

# **FOCUS** on business

## **Gainesville Ballet Offers Special Needs Program**

After much planning and anticipation, **Gainesville Ballet** is thrilled to launch a program for children with special needs. The first dedicated weekly course of instruction begins September 10 and continues for six weeks for preschool age children. No prior dance experience is required, and through the art of dance, these young participants will be gifted with gross motor movements, grace, stamina, flexibility, sensory input, and of course the beauty of ballet. Owner Elysabeth Muscat explains that while the



**Elysabeth Muscat**

studio had already successfully integrated students with special needs into existing programs and performances, this program offers a focused environment with low faculty-to-student ratios.

She also notes that a second class on Saturday afternoons for special needs students up to age 12 will be offered in October. Lead instructor Onica Patalive Hobbs underwent training that provided her with insight on how to teach students with autism, ADHD,

and other issues that can impact learning and development. Onica and assistant teacher Mallory Miller look forward to introducing the joy of dance to these young students. 🎨

~Nancy Griffin-Bonnaire