

# Nii Okaidja Afroso



## Mission Statement:

*To bring peace and unity to the world by teaching it's youth about cultural diversity and the significance of it in their communities and the world at large.*

## Grades Served:

K-12, Adult

## Lives In:

Portland, OR

## Homestay:

Required - Private room with bath or hotel preferred.

## Curriculum Connections

CL	CS	CT	DM
GH	LA	MM	MC
MU	PE	PG	VA

## Dancing Feet & Talking Drums

Nii Okaidja's drumming and dance residencies offer students the opportunity to learn about, experience, and perform Ghanaian movements and rhythm. Students are first introduced to the history, importance and power of rhythm and movement in the continent of Africa. They then learn basic rhythms, corresponding dance movements, and how to collaborate as a group. Students learn to create a sense of community which allows them to appreciate the value of cultural diversity. In addition, students learn about how other ethnic groups celebrate life and how to apply that knowledge to their own lives. The residency culminates in a group performance for classmates and family.

## Teacher In-Services

The language of rhythm and movement addresses the significance of movements which have their counterparts in our everyday activities. Teachers learn to express special and real life experiences in rhythmic sequences to musical and poetic stimuli.

## Residency Requirements

A large classroom space or gym free from desks and chairs is required for the entire residency. The artist charges a \$50.00 weekly fee for drums, instruments, and Ghanaian fabric for the children to wear. Homestay for 2 nights - hotel preferred.

## About the Artist...

Born and raised in Ghana, West Africa, Nii Okaidja began dancing and drumming at the age of 15. In 1994, at the age of 19, he was accepted as a professional dancer for the prestigious Ghana Dance Ensemble at the University of Ghana's Institute of African Studies. During his 5-year career with the Ensemble Nii Okaidja performed and conducted workshops locally and internationally both with the Ensemble and as a solo artist/teacher. His performances included several television appearances. In 1999 he moved to the U.S. to work with Obo Addy's Homowo African Arts & Cultures traditional Ghanaian group Okropong. As a lead dancer for Okropong, he performs and teaches traditional dancing and drumming in various schools, universities, and community events throughout the U.S. As a solo artist/teacher, Nii Okaidja conducts educational workshops and residencies on the origination of dance, rhythm, and traditional storytelling from Ghana, West Africa.

