

REBECCA DAVIS LEADS A DANCE TECHNIQUE CLASS FOR AN ENTHUSIASTIC GROUP OF STUDENTS IN KIGALI, RWANDA.



## Q&A

# Rebecca Davis

**INTEGRATING DANCE TRAINING WITH EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.** The Rebecca Davis Dance Company in Philadelphia has launched outreach programs in Rwanda, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Guinea. Founder and dancer Rebecca Davis uses dancing as a tool for change.

### How do you use dance in post-conflict countries?

"Whether a dance class is taking place inside an air-conditioned dance studio or outdoors on a de-mined grassy field, when everyone puts their arms in the air and jumps, or everyone makes a pirouette turn to the left, it is exactly the same. Within this safe environment, new relationships among participants can be developed, and cooperation can be fostered through choreography and group performance."

### Why did you develop programs in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Rwanda and Guinea?

"I decided to visit a post-genocide country and see firsthand what it would take to rebuild a war-torn society. I visited Rwanda as part of a human rights delegation. I realized that I had to use my

art in a way that would diminish divisions and strengthen a sense of community. Our primary interest is working in environments where ethnic strife has challenged economic growth. These three countries share similarities in the composition of the populations and the historic and present challenges they face. My organization slowly developed a new model for integrating these goals with local employment and capacity-building to strengthen the economic impact of our work in a community."

### How have these experiences altered your worldview?

"After traveling around the world, I have come to realize that children are resilient—even under the worst conditions imaginable. If they are given a chance to laugh, learn and be loved, they will make their lives and the world a better, safer place." | **ANDREA K. HAMMER** | **FIND OUT MORE:** [REBECCADAVISDANCE.COM](http://REBECCADAVISDANCE.COM)

## BUSINESS

# Lucky number 7

**WHEN ENTREPRENEUR TYLER MERRICK WANTED TO START A** new business in 2008, he saw brands all around him that were focused on "me." He wanted to start a business focused on "us." Today, what's important is that "there is a guaranteed 'give' with every product purchase, and we're giving back regardless of the profitability of a company," Merrick says. His Project 7 now benefits seven global areas of need: Feed the Hungry, Heal the Sick, Hope for Peace, House the Homeless, Quench the Thirsty, Save the Earth and Teach them Well.

The Costa Mesa, California-based company sells sustainably produced gum, mints, coffee, bottled water and apparel. Purchases

to provide food." Project 7 funds in the first and second quarters of 2011 helped furnish over 80,000 pounds of food and close to 168,000 meals.

The company's volunteer initiative, 7 Day, is a national movement in which volunteers meet once a month to give back to their communities through activities like picking up trash in their neighborhoods or working at local home-



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less charities. These are currently their 7 Day chapters across the