

Lawn students find creative ways to stay fit

By **Stephanie Heelan Cotsonas**

There is more happening at the Lawn School gym than an old-school game of dodge ball and these days there is more to staying fit than sit-ups and pushups. Physical Education teachers Eric Bush and Andrea Brayman have formed a fitness enrichment program for seventh and eighth graders. "We are trying to introduce new and creative ways to stay fit and our goal is to expose the students to different forms of exercise," said Brayman.

Last Thursday, Dance Choreographer Tim Cassese from the Talent Factory in North Kingstown entertained the Lawn students with an interactive hip-hop demonstration. Second-graders Travis and Tyler Atwood, who have been dancing for two years, kicked off the demonstration by performing their hip-hop routine, which they have been practicing with Cassese for competition. They came off the floor winded but all smiles and couldn't wait to get back out dancing when it was time to teach the seventh and eighth graders.

To encourage the students' interest, Cassese asked the timid crowd if they liked watching Dancing with the Stars and America's Next Best Dance Crew and he received a positive response. He explained that dancing, particularly hip-hop, was a method of expression, but also requires some level of fitness. "You need muscle tone to do these moves." But he went on to yell as the music started, "It's dancing, it's fun! If you are self-conscious, let it go and try and copy me."

After a warm-up and teaching a short routine step by step with help from Travis and Tyler, the students were starting to get the hang of it.

By the end of the 45-minute class, some kids were peeling off sweat-shirts and dancing in place as the music pumped in the background.

Cassese and the Atwood brothers put on a demonstration at the conclusion of the class which left everyone watching and wanting more. Students Katie Rosenor and Jack Clarke, who both had some hip-hop experience in their past, enjoyed participating in the program. Rosenor said she is trying to get back into dancing and Clarke said he definitely has the spark to try and start up again. He said he might take a class Cassese.

Cassese loves doing community outreach and teaching. "Working with children is a great opportunity that I love to get the chance to do. They are so excited to soak up this information," he said. "I think it is really important to make sure there is a sense of diversity and creativity. Personally I am a very big advocate of fitness, but my dancing is also based on artistry."

According to Brayman, "We are dabbling in everything to teach kids there are a lot of different ways to stay fit. We have the rock wall and we do yoga, so we are celebrating and exploring creative fitness. As a P.E. teacher, my goal is to expose children to as many fitness activities possible in hopes to spark an interest in fitness in every student."

The fitness enrichment class is a half-year program with about 40 students. "We don't want too many kids because it needs to be a hands-on class and we don't want anyone hiding in the back," said Brayman.

Seventh-grader Meredith Cote loves the fitness enrichment class.



Katie Rosenor, front, and the seventh and eighth grade fitness enrichment class move to the beat with Tim Cassese from the Talent Factory. The students are learning fun and alternate ways to stay fit.

Photo by Andrea von Hohenleiten

"We have been working on the four elements of fitness, and also the rock wall, double-dutch jump rope and we just started yoga," she said. She particularly enjoyed the hip-hop session and exclaimed, "It was really fun and I am thinking about taking a class. I want to have this class everyday."

Cassese teaches hip-hop at the Talent Factory and directs one of the only exclusively hip-hop style dance companies in the state, CREW. The Talent Factory offers instruction for all ages and skill levels in tap, jazz, ballet, hip-hop, musical theatre, voice and acting. For more information, see www.talentfactoryri.com.

Girls' softball meeting scheduled for March 13

All volunteers interested in coaching or helping with the 2008 Girls Softball League are asked to attend a planning meeting on Thursday, March 13 at 6:30 p.m. at the Recreation Center.

High school girls are encouraged to volunteer and earn community service hours throughout the spring. For more information contact Melissa at 423-7261 or email jamestownteens@yahoo.com.

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LEGAL TIP

The members of an informal, after-work drinking club could not be held liable as social hosts for injuries caused when one of its members drove home drunk, the Massachusetts Court of Appeals has ruled.

The driver and three others met regularly on Fridays after work for drinks at nearby bars or taverns. Each time one would pay for all the drinks (rotating).

While driving home from a bar one night, the driver was traveling in the wrong direction on the highway and struck the plaintiff's car, causing severe injuries. That night, one member of the club had paid for everyone's drinks, including the driver's.

The plaintiff argued that the defendant who paid was a social host because he entertained the others by paying for the drinks.

But the court disagreed.

"While (the defendants) could refuse to continue to pay for (the driver's) drinks, they could not require that (the driver) be "shut off" by the bar; relinquish his drinks; or be ejected from the premises."

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