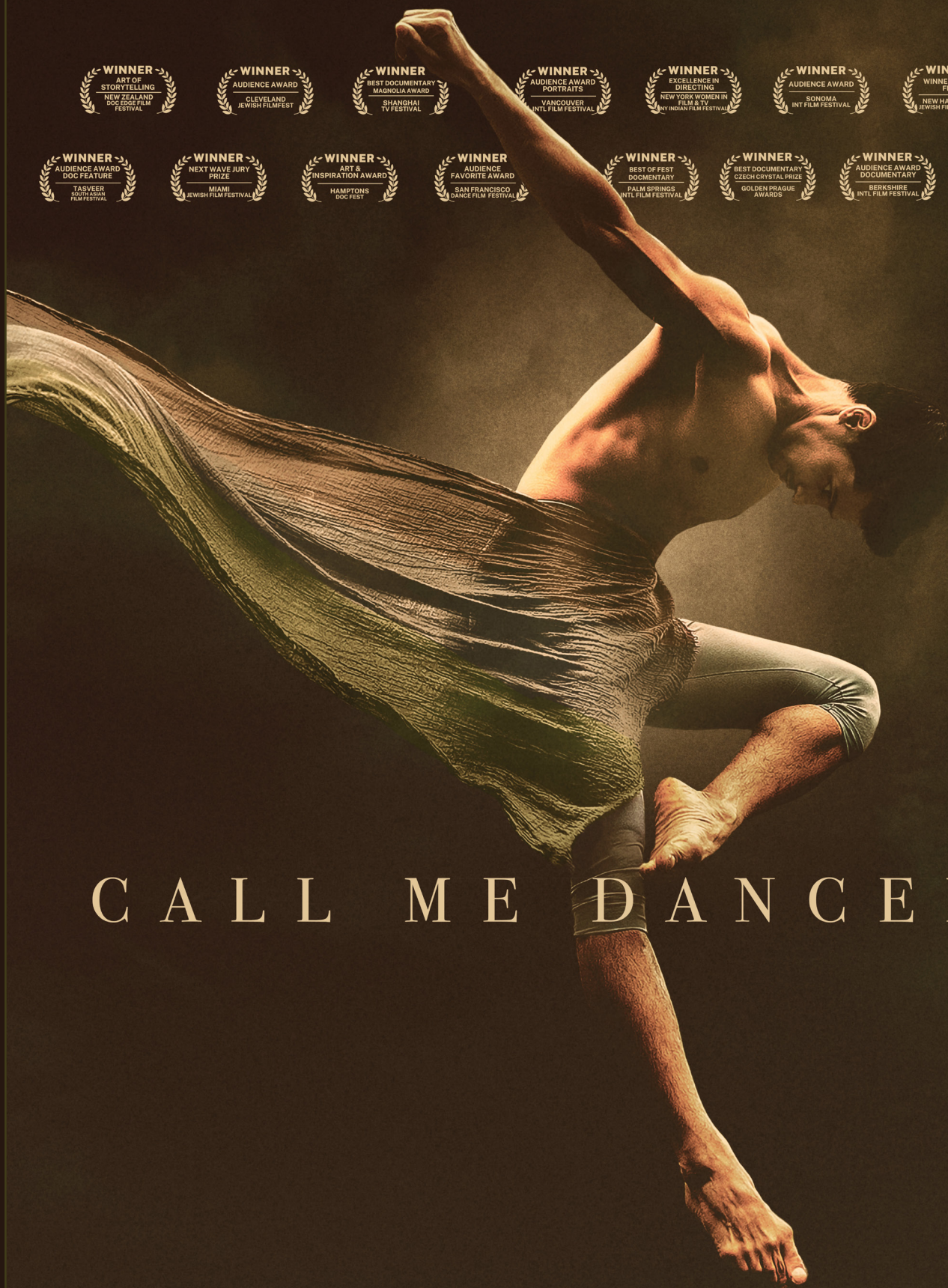


Learning Guide (Grades 2-6)

JOURNEYS IN FILM™
educating for global understanding



CALL ME DANCER

A FILM BY LESLIE SHAMPAINÉ

ABRAMORAMA IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH ZDF IN ASSOCIATION WITH ARTE FEATURING MANISH CHAUHAN AND YEHUDA MAOR
CINEMATOGRAPHY BY NEIL BARRETT & ABHIJIT DATTA EDITED BY JENNIFER BEMAN COSTUME DESIGNER NAINITA DESAI & NINA HUMPHREYS ORIGINAL SCORE BY JAY SEAN
CO PRODUCED BY MICAH FINK & SARA LUKINSON EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS JAY SEAN JOHN PATRICK KING JITIN HINGORANI ORI Z SOLTES
PRODUCED BY PRIYA RAMASUBBAN CYNTHIA KANE LESLIE SHAMPAINÉ DIRECTED BY LESLIE SHAMPAINÉ AND PIP GILMOUR



CALLMEDANCER.COM





CALL ME DANCER

A FILM BY LESLIE SHAMPAINÉ

CALLMEDANCER.COM

ABRAMORAMA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3	Facilitation Guidelines
4	Director's Statement
5	The Film Participants
6	Useful Terms / Vocabulary
7	Section 1: <i>Following Your Dream</i>
8	Section 2: <i>Friendship Across Differences</i>
9	Section 3: <i>Hard Work and Practice</i>
10	Section 4: <i>Family / Community and Support</i>
11	Section 5: <i>Be Yourself!</i>
12	Extended Learning Activities
13	Additional Resources
14	About <i>Journeys in Film</i>



JOURNEYS IN FILM™
educating for global understanding

FACILITATION GUIDELINES



Filmmakers use immersive storytelling to produce intense thoughts and emotions in the viewer. **Journeys in Film** uses this powerful medium as a springboard for meaningful dialogue around humanity's most pressing issues. In this guide, you will find suggestions for leading productive conversations that broaden perspectives, increase global competency, encourage empathy, and build new paradigms for education.

- When watching a film or having a powerful discussion, normalize taking breaks and exercising bodily autonomy. Acknowledge that conversations around complex topics can be vulnerable, complicated, and challenging. Encourage members to voice and do what is right for them without needing to explain or apologize.
- People do their best when they know what to expect. Start and end your meetings on time.
- Share or co-create your intentions for the meeting.
- Create your space. If possible, share snacks or find other ways to create an inviting, comfortable atmosphere.
- Create a trustworthy space. Maintain confidentiality and only speak to your own experience.
- Minimize distractions while you are together. Silence cell phones and devices so you can give your full attention to the conversation.
- Practice whole-body listening. Listen to words, tone, body language, and the feeling in the atmosphere.
- Acknowledge voices that may be absent. Is there a lived experience that isn't represented in your group? Who are the bridge people who might be able to connect you with other people in your community who might bring new perspectives to the table?
- Adopt an attitude of positive intent. If someone says something that bothers you, assume positive intent and ask for more information.
- Ignite your curiosity around other people's views and opinions. Listen to understand, not to respond. You don't need to agree with others in your group or make it known that you are "right" to have a worthwhile conversation.
- Words matter. Be open to learning and practicing new ways to communicate with others.
- Be clear, direct, and kind in your communication. Nobody benefits when you bottle your opinions.
- Everyone has blind spots and biases; cultivate a space of grace as you enter into new territory together.
- If a conversation gets heated, practice acknowledging the tension, pausing as a group, and taking a collective breath together before diving back in or taking a longer break to reset.
- Privilege your relationships with others over the content or agenda of the meeting. Show each other kindness.
- Create a closing ritual that celebrates the time you've spent together and either gives closure or gives members something to think about before your next meeting.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

As a former professional dancer, I spent many years training in studios where passion was everything. When I first met Manish, the main character in the film, I recognized that same fire. His story is not simply about dance. It is about a young person facing family pressure, financial obstacles, and self-doubt, and still choosing to believe in himself.

Now that the film is being shown in classrooms, I see how deeply students relate to him. They understand what it feels like to want something that others may not understand. They see that talent can come from anywhere, and that the courage not to give up matters more than where you start.

The film also shows the impact of mentorship. Yehuda, the teacher who guides Manish, sees potential in him before Manish sees it in himself. Their relationship demonstrates how support, guidance, and encouragement can change the course of a young person's life. Sometimes all it takes is someone who believes in you.

Because I am a dancer, I was allowed into spaces where cameras rarely go. The dancers trusted me, and they let me witness their real journey, including frustration, resilience, and joy. Instead of performing for the camera, they let the camera witness who they are. That intimacy is what allows students to emotionally connect with the story.

Call Me Dancer invites young people to reflect on their own passions. What do you do when you discover something you love? Do you quit when it becomes hard, or do you persevere? Whether their dream is dance, sports, science, art, or something entirely different, the message is universal. Your background does not decide your future. Your effort does.

I hope this film inspires students to believe in their own possibilities, to value the mentors who guide them, and to take bold steps toward whatever dream is calling them.

— Leslie Shampaine, Director



ABOUT LESLIE SHAMPAINE

Leslie has been telling stories throughout her professional life. From the ballet stage where she performed throughout the world during a 13-year career, to the television screen where she has produced award-winning programs for PBS, Discovery Channel, A&E, CBS, and Al Jazeera.

THE FILM PARTICIPANTS



MANISH CHAUHAN | LEAD PROTAGONIST



Manish Chauhan is from Mumbai and self-taught in the urban street dance known as b-boying. He competed in popular reality TV shows like *India's Got Talent* and *Dance India Dance*. Manish studied ballet at the Danceworx School in Mumbai under the teacher, Yehuda Ma'or. In 2020, Chauhan played the leading role in the Netflix film, *Yeh Ballet*, a fictionalized version of his life. He is also the lead character in the documentary *Call Me Dancer* that was released in 2023. Manish is currently a dancer with Peridance Contemporary Dance Company in New York City.

YEHUDA MAOR | LEAD PROTAGONIST



Yehuda Maor is an acclaimed ballet teacher working in India. He started his career as a principal dancer with the Bat-Dor Dance Company in Tel-Aviv. After leaving the stage he taught dancers around the globe, including ballet greats Rudolf Nureyev and Natalia Makarova. He was the director of Dancer's Stage in San Francisco and Ballet Madison, USA. The Netflix film, *Yeh Ballet*, is a dramatized story about his arrival in India and his teaching, he is played by the actor, Julian Sands. He is also featured in the 2023 documentary, *Call Me Dancer*.

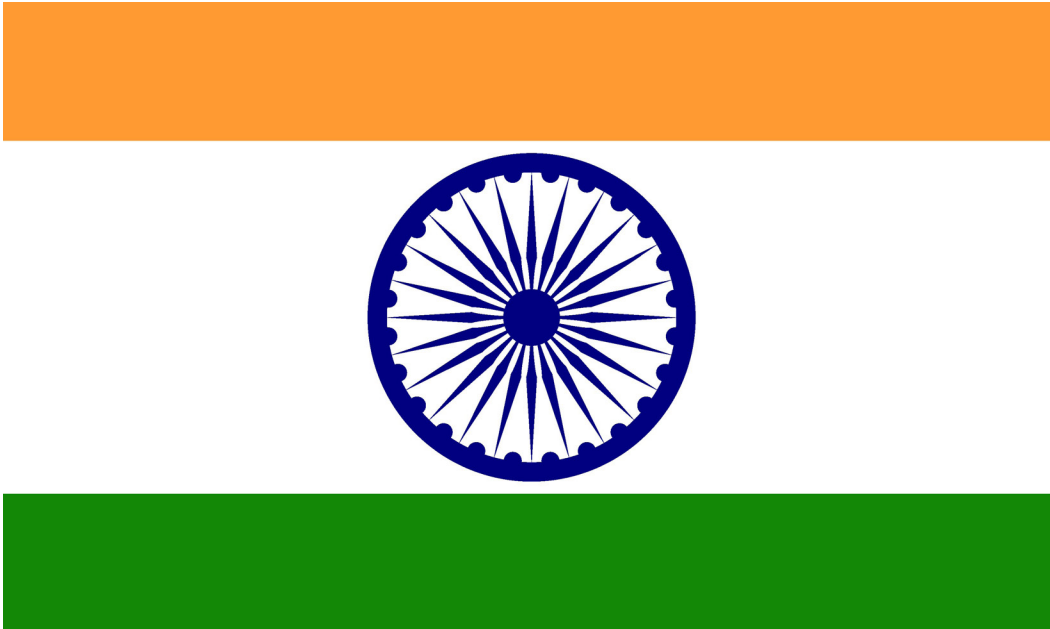


A talented street dancer from India is torn between his artistic dreams and his struggling parents' expectations, risking all of their money in the hope that he can make it as a professional in a field where only 3% will succeed.



USEFUL TERMS / VOCABULARY

Select the terms best for your learners/grade levels. Depending on your learners, they could also be used for spelling words.



Flag of India

Ballet: A type of dance with specific positions and movements

Dance: To move rhythmically to music

Dedication: Being committed to something and working hard at it

Dreams: Goals or wishes for the future *(This is one definition; you can discuss others with learners if you want.)*

Mentor: Someone who teaches and guides you

Mumbai: One of the most populated cities in India, also the financial capital of India and a city often associated, in India, with the pursuit of dreams

New York City: One of the most populated cities in the United States and a city often associated with the following of one's dreams, especially in novels, songs, music, etc.

Perseverance: Continuing to try even when things are difficult

Practice: Doing something over and over again to get better

SECTION 1: *FOLLOWING YOUR DREAM*



DRIVING QUESTION

What is the power of a dream? What does it mean to dream?

Learners may or may not be comfortable discussing all answers in a large group session. Consider allowing for small group discussions and/or for learners to engage with some questions through journal writing/responded drawing or other personal reflection approaches.

Discussion Questions

1. What is Manish's dream? What clues in the film tell you this is his dream?
2. What things does he say or do?
3. When was a time you tried something new where you felt nervous? What did it feel like after you finished the new thing?
4. What is something that interests you and might be a pursuit or job or educational goal for you as an adult? What do you think you need to do to move closer to reaching that goal?

Writing / Drawing Prompts

1. Create a story about a time you tried something new and it was hard. Show or describe how you handled the hard parts/challenges.
2. If you could learn something new (a sport, hobby, dance, musical instrument) what would it be and why?
3. Write a letter to Manish giving him advice about following his dreams. (Alternate: draw a picture for Manish)



SECTION 2: *FRIENDSHIP ACROSS DIFFERENCES*



DRIVING QUESTION

What makes a good friend? How do our similarities and differences help us build strong friendships?

Learners may or may not be comfortable discussing all answers in a large group session. Consider allowing for small group discussions and/or for learners to engage with some questions through journal writing/responded drawing or other personal reflection approaches.

Discussion Questions

1. How are Manish and Yehuda different from each other? (age, where they're from)
2. What do they have in common that helps them become friends?
3. How do they help each other throughout the movie?
4. What are some similarities and differences you notice with your friends?

Writing / Drawing Prompts

1. What are some ways that you and a friend are similar and/or different?
2. What makes a good mentor or teacher? (Alternate: draw a picture of someone who has been a good mentor or teacher for you).
3. Write about how Manish and Yehuda learn from each other. (Alternate: draw a picture of Manish and Yehuda together or a picture that reflects how they helped each other grow.)

SECTION 3: *HARD WORK AND PRACTICE*



DRIVING QUESTION

What is the value of practice? Why is hard work sometimes necessary?

Learners may or may not be comfortable discussing all answers in a large group session. Consider allowing for small group discussions and/or for learners to engage with some questions through journal writing/responded drawing or other personal reflection approaches.

Discussion Questions

1. What do you notice about how much Manish practices?
2. How does his dancing change from the beginning to the end of the movie?
3. Think of something you've gotten better at through practice. What was that like?
4. Why do you think Manish kept practicing even when it was hard?

Writing / Drawing Prompts

1. Write about a skill you've improved through practice. (Alternate: draw yourself working hard at something that is important you.)
2. What advice would you give someone who wants to give up on something difficult? (Alternate: Make a poster to encourage a friend).
3. Describe what "hard work" means to you. (Alternate: write an acrostic poem using the words: Hard Work.)



SECTION 4: *FAMILY / COMMUNITY AND SUPPORT*



DRIVING QUESTION

What does support look like, and why does it matter when someone is working towards a goal?

Learners may or may not be comfortable discussing all answers in a large group session. Consider allowing for small group discussions and/or for learners to engage with some questions through journal writing/responded drawing or other personal reflection approaches.

Discussion Questions

1. How do Manish's parents show they love him, even when they are not fully convinced of his choice?
2. Why might parents sometimes worry about their children's dreams?
3. How can families, community members, and or classmates support each other even when they don't agree?
4. Who in your life supports your dreams and goals?

Writing / Drawing Prompts

1. Write about someone who supports and encourages you. How do they show encouragement and support? (Alternate: Draw a picture of someone who supports you. Tip: A pet or stuffed animal could also be an example.)
2. How can you show support for a friend or family member's goals? (Alternate: Make a poster to support someone else or write a letter of support for them.)
3. Write a thank you note to someone who supports and encourages you (could be a pet). (Alternate: Make a thank you card for someone who supports you).

SECTION 5: *BE YOURSELF!*



DRIVING QUESTION

How do people discover who they are and find ways to express their true selves to others?

Learners may or may not be comfortable discussing all answers in a large group session. Consider allowing for small group discussions and/or for learners to engage with some questions through journal writing/responded drawing or other personal reflection approaches.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think the movie's title is "*Call Me Dancer*"? What does this title tell us about Manish?
2. How does Manish see himself? How do others see him?
3. What are the different parts of your identity/who you are, and how do you express who you are to others? (student, friend, family member, team member, club member, etc.) (This can be done through a repetitive "I am..." prompt exercise.)

Writing / Drawing Prompts

1. Complete the sentence "Call me..." and explain why you chose those words. (Alternate: Write "Call me" at the top of a page and then draw a picture reflecting the word you put after "call me...")
2. Write about a time when you felt proud of who you are. (Alternate: draw a picture of a time you felt proud of yourself.)
3. Describe how Manish's identity changes throughout the movie. (Alternate: draw a picture that reflects Manish's growth in the film.)



EXTENDED LEARNING ACTIVITIES



These hands-on activities can be completed individually or in groups and extend learner engagement with the film.

Dream Web: Learners create a web showing their dreams in the center with steps to achieve them around the outside. You can also add who can help you or what inspires you.

Example: Dream Web

- Center Bubble (Big Dream): "I want to be a dancer."
- Connected Bubbles (Steps/Ideas):
 - Take dance classes
 - Practice every day
 - Eat healthy food for energy
 - Watch other dancers perform
 - Ask my teacher for help
 - Never give up when it's hard

Movement Expression: Learners create simple movements to show different emotions (happy, determined, worried, proud).

Friendship Map: Learners create a visual map showing how people from different backgrounds can become friends.

SMART Goal: Have the students make a SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time bound) Goal for a skill they want to try or get better at.

Example: Sally wants to practice drawing.

- Practice drawing for 10 minutes 3 times this week
- Students then keep a week-long journal documenting something they practice and how they improve.
- Students should designate:
 - GOAL_____
 - Numbers of days each week
 - How much time each day
 - How this makes them feel
 - Follow up on if the students reach their SMART goal.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



BalletMet Educational Resources

<https://www.balletmet.org/community/resources/>

Bharatanatyam: Introduction to Indian Classical Dance

<https://www.kennedy-center.org/education/resources-for-educators/classroom-resources/lessons-and-activities/activities/tap/bharatanatyam-introduction-to-indian-classical-dance-with-teaching-artist-deepa-mani/>

Bollywood Dance Explained (BBC)

<https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-18686742>

Bollywood Dance Overview

<https://www.ipassio.com/wiki/dance/bollywood-dance>

Create and Dance Resources

<https://www.rbo.org.uk/schools/resource/create-and-dance>

Discovering Bollywood Dance

<https://www.decibel-danse.com/en/advice/bollywood-dance/>

Elementary Creative Movement Activity

https://www.pbt.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Elementary_CM_Activity_Breakdown.pdf

Folk Dance Around the World: India (BBC)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/school-radio/articles/zvpx2sg>

Get Inspired! Learn How to Bollywood Dance (BBC)

<https://www.bbc.com/sport/get-inspired/30518516>

India Kids: Favorite Resources for Elementary Students

<https://alldonemonkey.com/2016/06/08/india-for-kids-favorite-resources/>

India Country Profile, National Geographic

<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/geography/countries/article/india>

Library of Congress South Asian E-Resources

<https://guides.loc.gov/asian-eresources/south-asian>

South Asian Cultural and Linguistic Educational Resources

<https://www.hinduamerican.org/south-asian-cultural-linguistic-educational-resources>

Teaching Resources and Lessons Plans - South Asia

<https://liberalarts.utexas.edu/southasia/public-engagement/k-12-programming/curriculum/lesson-plans.html>



ABOUT JOURNEYS IN FILM

Educating for Global Understanding

JOURNEYS IN FILM **RESOURCES AND SERVICES**

We create educational resources that spark community discussions and/or promote proactive learning for youth, parents, educators in K-12 and higher education, home-schoolers, and other learning communities. We also **create impact materials for libraries and community organizations.**

We leverage our established educational relationships to **promote materials in active outreach** to these audiences. We **extend the reach of a film and its lifespan** in the educational marketplace and beyond.

We work with a wide array of partners (non-profit organizations, educational institutions, educators, museums, teacher training institutes) to **develop resources tailored to the individuals and communities we work with and the audiences they seek to reach.**

Our resources focus on cultivating human empathy and compassion, developing a deeper knowledge of global issues and current challenges, and encouraging civic engagement.



Journeys in Film is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to the use of film to promote a richer understanding of our diverse and complex world.

JOURNEYS IN FILM **STAFF**

Jennifer Fischer, Executive Director
Hershawna Frison, Director of Education and Strategic Initiatives
Amy Bowers, Instructional Designer

JOURNEYS IN FILM **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Joanne Strahl Ashe, President and Founder
Jennica Carmona
Jamor Gaffney-Logan
Kayla Johnson
Elana Luppino

EDITOR

Liz Stalnaker

LAYOUT

Tiffany McCormick

NATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD

Liam Neeson, Founding Spokesperson
Kristin Wiig, Spokesperson
Brooke Adams
Sharon Bialy
Ted Danson
Sara Jo Fischer
Gary Foster
Scott Frank
Professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr.
Daniel Goleman
Tara Bennett-Goleman
Piper Hendricks
Jill Iscol, Ed.D., In Memoriam
Professor Rosabeth Moss Kanter
Alexi Ashe Meyers
William Nix
Harold Ramis, In Memoriam
Emily Shagley
Tony Shalhoub
Professor Richard A. Shweder
Mary Steenburgen
Walter Teller
Randy Michael Testa
Loung Ung
Elizabeth Clark Zoia



JOURNEYS IN FILM™
educating for global understanding

**PO Box 65357
Albuquerque, NM 87193**