ACPN

LAC&D is a 2004-05 member of the Los Angeles Unified School District Arts Community Partnership Network, a collaborative group that promotes the rigor, joy and discovery in artistic expression, teaching and learning. One of only 47 selected organizations, our master contract offers a completely integrated program package to schools comprising 5 student workshops, a performance, a professional development session for staff, meetings to plan the residency, and study guides for all components. The package is firmly rooted in the Superintendent's Core Goals, supports standards-based education implementation (including free study guides with CA Contents Standards breakdowns), represents the cultural and linguistic diversity of the district and is culturally responsive. Repertoire included in the workshops/performances is "The Tennis Dances," a multicultural section with Japanese, West African, and Hebrew dance forms, "Let's All Dance to the Bluegrass Beat," and "The Patchwork Call us at 213-385-1171 for more information on our master contract package as well as other educational programs.

AFTERSCHOOL AT LOS FELIZ

This year we returned to Los Feliz Elementary School to again work with a group of fourth and fifth grade students that included a large percentage of gifted (GATE) students. Some of them have worked with us before, some have taken private dance lesson and others have never danced before. We first asked them to fill out a questionnaire to see if their dance knowledge met the CA Standards for their grade and what their previous dance experience was. After their first class we asked them to bring back some thoughts in writing about the class and their previous dance experiences. At the end of the 2nd lesson we asked for more written responses. Their replies are illuminating, thought provoking and touching.

As dancers, we've always known dance is beneficial to children. It develops their lives personally and socially, while improving their physical health. Now through the California State Content Standards we see how our educational dance programs work to further their academic development as well. We asked the Los Feliz students if dance has anything to do with the rest of their school subjects:

"Dance sort of has to do with math because in math you add. In dancing you add the dance steps together to make one dance." **-Rubina**

"Yes, math because you sometimes have to add dance steps or how much you have to move." **-Alejandra**

"Yes, I think it has to do with art." **-Shabrin**

"Art, Drama, Orchestra." **-Diana**

"Yes, culture." **-Christy**

"With all subjects because you need to concentrate." **–Jack**

Through these written activities we are able to make students aware of the process they are going through, the challenges they are overcoming, and the progress they are making:

Homework after 1st class: "I think it will be easy. I bet in these seven weeks I will know more about dancing. I hope I'll have a lot of fun."

End of second class: "I understand the steps, but it was confusing." **-Gevork**

Homework after 1st class: "My name is Alessandra. I'm nine years old. I'm in the 4th grade. But I would like to learn."

End of second class: "Today I learned new dance moves. We got in two different groups. I think it is going to turn out very good after all." **-Alessandra**

Homework after 1st class: "I think dance class was fun. It was also kind of hard. I hope it will be easier next time. I also hope to do better

End of class: 10/13/04 – Our dance had to do with energy. We had to move our feet a lot. We also did a fall. I learned that some dances have to do with energy like ours. Others have to do with other things like patterns.

-10/20/04- Today I learned that drawing can be part of dancing. We did drawings. Then we danced them. It was fun. ." **-Alejandra**

Students also discover the cultural aspects of dance as they already exist in their lives and in the new things they are learning:

"Yes I know Bengali and Indian dances." **-Shabrin**

"I liked the dance because it was very cultural. My dance teacher taught me the memory of the Japan people. I felt like I was doing the dance with the Japanese." **-Dashley**

"I only know Armenian dances. I don't know no more kinds of dances. I wish I learn lots of dances from different cultures. And plus I know a lot of patterns." **-Lucy**

We are constantly observing how truly integrated dance is, or has the potential to be, in the daily lives of our students:

"Whenever I'm bored, I think of a new dance. I make up my own dance steps in my head. This dance class has meant a lot to me because I'll have new dance steps to do in my head. Today in dance class, we did many warm-ups. I learned about unison. I learned the elements. The elements were space, time, and energy. I felt really good about learning some new warm-ups and a new dance. I hope to learn some more things." **-Rubina**

"It was fun choreographing dances today. I learned that I can make a whole dance with a few moves." -Diana

"I like this dance class and I like dancing. I've danced before. I make up moves and I put on music and dance. I dance whenever I am bored."**-Shabrin**

As this goes to press there are three more classes in this series. There is a final "Show and Share" at Los Feliz Elementary School on November 17. It is primarily for parents and friends of the students, but if you are interested in these kinds of classes, please call us for information on attending. A special thank you to the Youth Arts and Education Division of the Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department for funds towards this and many of our past projects. We are convinced that dance, especially when integrated with the proven state CA standards, is a powerful means of both expression and an integrated learning approach for young people. For Louise and our dancers, it is also an opportunity to share the years that dance has been a central element organizing and integrating their own lives.