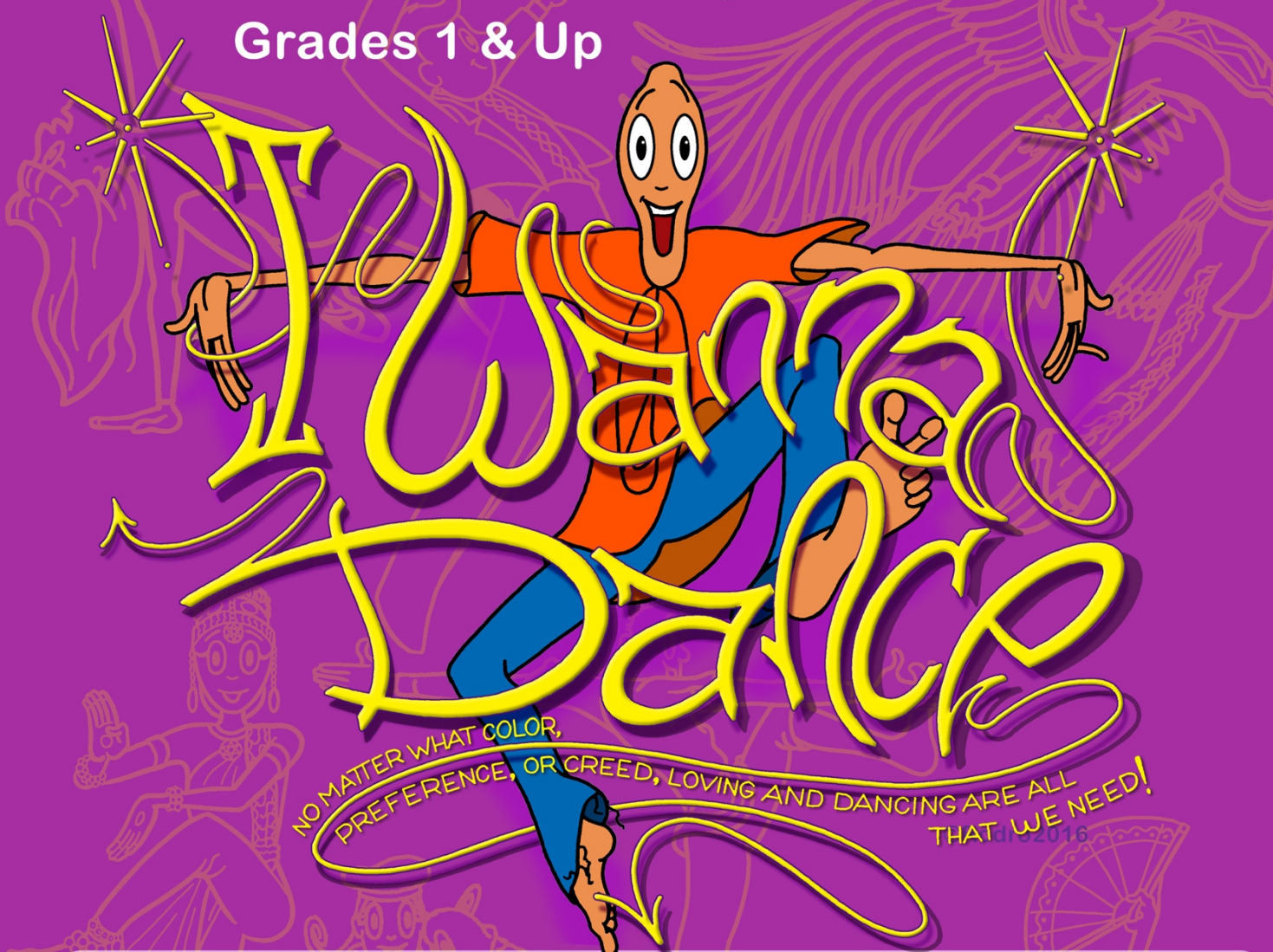


Diversity & Anti-Bully Program

Grades 1 & Up



NO MATTER WHAT COLOR,
PREFERENCE, OR CREED, LOVING AND DANCING ARE ALL
THAT WE NEED!

From rituals, to festivals, to just plain fun, everywhere you go around the world dance is a joyful part of life. So, instead of being divided by our differences and fighting, let's celebrate them and dance!

The *I Wanna Dance* book and programs promote global unity by praising our diversity as a strength rather than a weakness. When children are exposed to physical, social, and cultural differences at a young age, knowledge replaces misconceptions, and experiencing differences becomes fascinating instead of unsettling. When they learn early on that they don't have to be afraid of people who are different, fear and insecurity are alleviated, and replaced with appreciation and compassion.

Overview

It used to be a rare occurrence, but now it seems like every day I am talking with friends about another violent tragedy resulting in the loss of innocent lives. From bullying to shootings, I am more and more alarmed by the increase of news reports about these horrible acts of violence. My greatest fear is that they are on the verge of becoming common place. So I ask myself— “How can we make a safer world for our children?”

“What can I do?”

For me, the opposite of violence is dancing; the perfect act of spontaneous peace. That is the inspiration for the *I Wanna Dance* book and all of the related programs.



About The Book

I Wanna Dance, is a thoughtful and fun children’s book that humbly appeals to our higher nature. In the book, Rodro is just a kid, but his thoughts about dancing instead of fighting present a powerful message of understanding and valuing differences. He delivers this message with simple but powerful logic, and by showing cool and exciting dances representing cultures from all over the world.



(The background behind each set of dancers has information about the dance style, it’s origin, and/or a description of the movement.)

About The Programs

(1-day Workshop and 6-day residency)

The 1-day workshop is essentially the same as the first day of the 6-day residency. The 6-day residency spends each of the first five days focusing on the dance and culture of a specific country and concludes with a Peace Print Dance performance on the sixth day.

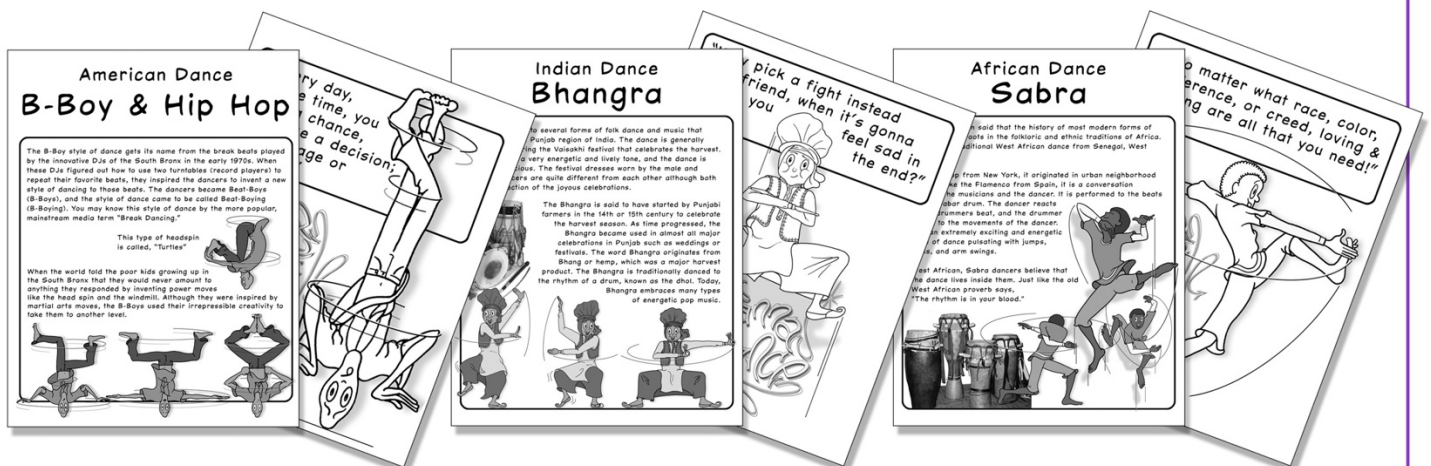
The 1-day workshop begins with a book reading that emphasizes the unifying joy of global dances. This is followed by a question and answer discussion that explores both the dances and the social issues, such as appreciating our differences, presented in the story. Students learn about ideas related to understanding how and why their differences are a good thing, and how that understanding can help them prevent bullying and acts of violence. This is supported by activity worksheets and I Wanna Dance concept posters.

Next, I perform a short dance to demonstrate some of the styles portrayed in the book.

Then, I work with your students to choreograph a Peace Print Dance, honoring dances from the book and using their own original steps. Along with the cultural and social concepts, I also help students explore how body language can express emotion.



As an extension of the program, I show students how to create a collaborative Peace Print Banner and provide them with 15' x 2.5' banner paper. Finally, in recognition of their contribution to promoting peace, each student receives a Peace Print Certificate of Achievement. (For dance schools and community organizations, the various elements of the program can be customized to fit the particulars your setting and participants.)



2-sided worksheets provide each day's diversity theme and cultural dance info.

Raising Awareness

I will also be conducting an ongoing event called The Peace Print, where acts of spontaneous dancing, promote peace by creating a conversation piece for a conversation about peace.

The event is simple. I will travel to random locations, play music, dance, do mini dance lessons, and invite anyone who passes by to dance for just a few seconds to support world peace. Everyone who joins me will leave behind “peace prints” for others to follow and they will receive a Peace Print stamp of approval.

Giving Back

Dance, like all of the arts, has the potential to enrich our children's lives in many positive ways. So, in honor of the book's dance theme, I will be donating part of the proceeds from the book sales to dance schools. These donations will take the form of dance scholarships that they can award to children who *wanna dance*, but are not able to afford classes.



I am delighted that *I Wanna Dance*, is a successful children's book with positive messages, but that's just not enough. My ambition is to have a much greater impact. So, I am bringing these messages to life by actually interacting with communities where the book is sold, and creating positive dancing and educational experiences. It is my goal to have our children develop a useful understanding of peace and unity through these experiences; an understanding from dancing together that will actually help them to appreciate each other and get along better.

**“No matter what race, color, preference, or creed,
loving and dancing are all that we need!”**

— Paul “Rodro” Rodriguez

All Rodro programs are available directly through Rodro and through Eastern Suffolk BOCES. Please, contact Rodro for scheduling and pricing information:

Call: 516-993-7690 Email: rodro@aol.com Website: rodro.com