



SPRINGBOARD Social Innovation - Forum

January Theme: *Arts as Vision*

~The 2nd Wednesday of each month~

Panelist, Workshop Presenter, Performer, and Artist Bios

Panel Moderator

o **Suzie Boss, Journalist and Springboard Innovation Board Director**



- o Suzie is a veteran journalist who writes about teaching and learning in the 21st century. With Jane Kraus, she co-authored a book on using technology to empower teaching and learning called *Reinventing Project-Based Learning*. From interviewing and observing hundreds of teachers in both formal and informal contexts, she has seen how innovative approaches to education can engage learners and transform communities. She has been an editor for the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, a freelance writer contributing to wide range of publications, and a community college instructor.

Panelists

o **Melinda Pittman, Artistic Director of BroadArts Theatre, broadarts.org**



- o The mission of BroadArts Theatre is to create artistic events that celebrate the impact women and minorities make as we all work together to create a more equal, peaceful, compassionate and just society. BroadArts Visionary Salons initiate conversation between the audience and community speakers about how we each personally and organizationally contribute to a better future for Portland and our world.
- o Melinda E. Pittman is an award-winning writer, director, composer, producer and performer of original theatre, music, comedy and satire. Her awards include city-wide Best Director award, Outstanding Theatre Production Award from KISN radio Arts Series, and Oregon Book Award for Best Drama. As artistic director of BroadArts, Melinda has written, composed and produced *Homeland In~Security* (2003), a musical "dramady" about historic women peacemakers, *FAT & SASSY*, (2004) a musical about women of substance and who's getting rich on America getting fat and (2005) *AmBushed!* In 2006, BroadArts Theatre received a commission from the City of Portland visionPDX project to create an interactive cabaret musical, *If I Were The Queen of this Forest!* which Melinda also wrote.

o **Romeo Sosa, Director of Voz – Workers' Rights Education Project portlandvoz.org**



- o Romeo is a Guatemalan Mayan with a vast array of experience in grassroots organizing. He worked as a rural researcher and indigenous rights organizer and developing popular education materials in many non-profits in the rural community. He also advocated for displaced people at la Organización de Servicios de Solidaridad, Mexico. He uses art to display and connect issues of immigration and globalization and to communicate and educate about the economic disparities in rural communities of Guatemala. He is currently the Director/Organizer of VOZ.

- o The mission of VOZ is to empower immigrant workers, particularly day laborers, to gain control over their working conditions and to exercise their collective power to address the issues they face. VOZ is a worker-led organization whose membership organizes to secure and promote their rights through organizing, leadership development, and community education.

- o **Sonali S. Balajee, Health Equity Policy Analyst for Multnomah County and Independent Consultant**



- o Sonali S. Balajee specializes in the fields of community engagement of diverse populations, arts and community collaborations, and creative strategizing. Over the past seven years, she has managed and led a large-scale community visioning project with the Mayor's Office and City of Portland, worked on school policy issues with the Multnomah County on Commission on Children and Families, organized grassroots community actions in Northeast Portland, and worked in the area of Prevention and Education with Cascade AIDS Project. Her educational background is in Education and Reform, and Business (Marketing, Management, and International Studies). Her arts background is in dance, piano, voice, and creative writing. Ms. Balajee is currently consulting with Centennial Learning Center and their school district on addressing racism in their educational system.

- o **Sally Peters, Launcher of SpeakArtLoud**



- o In every culture, the arts have been a vehicle for self-expression. SpeakArtLoud wants to use the arts to amplify the voices and visions of women who are not always heard by their fellow community members. Sally sees communities being enriched and transformed with new ideas as her two-stage art project unfolds. First, artists will lead women participants through an art-making activity that will allow them to express their vision for a future they want. Then, community members will experience this art. Depending on local context, the art event may take the shape of a play, musical performance, visual art exhibit, or other expression. Whatever the genre, the art will generate dialogue and create new community connections that will transform both artists and audiences.

Workshop Presenters

- o **SCRAP--The School and Community Reuse Action Project, www.scrapaction.org**



- o SCRAP is a 501(c)(3) non-profit and whose mission is to inspire creative reuse and environmentally sustainable behavior by providing educational programs and affordable materials to the community.

- o **Sarah Dougher, p:ear**



- o p:ear builds positive relationships with homeless and transitional youth, ages 15 to 23, through education, art and recreation to affirm personal worth and create more meaningful and healthier lives. To truly exit homelessness, kids must develop the internal strength, skills and foresight to make healthy choices. p:ear provides a safe, non-judgmental environment in which youth are trusted to outgrow unproductive and harmful behaviors. We offer individualized mentoring and education programs in a safe, reliable and intimate setting designed to foster trust, build self-esteem and to teach homeless and transitional kids – who all too often are regarded by society as disposable, "hopeless cases" – that they are valuable individuals with a future who have something vital to contribute to this community.

- o **Debbie Caselton, Chair of Diverse and Empowered Employees of Portland (DEEP)**



- o Diverse and Empowered Employees of Portland (DEEP) is a networking resource and support mechanism developed by City employees for City employees. The mission of DEEP is to assist the City of Portland in creating and enhancing a work environment that is inclusive and supportive of the City's diverse workforce. DEEP is committed to working to support the City of Portland's interest in attracting, developing, and sustaining a diverse workforce committed to quality public service.

- o Debbie has worked for the City of Portland's Bureau of Environmental Services for over six years as community relations for the Willamette River Combined Sewer Overflow Tunnel Program. Debbie spends her volunteer time as the Chair for the employee-driven Diverse and Empowered Employees of Portland (DEEP) and the LGBTQ & Friends Affinity Group for the City of Portland and as Secretary of the School and Community Reuse Action Project (SCRAP) Board of Directors. Debbie was one of the founders and served as the one of the Directors of the Portland Lesbian & Gay Film Festival for over 10 years; served as the Vice President of the Portland Area Business Association for several years; and the Chair of the Lesbian Community Project for several years.

- o **Chris Cearnal and Alex Ney, My Story, mystoryworkshops.org**



- o My Story is a nonprofit arts organization that teaches photography to underrepresented Portland youth. My Story uses photography as a tool to engage the imagination and creativity of young people, offering them opportunities to engage in positive activities; to build meaningful relationships within their communities; and to gain confidence in themselves and their ability to succeed. Each of their workshops culminates in a community photo exhibit, where young people take pride in their accomplishments, and communities celebrate the insights and talents of their future leaders.

- o **Melinda Pittman, Artistic Director of BroadArts Theatre, [.broadarts.org](http://broadarts.org)**

- o See Panelist Bios

Performers

- o **Veterans For Peace 72, vfpchapter72.org (Poetry and music)**



- o Veterans For Peace is a national organization founded in 1985. The organization includes men and women veterans of all eras and duty stations including from the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), World War II, the Korean, Vietnam, Gulf and current Iraq wars as well as other conflicts. Our collective experience tells us wars are easy to start and hard to stop and that those hurt are often the innocent. Thus, other means of problem solving are necessary.

- o **PHAME Academy Choir, [.phameacademy.org](http://phameacademy.org)**



- o PHAME Academy is dedicated to enriching the lives of developmentally challenged citizens of all ages through participation in performing and fine arts. Drama, music, art, writing and other creative expressions offer new endeavors for the students. They also prove to have a positive impact on self-esteem, social and communication skills and physical ability. PHAME also provides a place to meet new friends. Age group is all-inclusive; race, creed and color is not a question.

- o **Melinda Pittman, Artistic Director of BroadArts Theatre, [.broadarts.org](http://broadarts.org)**

- o See Panelist Bios

Community Art Exhibit Artists

- o My Story
 - o www.mystoryworkshops.org
- o Voz Artists – Latino Day Laborers
 - o [://www.portlandvoz.org/category/art-writing-and-music/](http://www.portlandvoz.org/category/art-writing-and-music/)
- o Leave No Plastic Behind
 - o [.LNPB.org](http://LNPB.org)
- o SUN Community School Students
 - o Teacher - Lisa Taylor Teacher
- o World Café Vision into Action banners
 - o [://www.visionpdx.com/images/worldcafe/](http://www.visionpdx.com/images/worldcafe/) (Image 75)
- o Alec Neal - [.alecneal.etsy.com](http://alecneal.etsy.com)
- o Loren Guerriero
- o Karl Ramentol - [://www.coroflot.com/lequendi1](http://www.coroflot.com/lequendi1)

- Tiffany Chantel - [.tiffanychantel.com](http://tiffanychantel.com)
- Sukita Crimmel (poetry)
- Eli Corbin (poetry)
- Mark Alter (poetry)