



## Christi Costa Brings Her Talents to Acalanes

Submitted by the Lafayette Arts & Science Foundation



Lafayette Arts & Science Foundation is fortunate to work with and support talented and exceptional teachers and their programs. One example of this is Acalanes High School's new dance instructor, Christi Costa.

Christi comes by her expertise naturally. She began dancing at the age of four in her grandmother's studio, Doreen's School of Dance located in Antioch. Her mother now runs the studio and is president of Dance Masters of America Inc. Christi honed her skills at San Francisco State where she earned a double degree in Dance and History. She earned her teaching credential at California State University Hayward.

Immediately upon graduating, Ms Costa was offered a position at Deer Valley High School where she developed a dance program and

remained for two years. The urge to dance took Christi to Los Angeles where she performed in parades, magic music days and was stage manager and organizer of special events for Disney.

Ms. Costa developed a successful dance program at Eagle Rock High School in Los Angeles where she built both the cheer and dance program in just one year. She was in charge of 200 students at Milliken Middle School in Sherman Oaks, a performing arts magnet academy catering to children of movie stars and actively performing young television actors.

Romance brought Christi back to the Bay Area where she received many offers to teach. Acalanes' excellent reputation for attention to the arts drew her to take her current position. Christi says "the enthusiasm of the kids and the genuine support

from the administration make coming to work here a joy."

The students in this program aren't just learning the Two Step. They are schooled in the techniques of jazz, ballet, modern dance, hip hop, swing and salsa. They complete fitness circuits which include Pilates and yoga to ensure safety and proper muscle development. Understanding and designing choreography are important aspects of the class.

Christi incorporates academia into the program by having the kids contrast and compare the histories of the different dance genres. They are also required to produce a musical theater timeline.

To round out their education, the students are asked to create a Dream Life Journal. In this they put their aspirations for the future and how, practically,

they intend to make their dreams come true. This exercise is always a favorite as it encourages the kids to look within themselves to recognize and express what really makes them happy and the possibilities of where their lives can take them.

Christi's philosophy is one of team building. Through her innate ability to connect with her students she helps them to see that each and every one of them is equally important. This realization allows them to see themselves in a positive light that transcends into all other aspects of their lives. Self esteem and the ability to carry themselves proudly with poise and dignity are lifelong gifts. Acalanes High School is truly lucky to have Christi Costa as part of their staff. LASF, with the help of generous donors, is very proud to financially support her program.