

Citlalli Odette Coria: Dancing “underdog” from Oakland and

Citlalli Odette Coria is a 14-year-old dancer from Oakland, Calif. Her inspiration lies in her environment, her friends and family. She began dancing at the age of seven, competing at the age of 10, and taking private dance lessons at the age of 11. She has competed approximately 15 times and placed first several times. She finds beauty in her city, where other’s may not see it and considers herself to be the “underdog” when she shows up to competitions where others who are there to compete come from “nice places,” while she comes from a city with a “bad” reputation.

[Oakland dancer, Citlalli Odette Coria, Talks About Accomplishments and Confidence](#) from [Natalie Rodriguez](#) on [Vimeo](#).

Her short hair flares out. Although her black, thick-rimmed glasses compliment her style, they may be one of the tactics a shy, 14-year-old girl uses to hide curious, glowing eyes. She applies her red lipstick with great care, looking at herself through the side mirror of a car in her family’s driveway. When she speaks, she does so with conviction and when she dances, the world is her own. Dancing she says has given her confidence. Confidence to speak and the confidence to dress as she pleases. She’s one of the middle children of Fidel and Dulce Coria and has three older siblings and a younger one.

She began dancing at the age of seven, which is her youngest

sister's age. In 2008 she began competing at the age of 10. When she began taking private lessons at 11 she says that her competitions "began getting serious." Coria has been taking lessons from the same instructor, [Amy Lee Danya](#) for years. "She has been teaching me from day one, she was my first dance teacher and I'm so thankful [that] she is still my teacher and friend," says Coria.

She doesn't remember how many competitions she has participated in, she estimates "about 15" in total. "She was going to go to nationals," says mom, "but she hurt herself." Nationals were going to be held in Disneyland this summer and Coria did not attend due to an injured hip. "Being silly" is what mom says Coria was doing when she injured herself. With every trophy and award that Citlalli shows, mom knows exactly what competition it was from and when it took place, despite the fact that she is multitasking in the background.

She's not quite sure where all of her trophies are. She knows they're safely put away. "To be honest for competitions I don't really give much feeling for my trophies I mean there a remembrance of what I accomplish but it doesn't really define my feeling over dance."

Competitions Citlalli has participated in:

[Nexstar National Talent Competition](#) 2011, First Place

[Kids Artistic Revue \(KAR\)](#)

[National Dance Competition](#),
Placed First twice

[Show Stopper Competition 2013](#),
Double Platinum award

Oakland, Calif., is a city that receives a lot of negative attention. In a 24-hour period three people lost their lives, [victims of violence](#) on the weekend of August 17th. Coria describes her neighborhood as “beaten down” with “closed down factories,” garbage, and graffiti. However, despite the negatives, she manages to find inspiration in her city and is grateful for the colorful graffiti, which she says, adds a “nice texture” to her neighborhood.

[Dancer, Citlalli Odette Coria, Finds Inspiration in Oakland](#) from [Natalie Rodriguez](#) on [Vimeo](#).

The [Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#) states that the physical activity of children and teens has many health benefits including building healthy bones and muscles, improving self-esteem and reducing stress, Coria agrees. [The Dana Foundation](#) has found evidence that dancing has effects on the brain that can enhance learning in academic subjects as well.

Benefits of Dance

- ▶ Stimulates growth of new brain cells
- ▶ Boosts memory
- ▶ Reduces Stress
- ▶ Burns body fat
- ▶ Keeps muscles toned
- ▶ Strengthens bones

Increases self esteem

Sources:
www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/physicalactivity/facts.htm
www.dana.org/news/Cerebrum/detail.aspx?id=23500
www.denverpost.com/ci_22069376/many-health-benefits-dancing
ABBASI, J. (2013). Let 'em Loose!. Scholastic Parent & Child, 20(7), 48-51.

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