

Jillian Gendal Helps Dancers with Disabilities Shine in the Spotlight

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Jillian Gendal is empowering young dancers with disabilities to take the stage through her initiative, [Spotlight](#). The program is dedicated to raising money and awareness for [Dancing Dreams](#), a New York City-based non-profit that ensures every dancer, regardless of ability, has the chance to shine. Gendal's efforts have already made a tangible impact, providing new costumes for 41 students for their Spring recital.

"Ever since I was a kid, I've loved dancing on stage," Gendal shared. "But performing is a privilege. Not everyone has access to the resources and support to do so, especially children with physical, emotional, and mental disabilities."

Gendal began supporting Dancing Dreams in 7th grade, donating money to the organization as part of her mitzvah project. More recently, she launched Spotlight to further her impact. She originally hoped to volunteer directly with disabled teens through a weekly one-on-one mentor program. However, the program's location in Queens limited her from doing so. Instead, she explored bringing the program to her local Westchester community but faced challenges with meeting the necessary physical therapy safety requirements. Undeterred, Gendal shifted her focus to what she could do from home: support the program's end-of-year recital on May 18th so the dancers would feel as special as possible.

In just a few months, she raised over \$1,000 to purchase brand new costumes for six classes of dancers, most of whom come from families with limited financial resources. "Costumes and other props are a luxury," explained Gendal. "Without donations, the children are stuck with homemade costumes or previously used ones." Wearing new costumes not only boosts the children's confidence, but it also gives their parents a sense of pride as they witness what their children have been able to achieve.

"There are really no other programs like this—where kids with varying degrees of disabilities can



dance alongside one another,” Gendal said. “It’s incredibly rewarding to help them do what I’ve always loved. I’m so happy I get to be part of making these dancers feel special.”

Gendal is already fundraising for next year’s recital. To learn more about Spotlight or to donate, visit <https://www.spotlight-dancingdreams.org/>.

About Jillian Gendal

Jillian Gendal is a junior at Byram Hills High School in Armonk, New York, where she is a member of Mu Alpha Theta and consistently earns High Honor Roll. She is also a member of the Student Wellness Advisory Committee, Youth Against Cancer, The Oracle (the school newspaper), the Student Grading Committee, and the Student Athletic Leadership Team—many of which she has participated in since her freshman year.

A lifelong dancer and creative spirit, Gendal competes on the Senior team at the Armonk Center for Dance and works as a dance counselor at Raquette Lake Girls Camp. She recently completed AP Graphic Design and will take AP Photography next year to further explore her interest in digital art.

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