

SO YOU THINK YOU CAN FANCY DANCE?

Most seventh graders like music with a strong beat, but when you're a fancy dancer like Jacob Conklin, the sound of a beating drum is a call to dance. Fancy dancing, also called fancy feather dancing, is a type of Native American dance that involves fast, intricate footwork and spinning and jumping. It is a competitive sport in which dancers are judged on their ability to keep up with the beat of the drum while performing. Jacob has been competing for only two years, but he's become passionate about a tradition that honors his Native American ancestors.

Fancy dancers are judged on their outfits as well as their movements. Your outfit is beautiful. Describe the pieces you wear. Almost everything I wear has feathers on it. The bustles on my shoulders and back are made of dyed turkey feathers. My front and back aprons have a mustang horse on them. I wear sheep wool leggings and moccasins on my feet. The whip sticks that I twirl have feathers and beads at the ends. On my head I wear a headpiece called a roach that's made of deer and porcupine hair and both eagle and hawk feathers. Several people in my family worked on making my outfit, so it's pretty special to me. It feels good to wear it, especially the two eagle feathers that I've earned.

What is the significance of the eagle feathers? My eagle feathers were given to me by the man who taught me how to dance. They have to be earned. It's an honor to be given an eagle feather because they're sacred

reminders of fallen warriors. They are usually given to you by someone who believes you're ready to take care of them.

Now that you're a deacon, how do you honor your priesthood? I pass the sacrament every Sunday. There are only a few deacons in my ward, so when I pass the sacrament, I know the little kids look up to me. Also, I am the only boy in my family, so I'm especially proud to hold the priesthood, and I look forward to going on a mission someday. **NE**

—As told to
Wendy
Kenney



Name:
Jacob Conklin
Age: 12
Hometown:
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PHOTOGRAPH BY TRUDIE BURTON