

# BURBANK LEADER

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## Ballet school taking bigger steps

Irma Lemus

NORTHWEST DISTRICT -- Some of her youngest students may not be able to pronounce her name, but they do know dance terms such as "high-fifth" and "passe," Burbank School of the Ballet owner Lisa Sutton said.

Originally from Maryland, "Miss Lisa," as she is known by her students, teaches ballet and jazz at her Burbank Boulevard studio to about 72 students. Her students range from 3 to well into their 40s, she said.

"I got some of my younger students practically out of the womb. I remember that one of my 3-years-olds couldn't pronounce my name, so she would call me 'Misa'. She put together 'Miss' and 'Lisa,' " said Sutton, a Burbank resident who has been teaching dance for 22 years.

As Sutton's roster has grown since she opened her studio in 1998 with 22 students, so has the need for a larger studio.

To accommodate growth, the Burbank School of the Ballet moved two doors from its previous location to 3008 W. Burbank Blvd. Her former high school sweetheart, now her husband, James Sutton, built the new studio.

The grand opening will be Aug. 12.

"This is the realization of my dream -- to teach dance the way I was meant to. To teach my students not just about dance and posture, but to improve their self-esteem," Lisa Sutton said.

Six-year-old Laura Raynes, who has been taking ballet at the school since she was about 3, couldn't agree more.

"I like Miss Lisa's teaching. She's really nice," said Laura, who was dressed in black leotards with her hair up in a bun for her weekly lesson.

Sharon Raynes said she drives her daughter from Studio City every Saturday to the Burbank school because of the friendly atmosphere.

"One of the main differences between this school and a performance-driven school is that Lisa really teaches the children ballet and not just to perform. She really cares about the children," Raynes said.

Creating a family atmosphere in her studio has been a priority, Sutton said.

"My husband and children are really involved with the school. One of my young students saw my husband in the studio once and she asked if he was 'Mr. Lisa' ... The name has stuck since," she said.

IF YOU GO:

WHAT: Grand Opening of the Burbank School of the Ballet.

WHEN: 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Aug. 12.

WHERE: 3008 W. Burbank Blvd.

DETAILS: A short performance will follow the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Information on classes at the school will be available at the reception.

Refreshments will be served.

COST: No charge.

INFO: Call 845-8856.