



JEAN APPOLON EXPRESSIONS OFFERS FREE SUMMER DANCE PROGRAMMING WITH THE SUMMER DANCE INSTITUTE IN TWO COUNTRIES THIS SUMMER

Impactful Health and Dance Education Program for Young People in the U.S., Dominican Republic, and Haiti

Hosted in partnership with Kalalú Dance School in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic and Izizwe Dance Studio in Lawrence, MA

Dominican Republic Summer Dance Institute: July 4-10, 2022
Lawrence, MA Summer Dance Institute: July 18-August 6, 2022

Boston, MA – June 15, 2022 – [Jean Appolon Expressions \(JAE\)](#) will serve 120 youth this summer through its 16th Annual Free [Summer Dance Institute](#), a free program for young dancers exploring connection and culture through dance. This year's free programming will take place in two countries, the Dominican Republic and the United States and serve young people from the U.S., Dominican Republic, and Haiti.

One month after the premier of [Traka](#) (a contemporary dance production at The Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston), JAE continues with its **mission to provide hope and healing** through the Summer Dance Institute. For the first time, the Institute has expanded to the Dominican Republic. The [Dominican Republic Summer Dance Institute](#) will be hosted in partnership with Kalalú Dance School in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, directed by [Marily Gallardo](#). For the last four summers, JAE has collaborated with [Izizwe Dance Studio](#) in Lawrence, MA, to offer a free [Summer Dance Institute based in Massachusetts](#). Both programs strive to empower youth through dance and to support youth to foster connections, build resilience, and heal from trauma. Classes will feature Horton, contemporary, Haitian Folkloric, Afro-Cuban, ballet, and yoga. Students will complete daily reflections centered around movement, identity, and social justice and work toward a final performance for family and friends.

“JAE's 2022 Summer Dance Institute is unlike any other because it is truly working to **bridge cultures across the globe through dance and community**,” stated JAE Executive Director, Professional Company Dancer, and Educator [Meghan McGrath](#). **“This is the first year that we are holding our free program in two separate countries**, simultaneously, which is a milestone for the organization. The pandemic slowed us down in some ways and yet, opened up the opportunity to connect more routinely with our students in Haiti, in our virtual classroom. This was a gift. Jean and I are beyond thrilled to share that five of our dedicated Teen Apprentices from Port Au Prince, Haiti will be joining us in Santo Domingo to dance and connect with our students in the Dominican Republic.”

The [Dominican Republic Summer Dance Institute](#) will take place July 4-10, 2022 with a final performance and community celebration on July 10 and the [Lawrence Summer Dance Institute](#) will take place July 18-August 6, 2022 with a final performance and community celebration on August 6.

The focus of the Summer Dance Institute will center on **Kiltirèl Conexiones (Cultural Connections)**, which uses dance to foster connections between Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and the U.S. Using Haitian Folkloric and modern dance techniques, students will learn choreography to **strengthen mind-body connections** within themselves and among each other. Students in both programs will be given the opportunity for creative expression and cultural sharing by creating their own choreography that will then be taught to students who are enrolled in the Summer Dance Institute in a different country than the one they are attending. Students will be provided with a safe space for expression, along with food, boarding (for the students traveling from Haiti), and a strong social support network – all necessary resources for **mental health and resilience**, particularly in areas with limited opportunity.

The Summer Dance Institute was created by [Jean Appolon](#), founder and artistic director of JAE, in 2006 with the intention to share the **liberating power of Haitian-folkloric dance to cultivate hope, healing, and justice**. Since its inception in 2006, JAE Summer Dance Institute has trained **over 1,000 young people** and provides a safe haven for students to realize their ability to become social change agents.

The benefits of these experiences are long lasting as many students have become teachers and entrepreneurs, who have started dance schools internationally and within the U.S. Love Felix is an example of 'making a way out of no way,' as expressed by Jean Appolon. After attending JAE's Summer Dance Institute in Port-au-Prince for two years, Felix created her own ballet studio in Port-au-Prince where she teaches 7-15 young dancers. Felix continues the mission of JAE by giving access to the healing power of dance to young people.

“I feel the program is even bigger than us and what we offer to the communities we serve. I think former students are a great testimony to how the program really changes lives,” said Jean Appolon, Founder and Artistic Director of JAE. **“We want the world to be aware of the healing we create through these programs. That we truly are able to give hope to kids, families, and communities.”**

The Summer Dance Institute is run at no cost to students. The overall fundraising goal of \$100,000 will support programming internationally and in the U.S. JAE has received generous support from the Social Equity Access Fund, Movement Arts Creation Studio, the Essex County Community Foundation's (ECCF) Greater Lawrence Summer Fund, Sunrise Airways, and individual donors to support the Summer Dance Institute's programming.

JAE will continue to host free community classes and events for dancers of all ages this summer in Boston, MA, building a global community of people who enjoy and share the healing power of Haitian Folklore. Learn more about community classes in Haitian Folklore and more on [JAE's website](#).

About Jean Appolon Expressions

Jean Appolon Expressions uses dance to celebrate Haitian cultural expression and empower young people through innovative dance performance and community programs. See our [repertoire](#).

JAE is one of the few companies in the world to synthesize Haitian folkloric dance and modern technique. As an ambassador of Haiti, and the Haitian, Caribbean and African diasporas, JAE showcases artistic expression of a specific cultural community.

JAE is proud to call Boston, with the third largest Haitian population in the U.S., its home. JAE conducts community classes, teen programs, and performances in the Boston area and beyond with the goal of enriching and enlivening communities through authentic cultural programming.

Throughout the year, JAE also maintains connections to young dancers in Haiti. In past years, JAE has conducted the Jean Appolon [Summer Dance Institute](#) in Port-au-Prince. Sixty young Haitian dancers are selected to participate in a free, high quality dance program directed by Jean Appolon. Begun by Jean Appolon in 2006 and based at Ecole Nationale des Arts (ENARTS), the annual Institute moved in 2013 to an open-air dance studio constructed at the Hotel Oloffson. During years in which travel to Haiti is not feasible, young dancers from Haiti participate virtually in JAE youth programming.

The company has been showcased in major arts venues globally, and continues to share its artistry in accessible, inclusive ways through free performances in locations like city parks and community spaces. JAE also has performed at many colleges and universities, including Harvard University, Lesley College, and Wheaton College. JAE has been fortunate to share the stage with celebrities such as Danny Glover, Henry Louis Gates, and Edwidge Danticat, and to collaborate with community partners such as Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción (IBA) and Central Square Theater.

About Jean Appolon

Jean Appolon is the choreographer, founder, and artistic director of Jean Appolon Expressions (JAE), who shares the liberating power of Haitian-folkloric dance to cultivate hope, healing, and justice. A bold visionary and master teacher, Appolon is intrinsically moved to preserve Haitian-folkloric dance - a portal for the majesty of Vodou culture - and make it accessible to all. His original choreography includes *Vwayaj*, *Angaje*, and *Traka* - all which center social justice themes such as immigration, LGBTQ rights, and mental health as a necessary dimension of healing. His training began in Port-au-Prince with Vivianne Gauthier and the Folkloric Ballet of Haiti. Appolon's education continued with Harvard and Radcliffe Dance Program (1995-1996), Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater (1996-1998), the Joffrey American Ballet School (1998-2003), and a bachelor's degree from The New School (2002). He has previously performed with Elma Lewis Productions, Marlene Silva, North Star Ballet Company, Black Door Dance Company, and the Atlantic City Ballet Company. A 2014 inductee of the 1804 List of Haitian-American Changemakers, he has received numerous awards and recognition in media outlets including The Boston Globe and NPR. Appolon is a member of The International Association of Blacks in Dance and The Boston Dance Alliance.

Sponsors

JAE has received generous support from the Social Equity Access Fund, Movement Arts Creation Studio, the Essex County Community Foundation's (ECCF) Greater Lawrence Summer Fund, and individual donors to support the Summer Dance Institute's programming. Sunrise Airways is providing round trip flights from Haiti to the Dominican Republic, making it possible for JAE's Teen Apprentices from Haiti to safely travel and participate in the Summer Dance Institute.

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