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JV Outreach reaches teens through dance

Jacqueline Vergez had an idea that she could make a positive effect on young people using her love of dance as the means.

The result has been JV Outreach, a nonprofit organization that gives middle and high school youngsters the opportunity to dance under the professional eyes of dance instructors such as Nancy Tolbert-Yilmaz in her Roswell studio.

Vergez, a single-mom, has made it happen through grants,

corporate and individual donations and the partnership of local schools and dance studios.

"Kids in our area who want to dance are really getting that chance," she said.

JV Outreach just finished a 10-hour hip-hop and salsa program at the Tolbert-Yilmaz School of Dance in Roswell, where children learned, rehearsed and performed choreographed routines for their family and friends.

For some this was their first time taking a dance class. Besides learning to dance, there were other benefits such as new friendships, working as a team and becoming more confident, Vergez said.

"The kids and their families were even more excited when it was announced during the performance that Nancy Tolbert-Yilmaz, owner of the studio, had generously offered a full scholarship to the children that participated so they can continue on at the Tolbert-Yilmaz School of Dance," she said.

This past school year JV Outreach also conducted a free hip-hop class for the students at Holcomb Bridge Middle School after school. The students in that program had the opportunity to perform at their school and at Independence High School in Alpharetta. JV Outreach also created a free 10-hour hip-hop class at Waller Park Recreation in Roswell where JV Outreach first started.



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At JV Outreach students **Caustin Ray** and **Emerald Jackson** learn some fancy steps as they get ready for a performance before family and friends.

Funding for these programs was provided by the Georgia Council for the Arts and the Fulton County Arts Council.

"JV Outreach's vision is to make a difference in the lives of children through dance – hip-hop, ballroom and salsa to start. Then I would like to give kids who are interested the opportunity to dance through after-school and summer programs and eventually have dance as an integral part of Physical Education," Vergez said.

To contribute to this program with a dance space or with a contribution of any kind, such as volunteering time or a financial donation, contact JV Outreach at www.jvoutreach.org or at 770-912-1057.

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AES Special Olympians 'go for the gold' at Emory

Amanda McGrath, left, and **Madison Blocker** of Alpharetta Elementary receive their medals during the recent Special Olympics Summer State Games held at Emory University. The athletes competed in track and field and participated in the 25-meter dash, 50-meter dash, 100- and 200-meter dash and the softball throw. Other students from Alpharetta Elementary who trained for 16 weeks prior to the Olympics were Mitch Schnarr, Jacob Moore, Madelyn Hoyland, Carlos Herreras Santana, Lupe Cerda, Amanda McGrath, Madison Blocker, Jared Clement, Paige Baskinger and Drew McClanahan.