

Community Resource Group – Bios

Rachel Diacogiannis

Rachel Diacogiannis is 19 years old and currently attending Boise State University. She is a kinesiology major and ROTC cadet. She enjoys volunteering and working in her community and can't wait to learn from others and evolve her leadership skills through this opportunity.

Ryan Gage

Ryan Gage's career as a tenor has taken him throughout the United States for recitals, orchestral dates, chamber music, opera, and oratorio appearances. A native of Oklahoma, Mr. Gage studied Music Education and Vocal Performance at Southern Nazarene University. He currently serves as Minister of Worship and Creative Arts at Nampa College Church of the Nazarene. Now in his 17th year of ministry, Mr. Gage has served at churches in Oklahoma, Texas, Florida and Kansas, and in addition has led worship for retreats, conferences and workshops. In the fall of 2018 he began teaching as an adjunct instructor of voice at Northwest Nazarene University. Mr. Gage has produced a variety of productions and performances including seasonal events, dinner theatre, and summer theatre projects for students. Ryan resides in Nampa with his wife Ashley and their four kids, Keller, Kerrington, Keefer, and Keegan.

Jessica Harned

Jessica Harned has been fortunate to begin her career in Boise, Idaho. She first became a member of the Boise Philharmonic in 2016, and since, has performed with ensembles including Boise Baroque, Opera Idaho, McCall Summer Symphony, Ballet Idaho, Idaho Shakespeare Festival, and along with Mariachi Sol de Acapulco, won the Governors Award for Musical Excellence in 2018.

To Jessica, education is of the utmost importance. In 2020, Jessica received her Masters degree from Boise State, after having won the Boise Philharmonic Graduate Quartet Fellowship. This experience emboldened her to speak up about the life and experiences of the BIPOC community within classical music. In 2019, she won an Alexa Rose Foundation grant, which offered her support to further her reach in this area. While enjoying her time fostering conversation about representation in classical music, on the radio, in the classroom, and within her own work, Jessica also delights in cultivating a space for growth and empowerment in her established violin/piano studio.

Outside of her performance life, Jessica enjoys being creative, and experiencing music in diverse musical spaces. She regularly collaborates with composers, creates music

videos, and has recorded and performed with various bands and jazz ensembles. One of her favorite experiences was collaborating with the local band Regular Sounds, and bringing life to the music of the Electric Light Orchestra.

Understanding that her career is multi-faceted, and being very proud of that, Jessica believes that this diverse path has helped her become the musician and person she is today, and she is looking forward to seeing what the future holds. In the meantime, you'll find Jessica traveling, cooking, reading Afro-futurist SiFi, and enjoying great conversation.

Miranda Heikkilä-Palacio

Miranda Heikkilä-Palacio is a queer performer, event organizer, content creator, gamer, and activist. She is co-founder of Corevette, a collective of creatives that use performance, gatherings, and art as a vehicle to empower authentic self-expression and radical inclusivity. Pronouns: She/Her, They/Them. Photo credit Khoa Nguyen (IG: @thekhoalabear)

Stephanie Laishy

Stephanie Laishy, A native of Boise, Idaho, is the lead singer and principal dancer for her Flamenco ensemble, Shimi Tree. Stephanie frequently tours as a soloist and teacher in Flamenco's West Coast communities. She was invited as stage manager and guest dancer with Jerez, Spain based group Familia Bermudez in 2013, and 2015 at the Obwalden Cultural Festival in Giswil, Switzerland. Her mastership comes from a deep connection with her hispanic roots as well as her respect and dedication to those that have taught her: award-winning artists La Chiqui de Jerez (singer) Maria del Mar Moreno (dancer) Antonio El Pipa (Dancer) and Los Hermanos Tota (rhythm/voice).

Erika M. Santillan

Erika M. Santillan, (She/They) is a BIPOC artist residing, dancing, playing music and working towards building dynamic communities across the Treasure Valley. Erika has played bass guitar for 19 years and has continued traveling, touring and learning various musical traditions across the country and U.S./Mexican Border. As an avid musician and artist, the heart of her work lies in building community, one relationship at a time. She has traveled to Oaxaca & Veracruz to learn the folkloric tradition of Son Jarocho and participated in a stage production at the 7th Festival at the Tesechoacan river in Playa Vicente, Veracruz México. She is a proud Alumni from the Evergreen State College in Olympia where she first began building her experiences in community organizing. She was a volunteer, a student, and assistant to the faculty of the program Gateways for Incarcerated Youth that operated under the Center for Community Based

Learning & Action (CCBLA) at Evergreen. Her 4r year tenure at the CCBLA enabled her to navigate community resources and helped build a network at her college where students could provide service to vulnerable populations such as formerly incarcerated youth, women & children, immigrants, refugees and the homeless. She is a proponent of putting education into practice as an advocate of non-traditional learning methodologies & decolonizing spaces. In 2018, Erika became a founding member of the Vomito Local art collective, in Lennox, CA where she grew up. Alongside other artists and lifelong residents of Lennox, they proudly organized the 1st "Noche de Rasquaches" in which intergenerational community members could participate in an official artist showcase for the first time in their lives. During her leadership in Vomito Local she gained valuable experience in grassroots organizing focused on creating access to art where barriers may exist, and in taking a lead in officiating & showcasing the voices that need to be heard, and/or often misrepresented. Erika currently lives in Eagle, Idaho with her loving husband, 2 cats and a dog named Worf. She serves delicious espresso by day and dances ballet folklorico by night!

Gennean Scott, Facilitator

Gennean Scott is currently serving as the Vice President of Human Capital and Inclusion for the Omaha Performing Arts. She has recently been appointed the Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for the Broadway League. In her current position, Gennean oversees organizational-wide equity work that spans all departments, to advance inclusion and equity in community engagement, programming, marketing/communications, and philanthropy. Omaha Performing Arts, implements and supports a variety of equity and inclusion initiatives, including the creation of Voices Amplified, an arts and social justice initiative.

Gennean's commitment to inclusion and equity includes spending over twenty years working on various racial and social justice initiatives in community organizations and professionally in non-profit and education sectors. Her career began early on in college when she became Program Chair for Omaha Healthy Start, a community organization aimed to reduce the rate of infant mortality – with special attention on lowering the number of infant deaths that occur among Black families. She served as a Higher Education Counselor for the Chicano Awareness Center. Where she assisted, in partnership with local colleges and universities, the development of Latinx youth conferences with over 100's of students attending annually. From there she continued after college by teaching and becoming an administrator in Title I schools promoting equity and inclusion in the Omaha school system.

In 2013, Gennean founded and directed a non-profit dance school, to promote equity in the arts to Omaha youth. Gennean is a co-founder of the Black Arts Leadership Alliance (BALA) a network of black professionals in the Midwest dedicated to empowering, training, recruiting, and retaining African Americans/Blacks in arts administration. She

also serves as a co-founder of the Nebraska Association of African American Human Resources Professionals, an organization designed to center Black voices in human resources and Blacks in the workplace. Ms. Scott is active in Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc and The Links, Inc where she serves as the local Chair of The Arts.

Gennean has been a keynote speaker, facilitator, trainer, and consultant for organizations and businesses that want to promote an inclusive work environment for their staff and consumers.