

SHORTCUTS DANCE



Photo: Kelli Uldall

Local Retailer Spins off a Statewide Dancewear Brand

BY RENEE BRINCKS

Heather Aldi expanded her Carmel children's store Zearly to include dance shoes and dancewear. She has a mobile boutique that travels to studios in California.

Shortly after Heather Aldi opened Zearly, a Carmel store that carries toys, gifts and children's apparel, she stocked some baby-sized ballet slippers that caught the attention of local shoppers.

"Parents kept asking if we could get them in bigger sizes, and I realized there was no dance store in town. But, there's a huge dance community here," says Aldi.

After moving the store to its current Crossroads location in 2016, Aldi expanded with a selection of pointe shoes, tap shoes, tights and dancewear. She hired a professional pointe shoe fitter from Chicago as the business grew, and recently launched a subscription service that supplies dancers nationwide with special-

ized gear as often as every two weeks.

This year, the former architectural designer also created a mobile dancewear boutique in a custom-built truck outfitted with wood and glass. Under the Metronome Dancewear brand, Aldi's team travels to studios throughout California to fit dancers with shoes and small-batch leotards and skirts by international labels such as AinslieWear and Lulli Dancewear.

"The reward is hearing people 'ooh and aah' over the truck when we pull up," says Aldi. "It feels like a very luxe experience when you're inside, and it reflects our store very nicely."

Zearly is located at 161 Crossroads Blvd. in Carmel. To learn more, please call 831/250-7933 or visit www.zearly.com.