

PRESS RELEASE

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LOCAL IRISH DANCER CROWNED 2015 NORTH AMERICAN CHAMPION

First Place Winner - Saoirse DeBoy, Age 16

The North American Irish Dance Championships (NAIDC) held in Providence, RI, July 1-5, 2015, showcased over 2000 competitors from the United States, Canada and Mexico, each vying for top recognition as "National Champion" in their age group. **Saoirse DeBoy** of Mt. Airy, age 16, a student of the **Teelin School of Irish Dance** in Columbia, Maryland, and a rising 11th grader at Mount De Sales Academy in Catonsville, earned that title by winning first place last month in the solo championships for girls age 15-16. The competition was also open to competitors from abroad, and included some dancers from the countries of Ireland, England, Scotland and Australia, to name a few.

"Saoirse is the first student from Teelin School to earn this title, we are all very excited!" boasts Maureen Berry, Owner/Director of the Teelin School of Irish Dance. "I am very proud of each of my dancers - they are hard workers and passionate dancers, and we've had a very good run at the competitions this year."

The international Irish Dancing Commission based in Dublin, Ireland governs the competitions, which are held locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. In December 2015, four students from Teelin School won first place in their age group at the Southern U.S. Regional Championships - Saoirse DeBoy; **Gaby Stratmann**, age 15, of Ellicott City; **Isabella Pelura**, age 11, of Millersville; and **Colleen Bartel**, age 8, of Severna Park. At the North American Championships this July (also referred to as the National Championships), six Teelin School students earned high placements in their solo championship age group and qualified for the World Championships, to be held in Glasgow, Scotland March 20-29, 2016 - DeBoy (1st place in Girls 15-16); Stratmann (4th place in Girls 14-15); Pelura (4th place in Girls 10-11); **Ellie King** of Arnold (6th place in Girls 14-15); **Jade Shields** of Clarksville (19th place in Girls 16-17); and **Katie Ortel** of Glenwood (22nd place in Girls 16-17).

The Teelin School of Irish Dance is comprised of approximately 250 students hailing from seven Maryland counties, and is co-owned by Berry's sister, Kathleen Young, who serves as Business Manager. Training focuses on a solid foundation in traditional Irish step dancing, with the opportunity to explore challenging

choreography developed with innovative style. Upon achieving an advanced level of proficiency, a subset of students from the Teelin School choose to audition for the Teelin Irish Dance Company, which is an elite team of approximately 45 dancers who stage performances, big and small, throughout central Maryland on a regular basis.

Known for performing traditional steps with innovative style, the Teelin Irish Dance Company is being featured on Saturday, March 5th, 2016, at 7:00pm at the Weinberg Center for the Arts in Frederick, with the debut of "Celtic Storm", an original new dance show. Many of the top competitors from Teelin School will be performing in this show, alongside a talented cast of dancers and musicians. Ticket information is available at <http://www.weinbergcenter.org>.

More information about Teelin Irish Dance may be found online at <http://teelin.com>.

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Photos are available upon request by email sent to info@teelin.com. To schedule an interview with Director Maureen Berry, please call 443-629-7808 or send email to info@teelin.com. To schedule an interview with Saoirse DeBoy, please contact her parents, Alissa and Chris DeBoy at deboycc@comcast.net or 410-365-2916.