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Potential is best at a young age

There would seem to be two ways for your child to reach what you consider to be his or her full potential — with the blessing of natural ability, which is to say genetics, or through environmental avenues, which would probably include hard work.

Naturalness is a fact.

Some pitchers of the baseball start out throwing harder than others. Coaches know that you can't teach athleticism.

People with natural talent usually get to where they need to be, even if it isn't center-stage at age eight or nine.

We gravitate toward what we enjoy, which tends to put success within reach.

Children placed in a situation based on a parent's abilities or environment, who knows where that is apt to finish.

It seems possible for a person to have too much natural ability — the prodigy, playing with the symphony at eight, frazzled in the teens, a childhood lost.

A camera phone moment: As a child, I was placed in several fields of activity without being consulted, one being dance class, which was held weekly in the basement of a neighborhood church.

People with certain natural abilities had a big edge at this dance class, speed being the key ingredient to a tolerable evening — foot speed, not footwork speed.

Before an evening of dance lessons, which lasted an hour but seemed like a full school day, the boys were instructed to move across the wooden floor and select a partner.

Boys with nervous energy sat in folding chairs on one side of the room, girls looking like they'd rather be doing math homework occupied folding chairs across the way.

Running was forbidden. But unfortunately it wouldn't get you sent home. It got you sent to the back of the line. Girls got to pick partners every other week. Girls actually walked.

Upon being told to select a partner, boys rose and began scurrying and elbowing others out of the way in one of the most unmannerly displays of social behavior imaginable. Guys fell. Fallen guys leg-whipped others.

The purpose of the flying wedge was not necessarily to pair up with the smartest or most popular or most attractive partner; it was to select somebody who danced about as badly as you did.

Dance class ended with the playing of, "Goodnight, Sweetheart, Goodnight" by the Spaniels (seriously), and it remains one of my favorites to this hour.

Nice try: Most children don't want to disappoint their parents.

If they're encouraged to get quicker or stronger or more dedicated at sports, or more tuneful at music, what's a kid to do — you do what you are told that you might enjoy.

Without being blessed with an abundance of natural talent, you have to work at sports, work at music, work at art; to become good, you have to pay the price.

The question is: How much exactly should a child have to work?

Race's numbers sprint ahead

■ Surpassing last year's figures, more than 9,000 runners have signed up for Saturday's Tulsa Run.

BY MICHAEL OVERALL
World Staff Writer

With the sluggish economy, officials were bracing for a low turnout at this year's Tulsa Run.

Instead, registrations are slightly outpacing last year's, with more than 9,000 runners signed up by Thursday afternoon for Saturday morning's race.

The number might top 10,000

before the starter gun fires, making it one of the biggest crowds in the event's history, said race director Marcia Whitaker.

"There seems to be more coming from out of state," she said. "And, of course, that's good for Tulsa."

In 1978, the first-annual Tulsa Run attracted only 1,300 runners, mostly locals.

And 31 years later, locals still provide the bulk of the crowd.

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ONLINE

Read all of the World's coverage of this year's run and get answers to your frequently asked questions:
tulsaworld.com/tulsarun2009

"It's a big Tulsa tradition now," Whitaker said. "People who live here want to be able to say they did the Tulsa Run at least once. It's like being a part of the club."

Only a few city blocks will separate the starting point from the finish line, with the race beginning in

front of the Tulsa World building at Third Street and Boulder Avenue and winding up next to the BOK Center at Second Street and Denver Avenue.

The 15-kilometer race, however, takes a scenic route through Cherry Street, past Swan Lake and Woodward Park, then stretches nearly two miles down Riverside Drive before it makes a U-turn and returns to downtown.

By the end, runners will cover 9.3 miles.

SEE **RUN** A13

MUSCLING IN ON 'DRACULA'



Tulsa Ballet dancer Nathan McGinnis winces as Ken Randall, associate professor of physical therapy at the University of Oklahoma-Tulsa, works on his ankle muscles while graduate students Becky Wilcox (left center) and Kacy Ward watch before Thursday night's production of "Dracula."

Photos by SHERRY BROWN/Tulsa World



University of Oklahoma-Tulsa physical therapy graduate student Becky Wilcox massages Tulsa Ballet dancer Alberto Montesso's calf muscle before "Dracula" on Thursday.

Physical therapy students train on dancers

BY SARA PLUMMER
World Staff Writer

The physical therapy table backstage at the Tulsa Performing Arts Center shares a room with three washers and dryers, but laundry isn't what people were in line for Thursday night.

Ken Randall, associate professor of physical therapy at the University of Oklahoma-Tulsa, and two of his students treated Tulsa Ballet dancers before opening night of "Dracula."

As his students massaged, pushed and pulled at muscles, Randall asked questions as he would in a classroom, but he was not the only instructor in the room.

"These guys (the dancers) are the best teachers," he said. "They give students feedback, and they know their bodies so well; they know when something's not right."

'Dracula'

When: 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 3 p.m. Sunday
Tickets: PAC ticket office, 596-7109, or tulsaworld.com/pac

In the last 10 years, Randall and about 250 of his students have volunteered at the ballet.

"These guys are excellent examples of human anatomy," but they're not the typical patient the students learn about, he said. "They really have to stretch themselves — take what they know about typical human beings and take it to the extremes."

Kacy Ward, a third-year physical therapy student at OU-Tulsa, worked with the dancers last fall and was backstage Thursday.

"We get to put our skills to practice," Ward said. The dancers "have very defined muscles. Some of the moves they do are

extraordinary — their strength and flexibility. People think ballet dancers are just ballerinas jumping around, (but) they are athletes. They are strong and very in tune with their bodies."

Becky Wilcox, also a third-year physical therapy student also volunteering at the ballet, said her classmate is ahead of the game with the experience she has.

"When we're practicing in class, we practice on each other, and most of us don't have real problems," Wilcox said. "She (Ward) has gotten to do this every week and work on people with real problems."

Serena Chu, a Tulsa Ballet dancer, said what Randall and his students do for the dancers is vital.

"We do so much exercise and abuse to ourselves; we need someone to fix it afterward," Chu said.

SEE **DRACULA** A13

Legislator taking aim at teen 'sexting'

BY BARBARA HOBEROCK
World Capitol Bureau

OKLAHOMA CITY — A state lawmaker hopes to clarify existing laws to combat teenage "sexting" without "creating a whole new generation of felons."

Rep. Anastasia Pittman, D-Oklahoma City, sponsored a public hearing Thursday on the House floor to tackle the problem of sexting, a practice among teenagers of sending sexually explicit images or text over cell phones.

Pittman said she wants the hearing to serve as the first in a series of

public discussions.

Parents have a responsibility to check children's cell phones for inappropriate messages, said Heath Merchen, associate general counsel for the Oklahoma Education Association.

Merchen, a former prosecutor in Washington state, said children who send sexually explicit messages and photos could face charges.

Trent Baggett, assistant executive coordinator of the District Attorneys Council, said laws on the books covering child pornog-

SEE **SEXTING** A13



University of Oklahoma-Tulsa Professor Dr. David Kendrick speaks Thursday during a press conference at City Hall about a new health-care information sharing network.

CORY YOUNG/Tulsa World

Progress lauded in health information-sharing plan

■ It's called "the broadest collaboration that's occurred in health care in this region."

BY KIM ARCHER
World Staff Writer

Tulsa's health establishment has made significant progress toward connecting all medical providers in the region electronically, a feat several doctors and Mayor Kathy Taylor lauded as remarkable among competitors.

"As far as I know, this is the broad-

est collaboration that's occurred in health care in this region," said Dr. David Kendrick, a professor at the University of Oklahoma-Tulsa who has spearheaded the effort.

Greater coordination and information-sharing among the region's medical providers will save \$200 million in costs of repeated tests and procedures, according to a Harvard University study.

And a system that allows physicians to access a patient's records right where they are will save lives by avoiding deadly drug interactions and similar circumstances, Kendrick said.

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