

# O'Toole School of Irish Dancing

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## *Glasses*

Step dancing classes are available for children starting at the age of 6 and teens in Millersville at the Maryland Sports Plex Wednesday evenings, and in Linthicum at St. Philip Neri Thursday evenings. Classes begin in September and run through the end of May. There is a recital for all students at the end of the year. New students are taken in September. For more information, please contact me via e-mail or telephone.



## The History of the O'Toole School

The School is under the direction of Noelle O'Toole, TCRG a fully accredited teacher of Irish Dancing qualified by the An Coimisiun le Rinci Gaelacha (The Irish Dance Commission of Dublin Ireland). The Commission sets the rules and guidelines for all Irish step dancing. Noelle started dancing under the instruction of Peggie Thompson. She competed and assisted Peggie with her dance classes until 1985 when Peggie passed away. She has been teaching Irish Dancing ever since.



Irish dancing helps students experience and preserve a part of Irish culture, develop self confidence and make friends. Solo Irish step dances are known by the music that accompanies them. There are four basic Irish step dances: the reel, jig, hornpipe, and the set dances. Each school has its own version of steps for these dances. Reels and jig steps are learned first with girls also learning a slip jig. Later children will begin to learn hard shoe dances such as the hornpipe and treble jig.

In addition to the solo steps, there are also group dances the students will learn. Ceili dances are group dances in which four to eight couples move through established floor patterns. Ceili dances steps are not unique to each school. There are other groups dances that are unique to the school. They are often

choreographed by the instructor and often times special costumes are worn when performing these dances.

## Performances

Throughout the year the dancers participate in various events. They have danced with:

- The Chieftains
- Michael Flatley at the Meyerhoff
- Symphony Hall
- Donny Golden at Pier Six Concert Pavilion
- Trinity Irish Dance Company
- O'Malley's March

The dancers have also performed at the following:

- Maryland Public Television
- Baltimore Irish Festival
- Baltimore St. Phatrick's Day Parade
- Washington Irish Folk Festival
- Lurman Outdoor Theatre
- Fells Point Fun Festival
- Maryland House of Delegates
- Mayor Kurt Schmoke Inaugural
- A host of other performances for civic organizations, church groups, and nursing homes

They have also entertained such dignitaries as:

- The Irish Ambassador
- Mayor O'Malley
- Numerous other state and local officials.