

Rye Neck Schools

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To Whom it May Concern,

This past Spring the Rye Neck School District initiated a partnership with Dance Parade NYC to bring a robust 5-week program of dance classes to our students. The results were exceptional.

The Dance Parade residency program included 760 students in grades three (3) through seven (7) at the F.E. Bellows Elementary School and Rye Neck Middle School. All of these students participated in interactive performances presented by the Dance Parade teaching artists. The performances were followed with dance instruction that was offered to all of the students (360 students) twice each week at the F.E. Bellows Elementary School.

Dance Parade worked diligently to facilitate the partnership between the teaching artist, Mazarte Dance Company, and structure the program's curriculum to emphasize aerobic and healthy movement skills while introducing students to the rich traditions of Mexican folk dance and music. The Mazarte residency was beneficial because it provided opportunities for all students to explore the treasures of Mexican culture in a community that is experiencing substantial growth in our Hispanic population. Specifically, we felt it was vital for our students to develop a cultural appreciation for Mexico because that served to build strong connections within our community. Working alongside the Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) we were encouraged by the support of all of our parents and in particular, the Mexican parents who attended the performances and joined in the classes. The result was that the reach of this program extended to families as well as our students.

Qualified instruction was provided by the teaching artists who were always punctual, fully prepared, and inspirational to students in teaching invigorating, creatively, and educationally diverse movement classes. The program included participation in the 11th Annual Dance Parade and DanceFest on May 20th, 2017. Youth and their families proudly represented the Rye Neck Schools by stepping in the Pueblo traditions down Broadway, among an ethnically diverse cast of 80 dancing cultures. The feedback we received from parents and students who directly participated in the Dance Parade event was overwhelmingly positive. Everyone was thrilled to have had a multi-cultural experience that was educational, empowering, and that created memories to last a lifetime.

Due to the educational value that Dance Parade's program provided for our students and their families last year, we plan to collaborate with Dance Parade again this year in an expanded program that will include Latin and Middle Eastern cultures. We encourage all schools in New York to support the enriching experiences and opportunities that these programs offered to our students in this New York State public school district.

Sincerely,


Valerie Feit, Ed.D.