



SCOTT BUSCHMAN/The Times

Erika Guerrero works on her steps with the East Palo Alto dance troupe Raices de Mexico.

# EPA dance troupe loses home

By JOHN CURRY

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**EAST PALO ALTO** — A small but skilled dance troupe moves to new quarters Monday, filled with hope and music — but saddled with an unexpected expense.

The Raices de Mexico (Roots of Mexico) folklorico troupe has been getting free use of an exercise room at the old Ravenswood High School for the last six years, but demolition of the buildings begins Monday, to make way for the Gateway shopping complex.

Starting next week, Director Maria Elena Pacheco Varela says the cost will be \$600 to \$700 a month for studio space at the former Cubberley High School in Palo Alto, where the group will continue to practice 8 to 12 hours a week for vari-

ous performances.

"We're really hoping someone has some empty warehouse space that could be converted," Varela said. "That rental expense is really going to be hard on us."

She noted that Raices de Mexico, founded in 1980, is a nonprofit group funded by donations, tuition and performance fees.

Any donated space would be useful as long as it's large enough, Varela said. The troupe has been using a 30-by-40-foot hardwood floor and also needs space for a small office and storage for costumes and musical equipment.

Seven girls and one boy, ages 9 to 14, make up its performance troupe. They do the traditional dances of all 15 of Mexico's regions.

The troupe has performed recently at the Fox Theater in

Pedwood City and the San Francisco Ethnic Festival. Sunday they will dance in a mixed performance that also includes jazz, ballet and modern dance by other troupes. On Sept. 9 Raices de Mexico is booked at the Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts.

In June they will join the Zohar Studios in Palo Alto in a mixed performance that also includes jazz, ballet and modern dance by other troupes. On Sept. 9 Raices de Mexico is booked at the Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts.

Past honors have included the first-place float in last year's Redwood City Fourth of July Parade, winners of a talent competition at the San Mateo County Fair in 1989 and selection to perform on a KQED public television documentary, "On the Other Side of the Freeway."

For more information call Varela, 322-1501.