

Ward School Treated to Alvin Ailey Performance

World-class performers teach third graders modern dance technique.

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By Barb Grondin Francella



William B. Ward School third graders were treated to a three-day residency by Alvin Ailey dancers, which culminated in two performances at the school Friday.

Eighteen senior dancers from The Ailey School's Ailey/Fordham BFA Program, known as the Ailey Fordham Student Dancers (AFSD), performed and answered questions at the New Rochelle elementary school Friday morning, following two days of modern dance instruction taught by an Ailey Arts In Education & Community Programs teaching artist.

For the seventh consecutive year, internationally acclaimed former Alvin Ailey dancer Donna Wood Sanders, a past Ward School PTA member, coordinated this event. This year, AFSD was accompanied by internationally recognized master teacher Ana Marie Forsythe, the acting director of the Ailey/Fordham B.F.A. Program, where she has taught since 1973. Forsythe began teaching the Lester Horton modern dance technique in the 1960s and has been the chair of the Horton department since 1979. In preservation of the Horton technique, she co-authored *The Dance Technique of Lester Horton* and was artistic director of three Horton videos.

The AFSD dancers are in their final year of training before graduation and pursuing careers in performance, teaching and choreography. They juggle rigorous training and schooling from Fordham University and The Ailey School and stay healthy and free of injury.

Last January, AileyDance Kids conducted a one-week residency in West African, modern and jazz/hip hop styles at Issac E. Young Middle School and were the artists in residence at Jefferson Elementary in the spring of 2009.

In other dance education news, the Dance Theater of Harlem continues its residency at the New Rochelle High School through December, working with 160 dance students every Tuesday. The residency will culminate in a performance on Dec. 10.

