



Star Dancer's Name: Ann Tillage

1. Please share some details about your professional and personal background.-- (i.e.: did you grow up in Baton Rouge, marital status, children, profession, etc.). What do you want event attendees to know about you?

Ann Tillage, born and raised in Los Angeles, CA, is the founder and owner of The Sharmooz, a boutique company that specializes in satin beauty accessories and custom designs. She is the 3rd generation of fashion forward, entrepreneur-minded women. She is a proud wife and mother to husband Keith Tillage, children Kelsie and Kameron Tillage. Additionally, she is the founder of the Mobile Fashion Camps, a community program that mentors girls while developing creative and positive outlets through sewing, fashion and STEM.

2. When you were approached about being a Star Dancer in *Dancing for Big Buddy 2017*, what made you decide you wanted to do it? Were you already familiar with the program and/or have you been active in Big Buddy in some way prior to accepting? WHY Big Buddy?

Ann is very eager to raise funds for a local program that impacts the lives of 500 Bid Buddies weekly! More specifically, Ann was a Big Buddy in the Level Up Program. She was ecstatic to share her business accruement and professional development with the teens. The experience brings her full circle and reflecting on the mentors that impacted her life. Furthermore, Ann is an avid mentor within the community with other organizations, i.e. GOTR and her community program Mobile Fashion Camps.

3. We expect our Little Buddies in the program to gain valuable life lessons from their participation in the program and from the experiences that we provide access to. We want them to step outside of their immediate environments and comfort zones. What do *you* hope to gain from this experience?

If fact, Ann is not a dancer yet she feels this will be a liberating experience! She was inquisitive and honored to be chosen to "strut" on the dance floor. Her motto: "Live your life with faith and when you can't see top of the stairs, still keep climbing!" Ann was that "little buddy" growing up in South Central Los Angeles. Her destiny was limited to high drop out rates, drugs, gangs and teen pregnancy. The utter mention of college was shut down as a way out for others, but not for anyone from her environment. Her early successes in life are directly contributed to mentors who donated their time and positive influences; Ms. Bobby Rein, 6th grade gifted mentor, her science teachers, and her Young Black Scholars mentor. Furthermore, this experience will reinforce Ann's continued path to assist in impacting the lives of the next generation.