

EVERY BODY DANCES

• SUMMARY •

The film begins in a dance studio. Juanita Seawright, a 68-year-old from Brooklyn, explains to Marion Baldeon Kampert (a dancer/choreographer in her 20's) how her dual-knee replacements cause swelling in her feet, prevent her from kneeling. Eneida Hernandez, a 67-year-old from Puerto Rico, tells Dwayne Scheuneman (a middle-aged choreographer in a wheelchair) that she's been fighting orbital lymphoma without the support of her family.

The modern dance workshop begins. Juanita and Eneida have one week to create and perform a new work. Marion leads them through a series of warm-ups and choreography exercises. Together, they let their own body parts guide them through space mixing together heavy, light, fast, and slow movements. Dwayne leads a mirroring exercise that seats the women face to face so they can take turns following each other's movements. They smile and laugh as the dance emerges.

Marion explains how Dwayne's impatient and demanding style helps to get things done. Dwayne inspires Juanita to think of her family members and invent a choreography representing each one. Marion reflects on how rare it is to see older people creating and performing art. Dwayne explains his method of exploring the women's personal histories in order to create new choreography from the existing vocabulary of their lives. Marion describes how integrated dance challenges her to create new forms that can accommodate performers' unique abilities.

At the recital, the women put on make-up back stage. They hold hands in a circle with Marion. Wearing matching outfits, they walk through a small audience of older adults and children. The dance begins. Echoing the movements from the workshop, Eneida zig-zags and grins at a little girl in the front room. Juanita sashays across the room leading with a swaying hip and shoulder. After performing the choreography they developed in the workshop. An older woman in a wheelchair watches intently. Back at the front, Juanita and Eneida clasp hands and bow. They beam as the audience applauds.