

A NEW WAY TO TEACH DANCE

Dance Lab students use imagination to connect with their bodies

By **DREW CICCOTELLI**
Staff Writer

MOORESTOWN — Candace Carringer, the owner and teacher of the Dance Lab, hopes her classes inspire kids to use their imagination.

"My idea in developing the Dance Lab was to offer an alternative to a traditional dance studio for kids," said Carringer. "To have a place to offer a creative approach to standard offerings and offer children an interactive chance to create their own dance adventures."

Children are taught and encouraged to explore new ways in interaction using dance.

"There is a focus on using their own imagination and physical abilities to get connected with their own bodies," said Carringer. "With that it can have them develop a more creative approach to problem solving and better connect a physical activity with the creative process."

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COURTESY PHOTOS

Christopher Roberts (above), as a snowflake, and Brigid Zielger, Ivan Li and Christopher Roberts participate in a Dance Lab class.



Dance Lab offers a new way to learn

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Classes are open to boys and girls and specialize in teaching early childhood from preschool children as young as 1 to children in second grade. Classes for those with special needs are also available.

In addition to offering special classes at schools around the area, 110-week classes are offered for anyone wishing to learn dance in creative and non-traditional ways.

Dance Lab offers Story Dance, a free event at the Moorestown Library.

"With Story Dance, I incorporate stretches and warm ups with games and story telling," said Carringer. "Together we read a picture book and try to create a dance based on characters and ideas from the story in an attempt to add another layer to what they are reading."

Although brought up with a traditional background of dance and ballet, Carringer presents children with different ways to express themselves through more unique types of dance.

"I try to focus on teaching kids a wide range of movement, not just learn-

ing steps," said Carringer. "My goal is to offer kids a chance to express themselves in a non-traditional way through story and dance."

Nature plays an important part in some of the themes used by Carringer.

"With each season I try to have a particular theme to encourage children to connect better with nature," she said. "In spring I use flowers, in fall autumn leaves and so on."

To Carringer, what a child learns from dancing does not reflect on what they can show to others but what they learn for themselves.

"What I want children to take from dancing is the process of the activity and not try to turn it into a product," said Carringer. "It is about the exploration of what we do each class period not what we can do with it."

"I want all kids to be inspired and gain self confidence to feel comfortable using their own imagination," said Carringer. "It's a rich alternative to traditional dancing were kids can have memorable experiences."

For more information, call Carringer at (856) 246-7068.