



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FIFTH GRADERS FROM PITTSBURGH ALLEGHENY, PHILLIPS, SUNNYSIDE AND WEST LIBERTY BRING HOME GOLD, ADVANCE TO FINALS IN "COLORS OF THE RAINBOW" BALLROOM DANCING CONTEST

PITTSBURGH, PA (December 13, 2010) -- Fifth-graders from four Pittsburgh elementary schools -- Pittsburgh Allegheny K-5, Pittsburgh Phillips K-5, Pittsburgh Sunnyside K-8 and Pittsburgh West Liberty K-5 -- took home gold medals in the "Colors of the Rainbow" ballroom dance competition, capping off the fall 2010 season of Mercy Behavioral Health's Dancing Classrooms Pittsburgh.

Held in the auditorium at Pittsburgh Allderdice on Saturday, December 11, 2010, the event featured six young couples from each of nine Pittsburgh Public Schools and Pittsburgh Catholic Schools that participated in Dancing Classrooms Pittsburgh in the fall 2010 semester. The 108 dancers were selected from more than 400 students who underwent 10 weeks of in-school instruction to represent their respective schools in the semi-final event.

Dressed in their finest, the young ladies and gentlemen danced the Merengue, Foxtrot, Rumba, Tango, and Swing while parents, school officials and fellow classmates cheered them on.

Because the competition was so close, it took two rounds of tiebreaker dances for the judges to narrow the field to the four teams who would ultimately take home the gold -- Pittsburgh Allegheny (yellow), Pittsburgh Phillips (green), Pittsburgh Sunnyside (indigo), and Pittsburgh West Liberty (red). Those four schools will advance to the finals, scheduled for May 2011, where they will meet the winners of the semi-finals of the upcoming spring 2011 semester.

Complete results for the Dancing Classrooms Pittsburgh semi-finals are as follows:

Gold Medal: Pittsburgh Allegheny K-5 (yellow), Pittsburgh Phillips K-5 (green), Pittsburgh Sunnyside K-8 (indigo), and Pittsburgh West Liberty K-5 (red)

Silver Medals: Pittsburgh Spring Hill K-5 (blue) and St. Benedict the Moor School (emerald)

Bronze Medals: Pittsburgh Arlington K-8 (orange), Pittsburgh King K-8 (violet), and St. Agnes School (magenta)

Mercy Behavioral Health introduced the program to Pittsburgh in 2009 as part of its prevention program, with the Pittsburgh Public Schools as its initial partner. In 2010, Catholic schools that are funded by the Extra Mile Foundation incorporated the program into their curriculum.

For more information about Dancing Classrooms Pittsburgh, contact Mark Rogalsky, prevention services supervisor, Mercy Behavioral Health, at 412.320.2321.

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ABOUT MERCY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH:

Mercy Behavioral Health (MBH) provides a full continuum of recovery-oriented, community-based mental health, mental retardation, and drug/alcohol treatment and prevention services to people of Southwestern PA. Established in 1969, MBH is part of the Pittsburgh Mercy Health System and Catholic Health East, sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy. For more information, visit www.pmhs.org

ABOUT DANCING CLASSROOMS:

Dancing Classrooms began in 1994 in New York City under the direction of Pierre Dulaine and Yvonne Marceau, directors of American Ballroom Theater. The program currently reaches more than 40,000 children in 400 schools in 13 cities. Through Dulaine's unique teaching methods, students broaden their experiences, create healthy relationships with others, learn social awareness, and become young ladies and gentlemen. For more information, visit www.dancingclassrooms.com

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