

Grant allows area students to witness *Ballet for the Schools*



Melanie Yost (left) and Kailyn Sandow (right), both dance students at The Academy of Performing Arts in Alma, are pictured dancing to the music of the Sugar Plum Fairy. (Courtesy photo)

by Phyllis McCrossin
Herald Editor

It was an opportunity for many area children to have their first theater experience.

Students from Alma, Ithaca, St. Louis and Fulton traveled by bus to Alma College two weeks ago to watch a live performance on a professional stage, complete with full theatrical lighting set by Alma College theater students.

The performance was made possible through a Gratiot County Community Foundation grant awarded to Alma College for the project, *Ballet for the Schools*.

The event was a collaborative effort between the Gratiot County Community Foundation, Alma College, local elementary schools, Francis Academy of

Performing Arts and numerous volunteers and performers.

APA director Kathy Francis dedicated this year's performance to Irene and Don Pavlik for all of Don's support, advice and encouragement for this program, and for Don and Irene's support of their own daughter's participation in this and other arts and community-focused activities.

Sandy Ebright, a third grade teacher at North Elementary School in Ithaca said her students thoroughly enjoyed the event.

"When we got back some were imitating the dances. There were some students from our school who were in the dance, so they enjoyed that. They really enjoyed the costumes and the movement. When they (the

performers) came out on stage in their costumes you could hear them ohhh and ahhh over them. . . It was a fantastic day and performance."

Members of the Gratiot County Community Foundation's Legacy Society were special guests at an evening performance, which was open to the community. The Legacy Society is comprised of donors who have included gifts to the Foundation in their estate plans. These types of gifts make it possible to generate grants for programs such as *Ballet for the Schools*.

Individuals interested in making a gift to the foundation may contact Gratiot County Community Foundation executive director Tina Travis at 875-4222 or at gccf@edzone.net for more information.