



ALUMNI

STORIES

Featured Alumni

Aleksandra Efimova

Class of OPM 39



26 JUL 2011

AN ENTREPRENEUR OF THE ARTS

Re: Ms. Aleksandra Efimova (OPM 39)

Originally from St. Petersburg, Russia, Aleksandra Efimova (OPM 39, 2010) attended the renowned Art School at the Hermitage State Art Museum and received training in classical ballet, art and academics. She moved to the United States in 1993 and settled in Chicago. An early blooming entrepreneur, Efimova founded Russian Pointe, her first company, in 1998 while she was a junior in college. Russian Pointe, a brand of luxury ballet shoes, is a successful, multi-million dollar business that imports ballet point shoes from Russia and sells them nationwide. In 2006, she opened the Russian Pointe Dance Boutique, the company's flagship store located on Chicago's Magnificent Mile.

Attending OPM, Efimova was inspired by a strategy class to launch a venture that would help get kids excited about the arts. In 2010, she founded Growing Through Arts™, a company that helps children learn about and explore the arts through books, e-books, toys, games and mobile phone applications. Saying "I am thrilled to bring the love of dance to children everywhere," she recently came out with her first line of children's books about ballet based on The Nutcracker, Sleeping Beauty and Cinderella and held her first official book signing with the Joffrey Ballet in May.

Efimova summarizes her work as “dedicated to sharing access to and enjoyment of the arts, and to building bridges among people of different cultures, particularly in educational, artistic and business spheres.” In addition to her business enterprises, Efimova is also a strong supporter of the arts and international relations. She serves on the Auxiliary Board of the Joffrey Ballet as well as the Junior Board of the Auditorium Theatre of Chicago. In 2009, she cofounded the Russian Foundation of Chicago, a non-profit group dedicated to raising awareness of Russian culture in Chicago, which she served as president of for two years. In 2010, Chicago’s Mayor Richard M. Daley asked Efimova to be the co-chair of the Moscow Committee of Chicago Sister Cities International.

“Most importantly,” she says, “the OPM program inspired me to look for opportunities to grow and expand while leveraging my existing brand. My OPM classmates gave me a lot of inspiration and ideas as I was developing the concept for Growing through the Arts. One of the key ideas they gave me was to use my face and my name as a brand itself, which I have executed in my new Web site, Aleksandra.com.”