



Photo Courtesy of Christina Black

Black shows off her talent, leaping into a split jump. Dance has been a part of Black's life for 11 years, and she has had many opportunities to express her skills and passion.

## Black leaps her way into the Nutcracker

Amanda Ostrowski / Editor

Senior Christina Black has been dancing since she was two years old. Black started dancing because her mom danced and she wanted to take after her mom.

Her passion for the arts has given her multiple opportunities throughout the years. The Nutcracker is a ballet that is put on for hundreds of people that many kids perform in. Black is just one person who does the nutcracker here at the high school. There are many students here who are in the play with Black.

Typically, the nutcracker practices are over 30 hours a week and they do 8 shows in total.

"I wanted to start doing the nutcracker because I was so inspired watching the sugar plum fairy and wanted to be that someday," Black said.

She lived up to her expectations that she had for herself since she was a young dancer.

Black has been doing the nutcracker for ten years and her senior year will be her eleventh year. During the eleven years she had been many different characters in the ballet.

She has been Clara, a doll, Russian lead, Arabian Princess, Demi rose bud, a snowflake, a mouse, a fairy, snow queen, Chinese lead and the sugar plum fairy.

Her favorite out of all of them was being the snow queen.

*"Black feels that being in the nutcracker really makes her feel special during the holiday season. Not only does she feel this, the nutcracker is now a tradition to her and her family," Ostrowski said.*

"The best part of doing the nutcracker is spending time with my best friends while doing the thing I love the most," Black said.

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Her family from Colorado and New Jersey comes on Thanksgiving and makes it a tradition to see her perform.

Black has seen many different nutcrackers around the country and she believes that the one that she performs in is the most entertaining.

Since this is Black's senior year she is trying to savor up the time and memories because this is her last opportunity to

show off her talent. The tradition of her being in the nutcracker, or at least this nutcracker, is coming to an end.

Black is happy to have the memories she has on being in the nutcracker because it is part of who she is and how she grew up.

## Helping out a man's best friend

Molly Richards / Copy Editor

There are many organizations in the community that are making an impact, but the Humane Society of Summit County gives four-legged friends in the community a chance to find their forever home.

Located in Twinsburg, the Humane Society of Summit County (HSSC) is a shelter that takes in abandoned and neglected animals and provides necessities to the animals until they are adopted.

As said on their website, the mission of this shelter is to strengthen the bond between people and animals through the education and support they provide.

HSSC has a vision of creating a community in which animals are all treated humanely, this vision aligns with many of the organization's core values.

HSSC has three main core values that guide the organization's decisions and work in the community: compassion, influence and engagement.

These values are seen in all of the services that the shelter offers to the furry friends of the community.

One main service this shelter offers is animal adoption service. Although HSSC takes good care of all animals in their facilities, their main hope is that all of the animals will eventually be adopted.

Even if an animal is never adopted, or takes longer than expected, the HSSC never euthanizes their animals for time or space reasons.

Karla Hopkins, volunteer coordinator at the Humane Society of Summit County, says this is one of the policies the shelter is most proud of.

Hopkins is in charge of all of the volunteer orientations as well as helping volunteers get the proper training they need to be able to help out at HSSC.

"We will never euthanize an animal for time or space reasons, but if an animal is a danger to the public or if the animal's health is at a certain point at which it is suffering, we will euthanize animals for those reasons," Hopkins said.

Along with the adoptions services, the organization also employs Humane law enforcement. These officers work with local authority to make sure all animal cruelty laws are being enforced.

As well as the location in Twinsburg, HSSC also supplies a thrift shop. One of the other services HSSC offers to the community is community education and outreach.



Source: Stohion/Molly Richards

HSSC always needs more volunteers to help the animals in the shelter. The dog in the picture is reaching his head out to communicate with more people.

Community outreach programs supplied by HSSC are designed to promote kindness and appropriate treatment of animals.

HSSC offers a variety of topics appropriate for elementary schools, special needs groups, and youth organizations through the Volunteer Speakers Bureau.

Because this Humane Society is not funded by the

government, and receives all of their funding from fundraising, sponsors and grants they receive, they do many of events in the community in order to get that support.

From fundraising events such as Bark in the Park and the Pledge walk, to simply taking donations of money or supplies needed for the animals; HSSC makes a huge effort to get the support they need to continue the work they provide to the community.

HSSC is always taking donations, whether that be on their donate now page available on their website, or through donations brought directly to the shelter.

If one would like to give back and within the help animals in need community, HSSC is always looking for volunteers.

Community service hours can be earned through doing laundry, dishes or working at the Happy Tails thrift store, as well as caring directly for the animals.

"Everybody knows my favorite thing is when people help out with the laundry, it piles up very quick in the laundry room because of how often we change out our animals bedding and sheets," Hopkins said.

This constant changing of the bedding, as well as many of the animals other needs being kept up with, is a huge part of HSSC trying to keep their animals as comfortable as possible while they are staying at the shelter.

"We want our animals to be comfortable, and never want them to be laying in any unclean sheets or with unclean bedding," Hopkins said.

However, working directly with the animals requires the completion of classes. These classes range from courses on dog walking to cat enrichment and care classes.

The Humane Society of Summit County is continually serving this community and its furry friends, not only during the holiday season, but all year round.

Source: Flickr