

Glass House Dance: **Seeing the Difference**

GLASS HOUSE

Dance Training Reimagined

For Larisa and Ryan Eronemo, you could say fate is a huge part of their equation. But the vision for their school was always clear: to have a place where everyone feels included, where everyone's voice was valid, and everyone's path *is* valid. It's the idea of inclusion. Of transparency and of never conforming to a mold or expectation of what dance *should* be. For every student at every age, the journey is different and at *Glass House Dance* in Sammamish, Washington that journey is not only embraced, it sets the foundation of the new program.

Accomplished dancers in their own right with super-stocked resumes, Larisa and Ryan, after realizing that competing with a dance school on every corner was not part of their plan, the two travelled from Phoenix to Washington to work on the next stage of their careers. It's been a roller coaster ride waiting for the launch but just last month, students came through the doors. A lot of students!



glasshousedance.com

Inside Dance chatted with them right before their fall opening. Oh, and did we say fate? Well, after much anxiety over their chosen studio location, things got complicated time-wise and a twelfth hour move looked to be in the cards. "We've spent six months working a deal at one location, just to jump ship literally with lease in hand, and seal a deal elsewhere in just one week...Timing is a strange thing..." says Larisa.

A home secured, here's a little more about this couple, in their own words.

On their goals...

Ryan: We are really focused on developing the individual artistry of the dancer and really fostering a love and respect for the art form. Regardless of their skill set or their age, there is something deeper they can take away. We start doing that with even our youngest dancers, so they can really get the true appreciation of the art form and really expressing their creativity. We also want them involved in their community. Connecting with local issues is a great message to send at the launch of something beautiful.

On the studio ownership business...

Larisa: We finally made our move to Washington which was really scary because we were making a very comfortable living in Phoenix. We got a lot of questions. *Well, do you have any dancers?* No. *Do you know any teachers?* No. We're just going. We did our due diligence and tried to pick a place where there was a real need, where kids needed dance and where there was a lack of dance studios. We wanted to start fresh. What we're finding out now is we've had to consider what and who is right for our business model. Someone might have an incredible hip hop background, for example, but if he doesn't have the same beliefs and goals as our model, that person isn't right for us. We're trying to not let ego take over and live our business model.

Ryan: We're finding that we're looking for characteristics so special, they aren't necessarily easily fit onto a resume.

On the industry...

Larisa: We're finding that unless you're good, unless you have this God-given dance talent, kids just aren't coming back to dance class. It's happening too often. What if that "back row" dancer is the hardest working dancer in the classroom? At the end of the day, these are still children and we want to reward those that deserve recognition with their skills and their work ethic. Everyone should have a place in the classroom, especially dance. That's our universal language.

