



The Community
School

Passages Program



Passages Press

Searching for a Career

by Andrea Benito

I interviewed my dance teacher and my parent educator. I also got some “on-the-job” training as a receptionist. I interviewed my dance teacher because I love to dance and I wanted to know more about her career. I chose to interview my parent educator because I love children and I wanted to know what it was like to work with them and help them progress.

Interview with Emily Jenks, dance instructor:

What steps did you have to take to get your business started?

Create a business plan, open a business checking account, look for a suitable studio space, buy instructional music, put up posters to advertise, talk with people I knew with children and persuade them to take dance from me.

How old were you when you started dancing?

I was five years old when I started dance lessons and I was twenty-five when I started teaching and I was thirty-three when I went into business for myself.

What inspired you to teach?

I had always wanted to be an elementary school teacher. As I became a teenager, I also wanted to be a professional ballerina. So teaching ballet was the natural marriage of these two passions.

Do you get a lot of business?

Yes, but the number of students varies from year to year.

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Is it worth the money you make?

There is not a lot of money in this business. But, yes, it is worth it.

Do you see yourself doing this throughout your future?

Yes—I am a teacher and a dancer!

How does dancing make you feel?

Exhilarated, rejuvenated, alive, free, healthy.

What type of dancing is your favorite?

I love all forms of dance—ballet is my very favorite—with everything else a very close second!

What are the performances and recitals like?

Performances are satisfying, joyful, fulfilling, stressful – a lot of work and fun, too.

Do you dance other than when you’re teaching?

I do, but not as much as before 2001 (I was in a car accident that has adversely affected my neck and upper back).



What advice would you give to me if I wanted to become a professional dancer?

Take as many dance classes as you can. Work very hard to learn technique.



Would you ever consider having someone as a “volunteer teacher’s assistant”?

Yes. I mentored one of my dance students for a year during her last year of high school. She was 17 and had taken dance lessons from me for four years and had been dancing since she was four years old. She came in almost every day and assisted most of my classes and substitute taught when I otherwise would have canceled due to illness.

Interview with Ruth Griffin, Parent Educator

What inspired you about your work?

I’m inspired by the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of children. By providing young parents with information on child development and support within the community, I hope to help their children get off to a good start. My goal is to help parents realize the great potential they have to influence their child’s development in a positive way. When I see babies and young children thriving in a positive atmosphere - that is inspiring to me.

What steps did you have to take to get you where you are?

I have a bachelor’s degree in early childhood education and a master’s degree in early childhood special needs.

How long have you had your job?

I have been in this job for five and a half years. Prior to this, I was a teacher for fifteen years.

Do you get a lot of business?

I am very busy in my work!

Is it worth the money you make?

I would like to see all jobs in which people work to help other people (education, social services, etc.) have higher pay to encourage more qualified people to enter these professions. This job pays less than I made when I was teaching, but I find it very rewarding, so I am happy with it for now. I also feel fortunate that because the university is my employer, I have very good benefits.

Do you see yourself doing this over the future?

Yes, as long as funding continues for this position. I enjoy it very much.

What do you like most about your job?

The positive feelings that result when I know I have helped to make a difference for someone. I also like that there are a variety of tasks to my job, from one-on-one visits to groups to grant writing and recordkeeping. It is never boring.

Is there anything you dislike about your job? If so, what?

It is kind of hard that there is constant rescheduling. You have to be very flexible in this job.

What advice would you give me if I wanted to become a parent educator?

Learn all you can about child development and parent-child relationships. Be open-minded. Realize that there are many ways to be a good parent. Be positive and supportive and encouraging.

Is your job difficult and stressful? If so, what do you find difficult and stressful about it?

It is difficult when the families I work with experience sadness or loss. It is difficult when people feel overwhelmed by their circumstances.

Working with colleagues can be difficult when their values differ from my own. But, working with babies and young children is always uplifting, so there are many, many smiles in this work and that offsets the stress.



Self-Care

by Nick Halliley

Let's start off by asking the question - *What is self-care?* Self-care is how you take *care* of yourself. Kind of obvious, huh? Now how can you take care of yourself? Let's break it up into five categories: emotional, spiritual, physical, social and mental.

Emotional

Emotional needs in self-care are met by trying to make your self happy with yourself. This can happen in many ways. You could physically get down to a happy weight or find that special someone. With emotions it is sometimes harder to tell the difference between true happiness and the fake happiness that things like drugs give you. True happiness is in your heart and throughout the rest of your body and lasts for a long time. Fake happiness only lasts for a little while and doesn't usually come from the heart.

I have been trying to get happy. At one time I thought I was happy with my ex, but now I have come to realize that I am happier without her. She told me something one time that actually makes sense. She said you can never truly be happy with someone unless you are happy with yourself. I always used to think I needed someone in my life for me to be happy, but I don't. Well, my kids help me to be happy. My kids definitely help the emotional part of my self-care.

Spiritual

Spiritual needs in self-care are noted as a sense of peace, purpose and awareness. Also, your connection to others and the universe.

Up until just recently I didn't know what spiritual needs were. Now that I know, I realize that being a dad is my purpose. I am at peace and tranquil when they are with me. As far as being one with the universe, the universe is more mysterious than what goes on in my mind. Therefore, I haven't figured out the universe enough to be one with it.

Physical

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Physical needs in self-care are about appearance as well as physical self-satisfaction. You should be happy with your appearance and if you're not, then change it. I personally have nothing against people changing their appearance as long as it's not too drastic, like getting a nose job or a boob job or liposuction. If you want your weight to change, then change it naturally. Surgeries to make yourself "look better" usually just make you look fake and worse. Weight loss is hard work, but the satisfaction of doing it yourself should help you decide to not go get a surgery to be smaller. You have the natural need to move your body. This need is met every day, even when you brush your hair, type on a computer or walk to the store.

My physical appearance always changes, mostly facial hair and hairstyles. In the past few years my weight has been fluctuating as well. My happy weight I will probably never get back down to, but that is only because I am going to be trying to turn all my fat into muscle and muscle weighs more than fat. I will be happy with my appearance when I have a flat or ripped stomach again. I also have been walking a bit lately, which helps my physical appearance and my need to move my body.

Social

Social needs in self-care are about friends. People need friends to help them stay sane. If you have no friends to confide in or vent to, you might implode and do a bunch of things that you might regret not long after. Friends do help you get along, but it's the true friends that help the most, because they actually care about YOU, not what's in it for them if they help you. True friends are hard to find. I have been in situations many times when I thought some people were true friends, but when push came to shove, I got pushed and they left. It has become hard for me to trust people now. I trust very few people right now. The few that I do trust sometimes I double- think trusting them. There are literally less than a handful of people in my life worth my full trust and love. For a while I had no social life, but it's coming back and it makes me feel good.

Mental

Mental needs for self-care are about how you think about yourself, as well as using your mind. If you think badly about yourself, then you obviously won't be happy and it won't matter how you look. Thinking badly about your self is a very hard thing to get over, but it can be done. So many people think badly about themselves and it takes a lot of trust in other people and in yourself to help you get out of that rut. Doing things that help you to be happy will help you vent and make you feel better about yourself, therefore helping you get out of the rut a little bit at a time. You can use your mind many different ways. You can use it to try to figure out situations in your life, read a book to learn more, or even do word searches or brain teasers. Doing things like drawing, writing poetry, kickboxing, wrestling, or whatever your passion is, can help you think of yourself as a better person.

I was one of those people who always thought negatively about myself, but lately the negativity has been going away. It may be because I feel more loved by people or I don't have a bunch of people telling me things that put me down. I'm truly not sure what it is, but I think more positively now than ever before. I also challenge my mind by thinking about things in my life, including a fellow Passages student and the situation with my children. I also use my mind at work to try to figure out quicker ways to do things, and I write poetry and stories.

I hope this helps you understand what self-care is all about. Also how my life is. Good luck becoming a happy person with love around you.

Next Workshops:



Quilting Workshop □ Wed. April 30
10 am – 12 pm CSchool

URock Orientation
Wed. May 7
10:30 – 12:30



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What's the Solar System, Mommy? *and other questions your kids may ask you...* by Shelly Matthews

For the report I had to do on Scientific Method I decided I would think up questions that my boys might ask me someday, so that I can answer them. I started with learning about the solar system because I've always wanted to understand it and how it all works.

Our solar system consists of nine planets, or so I thought. When I was learning about the solar system in school there were nine planets: Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto. I learned that the definition of a planet was recently changed and that Pluto is no longer considered one. It is now considered a large icy asteroid.

The planets are divided into two types - the terrestrial and the Jovian. The terrestrial planets are the four closest to the sun, which include Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars. These have a compact, rocky surface like that of our own Earth. The Jovian planets are huge planets like Jupiter and Saturn. They are gigantic compared to Earth and don't have solid surfaces. They are known as gas giants.

Our solar system also includes the sun, which is really a medium-sized star. The sun is the richest source of electromagnetic energy, mostly in the form of heat and light. The sun contains 99.5% of all matter in the solar system and is its largest object. The interior is around 11,000 degrees. The sun has been active for 4.6 billion years and is thought to have enough fuel for another 5 billion. At the end of the sun's life, it will fuse helium into heavier elements and swell up so large that it will swallow Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars. After another billion years of being a red giant, the sun will collapse into a white dwarf, the final end of a medium-sized star. Then, it will take a trillion years to cool off.

Our solar system is in the Milky Way Galaxy. The Milky Way is a spiral galaxy with 200 billion

stars. There are billions of other galaxies in the universe, all of them being composed of billions of other stars. These stars form out of nebula created by gas and dust from suns that have lived out their lives and gone supernova.

Here are some interesting facts about the planets in our solar system:

The Romans named Mercury after the god Mercury who ran fast because he had wings on his heels. It was named this because it moves quicker than any other planet. Mercury is 40% smaller than Earth, and 40% larger than the moon. Mercury has rolling, dust covered hills. The sky is always black because it has no atmosphere.

Venus is known as the morning and evening star. Venus and Earth formed out of the same nebula. Venus does not have oceans. It is veiled by thick, swirling cloud cover. These clouds are composed of carbon dioxide and sulfuric acid. It is constantly raining sulfuric acid on Venus. The surface temperature is 900 degrees due to greenhouse effects caused by the heavy clouds in the atmosphere. The sun's radiation hits the surface and is reflected back into the atmosphere where it can't escape. 85% of Venus is volcanic rock.

Our Earth is the third planet from the sun. It takes 365 days for the earth to travel around the sun. Earth's atmosphere is 78% nitrogen, 20% oxygen, and 1% other elements. Earth is the only planet in the solar system known to harbor life.

Mars is the fourth planet and is called the *red* planet. Here the rock and soil and sky have a pink tint. The soil is very dry, although there is evidence that water once flowed on Mars. It has a heavily cratered surface. The air is composed of carbon dioxide and no oxygen. The average temperature is -81 degrees. The maximum is 68 degrees with the minimum being -200 degrees.

Jupiter is the largest planet in our solar system. More than 1,000 Earths could fit inside it. It contains more matter than all the other planets combined. Most of this matter is in the form of dust and gas. Jupiter is known for its Red Spot, a

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gigantic hurricane that has been going on for over 200 years.



Saturn is the second largest planet. The wind blows at the equator at speeds up to 1100 miles an hour. The rings of Saturn may have been

formed by moons that once orbited it, but were shattered by comets and meteoroids. These rings show large amounts of water in the form of ice and snow.

Uranus orbits the sun once every 80.4 years. Compare that to Earth taking only 365 days. One of Uranus's years equals 80 of ours. Uranus has at least 22 moons. The planet has a blue-green color and is distinguished from other planets by being tipped on its side. Here the wind blows between 90 and 360 miles an hour.

Neptune is the outermost gas giant. If it were hollow, Neptune could contain 60 Earths. Neptune orbits the sun every 165 years. It has dark spots on its surface, which are hurricane-like storms. The Great Dark Spot is the size of Earth.

Now for the questions I want to be able to answer when my boys ask me:

How is a rainbow formed?

Rainbows are formed when sunlight shines onto droplets of moisture in Earth's atmosphere. The light is bent by the moisture and creates a prism-like spectrum of color. So, can you have a rainbow without it raining? Yes, as long as there is enough moisture in the air.

How is snow formed?

Snow forms when water vapor condenses into ice crystals, usually in a cloud. Snow is a type of precipitation in the form of crystallized water.

What is rain?

Rain is water vapor that condenses into droplet form and falls to Earth. Rain plays a role in our hydraulic cycle where moisture from the ocean evaporates, rises in the form of gas until it cools and condenses

into drops, then gets heavy enough to drop back onto the surface or into the ocean where it repeats the cycle again.

Budgeting Power

by Sheena Stone

It is a great idea to budget because if people don't they can get behind with bills, and it's much better being organized with this kind of thing. With budgeting it's giving you power over a part of your life. I know when I don't budget bills I get very overwhelmed and depressed. I feel like the world is at an end, and I hate the feeling of losing control and not having the power over something very important.

There are many ways of how to budget; you just have to find the right way for you. I haven't kept up with a little journal of bills and ways to pay them in a long time. It is probably a good idea that I do. When budgeting you have to stick with the plan and let everyone else know in your family that that's the way it's going to be. It's very hard sometimes to stick with the plan, but you have to ask yourself, do you really want to fall behind? Do you really want to worry about how you are going to catch up? Is it okay or do you know you have the extra money to spoil yourself and your family? Sometimes it's a better idea to let the person who handles money better hold onto all the money. This will guarantee that all the bills will be paid and will be paid in time.

Every month before my income came in on the first, I used to take a piece of paper and write down what I knew I had to pay and when. I would always make sure I would mail them out right away. I would then figure out what money I had left over to spend on me and my family. I was always very organized and always made sure the bills always came first. I then didn't write that little journal anymore, and a lot of people wouldn't think it, but without it, things went down the toilet. I don't know how other people react from having unpaid bills, but

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I freak out. It's a very important thing to me to have bills paid. I hate the feeling of owing people money, even if it's a little bit!

For me there aren't too many other ways that I don't know on how to budget. I had already found the way that works for me. So as far as new budgeting techniques go, I'm all set. There is, however, the whole savings thing that I'm interested in. Well, we do have a checking account, and we do have a savings account, but we haven't saved much money. We haven't been touching the savings account money, but we haven't really been adding to it either.

I found there are different reasons why people save their money. Some people save their money to be able to buy special things for other people or themselves. They also save to go on "one-on-one vacations"- you know, the romantic kind, so they can get away from the kids. Don't get the wrong idea, because they probably save up for exhausting children trips, too. They probably save up for security reasons, too - you know, if someone were to lose a job in the family.

If we were to be able to save money in the savings account, we would be doing great. There's a problem with that right now, though. The only source of income right now is my TANF that I get on the first of every month, which is the amount of \$363.00; this amount never changes. We aren't able to save anything right now, even if we wanted to! Me being pregnant, I know no one would hire me right now. I'm too far along; I would be too much of a risk to hire. Glen lost his job and is trying to find other work, but no luck so far. It will be easier when the baby is born, though. I won't have any problems finding work, especially in the summertime. We do not need to spend any of it on food because of food stamps, but it really isn't all that much to work with! We get some help with money from Glen's mother, but again that money has to go towards bills. When everyone is working again, we will have it so much easier.

People wouldn't think so, but saving a little money at a time really adds up to something, and it's a really good idea to start. Having loose change around helps a lot, too. Grab the loose change around the house or find it outside and stick it in a jar for a while; see what happens. If you drink soda or anything else with a return deposit, it really helps a lot, too. I know plenty of people who do that when they get low on money at the end of the month. Having lawn sales in the summer - that is a super idea - you're making money and cleaning house!

People don't realize it, but being on subsidized or Section 8 housing can save you a lot of money. Your portion of rent will be based on your income. If I was not on housing, I would not be able to afford anything, not even my bills. Having only \$37 a month taken from the TANF I get once a month really helps. At least I have something to work with.

As far as budgeting goes, if I go back to what I used to do, we will eventually get out of the debt we are in now. I know about the differences between needs and wants. I know that getting the bills paid is a need, having things from Color Tyme is a want. I think Glen is getting better with that. You need to start at the bottom of the ladder and work yourself up to the very top over time. If you try to get up to the very top in the beginning, you will end up losing everything. My problem is saying no to the one I love, but I'm getting better at it.

Remember

by Jasmin Rutter

You've seen me at my worst.

You've seen me at my best.

We've been though thick and thin.
We've been through thinner and thickest.

One thing I'll always remember is how
You'd say, "Always and forever!" and
I'd say, "Forever and always!"

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Parenting

by Jane Tarbox

Everybody has his or her own way of parenting when it comes to everything. Some parents are strict and others are softer. I am going to compare how I parent with how I see other people parenting.

I think every parent should have rules and be consistent with them. But I also believe that there is certain punishment for certain ages. I also think that if you want a child to behave in a certain manner, you should set examples. When you set rules you should make sure you never give in on them because this will make your children think that if they cry enough, you will always let them have their way. You also should make sure whoever else is around a lot or who takes care of them knows your rules and sticks with them. If they don't, it just defeats your whole purpose.

I consider myself a good parent, although I am a little overprotective. My son Timothy is eighteen months old and he is at the age where he wants to do everything on his own. At his age it is kind of hard to be strict because he is still learning right from wrong. If he does something that he is not allowed to do, I will tell him no and move him. I do this quite a few times and if he keeps on doing it, then I sit with him in the corner for about a minute. When Timothy does something right, then I clap and tell him he is a good boy and what a good job he has done; this encourages him a lot. I usually don't leave him for too long at a time so I really don't have to worry about anyone giving in with him. I am going to compare my parenting with someone I know very well. The difference is she has four kids.

My Parenting:

- Timmy eats as little or as much as he wants at meal time. He also has different kinds of snacks throughout the day
- Timmy has a set time for his naps and bedtime

- We have a routine before bed. First we eat dinner, read a book, run around and then we go get into bed
- Timmy is an only child so he gets most of my attention and more one-on-one time
- When Timmy is naughty I sit with him in the corner until he calms down.

My Friend's Parenting:

- Her oldest children have to eat a certain amount at mealtime. They have certain times for snacks.
- Her youngest children have set times for naps. Her oldest do not.
- It is hard for her to have a certain times for bed and naptimes.
- She has four kids to my one, so she has to divide her time with each child.

We have quite a few differences but we have qualities that are the same, too. We both love and will do anything for our children. This is what counts.

In every home fathering and mothering is a little different. Some fathers are stay-at-home dads and the mothers work. Others can be the opposite or sometimes both parents work, either different shifts or the same. It all depends on people's dreams, financial situations and time. Fathering and mothering can also be different by who does most of the discipline and who is home more.

In my house I stay home and my boyfriend Tommy (Timmy's dad) works days. When I did work, I would work nights, so Tommy and my mom could watch Timmy instead of putting him in a daycare. I plan to get another job waitressing at night. Then, after I graduate, I want to go to college at night. I do a lot of the discipline, but Timmy listens more to Tommy. I think he does this because he stays home all day with me and he tests his limits. Tommy will discipline when he comes home from work. We play differently with Timmy, too. I read to him and I play with his toys and Tommy wrestles a lot with Timmy, which is good because Timmy is very active. Timmy also likes to

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help us a lot by picking his toys up. He likes to help me carry things, too.

A parenting skill I want to be more consistent with is bedtime. He has a certain time he goes to bed but he likes to sleep with us. When I put him in his bed at night he gets up in the middle of the night and gets in bed with us. From now on I want to get him back to sleep each time and put him back in his bed. I think this will help because each time he wakes up at night he will be in his bed.

I really don't think fathering and mothering are that different. I think you just have to agree on how you want to parent.

A Couple of Conflicts Resolved

by Naomi Marr

It's My Turn!

Lew and I decided to both play a video game at the same time. Instead of fighting over the game we looked at what we both wanted and how we were going to do this to make it a win-win situation. We thought of how we would both play equally - who goes first and how long we both play. Lew and I both wanted to play the same game so it made it a lot easier. We found many ideas on who gets to play first, but the best one we found that would be quick and work was to flip a coin. We also found that taking turns would be a problem also, so we decided that both of us got to play a mission and if one of us failed a mission, we'd get to do it over, but there wouldn't be any more chances if that person failed once again. That person would have to then pass the controller. So in the end we found that we both got to play equally, had done teamwork and both were happy.

It's the Little Things...

I was getting fed up with cleaning the house all the time by myself, so I went to Lew and said nice and calmly, "My feelings are being hurt because I feel as though I'm the only one who cares about this house by cleaning it all the time by myself." Lew said, "The reason I don't clean the house that much is because I don't know what to do

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and when to do it, like sweeping or the laundry." Then I asked Lew if he understood what I was talking about and he repeated what I had said and how I was feeling back to me. Afterwards we figured out how we could make this happen. I was holding back the attack words I wanted to yell out at him, but I kept what I was trying to accomplish towards solving the problem. We had come up with picking up after ourselves and helping out when it wasn't asked for. Now the house is staying clean and I feel like I have a ton of bricks off my shoulders.

Book Corner



Here If You Need Me

by Kate Braestrup

reviewed by Andrea Benito

I have just read the book called Here If You Need Me by Kate Braestrup. It is a true story about a woman who lives in Thomaston, Maine, and how she copes with the loss of her husband.

This book is about the path that Kate chooses after her husband dies. She becomes a Warden Chaplain, although growing up she was never really religious. Her job is to go with the Warden's to peoples homes who don't already know their loved one has passed, or sometimes just to be there for someone who is awaiting their loved one being found. It is a very touching book. I cannot say too much about it, because it is a short book.

She talks a lot about her work in this book, she talks a lot about when people went missing, and she would assist the warden's in the search of at least a body, even though the subject may not be alive.

One quote that really got my attention is when she writes, "The most dangerous thing I do as a chaplain is also the most dangerous thing Mike does as a game warden. Statistically speaking, it was the

most dangerous thing Drew ever did as a state trooper and is doubtless the most dangerous thing you do too. We drive.” Sure enough, the fact is that car accidents are the leading cause of death in the world. Can you imagine? It doesn’t matter how good we drivers are, all it takes is one drunk driver, someone sleeping at the wheel, or just someone who is in a hurry or daydreaming. Even those of us who don’t drive, we do ride in vehicles. We put our children’s lives and our own lives at risk almost every day of our lives.

I would recommend this book to anyone who likes true stories. It is a good book for someone who is widowed. I think she is giving hope to those who have lost a spouse, letting them know that it’s not the end. This book is very touching. I could feel my heart beating throughout almost the whole book.

Things Change

by Patrick Jones

reviewed by Miranda Robinson

Things Change is about a straight A student named Johanna, who starts dating a guy named Paul. Everything goes great at first but then Paul starts getting abusive and Johanna and Paul break up. But Johanna loves him too much and thinks she can’t live without him, so they get back together. Paul tells her things will change. Then a little later on Johanna talks to Paul’s ex-girlfriend Carla and finds out he used to beat her. Paul had already started abusing Johanna again, so they get in a fight and Johanna breaks up with him again for good. Nine months later Johanna sees Paul and his new girlfriend. And his new girlfriend has a new black eye.

I think the author wrote the book to show people that when people drink or are abusive and say, “sorry” and that they will change, they usually don’t. I like how the author was very clear in separating the points of view of the book, so you always knew who was talking. One thing I learned from this book was that most people who abuse others really don’t ever change.

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