

Jose Mateo Ballet Theatre opens dance classes in Dot

By *Monique Atkinson, Special to the Reporter*

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The Jose Mateo Ballet Theatre Company opened its first-ever Dorchester-based classes for children ages 3-5 last Saturday. The Young Dancers program features two sessions of “pilot classes” from January through May and will begin expanding in September 2015. Students will be co-instructed by Julia Yen and Chantel Alves, both of whom have danced with the theatre.

Classes are held at St. Mary’s Episcopal Church or 14 Cushing Ave. on Jones Hill each Saturday.

The pilot classes run from 10 a.m.-12 p.m. each Saturday. Session 1 will take place January 24-March 21, 2015 while Session 2 will be held March 28-May 30th. Both sessions offer creative dance classes for students age 3-4 with Pre-Ballet I and Pre-Ballet 2 for students age 5 and 6 respectively. Though session 1 classes are nearly full, interested students can still claim the few available spots and begin registering for the approaching spring session.

The tuition is \$185 for an eight-course session. Financial aid as well as full and partial scholarships are available. The program assures that no student will be denied because of an inability to pay. Also, due to partnerships with the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative and the Uphams Corner Health Center, eligible students have an opportunity to participate for a fee of just \$40.

Julie Yen danced with the Cambridge Jose Mateo Ballet Theatre through middle and high school and is now their Arts Education and Community Development Associate.

After graduating from Harvard University she used the Pforzheimer Foundation Public Service Fellowship to fund her involvement in forging Jose Mateo’s Dorchester Theatre.

The inception of the Dorchester theatre has an objective of creating dance opportunities for all interested students.

Scott Fraser, the managing director, noted the importance of such programs.

“[The Young Dancers Program creates] equitably available programs that foster skills in children that prepares them for a lifetime of success,” said Fraser. “There is an unequal playing field. This is making it equal” in the context of youth opportunities in dance, he said.

To learn more about the program, visit ballettheatre.org

Families interested in enrolling their children in a session can contact Julie Yen at jyen@ballettheatre.org or call 617-354-7467 extension 104.