



Left: Rhythm in your Shoes dance teacher Karen Love with daughter Lauren, 5, wants her young dance students to “feel like they have all the potential in the world.”

Teaching pre-schoolers how to trip the light fantastic

By Angela Waller

BURWOOD woman Karen Love's passion to teach pre-schoolers to dance started in her own living room four years ago.

The mother of one was teaching her young daughter, Lauren, to dance when she decided to start up her own pre-school dance classes.

“She just picked it up so well, and I thought – there must be other kids out there who want to do this too ... but where is there for them to go?”

So Ms Love set up Rhythm in your Shoes dance classes for pre-schoolers and through word of mouth, the business has grown.

She has expanded her classes to cater for her young dance students as they get older and more experienced and is now taking classes for five to seven year olds as well.

“I started out with 20 or so pre-schoolers, and it has grown steadily. My classes have grown with the children ... as they grow and move up, I

grow with them.”

She also teaches seven years and over in ballroom and latin american dancing and runs an adult social class.

Ms Love began dance classes when she was four years old, after watching her sister attend highland dance lessons with her parents.

“The classes were for five-year-olds and up, and I used to dance on the sideline since I was about three-and-a-half. I was one of those sideline dancers! ... so they let me start lessons when I was four.”

She went on to compete in highland dancing competitions, trained in ballet, jazz ballet, modern dance, ballroom and latin american dance.

When she was 21 she moved to Australia to further her studies in ballroom and latin american and she started competing professionally.

In 1990 she arrived in England “the heart of Latin and Ballroom dancing” for more training, where she competed in major world champs.

Ms Love returned to New Zealand

in 2000 and said she now has the “best job in the world”.

“It's neat. I love the kids and to have a business you want to go to every day is awesome. I love seeing the children's confidence grow, they are just sponges and are so creative. Just seeing their happiness is reward enough.”

She said her classes, held at Richmond Methodist Church, introduce the children to a variety of dance forms such as tap, jazz, ballet, disco and Latin.

“Ballet is good for strengthening, footwork and deportment. And disco is a lot of fun. We have different themes every term and we have props and dress ups and the dances reflect that theme. It's like being in a dress-up box and dancing in it.”

Ms Love said she wants to pass on her talent and help the children to feel they have all the potential in the world.

“They are beautiful and inspiring. They are my energy source.”