

DANCE

Mexican dance in East P.A.

STAFF
EAST PALO ALTO

If your tastes in dance run traditional Mexican, the Raices De Mexico dance troupe would love to have you — either as a participant or a donor.

The dance troupe has been in existence since 1980. However, the troupe remains a well-kept secret, with only a handful of participants.

Traditional dances performed by the troupe include the "Jarabe Tapatio," "Negra-Bamba," and "Polkas Nortenas," said artistic director Ramon Morones. Dancers perform on a hardwood floor, using boots with nails driven into the heels for a maximum stomping impact.

The troupe, which offers classes at the Ravenswood Dance Studio, has some special plans coming up for the holidays.

On Saturday, Nov. 3, the troupe will be holding a religious "celebration" for a Nov. 2 Mexican holiday called, "Dia De Los Muertos," or "Day of the Dead." The event will feature dance, artwork and poetry, and takes place 4 to 8 p.m. at the dance studio, located on the Ravenswood High School campus.

The troupe also is preparing for a "Pastorela," which is a religious ceremony chronicling the journey of shepherds to Bethlehem, said Maria Elena



R. ROTH PATTERSON / SPECIAL

Magarita Zarate wears the costume of Vera Cruz in a dance with the Raices De Mexico troupe.

Varela, the troupe's general director.

Both events are funded in part by the Peninsula Community Foundation.

A date of Dec. 16 is set for the Pastorela, at a location yet to be decided, Varela said.

The troupe, consisting of five adults and 12 children, is looking to expand to Redwood City, Varela said. Classes are currently held 6:30 to 9 p.m. Thursdays, and 6 to 9 p.m. Fridays

for adults (18 and older). For children (ages 6-12) classes are from 6 to 7 p.m. on Tuesdays and 10 a.m. to noon on Saturdays.

Auditions for the dance troupe are held every Wednesday from 7:30 to 9 p.m. at Fair Oaks Community Center, 2600 Middlefield Road, in Redwood City.

For more information, telephone (415) 322-1501.