

FRIDAY EXTRA!

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Weekend Edition

DANCE

IT OUT



An energetic Zumba dance fitness class at Tolovana Arts Colony is accessible for people of all ages.
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LET LOOSE AT A DANCE CLASS

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Zumba at Tolovana Arts Colony

On a Monday morning in late August, I was at what felt like a mini dance party with eight other people of various ages. We were all dancing, stepping, jumping and squatting to music that ranged from bachata to Enrique Iglesias and Sia.

The 8:30 a.m. Zumba class at Tolovana Arts Colony was one of the two dances I dropped in on this week to get moving and get out of my comfort zone.

I came to the class feeling sleepy and unmotivated, but I left feeling energized and ready to start my day.

Other dancers felt the energy, too.

"The music is loud and you can feel the beat through your feet and all the way into your soul," Peggy Roberti said. "Eventually, you move so freely that you can't stop smiling.

Zumba is like taking a happy pill that lasts all day long."

Instructor Joy Sigler — who credits Roberti for spreading word about the class throughout town — teaches the dance-fitness class with infectious enthusiasm.

"I'm so thankful to be dancing at this time in my life," said Sigler, who is 55. "It's so important to keep moving."

Zumba classes include dance moves from cumbia, salsa, merengue and reggaeton combined with fitness for the core, arms, glutes and more.

"Each class has a balance," Sigler said.

Zumba requires that classes have 75 percent world music, which Sigler said supports artists all over the world.

Sigler emphasized that Zumba is accessible for all ages, modifiable and low-impact — and it releases mood-boosting endorphins, which explains why I left the class with a smile on my face.

For information and updates on the class, go to tolovanaartscolony.org

Hip-hop at Astoria Arts and Movement Center

My next stop was a Tuesday evening hip-hop class that started over the summer at Astoria Arts and Movement Center.

We learned part of a dance routine choreographed to a song that involved fun, quick moves that were broken down into small sections and repeated until everyone in the class felt comfortable with it.

"It's approachable," Emily Geddes said about the class. "Olivia meets everyone where they're at."

Although dancing to the tempo of the song was a challenge at first, the room was free from judgment and I learned to keep going even if I made a mistake. I also enjoyed the thorough breakdown of all movements — from shoulder rolls to playful hand move-

ments and big steps. After practicing the dance a few times, I felt sweaty but accomplished.

Although she has taken dance classes from a young age, instructor Olivia Jones-Hall began teaching choreography while in an all-female hip-hop group in college.

"I like hip-hop because within it there's so many different styles and so much you can do with one song," she said. "YouTube makes it easier to share choreography ideas."

The choreography process starts when she hears a song that she likes.

"I want to put something to it and it becomes seeing and feeling certain moves when I get into studio and just fill it in," she said.

Jones-Hall began teaching hip-hop at Astoria Arts and Movement Center after graduating from college in May. Her first classes included Caribbean dance and house dancing.

For information and updates, go to astoriaartsandmovement.com

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Peggy Roberti
student in a Zumba dance fitness class