

Take My Kids Where?!

By Jeanne Traxler

When you read about the exciting opportunities for children to dance in places out of town, do you shake your head and say "That's too big an undertaking," or "We don't do dance competitions; it's too expensive, and doesn't serve the goals of our program," or "Our students aren't very advanced or technical dancers," and then stay home?!?

We would love to see all of our member groups and individual members attached to school groups, etc. attend the local daCi Days of Dance, or the National conference in Philadelphia this year, or International conference in the Hague in 2006 or Jamaica in 2009. So, to help you attend the daCi Days of Dance, National, or International conferences, we are developing a new resource booklet for our members.

The guide will include sections on why travel, raising funds, signing up, templates for forms you will need, and performing guidelines.

Why Travel?

While traveling with children may seem daunting, the benefits of travel to a daCi event are myriad.

- *Children have an important role in the proceedings. They learn new things from exciting, expert teachers.*
- *Cultural dance forms, new techniques, and creative process sessions make for engaging learning experiences.*
- *Children meet many other children who dance seriously, which can be an eye opener, and enhance their effort and commitment to your program.*
- *Attending a conference builds bonds of friendship. And in these days of Internet connectivity, these friendships are much more a part of children's lives than they were of ours.*



What is the daCi philosophy?

Dance is an art form. daCi values all forms and levels of technique in children's dance. The daCi events are not competitive, but they do include opportunities for children to share their work in diverse concerts of dances and be recognized by an audience of supportive peers and adults for the effort that they put in and the expertise that they demonstrate. Youngsters and adults get to see more kinds of dance, especially dance by children or for children. Children usually create a work together over the conference time or day and either share that at a culminating event or a smaller sharing, so everyone performs and is recognized, even if you don't bring a finished work.

Who can attend?

Children of all ages are welcome. Much of the day is with peer groups, but there will also be times of dancing with all ages. Parents may register as conference participants and dance on an equal footing with their children, which is always an amazing bonding experience.

What's in it for the teacher?

For you as a director, there is also benefit. You have the opportunity to network with other teachers. You can observe master teachers and learn new skills and strategies. Adults also have their own workshops and creative process sessions. Your program is also enhanced by the opportunities you afford your students. Your students' performing also gives your program recognition and exposure. Attending the conference can also serve as a reward for your more serious kids and families that are willing to go the extra mile.

But most of all, a daCi conference is Fun! Getting together and dancing with a crowd of new friends and old that love to dance, learning from teachers that inspire, and seeing great dance, are pure pleasure.

It is our hope that the resource booklet will help you convince parents, make it easier to organize the tasks associated with taking children on a road trip, and inspire you to go away, often!