

# Youngsters are 'star' attractions in Rowayton



Above, Rowayton Elementary School first-grader Dairelys Mises and kindergartners Hatsie Dunne, Jenny Tororici and Anna Wood dance during a assembly at the school showcasing the different programs like "Dancing with the Stars" that the after-and-before-school program After the Bell offers. Below, Natlaia Fortuna and Rachel Smith talk about their knitting projects.

Hour photo / ERIK TRAUTMANN



## NORWALK

By LAUREN MYLO

Hour Staff Writer

Norwalk's newest before-and-after-school program "After the Bell" is exhibiting its perks and reaping rewards.

Last month, the Norwalk Children's Foundation gave the program, which is managed by the Norwalk Education Foundation and finds a home at Kendall and Rowayton Elementary schools, a \$75,000 grant.

Norwalk Education Foundation Executive Director Lauren Rosato said the grant will fund After the Bell for the next year and hopefully help it expand into other schools.

"A lot of children don't have the means to have private enrichment, so this is the way to expose them to different interests in a cost-effective manner," she said.

A number of the programs in the before-and-after-school program were exhibited Thursday morning in a school-wide assembly at Rowayton.

Two groups of students from "Power Hour," the interactive enrichment program promoting early literacy, presented skits: "Jack and the Beanstalk" and "Fiddle Diddle."

After the Bell's "Dancing with the Stars" program danced for fellow students, and the Japanese program did a presentation of origami and the song: "Old McDonald Had a Farm," holding signs naming farm animals and the sounds they make in Japanese.

The knitting class did a knitting demonstration.

After the Bell provides a snack, athletic activities, beading, computers, arts and cooking and Pilates classes and "Fun Friday," which features games, puzzles and Rowayton Library enrichment.

The program serves 150 students in the daily care system, and 177 students in the enrichment program in Kendall beyond just those who participate in the daily care.

Thirty-seven teachers from Kendall teach at After the Bell as do 11 staff members from Rowayton.

"What that does is it creates a communication flow from the school day to after school and back," said Rosato.

Rosato said another feature that makes the program interesting is it provides transportation for students who stay after school for academic help.

It's also a great program, she said, because it's not just an after-school tutoring program — it creates fun

see STUDENTS, A4

# Students dance in Rowayton

## From A3

supplement learning activities.

The NCF grant marks the sixth private donation to After the Bell, which was launched this school year.

The program raised \$84,500 last year from five different

donors.

NCF program officer Anthony Allison said in a release that After the Bell helps the foundation fulfill part of its mission in providing "quality after school programs."

"We were impressed by the way that not only the children are affected by it, but also by how the

teachers talk about it," he said.

"When children have close connections to their teachers out of the regular school day, both teachers and students learn to see their relationship in a different way that benefits both."