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Students to perform for National Dance Institute

Get ready for a taste of Broadway right here in Silver City this weekend, as students from local schools will perform for the 14th annual National Dance Institute residency program.

The New Mexico Dance Institute and local schools are partners in a program to give students a taste of the arts and of what dancing is all about. More than 200 students from Jose Barrios, G. W. Stout, Harrison Schmidt, Sixth Street and Central Elementary schools, along with students from Guadalupe Montessori, La Plata Middle School and Silver High School, will participate in this year's event.

The students have been rehearsing daily with New Mexico Dance Institute Residency director Cristiane C. De Oliveira and associate director Emily Lowman. De Oliveira said this is her third time in Silver City and this show promises to be a good one.

“The students’ just keep getting better every year.” de Oliveira said. “They have done a wonderful job.”

The students will be performing “Route 66: Legends of the Road,” a musical tour that takes the viewer from the streets of Chicago to Los Angeles and through musical hits such as “Chicago” and “Oklahoma.”

“The performance represents freedom, determination, adventure and the promise of a better tomorrow.” de Oliveira said.

More than 30,000 New Mexico students have gone through the program in the past 14 years and school officials say the program is a great tool that helps the students immensely.

“The program does wonders for our fourth-and fifth-graders,” Alan Ramirez, principal for Sixth Street Elementary, said. “It boosts their self-confidence and does wonders for morale. It also brings out a lot of hidden talents in our kids that we can ducktail off of to motivate them in their other academic activities.”

The performances begin Friday, but supporters can help the students tonight at the third annual Silent Auction and Kick-off Party at the Copper Crest Country Club. The event includes, of course, a silent auction with more than \$7,500 in goods and services up for grabs and a sneak peek at Friday's performances.

David Gershenson, chair of the National Dance Institute Support Committee of Silver City, said the program is a win/win situation, where attendees can pick up wonderful goods and services at good prices and the money helps the students.

“The generosity of our community in consistently supporting programs that benefit our children never ceases to amaze and gratify me,” Gershenson said.