The Global Education Center is excited to be a partner MNPS Early Learning Centers. We offer international dance and drum classes, cultural museum presentations, assembly performances, family nights and teacher training as part of our Passport to Understanding program.

Passport to Understanding is the school outreach component of the Global Education Center. It was created thirty-four years ago to address the growing diversity in area schools. The Global Education Center is a nonprofit multicultural arts center that uses the arts of diverse cultures to highlight the commonalities of all people and promote cross-cultural understanding and respect. The Center is in its 19th year of teaching and performing throughout Middle Tennessee, and we are excited to add families and staff of Metro’s Early Learning Centers to our Global family.

In addition to support from Metro Nashville Public Schools, Passport to Understanding is supported by the Tennessee Arts Commission, the Metro Nashville Arts Commission, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Nissan Foundation and the Memorial Foundation.

www.globaleducationcenter.org
Instructors for Passport to Understanding

Ellen Gilbert is the Center’s founding director. She is an anti-bias, multicultural education specialist with a background in early childhood education, elementary education, therapeutic recreation and dance. She has studied and performed various cultural dance forms and is in demand as a presenter on multicultural arts integration and anti-bias education at local, regional and national conferences. She has extensive experience as an administrator of preschool, elementary and middle school programs and has been involved over the past thirty-two years as the creator and lead presenter of the Center’s Passport to Understanding program.

Charlie Gilbert is director of our Roots, Rhythm and Rhyme youth program, teaching world percussion and Spanish language through the arts as well as facilitating programming with our Spanish-speaking teaching artists. With a master’s degree in Latin American studies and international relations, he has been invaluable in solidifying our relationships with our Latino families and instigating partnerships with Latino organizations such as Nino Luz, an NGO in Peru. He previously worked as a Spanish-language workshop presenter for the public library and as Hispanic family coordinator for Headstart.

Tirra Olufemi Hargrow is the resident West African and ZumbaKids® instructor and performer at the Global Education Center and one of its many Zumba® teachers. She also performs Afro Peruvian, Afro Brazilian and Afro Cuban dance. Tirra is a public health educator, Cub Scout leader and energetic home school mom; and she coordinates the Center’s home-school programming. She will primarily teach ZumbaKids® for this project, as well as some West African.

Michael EmEme Irvin is director of Grupo Balança Capoeira, which is a capoeira school founded by Mestre Gildo Valu in Bahia, Brazil with schools in Brazil, Angola, Holland and the U. S. He teaches capoeira at the Center, including the music, dance, games and Portuguese language and will do the same for this project.

Gabrielle Saliba is a professional dancer and thespian, trained at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music and Columbia College. She is trained in ballet, modern, jazz, tap, African and Haitian dance. Gabrielle has danced professionally with various companies and was a founder and creative director of a local dance studio in which she specialized in creating dance curricula appropriate for varying ages and capabilities, including early childhood. She is currently artistic director of Saliba Dance and will teach creative movement and pre-ballet in this project.

Jeimy Vitor teaches preschool Spanish and facilitates the dance portion of Roots, Rhythm and Rhyme at our satellite studio at Casa Azafran. She is an Afro Peruvian dancer from Lima, Peru, where she was also a preschool teacher and curriculum coordinator for Nino Luz, a nongovernment organization serving families of Incan descent outside of Lima. For this project, she will be teaching Peruvian dance and crafts as well as Zumba®.

Miscellaneous guest artists also bring African dance, hip hop and creative drum circles.

Assembly Programs May Include
October - Afro Latin Diaspora
December - Festivals of Light
February - Singers of United Lands
April - Rhythms of Life

Hands on Cultural Museums
September - Mexico
October - Lakota Indians
November - Coming to America
December - Native People of Alaska
January - People of China
February - People of West & East Africa
March - People of Peru
April - People of Japan