

Draping his red sash around his waist, freshman Luke Dufort assembled his traditional Russian dance costume on Thursday, Jan. 24.

After studying multiple cultures in his free time, Dufort decided to study Russia and found an interest in Russian dancing due to the vibrant tradition and music.

“I have always liked looking into other cultures, so Russian dancing opened my eyes to the culture and tradition,” Dufort said. “I really liked the music and arts associated with Russia and it is a main interest I have right now.”

Entranced by the music, Dufort researched the tradition and was introduced to the men’s dance.

“I was surfing around on Youtube and I found videos. It looked really cool,” Dufort said. “I wasn’t purposely trying to find something to do, I just stumbled across [Russian dancing]. I saw some videos and I really liked it.”

Despite not having a studio to practice in, Dufort set up a space to improve his skills.

“I practice in my garage. I put down pieces of cardboard on the cement floor,” Dufort said. “I picked the garage because I needed a flat space with lots of room because I didn’t want to kick something. Also, it helps my moves be more fluid.”

Dufort’s friend, freshman Fischer Unruh, supported Dufort’s newfound passion because he found it different.

“His dancing hasn’t changed our friendship a lot, except for that it’s a funny conversation starter when we’re hanging out together,” Unruh said. “I think it’s funny and really impressive.”

Echoing Unruh, freshman Declan Taylor encouraged Dufort to pursue his passion because of the uniqueness.

“I know he likes the attention and it always makes people laugh when he performs at dances,” Taylor said. “I think it’s cool how he’s able to do a dance that a lot of people wouldn’t be able to do.”

Acceptance and encouragement by friends gave Dufort the confidence to perform during school dances.

“My friends think that my dancing makes a good show and they enjoy it a lot,” Dufort said. “I would go to school dances to do it for the hell of it. A lot of people enjoy it, and it is very fun.”

In addition to picking up the skill for school dances, Dufort found self gratification and pride through Russian dancing.

“I would consider it a skill that I have because it is weird and a lot of people can’t do it. I am very proud to be a Russian dancer,” Dufort said. “Before, I definitely was not a good dancer, so I’m glad I can say that I [am] now. I didn’t know I could ever do something like this.”