Written by Mark Jaeger
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THE NEW HOME of Lake Shore Dance on Moore Road in Port Washington gives the school a permanent location and three dance studios. A boutique also offers shoes and apparel for dancers of all ages and skill levels.

Photos by Mark Jaeger and Sam Arendt

Former equipment shop transformed into instructional studio

Just as the ballet “Swan Lake” centered on the transformation of a princess into a swan, Lake Shore Dance has guided the transformation of the former Four Seasons equipment building in Port Washington into a stunning dance studio.

The studio at 600 Moore Rd. opened Feb. 1. It replaces the studio Lake Shore Dance had on Foster Drive in Saukville.

The exterior of the metal building gives no hint to the extensive renovation work done inside.

The facility was completely refurbished, with carpeting and hardwood floors installed throughout.

“We closed on the building on Nov. 5, and had contractors starting the renovations that day,” said Gwen Agee, director of the studio.

“My husband actually tipped me off to the building three years ago, and after looking at it I said, ‘I don’t know.’ I mean it used to be just a shop. We went back four or five times before I started to see its potential. Now that the work is done, I think it is fantastic. It feels so warm … perfect for creativity.”

The Port building features three studios — two for larger classes and a smaller one for private instruction.

Each room is brightly lit, with mirrored walls and stretching barres.

Gallery windows allow parents to observe as their young dancers perfect their form.

The building also has a locker room for students to change their clothes and a boutique where dance clothing and shoes are sold. There is ample storage space available for costumes and props used in dance productions.

As for that ugly-duckling exterior, Agee said that too should change this spring.

“We are stuck with the aesthetics for now, but once the thaw comes, we want to paint the exterior and do some landscaping. We also planning to pave the parking lot,” she said.

Agee said the Port location allows greater opportunity for students to walk or bike to the studio, which is just north of the Port Washington High School athletic field.

“It also gives us a feeling of permanence. Now that we’ve bought the building and it is open, we know we aren’t going anywhere. There won’t be any more moves,” she said.

Agee is a graduate of the dance school. She went on to earn a bachelor of fine arts degree in dance at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and trained with more than a dozen professionals.

Agee runs the school with Amy Aichele, who is director of the Cedarburg studio.

The dance school started in 1993, offering lessons for dancers of all skill levels. It also maintains a studio in Cedarburg.

Classes cover a variety of genres, including ballet, jazz, tap, modern and pointe.