

many voices, one movement



FIRST GENERATION

performing arts and youth leadership

A newsletter for ensemble, families and friends of First Generation

OCTOBER 2010

2010 First Generation Ensemble Members

<i>Shakurah Abdul-Raheem</i>	<i>Iyawna Burnett</i>	<i>Terrell Jones</i>
<i>Devi Adhikari</i>	<i>Kumari Ghimire</i>	<i>Parsu Koirala</i>
<i>Lakshima Adhikari</i>	<i>Mohinee Gorshai</i>	<i>Gita Koirala</i>
<i>Devika Adhikari</i>	<i>Bikash Gurung</i>	<i>Kamal (Chabi) Lal Khadka</i>
<i>Bhima Basnet</i>	<i>Prakash Gurung</i>	<i>Krishna Rapal</i>
<i>Devi Basnet</i>	<i>Justice Henry</i>	<i>Monique Wilson</i>



LOOKING BACK ... 2010

Here are some of the highlights of First Generation 2010 so far!

JANUARY – AUGUST 2010 First Generation has gone on 7 field trips so far to see innovative and inspiring theater and dance performances, which were:

- Kenichi Ebina, world-renowned Hip-Hop dancer (UMass Fine Arts)
- Nataraj: Performing Arts of India, Directed by Ranjana Devi (STCC)
- When We Danced, Gregory Ramos (KO Theater Festival, Amherst College)
- Alice, Quest Productions (KO Theater Festival)
- The Woman Who Fell From The Sky, The Mettawee River Theatre Company (KO Theater Festival)
- June Bride, by Sara Felder (KO Theater Festival)
- LOUP GAROU, by Nick Slie (KO Theater Festival)

First Generation participated in 2 LEADERSHIP TRAININGS!

- "Stepping out of the Box" (A Leadership and Violence Prevention Training led by Stephen Botkin and James Arana of Men's Resources International)
- "Leadership and Leadership Styles" (led by Josh Schupack and Kara Serasis, student leaders at Springfield College)

EVENTS

APRIL PERFORMANCE: April 24th featured a performance at Northampton Center for the Arts. The evening was MC'd by Sid Ferreira and dedicated to Julius Ford and his family. Performers included First Generation ensemble, BAKOK!, and artists Tem Blessed, Jo Sallins, Julissa Lee Rodríguez, Onawumi, Ruth Bass Green, Ago Gurung, Sana N'diaye, Daniel Belmont, and Mellissa Craig. The event was attended by over 225 people.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY CELEBRATION: In May 2010, we held a Family and Community Celebration at Rebecca M. Johnson School. The evening featured First Generation Ensemble, poetry readings by Taja Wiggins, Terrell Jones and Iyawna Burnett, and

performances by Janet Alfs, Julissa Lee Rodríguez, Ishea Shaikly, Brenda's Child, Leah Kabue and Ago Garung. Artwork was on display by Tony Lugo. Also, performing for the first time in the US, was the newly formed dance ensemble of the Association for Burundian Solidarity in Massachusetts.

VISITING ARTIST'S

We have worked with these generous and inspired visiting artists so far this year:

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|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Ishea Shaikly</i> | <i>Lesley Farlaow</i> | <i>Ranjana Devi</i> | <i>Leah Kabue</i> |
| <i>Janet Alfs</i> | <i>Donna Mejia</i> | <i>Jo Sallins</i> | |

The group also worked closely with Artists-In-Residence Jayme Winell and Julissa Lee Rodríguez.

UBUNTU

I'm proud to say that Summer 2010 was my second year as Theatre Arts Teacher in the Ubuntu Summer Arts Program for 2nd through 5th graders. UBUNTU students are incredibly enthusiastic about learning! In my classes, we explored different styles of theatre: Improvisation, visual theater, ensemble acting and Suzuki. It was a great pleasure to teach alongside the First Generation Teacher Apprentices who all did such a fantastic job. And the performances were AMAZING! The

Featured Intern: Iris Arieli

Hey, my name is Iris, and I'm from Israel/Palestine. There is a war in my home, based in deep-rooted racism, and I use arts in the community struggle to stop it. I'm part of a drum-line that teaches music as a tool for action. When people feel powerless to stand up against injustices, drums have the benefit of being louder than shouts, police sirens and grenades. In addition to playing drums, I write, paint, sculpt, compose and organize actions. I choreograph and dance in a body-percussion crew, and play in a brass band. I speak Hebrew, English, Spanish and some Arabic. Last year, I got a scholarship to come to the U.S. for school. If you ever feel alone, know that everywhere in the world there are people fighting for social change, beginning in their own communities, telling their own stories, just like First Generation. I can't wait to hear yours.



Updates & Shout Outs! *Jayme we miss you!* **CONGRATULATIONS to Ashley Gadson (aka Stickii) for completing her certification in Culinary Arts at Holyoke Community College and graduating with honors! WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK Jeannette Somers, Dan Richardson, Hillary Rathbun for their tireless support and commitment to the Performance Project and First Generation. THANK YOU Tiger Press, our Community Business Partner, as always, for donating the printing of our newsletters and programs and now, our youth program journals too! THANK YOU Sabrina Hamilton & KO Festival for your generosity!**



LOOKING BACK ... 2010



Brother Julius Ford, husband, father, friend, visionary, activist, lawyer, freedom fighter, entrepreneur, conservationist, musician, lover of life and believer in the power of young people.

Julius' transition to a higher existence a year ago and his departure has left a void in all our lives. We in the Performance

Project and First Generation humbly acknowledge to his family and community that one year has passed since we lost him.

Julius, still and always inspired by your voice, laugh and song!

UBUNTU students had such tremendous presence, focus, heart and soul as they performed dance, poetry, music, and theatre! It isn't often enough that art programs such as Ubuntu are offered to students in Springfield. It was great to see such an abundance of creativity and positivity. I am grateful to have been a part of Ubuntu, such a unique and exciting arts program. Thanks to Dr. Edison Santana and Julie Lichtenberg for envisioning it, bringing it to fruition and inviting me to be a part of it! And thanks to Rebecca M. Johnson for hosting it!

-Julissa Lee Rodríguez

UBUNTU

Thank you for allowing me to be part of UBUNTU. As a teacher of teenagers while in Kenya, this was certainly a new experience! I admired the immense talent displayed both by the teachers and the pupils. I still see Ms. Mickens dance troupe, the colorful art work, and the beat of the drum as Ito and Kinnethia start with "cha cha kofi saa..." I hear the beat of the sticks as Julissa directs her theater group. It was an awesome experience. The Community Circle was a stage at which character was built. I saw shy pupils eventually stand up and express themselves eloquently. Moreover, the counsel given to the group is something they will pick up in future as it rests in their subconscious. James did a great job in leading these sessions. This is what I felt each time I sat in the circle. Long live UBUNTU!!!

LOOKING FORWARD: FALL 2010

Julissa Lee Rodríguez and the Performance Project are proud to announce: **GENERACIONES: CUERPO, MENTE, ALMA, Y CULTURA** (Generations: Body, Mind, Spirit, and Culture), a program for girls and young women in the North End of Springfield. Generaciones is a unique opportunity for young women to explore visual, performing, and martial arts as tools to promote health of the mind, body and spirit. Directed by Julissa Rodríguez, Generaciones will engage young women in dialogue about individual, family, and community health and culture, and celebrate culture and community through the design and creation of a public mural. Through performance and the unveiling of the mural, the young women will share

their voices, experiences and pride with their North End community and give a gift to their neighborhood that will last for years to come. For more information call: 413-233-7343.

Burundian Community in Springfield

The Burundian community in Springfield is a very close community with about 25 families, coming from a very humble country and settings. We are thankful to the US government for providing a durable solution for thousands of Burundians who were stuck in refugee camps in different countries in Africa with no future and no hope.

Burundian in Springfield come together every month to discuss many things including, how to maintain our culture, tradition and language.

We care for ourselves, we advance unity, peace, forgiveness and reconciliation. Because our country was torn up by conflict, war, and genocide, we feel that it is essential to teach ourselves and our children about our painful history and to not forget where we come from. Through our traditional dance and song, we are keeping our identity and language alive!

-Pascal Akimana



NEXT NEWSLETTER WE WILL ANNOUNCE THE DATES OF OUR UPCOMING PERFORMANCES AND EVENTS!



This program is supported by the Springfield Cultural Council, a local agency supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council

First Generation is an intensive, arts-based and youth leadership-development program.

First Generation provides a platform for young people to have a public voice in their community, and beyond.

The Performance Project creates theater about oppression and liberation. Through our multi-generational collaborations we examine the effects of racism, economic oppression, bigotry, and violence, and create compelling works of theater, movement, and spoken-word. Our performances engage audiences in dialogue about critical social and cultural issues.