

# NORTHERN NEWS

A FRESH NEW BREEZE

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## A Dynamite Donation

D&J Dynamite Dance Company, a program within the North Carroll Recreation Council, gave back this holiday season. Recognizing that they had a budget surplus this year, D&J's didn't ask its members to donate to their organization; instead, D&J's directors reached out to the Tree of Friends Foundation (ToFF), a local 501(c)(3), and asked their members to pay it forward.

D&J's set an initial goal of \$1,000 and raised over \$1,500 to be donated directly to the ToFF. Jessica Etzel, Co-Director of D&J's "The holiday season is hectic and busy for everyone; however, it is also a perfect opportunity to reflect upon the true meaning behind this time of year." said Jessica Etzel, D&J co-director. "We often take for granted what we have and I think this is the time of year where true holiday spirit needs to ring true – the importance of giving.

"We at D&J's Dynamite Dance believe in the power of our community, so the partnership with the Tree of Friends Foundation was a perfect fit. We asked the dancers and their families to keep in mind that everyone should be filled with the warm feelings during the holiday season. Everyone deserves to see the innocent excitement and joy from their children. And everyone deserves the right to feel loved and supported.

"We are not just about dancing at D&J's – we reach out, we give back, and we support those in need. This was a rewarding opportunity to give back to our community."

D&J intentionally involved their youngest members, the dancers, in this campaign. Caroline Beakes, dancer, 10, said, "I decided to donate my own money to Tree of Friends because I could help other people in need right here in my own country. This is the time of year to be giving to others and this is how I wanted to show that."

Alex Wun, senior dancer, 17, stated "The Tree of Friends is all about helping people and families in need. By getting to contribute to something so special, like this organization, and in light of the Christmas spirit, it means the world to me. As it is always said, 'it's better to give than to receive.'"



Members and instructors of the D&J Dynamite Dance Co., is an affiliate of the North Carroll Recreation Council. Submitted photo

To help D&J's achieve their goal, they attracted dancers to maximize fundraising efforts with the promise of a free dance party for the company group who raised the most money for ToFF. The dance party will be hosted by Wun, who is also a current student at the Baltimore School for the Arts.

Information, D&J's Dynamite Dance Company, 410-374-0622.