

tribute

NATIONAL TALENT COMPETITION

2020 Tribute to my Parents "At Home" Award Winner



The Donohue Family

Dancer - McKenna Donohue - Age 14

Parents - Sean Donohue and Lisa Donohue

Dance Studio - Summit Dance Works - Colorado Springs, Colorado

My parents are the most encouraging and supportive people I have ever had the privilege of knowing. My name is McKenna Donohue I'm 14 years old, I'm from Colorado Springs and I feel so honored to give a tribute to my wonderful parents. My parents, Lisa and Sean are so incredibly giving, supportive, kind, and loving, and I feel so lucky to have parents such as these. They are truly amazing people who have taught me the values of kindness, service, and humility by leading their own lives with such values. By teaching through example, I have developed morals and values that have shaped me into the person I am today.

My parents have done a lot in their time, they have four children, my older sister Nikki, my older brother Mitchell, my older sister Meghan, and myself. Nikki was adopted at the age of 12 before I was born, she had spent time in foster care before being brought into our family. They gave her a family, a permanent home, and most of all they loved her. This story amazes me because the selflessness, bravery, and compassion my parents displayed is truly inspirational. Today, Nikki is 31 years old, married, and is the incredible mother of my two beautiful nieces, Kaylee and Kristen. Even as my older siblings start their own families, my parents make sure we go on vacation together and make time for each other. For example, we spent Christmas at Disney one year and my parents helped Nikki and her family come to Colorado for spring break so we could all be together. They have done a great job keeping us connected even when we're far apart. Nikki is one of my best friends and I am so thankful she is part of our family.

I am so grateful for the support my parents provide. My parents have always supported me financially in dance and they go the extra mile to provide everything I need to do what I love. My dad built a dance room with nice floors, a large mirror, and even a ballet barre which has been especially useful while I have been doing online dance classes. They have brought my older siblings' home from college for a weekend to see me dance in competitions which always helps me do my best when I have the support of my whole family. They have supported my siblings in their activities as well, from my sister's dance fees to my brother's voice lessons they have been there rooting all of us on. My mom also makes sure I am looking my best before a performance by doing my hair which is never enjoyable, but she is always there to help me look and feel my best. They're always ready for a challenge, my studio has family dance challenges and lip-syncs battles that my parents have been excited to participate in which is a good laugh. Lastly, they put in all the miles and time to get me to every class and performance and they're always in the crowd cheering for me at every competition and recital which means the world to me and makes me feel so loved and cared for. I appreciate everything my parents have done that allows me to dance and because of them, I have grown so much as a dancer and I can't thank them enough.

The arts have always been a part of my family, my mom participated in musicals and was a dancer in high school, my sister was a competitive dancer and did theatre in high school, and my brother was involved in theatre throughout high school and college. They along with my dad have always encouraged me in dance because it's something we all get to love. We love watching musicals as a family and listening to Hamilton in the car on long drives. My mom and sister always told me whatever activity I chose to do would be fine as long as I was happy, but I think they were happy when I chose dance because we all love it so much. For as long as I can remember I have watched Dance Moms and Dancing with the Stars with my mom and sister and I would waltz with my dad in the kitchen. Dance has always been a part of my life, but I believe my family has encouraged my growing passion and now it is one of the most important things to me.

Then there are the things I never really noticed about my parents until we were put in a position where these traits became apparent. During these difficult times of the Coronavirus pandemic, my parents have stayed calm and positive, continued to work extremely hard from home to provide financially for our family, and never made me feel stressed or worried. Being in quarantine has been one of the hardest things I have had to go through because I have missed my dance studio and my second family there. My parents have shown me what a great family is like so when I became involved in dance, I knew that it would be my second home because of the family-like atmosphere. Through all of this, my parents helped me to stay calm and not worry because they assured me our family could handle whatever was thrown our way. This has been the biggest test of our family's strength and unity, but I realized that my parents created such a strong and loving family we would stand the test of spending so much time together. I think all of this has made us stronger and allowed us to create deeper bonds with each other. All this time hasn't gone by without some laughs, we've played hide and seek, I've taken the role of the Tik Tok dance coach and play so many board games we have a competition going for who can win the most games. Without my parent's kindness and grace, I would not be doing as well as I am doing in these hard times.

My parents are incredible people, but they are also incredible parents. Anyone can be a good person, but it takes a great person to make a good parent. Being a parent is one of the hardest jobs in the world, but I am confident that one day I could make a good parent because of the examples they have set. They radiate the qualities it takes to be a kind, forgiving, supportive, and overall great parents. I am so incredibly grateful for who my mom and dad are, and I don't know what I would ever do without them.

McKenna Donohue