

**LOOKING BACK: PERFORMANCE PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2011**

**2011 HAS BEEN INCREDIBLE! SO MUCH HAPPENED THIS YEAR:**

**FIRST GENERATION**

- Four FG youth have applied to be James Baldwin Scholars at Hampshire College
- Devi and Jamari graduated from high school and began Holyoke Community College
- Stickii has been accepted at Lincoln Culinary Institute for International Baking and Pastry
- FG members were employed as Teacher Apprentices and mentors to younger children in our UBUNTU Summer Arts program
- FG ensemble participated in a 1-week residency on the Amherst College Campus and performed Ripple Effect at the prestigious Ko Festival of Performance in July
- FG ensemble performed and taught a workshop for 80 youth at the Upward Bound summer program at Northfield Mount Hermon
- FG ensemble performed and facilitated a workshop for high school students at the YES! Youth Conference at the Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield to launch a national youth campaign to end bullying through positive youth leadership
- FG members attended regional cultural events spanning from New Haven, CT to Vermont
- FG members participated in an Undoing Racism Workshop
- FG members taught workshops to other teens and youth workers in several High Schools and youth programs
- FG members performed excerpts from Ripple Effect at Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter School
- FG performed Ripple Effect at Springfield Technical Community College, Springfield College, Hampshire College, and Northampton Center for the Arts

**UPWARD BOUND PERFORMANCE AND WORKSHOP**



There were 90 Upward Bound Students. First we performed selections from our play, Ripple Effect. Then we each partnered with another First Generation ensemble member and taught a theater workshop to a group of about 20 students. The workshop

included a chance for them to experience a different kind of theater, leadership skills and communication-building skills. We got to know the kids there, gave them information about what we do, and invited them to our show at the Ko Festival. We met a lot of interesting people that came to our show and got something out of it. I also learned about just being able to go into a crowd and just jump in headfirst.

- Stickii Gadson

**THE MURAL PROJECT**



The Mural Project created a second mural in downtown Springfield. Springfield artist Porn Siphonoum, led the creative process, supported by James Arana, Julie Lichtenberg, and Julissa Rodriguez. The mural was conceived and painted by

mural artists Chris Hernandez, Eric Perez, Joseph Gonzalez-Rivera, Principe Matrille and Kamari Acree. The Mural Project is a collaboration with the Department of Youth Services and Center for Human Development (CHD).

**A NEW MURAL TEAM**

Ricky Brown, Christopher Hernandez, Jose Olivera, Camry Starks, Jonatan Torres, and Malik Green-Walter have begun working together. Artists Kamil Peters, Carla Wojczuk and Julie Lichtenberg are leading the current mural project, with James Arana facilitating and providing leadership training.

**FIRST GENERATION WELCOMES OUR NEWEST MEMBERS**

Khina Karki, Davidson Altimo, Bush Christopher, Kamari Cree, Bill Japakah, Gernarys Moskowicz, Olivier Francis

*We are excited to begin our process to create our next performance piece together!*

**UPDATES AND SHOUT OUTS!**

Thank you Phoebe Stewart, Shiloh Bradshaw, Springfield Art Pulse, Nehemiah Ministries for your faith, encouragement and steadfast support! And to Fred Rowe and Leon Charkoudian for welcoming us into our new home! Thank you Woody Bliss for your vision and commitment to helping us move forward, and to Joanna Walker and Hillary Rathbun for the many amazing gifts and skills you bring to the project, and for grappling with the grants!

*Thank you Commonwealth Corporation for the projector and screen that we have so badly needed for many, many years! And thank you to Justin King for working so closely with us to make our mural project a success!*

**LOOKING BACK (CONTINUED)**

**UBUNTU SUMMER ARTS PROGRAM**

For the third year in a row, our UBUNTU Summer Arts Program brought together 50 children ages 7-12 with professional artists and First Generation members as Teacher Apprentices to experience theater, music, dance, drumming, storytelling, poetry, and journaling. We would like to share with you some of the children's journal entries from Ubuntu:

*"Today I had fun, I stopped being shy I feel happy for me. In theater I learned 3 new vocabulary- projection- enunciation- dialog there hard to spell. The weight of this sad time we most obey. In dance we dance zumba it was sooo funnn. This summer program is fun."*

*"This ubuntu family made me so happy. I meet a lot of friend. I love these's program."*

*"So far my day has been good. In theater we got to play some games. In dance we learned some of the warm up and we played a game. The theater teacher's name was Celia and the dance teacher's name was Jonathan. My favorite block of the day so was dance. I liked dance the best because we got to express ourselves more than in theater. I like both Iyawna and Shanice. Shanice is the quiet one. But Iyawna is the wild one."*

*"Today we a we had fun and I was the helper and I was in the front because I was the helper and we made a video and it was fun and today we made a video and we were in a line. And we were drumming last time and we had fun."*



THE PERFORMANCE PROJECT IS FINALLY GOING TO HAVE A PERMANENT HOME!

We have just moved into a space on the corner of Pearl and Chestnut St. This means that First Generation, The Mural Program, and Ubuntu will have a place to meet, hold our workshops, trainings and rehearsals, paint our murals and more!

First Generation ensemble members are taking leadership, planning events to celebrate family, community and culture and to bring all our First Generation communities together. They have taken the initiative and have already started working on our new home, emptying and cleaning the space and getting it ready for use. Taja Wiggins is writing a grant to raise funds for the renovation of our new home and to support First Generation programs!

Our new home is at: 121 Chestnut Street, Suite 255, Springfield

As we make our home, we are looking for: An electrician, a plumber, shelving, a ladder, 3 large folding tables, folding chairs, large storage cabinets, fridge, microwave and a 15 passenger van!

"I think the new space is a work in progress. We got a lot done. It has definitely improved from the first time I saw it. We had to move a lot things that were being stored in the space, and then we broke a wall down to have more open space in the room. It's gonna be a really good space to rehearse, to meet, and talk about our next steps, and just have a space of our own where nobody's interrupting or telling us we have to keep it down because there's other people there, and that's always a good thing. So it's our vision. We have our little vision of what's to come, and I think it's gonna turn out pretty good!"

- Taja Wiggins on OUR NEW HOME

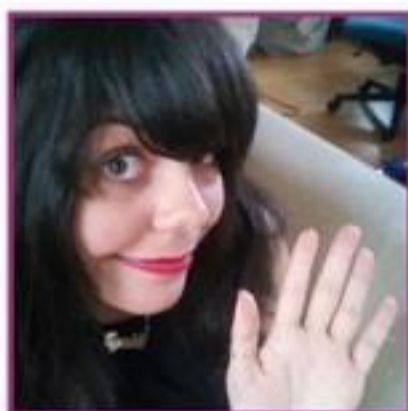
MEET OUR INTERNS

JAHEIDA CHUNG



My name is Jaheida Chung. I am junior at Springfield College. I have a minor in dance and I am Majoring in Rehab and Disabilities. I am a member of the SC Dancers and the SC cheerleading team. I have been dancing for 11 years now and I love it. When I graduate I want to move to NY and join a dance company. I also want to work with kids in either dance therapy or in rehab and counseling.

SAMI DIAZ



I'm Sami Diaz and I've been working for the Performance Project for the past two semesters. My current studies include creative writing, literature, and visual culture at Hampshire College. I was born and raised in Manhattan, but I moved to Brooklyn in high school. I like clothes shopping, used books, and cartoons. My favorite movie is Beetlejuice, my favorite band is My Chemical Romance, and my favorite TV show is Supernatural. I'm the head copy-editor for the campus newspaper, The Climax.

TARA MORRISON



I am a second year student at Hampshire College studying expressive arts, with a specific focus in psychology and art therapy. The visual arts are my primary focus, and I love to make, create, and help others to create. I am interested in how self-expression can be used to process and heal, and the power of being honest with oneself and others through expressive mediums. Working with First Gen means

that I get to see directly how the process of creating a performance brings the group together as people as well as artists, and also creates an incredibly moving and beautiful final product. First Gen is truly a collaboration of wonderful people working really hard, and I love feeling like I can help the group to get where they want to be.

GILLIAN CANNON



My name is Gillian Cannon and I am a fourth year student at Hampshire College in Amherst, MA. For my final undergraduate project, I am writing and directing a play that is based on oral history style interviews I conducted with four people in a women's prison in California. I am committed to the struggle against oppression in all its forms and I am constantly working to become a more educated and aware person in order

to best do that work. First Generation is one of the ways that I am involved in art making and social justice. My involvement with the group has offered me many life lessons as well as inspiration for my own art and activism. I am a young queer woman and am very proud. I love colors and chocolate and spicy food and penguins.

MEET OUR INTERNS (CONTINUED)



ELISSA GALLUP I am an energetic young woman and a Western Mass transplant, originally from North Carolina. "Variety" should be my middle name to explain the many things I've done in my life. My experiences range from serving in the Peace Corps in Kenya as a Deaf Education volunteer teaching about HIV, to working on hiking trails on Bumpkin Island in the Boston Harbor, to spending a year training with Double Edge Theatre in beautiful Ashfield. I enjoy hiking, being left-handed, and good, vegetarian food. From my childhood days of making up plays and dances with my younger sister in the living room, I have always had a passion for performance and movement. Now I am pursuing Master's degree from SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, VT and am so excited to be working with Julie, James and First Gen!



SIKENDRO LEICHOMBAM I was born and brought up in a small town called Imphal, the capital of Manipur, located at the far Northeast corner of India. I moved to Springfield this September to pursue a Masters Degree in Social Work at Springfield College. When I was 13 years old, I visited a place of extreme poverty. People were unable to attain basic human needs. At the time I didn't know what to do or how to help them, but I instinctually vowed to do something to make a change, and to give my help to those who need it the most. In pursuit of this journey I traveled to many parts of my country and observed many social problems. I decided to devote my professional career to social service, as I am happiest when I can apply myself to enhancing the livelihood of a community. I enjoy traveling, learning new languages, and learning about different cultures. I believe in culture, peace and education. I have always been interested in the arts and working with diverse communities. This makes First Generation a perfect job for me!



IDALIA BUDDINGTON My name is Idalia Buddington and I am a third year student at Hampshire College in Amherst, MA. My studies are concentrated in both dance and history. In terms of dance, I am interested in making dances that comment on the social and political injustices that have been committed against people (particularly people of color) from the antebellum period to the present. When it comes to history, I am focused on exploring social movements from a historical perspective in order to determine which strategies proved successful and unsuccessful in organizing for social change. I am currently participating in a performance project called Let the Body Speak, which relates immensely to First Generation's process of devising theater that seeks to bring attention to power struggles, diversity, and oppression. I am so excited to get more involved with the Performance Project in 2012!

ENSEMBLE MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



STICKEE GADSON I finished my culinary certificate, and now I'm starting a pastry program. I'm really excited to learn all the cool stuff about designing pastry and making desserts and working with chocolate and sugar and all that fun stuff. My end goal with the pastries and baking is to hopefully open up a community café. I want to open a space where it's really cool and politically themed, with articles from like Angela Davis and the Black Panthers and the Young Lords and pretty much focused on the age range from high school to college level, just like young adult oriented. Not necessarily organic but really good quality baked goods. A place where people can meet and just chill, grab a coffee or a donut. Just a real community based strong safe space where people can come to chillax for a little while. Part of the pastry school program, intense training, there's a five-month internship I have to do and I want to take it in San Diego, California. And go out there and like, the west coast, take a little bit of that back here. Use my time in baking pastry to explore different styles... I really want to know what's going on in Southern California.



This program is supported by the Springfield Cultural Council and the Northampton Arts Council

First Generation is an intensive, arts and youth leadership program in Springfield, Massachusetts that 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 theatre, movement and spoken-word. Our performances engage audiences in dialogue about critical social and cultural issues.