



Pimsler (front, left) and dance professor Ryan Corrison (back, left) work with the JMU men's golf team.

Meaning in movement

Pioneering performance company brings workshops and healing to the Valley

BY JEN KULJU ('04M)

To celebrate its 35th anniversary season, Stuart Pimsler Dance & Theater (SPDT), an internationally recognized performance company known for pioneering the arts in health care field, initiated a nationwide application process to award "one incredible community" with a weeklong residency and performance opportunity. Dance faculty member Kate Trammell in JMU's School of Theatre and Dance was awarded the grant.

The residency included lectures, workshops and classes for students and faculty in JMU's College of Health and Behavioral Studies and the College of Visual and Performing Arts, a class with the men's golf team, as well as workshops for health care professionals and for stroke survivors and their caregivers at Sentara RMH Medical Center. The residency culminated with a performance by the company at the Forbes Center for the Performing Arts.

A highlight for Trammell was SPDT's work with her Dance in Community class. "I thought it was particularly great because there was an integration of populations in the class," says Trammell.

Pimsler particularly enjoyed working with the men's golf team. Golf coach Jeff Forbes says the session served as a great team-building experience and "really opened up the players' minds on how different movement techniques can help them improve their games."

JMU students had the opportunity to attend one of two workshops at Sentara. "Caring for the Caregiver" brought together 25 area health professionals who worked with stroke survivors. The workshop placed "the wellness of the actual caregivers in the spotlight, and that caregiving role is one that so many [health and behavioral studies] graduates step into for their professional lives," says Sharon Lovell, dean of the College of Health and Behavioral Studies. During the "Meaning in Movement" workshop, 25 stroke survivors and their caregivers interacted using expressive movement, storytelling and music to communicate. "Living life with music, movement and renewal must become a mantra of our health care system in order to build a healthier community," says Janet Marshman, clinical effectiveness specialist for Sentara's stroke program.

The residency had a positive impact on all participants. Kayla Bolton, a dance major with an interest in physical therapy, summed up the experience: "I learned a lot of techniques that I will tuck away for the future."



(Above) Kate Trammell's Dance in Community class works with Suzanne Costello and SPDT. (Below left) Participants in the "Meaning in Movement" workshop "dance" to their dreams.

