

## IHMs In Action



Sister Jannita incorporates movement into educational activities at the Children's Creativity Center in Monroe.

Sister Jannita Marie Complo, IHM, incorporated her gift for teaching with her flair for drama to create a ministry that is uniquely her own.

She is the founder and director of The Children's Creativity Center in Monroe, Mich. The center provides an after-school learning environment where certified teachers work one-on-one with children, both with and without special needs.

Sister Jannita is also the creator of "dramakinetics," a term she coined to describe incorporating creative movement into a curriculum.

"Dramakinetics uses movement to foster a child's bodily kinesthetic intelligence," Sister Jannita explains. "When I first began teaching, I noticed that regardless of children's intellects or abilities, they had one thing in common. They could all use their bodies to express themselves."

She based her doctoral dissertation on her experience with bodily kinesthetic intelligence. The dissertation was published as a book, *Dramakinetics in the Classroom*, in 1974, and Nelson Publishing and Marketing released the revised second edition this January. It is a book grounded in experience.

Sister Jannita taught at elementary schools in Detroit and Monroe for nine years and at Marygrove College, serving as the director of student teachers, for 12 years. She ministered as principal of Jemez Day School in New Mexico for 16 years. In all her ministries, past and present, she integrated dramakinetics into her students' curricula.

"My course in movement was a requirement at Marygrove," she recalls. "I taught movement skills to student teachers and demonstrated how to apply those skills in their classrooms.

"When I worked with elementary school students, I had them put on a musical each year," Sister Jannita continues. "I also initiated a 'swing choir' as part of the curriculum at Jemez. Children performed on tour and for special occasions."

The children learned acting techniques, dance routines and professional composure, but they also took much more from their experience. Studies have shown that

success and development in one area can foster a positive self-image, which carries over to academic subjects.

"Dramakinetics can be a valuable means to initiate creative growth in children," notes Sister Jannita. "As they feel free to express themselves through movement, they can develop some very creative ways to learn.

"For example, one child at the Children's Creativity Center seemed unable to learn the alphabet. By giving him the experience of free movement, he learned the letters by forming their shapes with his body!"

Sister Jannita also serves on the advisory board of [Dramakinetics of Cincinnati](#), a nonprofit organization based on her work and developed by Pamela Shoener.

"I was drawn to both the educational and the therapeutic potential of dramakinetics," Pam says. "It breaks down core development skills so it's inclusive of people with all abilities.

"Sister Jannita has been a valuable mentor to our program."

"Some children can express themselves verbally or artistically," Sister Jannita notes. "But there are many children who are not gifted in any of these areas.

"Dramakinetics taps into the innate physical channel for expression all children share and maximizes their potential."

*The revised second edition of "Dramakinetics in the Classroom" is available through the Children's Creativity Center, 15 Washington, Monroe, MI 48161, 734-241-6908; through the IHM Gift Shop, 610 W. Elm Ave., Monroe, MI 48162, 734-240-8308; and through Book Nook, 42 S. Monroe St., Monroe, MI 48161, 734-241-2665, [book9lady@sbglobal.net](mailto:book9lady@sbglobal.net).*

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