

LARISSA VELEZ-JACKSON

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PROFILE

Larissa is a choreographer, performer and movement educator, AFAA certified Senior Fitness Specialist, RYT 200 Yoga Instructor and Pilates Instructor with a BFA in Dance Education and 20 years of experience teaching. Following a bone marrow cancer diagnosis and the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic 5 years ago, Larissa formed a home business of rehab-informed Pilates, gentle yoga, older adult remote fitness and workshops in dance in Middletown, NY. Recent training at the Creative Institute in NYC, which partners artists with healthcare and community institutions, has further supported Larissa's classes and workshops to serve all ages with various abilities, with special attention to the benefits for the older exerciser and those in recovery of an kind.

EXPERIENCE

Group Fitness Instructor, NY, NY — 2004-Present

Certifications: AFAA Primary Group Ex (2005), AFAA Senior Fitness Specialist (2015), AFAA Primary Group Ex Re-Certification (2023)

Employment: Middletown YMCA, Middletown, NY (hired June 2024), West Side YMCA, NY, NY (2005-2020), 92Y (2006-2019), as well as Vanderbilt YMCA, 14 ST YMHA, Goddard Riverside Senior Center, West Side NORC (Naturally Occurring Retirement Community.) Zoom classes since 2020.

Yoga RYT 200 Instructor — 2004-Present

Certifications: Honor Yoga's Roots (with Susanna Barkataki) (2023), Rasa Yoga 300 Hr. Yoga and Ayurveda Certification (2004),

Employment: 92Y (2006-2019), private practice (2006-2019), Zoom classes since 2020.

Adjunct Professor, University Dance Departments — 2018-2022

Teaching dance improvisation, dance composition and performance to university students.

Employment: The New School, Lang Dance Department (2018 & 2022), Sarah Lawrence College Theatre Department (2020 & 2021), Princeton University (2021), Bennington College (2022)

Pilates Equipment Instructor — 2009-2020

Certifications: AFAA Group Pilates (2006), Kane School Mat Pilates (2007), Kane School Equipment Pilates (2009)

Employment: West Side YMCA Pilates Studio (2009-2020), Pilates Way & Body Brilliance Studio NY, NY (2009-2018), Citrine Wellness Studio, Brooklyn, NY (2018-2020), private practice (2009-present)

Ballroom Dance Instructor — 2000-2018

Certifications: Arthur Murray Dance Studios Ballroom Certification, Bronze and Silver Levels. Professional & Pro/Amateur Ballroom competitive dancing in 2001.

Employment: West Side YMCA (2009-2020), Arthur Murray Dance Studio Chatham, NJ (2000 & 2001)

SPECIAL TRAINING

The Creative Center's Arts-In-Healthcare and Creative Aging Training Institute— 2024.

A unique opportunity for practitioners working at the intersection of the arts and healthcare to learn from experts in the field. Participants had the opportunity to learn everything needed to implement best practice arts programming in hospitals, healthcare centers, nursing homes, community-based organizations, senior centers, hospice and palliative care centers, and residential facilities serving older adults and their caregivers across the aging continuum. Larissa particularly focused on creative experiences that center around movement and mindfulness.

EDUCATION

University of the Arts — BFA Dance Education, 1999.

Awarded for "Best Choreography" of graduating class.

AWARDS

- * AXIS Dance Co. Choreographic Fellowship, Berkeley, California. Working with world-renowned mixed abilities dance company. (2024)
- * Dance/NYC's Disability.Dance. Artistry Residency Award (2022)
- * Caroline Hearst Choreographic Fellowship, Princeton University (2020-2021)
- * NY Dance and Performance "Bessie" Awards: Nomination for Best Emerging Choreographer (2016)
- * Two-time Foundation for Contemporary Art grantee. Awarded the prestigious Grant to Artists Award (2016) and the FCA Emergency Grant for a dance-theater premiere at The Chocolate Factory in NYC (2022).