

• **THE UGLY DUCKLING ANTI-BULLYING PROGRAM**

OVERVIEW

The Ugly-Duckling Anti-Bullying Program is a performance dance workshop in which students and professional dancers work together to create lifelike scenarios of everyday school life through a combination of discussion and creative choreography. The program, patterned after the highly successful and award winning program by Ballet Nouveau in Colorado, utilizes best practices from the anti-bullying field and provides schools with an artistic method of assisting students in creating a caring community.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

“The Ugly Duckling” Anti-Bullying Program begins with teacher-directed activities to be conducted within the classroom in the weeks prior to the performance experience. Worksheets and in-class activities address the basic concepts of creative problem solving, emotional awareness, and teamwork with the goal of preparing students for the lessons that will be relayed during the live performance. Schools will receive an informational packet that includes these teacher-directed activities and student worksheets prior to the performance. Concepts in these worksheets include defining “bullying” and how to respond to bullying, The performance experience includes an introductory session reviewing key concepts/vocabulary before watching the live presentation of “The Ugly Duckling” by our professional dancers. Finally, a follow-up discussion with the ballet’s characters allows the students an opportunity to see negative scenes from the ballet reinvented with positive actions and outcomes. Teachers are encouraged to engage in a follow-up session in the weeks following the performance.

How this program increases the students' appreciation for and knowledge of the art form:

Dance Theatre of Tennessee is committed to bringing the art and beauty of dance theater to our community. DTT aims to cultivate and develop the next generation of audiences while providing valuable information through this in-school workshop. This program allows local school children the opportunity to enjoy world-class professional dancers in performance, an experience few young children might otherwise have a chance to share. “The Ugly Duckling” workshop allows students a first hand look into how a production is created, allowing the children a chance to formulate a deeper appreciation of the excitement and cultural beauty of dance. By conducting the performance in an environment familiar to the children, the production allows appreciation of the art form to become personal and relatable. The student participation provided throughout this program furthers this personal connection, hopefully sparking in some an interest in the pursuit of dance. The anti-bullying message related by the content of this workshop enables the children to gain a clear and deep appreciation of how lives can be enriched and positive changes effected through art forms like dance. Studies have shown that children who are continuously exposed to the arts develop into

more productive citizens, thereby enhancing the communities in which they live.

How this program connects to and supports the school's curriculum:

According to the American Psychological Association in its publication **Bullying: A Module for Teachers**, 'bullying by peers can have long-term effects on students' academic achievement.' We believe that "The Ugly Duckling" Anti-bullying program is a valuable tool in developing a more compassionate understanding of diversity within our school communities. Also, teachers may find this program to be of assistance in satisfying a number of TN state Curriculum Standards. In addition to those applicable under Arts Education/ Dance & Theatre, "The Ugly Duckling" program is ideally suited to compliment Personal Health & Wellness/Standard 8 (*The student will understand the importance of positive self-concept and interpersonal relationships for healthy living*).

Educational goals of this program:

Through the medium of performance art, Dance Theatre of Tennessee seeks to educate the students of our community about the pressing issue of "bullying" while encouraging a sensitivity to and understanding of individual differences. This program, in keeping with our mission, brings the best of professional dance to new audiences, encourages an appreciation of the art form, and sparks awareness while delivering valuable information about this pertinent issue through community outreach. "The Ugly Duckling" Anti-bullying program is a valuable tool in developing a more compassionate understanding of diversity within our school communities,

Why teachers should give up valuable instruction time for this program:

It is estimated that 40% to 80% of school-age children experience bullying at some point during their school careers. (Nansel et al., 2001) Moreover, survey data indicate that more than 60% of elementary and secondary school students rate bullying as a major problem affecting their lives and that they worry most about being harassed at school rather than when they are going to and from school (Kaiser Family Foundation and Children Now, 2001). Additionally, within the field of affective education, research involving successful anti-bullying initiatives suggests that it is not just bullies and victims that we need to reach. Rather, focus must also be placed on the "caring majority" — the children who are neither victims nor bullies. Encouraging students to stand up for their peers in order to create a safe learning environment is an essential component of any anti-bullying program and critical to all educational institutions. All of the lessons taught in this program stem from best practices identified in the anti-bullying field. Educational elements for this program have been developed and designed in collaboration with trained experts in fields concentrated toward creating caring communities. The fact that these lessons are presented through performance art enhances the students' cultural experiences, as well.