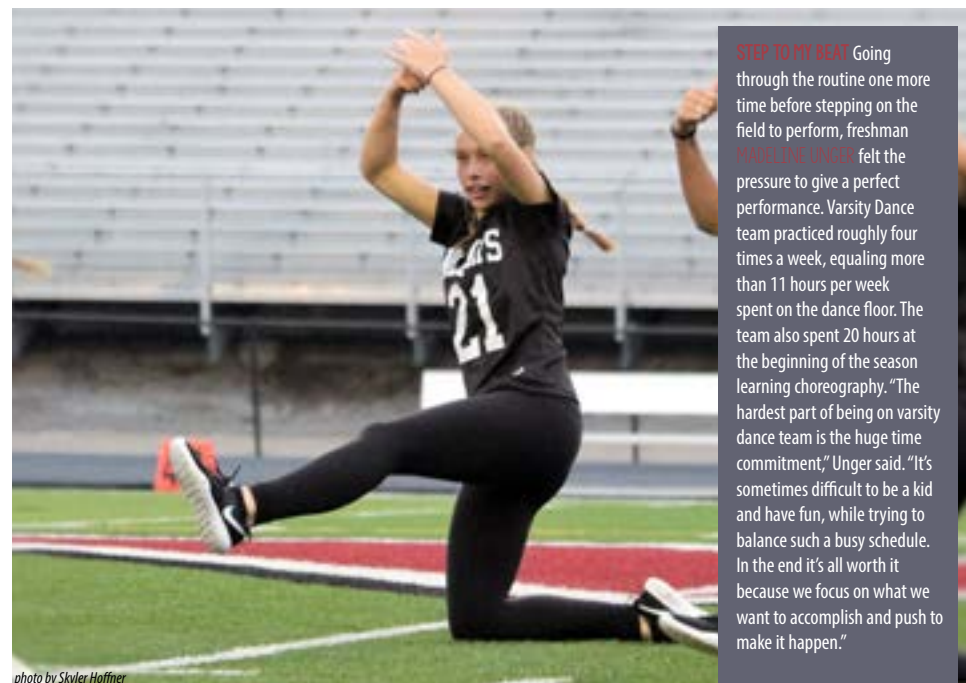


photo by Skyler Hoffner

**STEP TO MY BEAT** Going through the routine one more time before stepping on the field to perform, freshman **MADOLINE LIPSON** felt the pressure to give a perfect performance. Varsity Dance team practiced roughly four times a week, equaling more than 11 hours per week spent on the dance floor. The team also spent 20 hours at the beginning of the season learning choreography. "The hardest part of being on varsity dance team is the huge time commitment," Unger said. "It's sometimes difficult to be a kid and have fun, while trying to balance such a busy schedule. In the end it's all worth it because we focus on what we want to accomplish and push to make it happen."

# Dancing IN SYNC

"My favorite routine this season is our Lion King routine because there are a bunch of tricks and it is the most fun dance to perform."  
- Taylor Johnson '20

A successful first team camp helped the varsity dance team prepare for the rest of their season

by Madelyn Augustine & Skyler Hoffner

Traveling around the country with 11 of your best friends is something many students would love to have the opportunity to do. The varsity dance team got to do just that when they traveled to St. Cloud, Minnesota, this past summer for the annual UDA Summer Camp.

The 12 dancers spent five days of their summer in Minnesota learning new choreography, improving their dance skills and performing in front of a panel of judges. In three days, the team learned and mastered two full dances. The dances were used later in the season for their halftime performances at varsity football and basketball games.

For first timers, camp was an intimidating new experience. Sophomore **LAUREN HOFF** was one of three new members that had never been to camp before.

"I was super nervous for camp because I knew it was a lot of long hours," Hoff said. "I knew I had to work hard and needed to try to get a blue ribbon. By the end of camp I was so proud of myself for putting in the effort and having fun."

The varsity dance team did nothing but prove how much talent their group of 12 girls contained at camp. Each individual girl won a blue ribbon, the top individual award, for every routine they performed, resulting in 24 blue ribbons in total for the team. Other individual awards won included four All-Americans and

one Pin It Forward award.

The only Pin It Forward winner was sophomore **TAYLOR JOHNSON**. The team's coach **LAURA PICKETT** was excited, but wasn't surprised when Johnson received this award.

"Taylor is such a hard worker," Pickett said. "She's extremely positive and that was recognized by the UDA head instructor who gave Taylor the Pin It Forward award. Taylor stood out to the head instructor amongst 300 other students for being a leader to other dancers."

The girls also won eight team awards in Minnesota. The most important of these awards were the team Full Out award and a bid to Nationals. The team Full Out award recognized the team that worked the hardest and put in full effort to improve throughout the camp. Junior **EMILY WILLIAMS** credited the team's results at camp to their high level of effort.

"I think we were successful at camp because of our work ethic," Williams said. "Everyone on the team is so hardworking and everybody was willing to put in the extra effort to make sure they could do their dances perfectly and achieve our goal of getting a bid to Nationals."

Over the course of the five days spent in St. Cloud the team saw growth in each individual dancer, strengthened their team bond and learned tips for their performances that would contribute to the upcoming season.



photo by Annaliese Punt

## BACK AND BETTER

Millard West introduced a new JV Dance team to the school for the 2017 season after a six-year hiatus



photo by Madelyn Augustine

**MORE OPPORTUNITIES** Hitting their final pose, the JV Dance Team makes a debut this school year. The team was made up of five underclassmen that operate without a traditional coach. Their sponsor, **DEANA HILLIARD**, attended the team's practices and supported the team as they learned new dances from a Fusion Dance Company choreographer. The team performed the dances at JV football and basketball games. "I decided to sponsor a JV dance team this year because it allows more students to get involved in school activities," Hilliard said. "Varsity dance team is very expensive, so JV provides a way for girls to dance at a more affordable price. It also allows girls to do both studio dance and high school dance."

"We practice every Wednesday in the Black Box, and it's a good time to interact with my friends while still being able to get a lot of dancing done. I love learning new techniques and improving the techniques I already know."  
-Javiana Manzitto '21



photo by Madelyn Augustine

"I was pumped when I heard there was going to be a JV dance team. When I made the team I thought it was going to be the best thing ever, and it was. It's just a really fun experience overall with all my new friends."  
-Brighton Bischoff '20



photo by Madelyn Augustine

"I really like being on JV dance team because it isn't as big of a time commitment as varsity is so it allows me to still do studio dance. It's a lot different performing on the track because you're below everyone else compared to a stage where you're above the crowd."  
-Joselyn Miklas '20



photo by Madelyn Augustine

"Team bondings are my favorite part about being on JV dance team because we have a lot of them. There's only five of us and we all get along really well and we have a lot of fun together."  
-Hildi Schneider '21



photo by Madelyn Augustine

"When I found out I made the team I was really excited because I think that being on JV is a good start to being apart of the Millard West Dance program. It gives me a chance to get used to high school dance and learn from my experience to better my dancing."  
-Makenzie Pearson '21

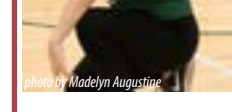


photo by Madelyn Augustine



"My favorite part about being on Varsity Dance Team is getting the chance to perform under the lights at football games in front of a big crowd. I also love improving as a dancer with my best friends."  
-Emma Osborne '21

photo by Madelyn Augustine

photo by Emma Koch

photo by Katie Muller

**5.6.7.8 YEARS TOGETHER** Being on stage and performing together is something juniors **BRIELLE HALL**, **ASHLEY MITCHELL** and **BREA STENGER** are used to. Since the third grade the three juniors have been dancing together for both Fusion Dance Studio and the Millard West Dance Team, which made it easy for them to be unstoppable on the dance floor. "Since we've been dancing together for so long we have a super tight bond and click really well together," Hall said. "We all know how the other dances, which makes it easier to dance together as one and make sure our timing is right."