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TAKING NAMES
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Michigan Avenue boutique owner writes ballet book for children

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Chicago businesswoman **Aleksandra Efimova** played host to a tea party held in conjunction with the Joffrey Ballet's Academy of Dance performance of "Sleeping Beauty" over the weekend.

The president of Russian Pointe Inc., which imports ballet pointe shoes from Moscow and has its flagship boutique at 333 N. Michigan Ave., Ms. Efimova signed copies of her new children's book about the fairy tale with a ballet theme. She's written a similar book about the "Nutcracker" ballet, and her "Cinderella" will be out soon.

"Connecting with the stage and the arts can affect people for the rest of their lives," says Ms. Efimova, who along with running her business has founded a foundation focusing on getting children involved in the arts.

Her books include notes to engage young readers.

For example, when the fairy isn't invited to Snow White's party, the author asks young readers how they feel when they're not included.

Writing for children is a natural progression of a company that was born from a business plan Ms. Efimova wrote while studying at the University of Michigan.

After moving to Chicago, she started supplying shoes to the Joffrey and now sells Russian pointe shoes and other apparel to stores and dance companies nationwide.

The long, lean Ms. Efimova was a competitive ballroom dancer before landing in Chicago.