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Business

Kids learn dance Class also teaches proper manners, etiquette

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SOUTHFIELD – “In Joe Cornell, we never say no when someone asks us to dance,” Steve Jasgur tells a crowd of fidgeting, nervous sixth-graders.

It’s the first night of the new season of Joe Cornell dance classes, and the kids are learning that they didn’t just come here to dance; they came to become polished adults.

No jeans. No sneakers. Shirts tucked in. No gum. Girls, cross your ankles when you sit and make sure your skirt doesn’t wrinkle or ride up. Boys, sit gracefully, take the girl by her hand, thank her for dancing with you, walk her to her seat and don’t turn your back when you walk away.

Since the 1950s, Joe Cornell Entertainment has been teaching middle-schoolers the art of ballroom and line dancing.

Embedded in these weekly lessons are subtle, but crucial, messages about what it really means to be cool and how to confidently interact with the opposite sex.

“We teach that being nice is cool. Other than Joe Cornell, kids today have nowhere to learn social graces,” said Jasgur, the company’s president. “We teach posture, manners, etiquette, self-confidence — all masked in the fun of dancing. And hey, these kids leave class knowing more than a handful of formal dance steps that they’ll never forget.”

“We are so proud of our students,” said Vice President Rebecca Schlusel. “We have a no-tolerance rule that anyone who is rude or insulting is asked to leave. We want the kids who take our classes to walk away with a hearty dose of self-confidence and a healthy perspective on social interaction.”

The dance classes sell out every year. The company will create new classes upon request, for schools, faith groups and community centers.

Joe Cornell Entertainment is owned by the sister-brother team of Schlusel and Jasgur, who began working with the company’s namesake when they were teens. Jasgur is also a TV actor with more than 70 commercials to his credit.

They serve as emcees, entertainers and dance instructors.

FYI

For additional information, call (248) 356-6000 or visit www.joecornell.com.

— From staff reports

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