

## Creative arts school gets a new location

By **Cindy Arora**  
STAFF WRITER

**EL MONTE** — Not everyone believes dance is sinful.

A month after Creative Planet School of the Arts was evicted from property owned by Christian landlords because of practices deemed "pagan" and "sinful," it has found a new home at United Methodist Church at 3903 Tyler Ave.

The art school will not only be able to continue its after-school program where teachers instruct in everything from modern dance to yoga, but on Jan. 6 the school will expand.

"The need came up to start a day school, so we did," said Bill Rugh, director of Creative Planet.

"We had this in our heads when we first started the school but that was for five years from now ... but because of everything that's happened we had to accelerate the plan."

Rugh and his staff of eight paid employees and a handful of volunteers were forced to close the school's doors to about 40 students Nov. 15.

The art school was on property owned by the Wesleyan Church and El Monte Christian School at 2400 Santa Anita Ave. for nearly two years.

The school opened with the approval of Wesleyan's Church's former pastor, Dave Ellis, and the church's board. But when Pastor Edgar Chacon and his board took over, they didn't

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approve of the curriculum being taught at the school and shut it down.

Pastor Marguerita Rivera-Bermann from United Methodist said their loss is her gain.

"The program they do is phenomenal and it's something we have been wanting to do here," she said.

"We United Methodist tend to be more hip ... we're known for that."

The new academic school will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday and will follow nondenominational religious principles. Students will have Bible classes and will attend chapel once a week, said Rugh.

"There will be no pushing of an agenda ... we'll just be learning about the Bible," Rugh said. "We will academically feed them, spiritually feed them and creatively feed them."



Staff file photo

**BILL RUGH**, artistic director, and his class are reflected in mirrors during a dance session at Creative Planet.

For now, Rugh and his staff are signing up students and preparing to open.

Most of the teachers at the new private art school will be working for free until enrollment grows.

Most of the staff recruited to the new school, including a sec-

retary and janitor, are former employees of El Monte Christian School who left because of the eviction of Creative Planet.

Amy Rodriguez, a teacher at the Christian school, will finish her last week Friday.

"I stuck it out to the bitter end because my daughter was

still enrolled in the school," she said. "But this is just perfect ... it's really amazing how things turned out."

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