

Courtney McMahon dancers' Red Cross success



IRISH dance, despite its popular appeal, is not known for its creative expression. But dancers from the Courtney McMahon School of Irish Dance in Bexleyheath, London are challenging that view.

Recently, nine young dancers stunned a panel of professional dancers and West End producers in a regional heat of Dance For Life – an annual showcase of youth dance run by the British Red Cross.

Dance groups are challenged to develop and perform a movement piece that demonstrates some aspect of the work of the Red Cross.

The Courtney McMahon School chose the sensitive subject of child soldiers and their 15-minute production poignantly depicted the recruitment, training and

indoctrination of children by violent militia groups.

Declared the overall winner, the Courtney McMahon group also took first place in the key categories of Best Concept and Best Entertainment.

Hannah Rosalie, senior fundraiser for the Red Cross in Sussex, was intrigued to see how an Irish dance group would deal with the choreographic challenge as it is the first time that Irish dancers had taken part in Dance For Life.

The usual entrants are contemporary dance groups, street

dancers, musical theatre groups and classically trained dancers.

Hannah was thrilled with how the nine young dancers, aged between 12 and 16 years, described a difficult area of Red Cross activity.

The Courtney McMahon dancers on stage.



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