

The 2008-2009 *Having a Ball* ballroom dance intensive program, is run by the CPS Office of Arts Education, and in 2007-2008 was redeveloped to be a program unique to Chicago. Partially funded by a U.S. Department of Education Carol M. White physical education grant, *Having a Ball* concentrates on 5th grade students who learn the International Style of ballroom dance which not only provides physical exercise, but also introduces a fresh way of learning history, geography, and culture. Another equally important benefit is the development of students' confidence and self-esteem as well as the cultivation of important skills such as communication, teamwork, goal setting, leadership, posture, coordination and musicality. The 20-week curricular program involves regular ballroom dance instruction as well as classroom instruction involving related subject areas including fitness, nutrition, socio-emotional skills and cultural connections. Students learn the Cha-Cha, Waltz, Tango, Paso Doble, Jive and Rumba and have an opportunity to participate in a culminating event at the Navy Pier Grand Ballroom as well as in in-school demonstrations.



Dance is a wonderful way to promote physical fitness and personal development. The term DanceSport is used to describe ballroom dance in its competitive, athletic form, which in 1997 was recognized by the International Olympic Committee as an Olympic non-medaling sport. Since then, the popularity of DanceSport has grown by leaps and bounds and can be seen on television shows like *Dancing with the Stars*. Supporting Chicago's 2016 Olympic bid, *Having a Ball* focuses on the International Style of ballroom dance, considered to be a foundation of ballroom, which has a

universally recognized set syllabus that is taught world-wide.

The International Style allows students in *Having a Ball* to concentrate on learning a dance discipline and therefore begin to study the life long skills associated with studying this art form. It also provides an opportunity to connect with the world and participate in something that is shared globally. Through approaching dance as a discipline students receive lessons in social and emotional areas in an active yet subtle manner that allows for growth on a personal basis.

Dance has proven time and time again to be a life long anchor and whether one experiences it for a short time or for a life time, the positive impact is immeasurable. We are proud at the Office of Arts Education to continue to set high standards and to have one of the most rigorous, discipline-based elementary ballroom programs currently offered in any public school system in the United States. We hope you will join us in supporting this year's exciting journey!



Photo Credits: Cheryl Mann

Student Artwork: Alcott Elementary



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