

To: My Ballet School of Vermont Students

From: Maryellen Vickery, ABT Certified Ballet Instructor Primary to L5 / BSVT Director

I love to teach children and I think that dance training should be a part of a child's education. I feel that the education of dance training should always be represented by the technique that it stems from: ballet. Ballet teaches a refinement of movement that coordinates the body; creating cleanliness and technique for dancers. I think that ballet training encompasses the complete body and mind. Ballet is: disciplined, athletic and physical; focused in mind and memory; is artistic and teaches team work. I love knowing what I teach has four hundred years of history, is steeped in tradition, and creates beauty out of movement.



My goal for this year is to teach the children to look forward in their lives, by setting standards and goals for themselves. I want to teach that achieving smaller goals will help them get to their larger goal. Technically, I want to have my students be clean and precise dancers. I will achieve this by slowing steps down (or what I call "breaking it down to build it up"). Often the mistake in training students is advancing them too fast and giving too much at once. Students too often know a large amount of vocabulary, but cannot execute the vocabulary with precision because they have not built up the muscle memory needed for clean movement.

**I want to teach students that it is not their class level that is paramount, but how clean and pure they are making their movements *within* that class.** If training properly, advanced student can take a beginner class and have just as much physical sweat, and mind focus, as they would in an upper level class. At the [ABT® Teacher Training Intensive](#) this past summer there was a well known student that was going to begin studying at the JKO School ([Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School at American Ballet Theatre](#)). She has been written up in magazines and has competed in the [Youth Grande Prix](#) (A prestigious ballet competition for the best students in the world; an Olympics for dancers). She is a tremendous dancer. After watching her take class, the director of the JKO School told us that she was being brought back to the elementary levels because her training went too fast, and that she needed the repetition of working on "simpler" things. They were going to bring her back to the basics. Through experience, I know that by going back; she will come out a cleaner, more proficient dancer than she is now. **Clean technique starts at the beginning levels of training. It is very hard to retrain a student that does not have the core technique needed to be in the upper levels. A Ballet 1 Class is just as important as an Advanced Ballet Class.**

I want The Ballet School of Vermont studios to be a place that people can come to forget about outside stress and just enjoy being able to move with beauty and grace. I want my students to know that I feel privileged to teach them. I am thankful to all my former teachers that gave me a strong and knowledgeable dance education. I feel fortunate that I have had proper training, and the opportunities to pass this historic art form on.

I am excited for this year,

Maryellen Vickery, Director [The Ballet School of Vermont](#)

Instructor: Ballet, Modern, Jazz

[Read Maryellen's Faculty Biography](#)