

Teen Arcadian Broad helps dance competitors with their routine and builds their confidence.

COURTESY OF AMERICAN DANCE COMPETITION

Devotion to Dance

By Karen V. Contino

This Longwood resident shares his love for dance with kids.

For as long as he can remember, **Arcadian Broad** of Longwood has been called to the performing arts. “We had an upright piano in our home, and I would go up to it and just start playing,” Arcadian says of being a toddler. “My mom said I would stay there until my diaper was full. I would just stay there all day.”

By four years old, Arcadian was enrolled in piano lessons and his prodigious gift was able to take off. Along the way, he also took up singing, acting and dancing. While he enjoyed all those venues of creativity, it was dance, specifically ballet, that really caught his interest and he pursued it relentlessly.

Now 17, Arcadian has been through two summer programs at The Juilliard School and was a finalist for the title role of Billy in *Billy Elliot the Musical* in New York City, where he also trained with director Stephen Dauldry.

He was a semi-finalist on season four of NBC’s *America’s Got Talent* and was featured on *The Ellen Show* in 2009 before becoming the youngest professional ever to be hired at the Orlando Ballet Company under Robert Hill.

What Arcadian really enjoys is sharing his talents to help others. In 2011, he performed in Washington, D.C. for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s National Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day and at a health summit hosted by the Orlando

Health and Rehabilitation Center. In 2010, he gave a benefit performance for a local Awareness for Autism event.

A former competitor, this year Arcadian returned to the American Dance Competition — an international pre-professional ballet competition for ages 7-21 — as a choreographer, performer, backstage manager and role model.

“I loved being backstage,” he says. “I was bullied in school for being in the arts. This competition gives the male dancers an environment to feel comfortable and meet other boys to form a camaraderie with. It’s so important to me to help them to feel comfortable with themselves and nurture their talents.”

Audrianna Broad, American Dance Competition founder and president, says Arcadian not only helps the dance company tremendously, he is such an inspiring example for other young dancers. “It can be a stressful time for a young child to express themselves in front of so many influential people, and to have Arcadian there to provide last minute helpful advice, comfort, or even comic relief, made a difference.” **L**

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