

# Alli Rice

All of my hard work has been leading up to this moment. Vigorously practicing every day, to buying 1,000 new pairs of shoes, and to having private lessons with the teachers, all to guarantee that I would make the team.

Change took place in my life last year when I made Comp 3, which is the second highest level at L&L Dance Studio. Being an incoming freshman, many things seemed to be changing at the same time. Little did I know that this would be the greatest growing and eye opening year for me.

Going into a new competitive team I was nervous about things being too stressful, and not bonding with the other dancers. But the opposite happened when I instantly became best friends with everyone, not only on Comp 3, but on Comp 4 as well. Aside from the newfound friendships I made, I especially bonded with all of my teachers. It wasn't just a regular teacher-student relationship, I felt like I could talk to them more than anyone.

I can't explain how excited I was to go to practice every night, and be surrounded by the vibrant and loving energy. I felt like I actually belonged there, and it wasn't just an after school activity to fill time. On top of that, I was inspired by watching others dance, especially the people in Comp 4. It was a completely different feeling to watch someone be so happy when they dance, their energy filling the room. Being surrounded by such positive and charismatic people everyday changed me, I wanted to



follow their lead.

As the year went on, I started growing as a person and a dancer. My whole view on life started settling into place as I learned valuable life skills. If I could take away one thing from being on Comp 3, it would be learning how to be present. Not only physically, but being fully engaged and invested into something I love.

It is fulfilling to know that what I am doing benefits myself and those around me. Not everyone has a place to go that makes them feel on cloud 9 everytime they walk in the door, but I am so lucky to have found the place that I belong.

