

Dancer plans performance to honor police

By ERICK PETERSON
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Dancer Breah Rios, 10, of Hermiston, is looking forward to paying tribute to Anthony Dia, an Ohio officer who was killed on the job. Breah will dance to honor Dia and other officers at upcoming contests.

Her first competition is March 18-20 at Sheer Elite in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. A Highland Hills Elementary student, Breah said she feels a little nervous about her upcoming performance, where she has planned a contemporary solo dance, as well as jazz, lyrical and hip-hop performances.

"I've only done one solo, and that was last year," she said.

Still, she said, her last performance earned her platinum honors in Tacoma, so she feels confident she will do well in the upcoming contest.

She said she is preparing with a lot of practice and stretching. As part of her practice, she will see a choreographer in Texas.

Dance history and ambitions

Breah said she has been dancing and competing since she was 3 years old.

"I started dance because my mom stuck me in it," she said.

Though her mom is not a dancer, they dance together and have enjoyed making videos, she said. In addition, they have watched many videos on TikTok.

Throughout her years of performance, Breah has visited various cities throughout Oregon, Idaho and Washington, she said, and has received awards with her dance groups.

She dances with Dance Unlimited, a Hermiston school. There, she said, she enjoys working with her coaches. She added they work well together to



Breah Rios, 10, left, talks with members of the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office and Hermiston Police Department on Saturday, Jan. 8, 2022, at the Stafford Hansell Government Center in Hermiston. Breah, a competitive dancer, will be performing a law enforcement tribute dance at a set of upcoming competitions in remembrance of fallen Toledo, Ohio, police officer Anthony Dia.

meet her goals.

"I want to become a professional dancer and go to Juilliard," she said.

Breah credited The Juilliard School for being a premier performing arts school that will require "lots of dedication" from her if she is to attend.

In addition, her ambitions include learning choreography, something she said she will eventually study.

Forthcoming performances

The daughter and granddaughter of men in law enforcement, Breah said police are important to her. She was particularly touched by the death of Dia, whom she calls a hero. He stands out, she said, because of his final radio call before his death in which he told a dispatcher he loved his family.

Her upcoming solo performances, which she has dedicated to Dia and other police officers, are especially meaningful to her. Dia, she said, was 26 years old and a father of two children.

"It touched my heart specially, because I feel



Hermiston dancer Breah Rios, age 10, fourth from right, poses alongside members of the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office and Hermiston Police Department on Saturday, Jan. 8, 2022, at the Stafford Hansell Government Center in Hermiston.

police don't get support much," she said.

Breah's mother, Kelley Rios, supports her daughter.

"I am incredibly proud of Breah for doing this tribute dance at competition and doing what she feels is right despite the outcome," Rios said.

But she expressed concern that people will respond negatively to a performance in support of police.

"We placed platinum in

Tacoma last year," she said, "and Breah knows she may not place this year simply because of what she is doing and how the judges perceive it."

After Coeur d'Alene, Breah has performances April 8-10 at Spotlight in Portland, April 22-23 at Team Dance in Richland, Washington, May 13-15 at Showstopper in Tacoma and June 28-July 2 at Nationals/Team Dance in Nampa, Idaho.

LOCAL BRIEFING

Copeland retires from BMLT

WALLA WALLA — Tim Copeland, executive director of the Blue Mountain Land Trust, is retiring.

BMLT announced the news in a press release Tuesday, Jan. 11.

Copeland joined the trust as its executive director in November 2014. During his tenure, BMLT tripled its geographic service area in southeastern Washington and Northeastern Oregon to become one of the largest regional land trusts in the Pacific Northwest, according to the press release, and expanded its natural resources education and outdoor recreation activities.

BMLT's conservation easement holdings increased from 866 acres to 13,659 acres with an additional 9,500 acres projected to close in early 2022. In 2021, the BMLT also acquired its first owned property, Phipps Meadow, a 278-acre parcel of environmental significance on the Middle Fork of the John Day River.

Thousands of guests each year, even during the pandemic, have attended or viewed the trust's education programs, including Learning on the Land and Learning on the Land Online.

The Blues Crew also has been successful in its contributions to recreation opportunities in the Umatilla National Forest, including the restoration of the Horseshoe Prairie Nordic Ski Area, the press release stated.

Copeland will continue to serve as a director of the Washington Association of Land Trusts and the Oregon Agricultural Trust. He is the immediate past president of the Washington Association of Land Trusts. Copeland also will be involved in the transition of leadership through the first quarter of 2022. Board member Greg Brown assumes the role of

interim executive director pending the recruitment of a new executive.

Four locals up for state boards, commissions

SALEM — Gov. Kate Brown submitted a list of state board and commission appointments to the Oregon Senate for confirmation, and four locals are up for consideration.

Brown selected two Umatilla County residents and one Morrow County resident for first-time appointments: Sandra Sampson, treasurer of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation Board of Trustees, for the Health Policy Board; Greg Clouser of Umatilla to serve on the Public Employees' Benefit Board; and Morrow County Commissioner Jim Doherty to serve on the Energy Facility Siting Council.

Sampson would finish out a four-year term that expires Dec. 31. Clouser and Doherty would serve four-year terms that end in 2026.

The fourth selection is a reappointment — Eric Quampts, CTUIR director of Natural Resources, to the Water Resources Commission for a four-year term that ends in 2025.

"I am committed to ensuring that all boards and commissions represent the growing age, racial, and gender diversity of our state," Brown said in a press release. "Our policies, programs, and initiatives are stronger when diverse perspectives have been at the table, helping to craft them. I appreciate the willingness of all these nominees to help us build a safe, strong, just and equitable Oregon for all."

The Senate Rules Committee is scheduled to consider the nominations in February.

—EO Media Group

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