

**Artesia Daily Press –Thursday, 2-26-2006**

**Roselawn students take part in institute program**

ARTESIA- Roselawn Elementary School third, fourth and fifth-graders have spent the week learning to dance as part of the National Dance Institute of New Mexico's outreach program.

The institute partners with public schools throughout New Mexico and provides dance classes as part of each school's regular curriculum. This year, the institute will reach 5,600 children in 497 public schools and 60,000 audience members statewide.

Certified NDI-NM instructor Cristiane C De Oliveira, residency director and professional pianist Dan Lizdas, residency music director, welcomed every Roselawn student with enthusiasm and energy. Forming a circle, each class is encouraged to signify attendance with a dance move, which had students smiling. And that is only the beginning of the hour for each class.

They are given assignments after the class to learn a new move and bring it back the next day. None of the students at Roselawn complained and eagerly raised their hands when asked if they practiced at home.

On Friday, the students will use their week of dance lessons in a performance for their peers at Roselawn at 2 p.m. and a community performance set for 6 p.m. It is expected to last 45 minutes.

According to Matthew Ortiz, NDI-NM Company XCel Dancer, students exposed to dance show an improvement on standardized achievement tests. "I have a reading disability and it used to take me an hour to read just a few pages. When I started dancing, it clicked, and I became a fluent reader. Before long, I was reading above my grade level, all because of NDI-NM." He said.

Another benefit is an improved self-confidence, school attendance and general behavior in and out of school according to the institute's information.

According to NDI-Nm statistics, the program reaches a diverse population of students which includes 72 percent Hispanic, 15 percent Caucasian, 12 percent Native American and 1 percent African/Asian American.

Governor Bill Richardson and his wife Barbara endorsed the school. They said the National Dance Institute of New Mexico sets high standards for training the thousands of children it reaches every year, from Raton to Silver City, and from Zuni to Hobbs, in isolated rural communities and inner city schools, and in Pueblo schools throughout New Mexico.