

EASTLAKE STUDENT IS MOSCOW-BOUND

Sophomore Kyra Atchason earns scholarship to study Russian, dance with Bolshoi Ballet

*Story by Lisa Deaderick
Thursday, June 16, 2011*



Kyra Atchason gets bored if she stays in one place for too long, which is part of why she loves to travel. She also loves dancing and has been taking ballet since she was 2 years old. So, the full scholarship she won for the National Security Language Initiative for Youth program this summer was perfect.

“I was really relieved, kind of, because it was really stressful,” she said of how she felt once the audition and application process for the program were over and she learned that she’d been selected. “I was hoping that all this hard work would pay off, so I was really grateful that I got the scholarship and the opportunity to go over there.”

The program is funded by the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and provides merit-based scholarships to qualified high school students to learn foreign languages and cultures that aren’t taught as commonly as others. Sixteen students from across the country were selected to participate in the nine-week program through the Russian American Foundation and the Bolshoi Ballet Academy. Kyra, 15, is a sophomore at Eastlake High School and a previous participant in the Bolshoi’s summer intensive program in New York City. She and the other students will train with the ballet academy in Moscow and also study Russian language, history, arts and culture.

Kyra is excited about the program because she’s learned some Russian over the years with her involvement with the Bolshoi in New York, and enjoyed it because it was different from the Japanese she’s been learning. To be able to practice and learn in Russia “really excites me,” and adding the ballet at such a well-known academy “is an amazing opportunity.” She’s also looking forward to a couple of other lessons she thinks this experience will teach her.

“Probably more discipline because I’m really focused now, but being away from my family and stuff will really prepare me for when I go away to college. And when I have to do stuff on my own, it will make me more disciplined and prepared,” she said. “And, hopefully, it will improve my (ballet) technique.”