

"BGC Bratz" Steal the Show with Debut Performance at Newport Yacht Rendezvous

By Dierdre Murphy | Photos By Cocoa & Co.

At the Boys & Girls Clubs of Newport County's annual Newport Yacht Rendezvous at Safe Harbor Newport Shipyard, the eight-member "BGC Bratz" dance team took over the floor and entertained the gala's 300 guests with a contagiously energetic routine that ended with a standing ovation. Dance coach Sienna Benson and teen coordinator Sophie Perrotti worked with the all-female troupe to develop a routine.

"My dancers worked incredibly hard to prepare for this show, dedicating countless hours to rehearsals and perfecting every detail," Benson said. "Their commitment, energy, and teamwork were evident in every step they took on stage. Watching them perform with such passion and precision was a true testament to their dedication and love for dance," she continued. "We aren't just a dance team, we are a dance family. Our girls, the BGC Bratz, showed up, showed out, and filled me with pride!"

The dance program was conceived last year by a group of female teen members who were participating in the Club's SMART Girls program, who were looking for an alternative to the wrestling program. (SMART Girls is a program

designed to meet the developmental needs of girls; members explore both their own and societal attitudes and values—as they build skills to take care of themselves, develop positive relationships with peers and adults, and avoid risky behaviors.)

A dancer since the age of four, Benson had performed with the local dance troupe Off the Curb, a non-profit organization that combined performances with positive messaging to keep kids off the streets. She eventually began teaching hip-hop and contemporary dance in after-school programs.

Funding from the Newport County Fund covered the inaugural year's expenses, and their first performance was at the June 27 Newport Yacht Rendezvous.

"This program is emblematic of the type of experiences that kids and teens can have at the Boys & Girls Club," said Chief Operating Officer Lauren Utschig. "Not only is it a healthy, physical activity in performance art, it is also an opportunity to develop confidence and teamwork, and it gives them the opportunity to give back and support the community by performing at community events."

In Their Own Words: What the BGC Bratz Dance Program Means to Them

Ayla – I love dance. It's my passion. I actually enjoy performing more than just dancing. We work so hard learning dances. I love to show them off to people and make them happy.

Olivia – I feel like I can be myself and do one of the things I love. Dance makes me feel happy and productive. After we had our performance I felt so proud and grateful.

Brynn – I look forward to having these dance classes every week. I enjoy learning new moves but also enjoyed having fun with friends during class. Learning these dances aren't always easy but it's always fun.

Kaylee – I enjoy it a lot and it makes me happy. I love that I made new friends that love dancing too. I love performing and dancing.

Jules – I loved it! I love that we perform. It gives something to look forward to after working hard on the dances in class.

Lily – What I love is making new friends and practicing until the performance. It's helped me build confidence.

Jaz'myne – I've just always loved to dance. I get new bonds out of it it's just so nice to meet new people through dance and also networking and meeting new people. I like both performing and just dancing.

Coach Sienna Benson – When dancers feel supported and valued, they're able to express themselves more freely and grow both artistically and personally. Creating a space where they can have fun while learning not only builds their skills but also fosters a lasting love for dance.

