

Rubygaile Mangione and Francine Baker
Primary School / Preschool Self-Contained
Rhythm Works Integrative Dance Program

Over the past 4 years, we have been the honored recipients of 4 Grant Awards provided by the South River Foundation for Educational Excellence. Each Grant has enabled us to provide our Special Education Preschool Students with enhanced opportunities to build and grow their academic, social and physical/recreational skill repertoires. The Grant Award we have chosen to focus on for our "**Virtual Walk Down Memory Lane**" was presented to us in March 2019 and provided our students with access to the Rhythm Works Integrative Dance Program.

Beginning in April 2019 - July 2019, Ms. Robin from Kaye-Lynn Dance Studio in East Brunswick visited our Special Education Preschool Students 4 times to provide dance and gross motor movement instruction to our students. Ms. Robin is certified in the Rhythm Works Integrative Dance Program, which certifies dance educators to provide dance instruction to students with Special Needs. Rhythm Works Integrative Dance was created by a team including a Dance Educator, an Occupational therapist, a Physical Therapist, an Early Education Consultant, a Special Needs Educational Therapist. The program is designed to enhance the lives of people with learning differences and special needs through the art of dance.

Ms. Robin used the Rhythm Works Integrated Dance Programs to engage our students in purposeful body movements and rhythm patterns through the use of music. Students enjoyed sustained involvement during each session through the use of jingle bells, ribbon wands, and scarves while dancing and moving their bodies to music. By providing dance instruction through the Rhythm Works program, our students were able to meet goals such as developing body awareness and control, strength, flexibility, and coordination while gaining skills to aid in increased focus, imitation, memory & recall, and increase receptive and expressive language.

At the time our students were learning to develop and build skills through the use of the Eden Autism Services School Series. Within the school series is a Physical Education/Recreational Series. By participating in these dance classes, we were able to enhance their learning by providing the opportunity for them to generalize the specific skills learned in their Eden Autism Services School Series student programs. This was a wonderful opportunity to not only expose our students to dance and movement classes, but also provide them with an opportunity to enjoy new leisure skills while building appropriate social skills.

Thank you so much for giving us the opportunity to enhance our Preschool Special Education Program through your generous support.

Mrs. Rubygaile Mangione and Mrs. Francine Baker

