

2015

Country Day Creative Arts

Artists / Teachers

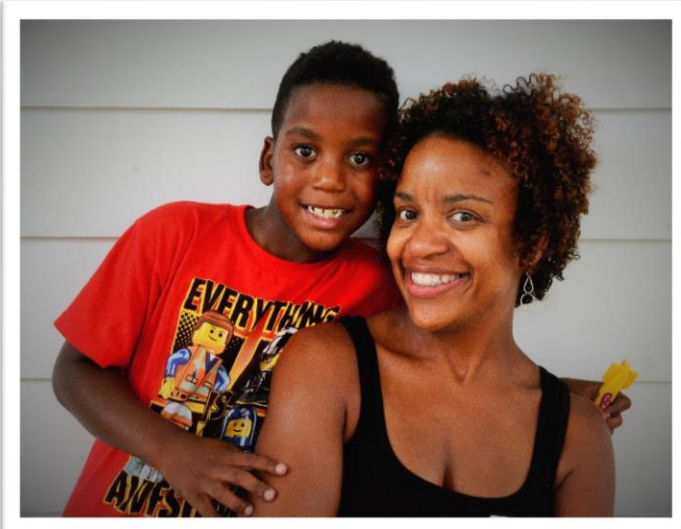


***We thank the 38 Interns of the
2015 Country Day Creative Arts Program
for all of their help and support!***

Nicole Boyd Buckels

Kenner, LA

Musical Theater



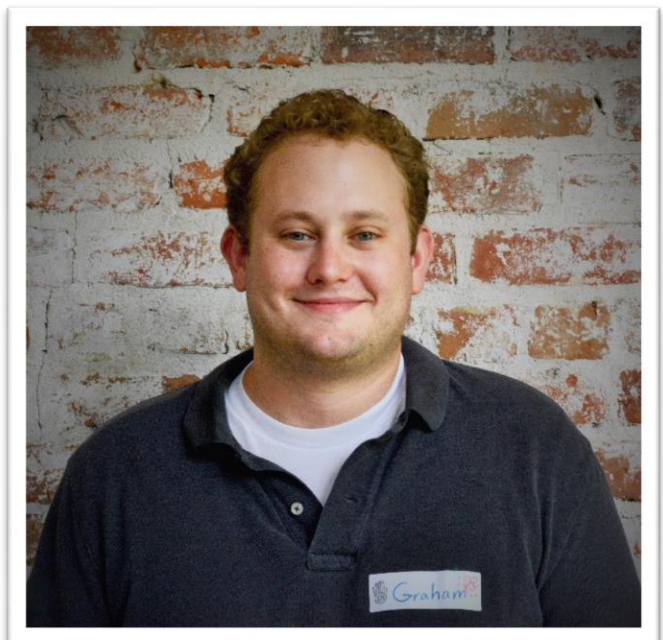
Nicole Boyd Buckels discovered her love for dance over twenty years ago. She studied and graduated from N.O.C.C.A and attended UC Los Angeles where she majored in dance. She has choreographed local productions such as *The Rocky Horror Show*, *Dog Fight* and *Ain't Misbehavin'*, all under the direction of Tim Baker. She has also performed locally in various musicals such as *Pippin'*, *Nine*, *Into the Woods* and *How to Succeed In Business*. She has assisted in choreography and had roles in *Anything Goes* and *Mack and Mabel* both performed in upstate New York. Nicole is currently a faculty member at Lusher Charter School and Tulane University. This is her first year teaching at CDCA.

Graham Burk

New Orleans, LA

Theater

Graham Burk has recently returned to New Orleans after completing the Masters' program at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow, Scotland. He has performed as an actor in New York, London, Glasgow, Edinburgh, and various theatres across the U.S. He has taught theatre at Hynes Charter School and Lusher Charter School. Graham first experienced CDCA at the age of seven and he's thrilled to be a part of it again for the first time since he was an intern in 2001.



David Chervony

New Orleans, LA

Juggling



David Chervony is a props manipulator from Chicago, Illinois and has been teaching and performing for eleven years. He specializes in diabolo, poi, devil sticks, and pin juggling. David is a recent graduate from Indiana University with a degree in animal behavior.

David can't wait to see what CDCA creates this summer!

Patti Constantin

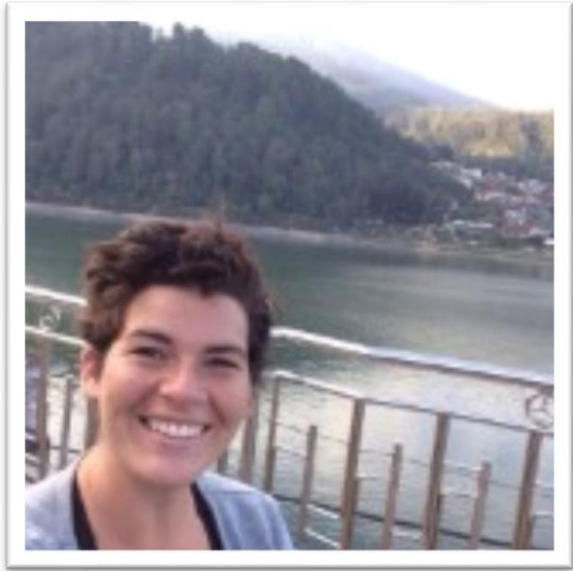
New Orleans, LA

Cooking

Owner of Patti Constantin Designs and Catering, Inc., Patti Constantin is a former restaurant owner and chef whose distinctive catering style combines elegant presentation with high quality, largely organic cuisine. Twenty plus years ago, CDCA's director, Sara, saw Patti across a crowded parking lot and called out to her, "You're coming to work at Creative Arts." Despite her busy schedule, Patti has been at CDCA ever since.



Hali Dardar
New Orleans, LA
Robotics



Hali Dardar is a Louisiana native who is interested in projects on the intersection of art and engineering. She works with software, hardware, video, sound, and paper to create sculptures and stories. She is interested in digital preservation, cultural interaction, origami paper folding, digital projection mapping, and languages.

Christina da Silva
New Orleans, LA
Capoeira

Christina da Silva, and her husband, Mestrando Cocada (aka Rogerio Valencio da Silva), offer Capoeira classes for kids and adults in Uptown New Orleans and at a few local schools. Mestrando Cocada began training at the age of 14 in his city of Goioere, in Southern Brazil. At the age of 18, he opened his own academy and implemented a social project in ten schools around the city. The programs are highly successful today with over 500 students ranging in age from five to 15.



Toby David
New Orleans, LA
Theater



Toby David is an actor, storyteller and master of ceremonies in New Orleans. He is the architect and host of *The Weekly Revue*, a monthly variety show in New Orleans produced in association with Court 13. Toby is ready.

Lauren Gehman
New Orleans, LA
Assistant Director

As a member of Country Day's faculty for 13 years, Lauren Gehman currently serves as the head of the counseling department. After graduating from Loyola University, Lauren joined Teach for America where she spent two years as a fourth grade teacher in an under-resourced school in Washington, D.C. After fulfilling the commitment, Lauren returned to New Orleans to attend Tulane's School of Social Work. Lauren worked for years as an adolescent specialist at Jewish Family Service prior to joining the Country Day community.



Susan Gisleson

New Orleans, LA
Visual Arts

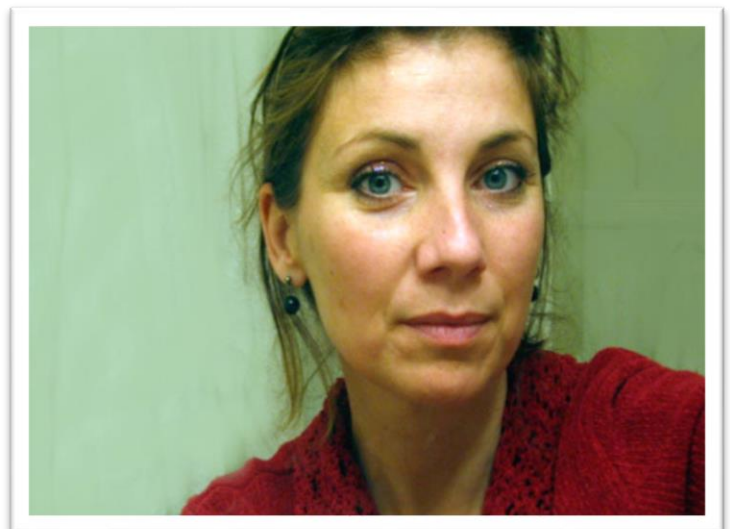


Susan Gisleson is a New Orleans based artist and educator who finds it difficult, if not impossible, to pass a pile of trash- especially if it has old cardboard boxes that look as though they have been recently excavated from someone's attic. She makes things with her hands using anything and everything to get her point across which is usually something about how extraordinary this whole world is- for the most part- and how each of us is really a universe. Gisleson has the greatest job in the world: she teaches art full time at Metairie Park Country Day School to middle and upper school students. She is a founding member of Press Street and Antenna Gallery and one of the many organizers of a 24 hour event called Draw-a-thon that occurs every year. One of her favorite places in the world is CDCA.

Patsy Grace received a BFA and a MFA from The School of Visual Arts in Manhattan. She has two self-released CD's entitled *Name Her Lucky* and *Toodleloo, too*. Her children's book, *The Wise Sophia*, has been performed as a puppet play at Manhattan Theater Source in New York and various venues throughout New Orleans. Her work has been featured in a variety of publications and exhibitions including The Gambit Weekly, Mignon Faget, Harrah's Casino and Anthropologie. She continues to perform live throughout New Orleans.

Patsy Grace

Metairie, LA
Visual Arts



Ryan Groendyk

New Orleans, LA

Visual Arts



Ryan Groendyk is an interdisciplinary visual artist living and working in New Orleans. Ryan has worked as an electronic art and sculpture instructor at Michigan State University and as an independent graphic designer. He loves collaborating to accomplish lofty goals and has never met an artistic medium he didn't enjoy. When not working as an artist, you can find Ryan cooking vegan food, cycling, and enjoying the streets of New Orleans.

Sophie Johnson

New Orleans, LA

Creative Writing / Books

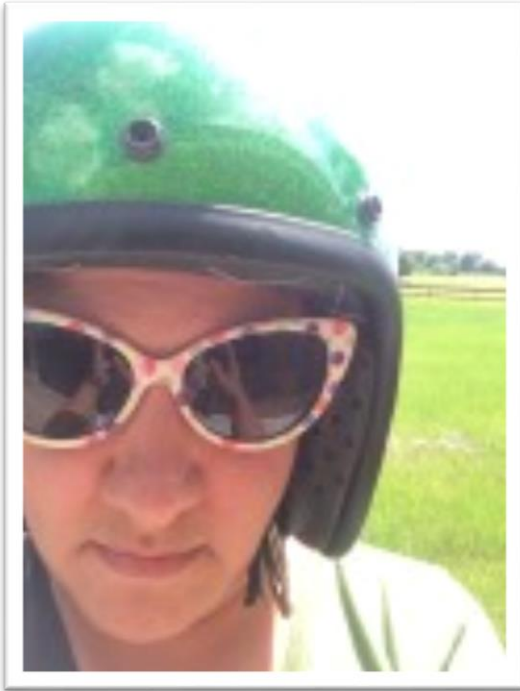
Sophie Lucido Johnson is the Editor-In-Chief of the magazine *Neutrons Protons*, where she publishes creative nonfiction, humor writing, and comics. She's also a stand-up comedian, a widely-published writer and illustrator, and a long-time teacher in New Orleans. She has worked with KidSmART for the past five years to develop the *With Feeling* curriculum, integrating visual arts and social emotional learning. She definitely believes in magic and she likes to name her cats after jazz musicians.



Kylee Kidder

New Orleans, LA

SINK



Kylee Kidder moved to New Orleans to complete a Master's degree at UNO, in Arts Administration. She works in Festival Production managing volunteer programs and children's activities most recently with French Quarter Festival, Satchmo Summer Fest, Bayou Boogaloo and the Arts Council's Palmer Park Art Market. Mostly she likes fun, sun, music, food and goofing around. Kylee is very excited to be working with the CDCA this year.

Kate Lacour earned a B.A. in Biology and Psychology from Oberlin College and a M.A. in Art Therapy from the School of Visual Arts, New York. She is a cartoonist, board-certified art therapist, science lover, and amateur entomologist. She loves creating and discovering secret worlds, characters and creatures. Kate's passion is teaching others to move their fantasies from their minds into the minds of others through the medium of art. She creates and teaches comics, claymation, puppetry, sculpture, and painting. Kate leads social skills and sensory integration art therapy groups for kids with autism. She also hosts the art therapy table at the Children's Museum of Louisiana's monthly Sensory Friendly Family Fun Night.

Kate Lacour

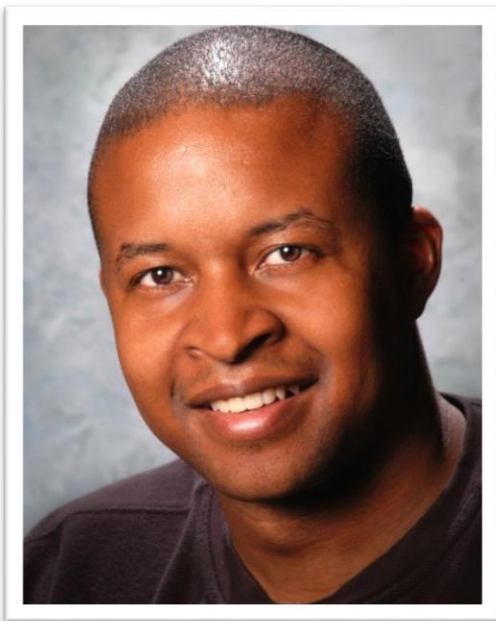
New Orleans, LA

Comics



Don Lewis

New Orleans, LA
Theater



Donald Lewis, Jr. is a graduate of N.O.C.C.A. and attended the College of Santa Fe, NM and UNO. He performed in the New Orleans premier of “Fragments.” He has performed with the Alliance for Community Theaters and received their “Big D” Lifetime Achievement Award. He has performed with the Anthony Bean Theater Company, Chakula Cha-Jua Theater Company, Cripple Creek, Young Audiences, Tulane Shakespeare Festival, Jefferson Performing Arts Society, and many others. His writing credits include co-writing, “A Dose of Reality” by Cast Productions and “On one Foot” with Dr. Michael Chafetz which premiered at Dillard University for their annual conference on African-American Jewish Relations. Donald was the Head of the Theater Department of the Recovery School District’s Gifted and Talented Program. He is the current Stage Manager of the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival’s Kids Tent.

Melissa Licali

Metairie, LA
Sign Language

Melissa Licali is a Bully Preventionist and a Character Education Facilitator at a K-8 school on the West Bank of New Orleans, where she also teaches Sign Language as part of the 21st Century Program. Her love for Sign Language and Deaf Culture stems from having grown up with a deaf family member. Seeing the communication struggles firsthand for the hearing impaired has inspired Melissa to educate others about Deaf Awareness and the beautiful language of sign. She is very much looking forward to her first year at CDCA with the hope of having many more years to come.



John Lutz

New Orleans, LA
Computer Art



John Lutz is a math teacher at a local high school, with a keen interest in computer programming, robotics, and general tinkering. Before becoming a teacher, John spent 14 years performing as a professional Jazz musician in New Orleans, and therefore brings a spirit of creativity and spontaneity to his teaching. John shares his enthusiasm for programming, robotics, and chess with the students at his school in several after-school clubs and activities that he runs. He also volunteers his time for “Maker Krewe,” a local program which gives school-age children an opportunity to experiment with electronics.

Maritza Mercado-Narcisse has called New Orleans home since 1988. She has worked with a variety of local dance and theater artists including ArtSpot Productions, Moving Humans and Mondo Bizarro. Maritza has performed on the Jacob’s Pillow Inside/Out stage, The Kennedy Center Millennium stage and Piccolo Spoleto. She is a Louisiana Division of the Arts Fellow and has been a participant and faculty member of the Urban Bush Women’s Summer Leadership Institute in which she continues to explore the intersection between art and activism. In November 2014, she premiered *The Agency* presented by Dancing Grounds. This summer, Maritza premiered her company, the Narcisse | Movement Project.

Maritza Mercado-Narcisse

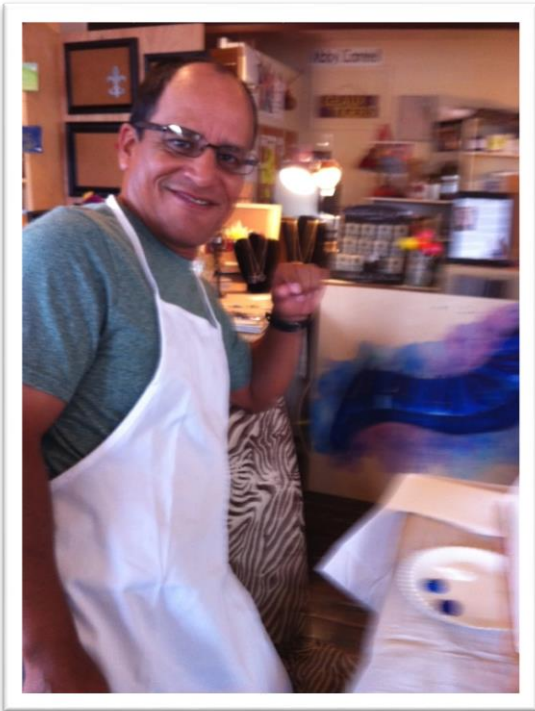
New Orleans, LA
Dance



Carlos Ochoa

Kenner, LA

Fencing & Gymnastics



Carlos Ochoa is a native of Lima, Peru and has been a physical education teacher and fencing coach for over 25 years. Carlos started fencing when he was seven years old and his specialties are teaching fencing, gymnastics, and soccer. Carlos started the first fencing club for children in the city of New Orleans. He has had several fencers participate as Junior Olympics' qualifiers and he himself is a former member of the Peruvian National Fencing Team. Carlos also introduced the first portable/mobile rock climbing wall in the greater New Orleans area.

Jeanie Osborne

Slidell, LA

Visual Arts

Jeanie Osborne is a full time art teacher at Louise S. McGehee School. In her studio, she paints, makes collages, and mosaics. She also loves to sew, garden, photograph, and sing! A teacher in New Orleans since 1984, she incorporates much of the CDCA spirit and philosophies in all of her classes. She exhibits her art in group exhibitions and sells her art in local art festivals.



Jess Pinkham

New Orleans, LA

Swimming



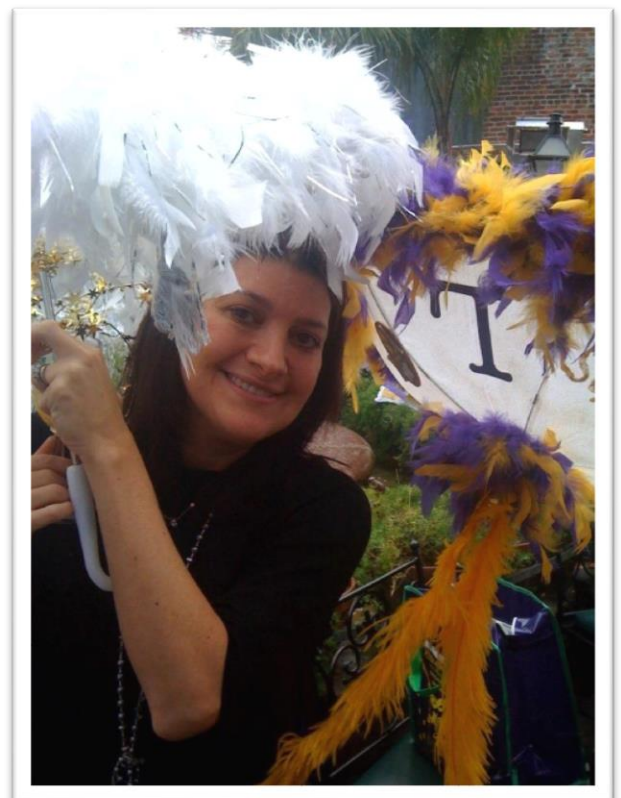
Jess grew up in New York but has been living in New Orleans since 2010. She always has a camera on her, and loves animals almost as much as she loves taking pictures. She tries to spend as much time in and around the water as possible. She works at a veterinary clinic but took time off again to plunge into the pool at CDCA, which she thinks is as fun as hugging a giraffe.

Keri Pollock

New Orleans, LA

Business Manager

Keri is so happy to be a part of CDCA for another glorious year! She is the Business Manager and can be found working, but really having fun, in the office. Prior to working at CDCA, Keri lived in Atlanta and worked at Eileen Fisher for 7 years selling clothing to boutiques in the Southeast. She wears her Eileen Fisher samples that she was busy hoarding during her working hours whenever she can. Outside of CDCA, Keri is busy being a mom to Max and Sarah.

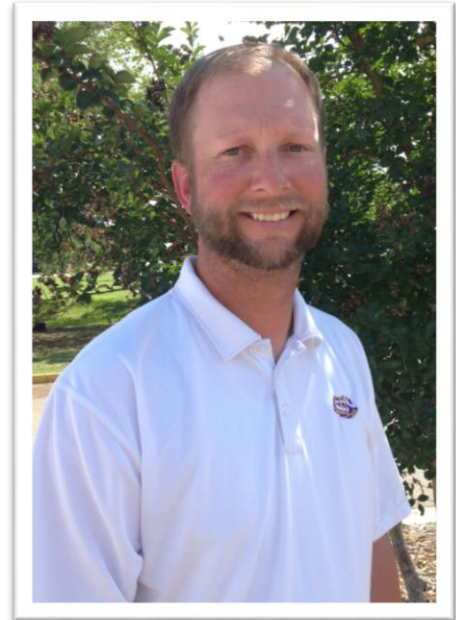


Michael Seely

New Orleans, LA

Team Games

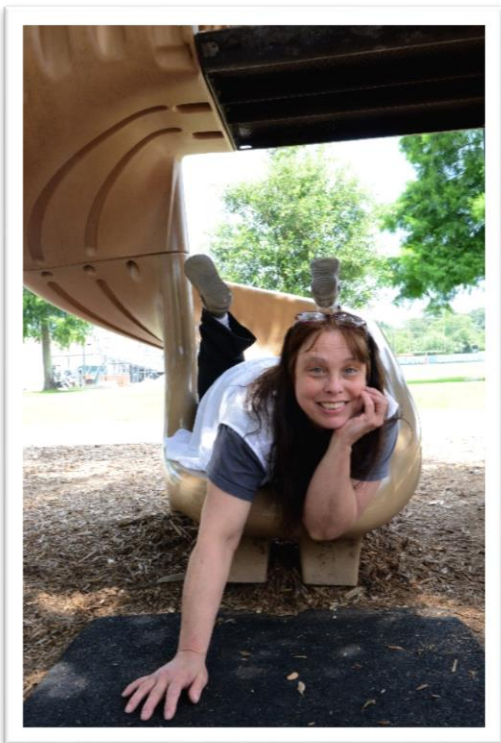
Mike has been an educator and coach in the New Orleans area for the last 14 years. He spent 10 years in Jefferson Parish schools as a physical education teacher and head coach of both baseball and football. Mike currently teaches science and coaches football and baseball at Hahnville High School. He believes that team sports can bring out the best in people and show how creative they can be to overcome the obstacles set out before them. Mike also enjoys the teamwork aspect of sports and helping people to learn to work together to overcome adversity. For Mike, "it's one of the greatest parts to being a coach and educator."



Jane Catherine Shaw

Brooklyn, NY

Puppetry



Jane Catherine Shaw has a MFA in Directing from Brooklyn College and is a member of the Lincoln Center Directors Lab. Cathy is curator of *La MaMa's Puppet Slam* and co-founded the *Voice 4 Vision Puppet Festival* in 2004. Recently, she was nominated for a 2014 New York Innovative Theatre Award for her work with Theodora Skipitres on *The Chairs*. She creates and directs her own work for puppet theatre, among them, *The Blue Marble*, *Following the Wind*, *Folktales of Asia and Africa*, *Pelandok the Mousedeer*, as well as adult works, *Thirst: Memory of Water*, *The Lone Runner*, *Bed of Light*, and *Universe Expanding*, all of which premiered at *La Mama*. She has been a teaching artist with the Brooklyn Arts Council for 5 years and with Shadow Box Theatre in NYC for 3 years. She has also conducted master classes at Rutgers, Barnard, Pratt Institute, and NYU.

Michael Skinkus has spent the last quarter century in New Orleans working as a band leader, recording artist and sideman as he deepened his studies of African Diasporic drumming styles. Over the past 25 plus years, Michael has apprenticed himself to many master drummers from Senegal, Haiti, Brazil, and Cuba. A dedicated player of Batá drums, Michael was sworn to the drums of his teacher in Havana, Cuba in 2001, earning the title of Omo Aña. Michael earned a Master's Degree in Latin American Ethnomusicology from Tulane University in 2003. A popular recording artist, Michael can be heard on recordings by the late Johnny Adams, Cubanismo, Dr. John, Irma Thomas, and the Radiators, to name just a few. Presently, Michael continues to perform and tour with many Latin and Jazz music ensembles, and leads his own band, Moyuba.

Michael Skinkus

New Orleans, LA
Music & Radio



Sara Stevenson

New Orleans, LA
Director



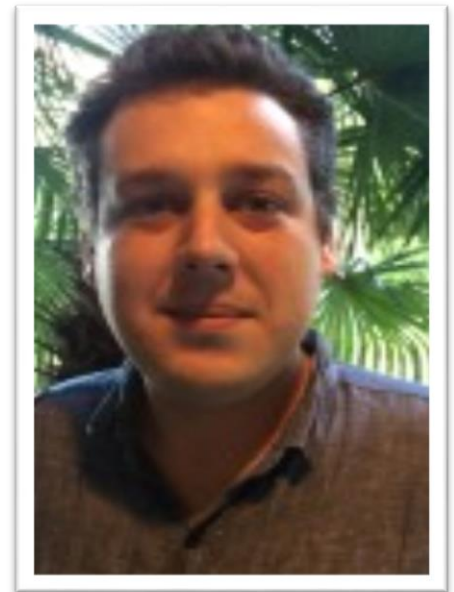
Previously a community organizer in the inner city of Cleveland, Ohio, Sara Stevenson has called New Orleans her home for over 30 years. Here, Sara worked with the New Orleans Arts Council, the Children's Arts Council, and the Contemporary Arts Center before she founded Country Day Creative Arts. Now in its' 33nd year, Sara has been the director of the program since its inception. She never ceases to be enamored by this "precious program" and is "humbled by the way CDCA changes lives."

Jeffrey Thurston is a working ceramicist and spends most of his time thinking about mud. He thinks mud is awesome, makes things out of mud, is usually covered in mud after a long day in the studio, and loves every second of it! After all, a simple medium like mud can be used, with just a little effort, to make something that will last for centuries. Jeffrey received a Bachelor of Fine Arts in ceramics from California State University in Chico, CA. He is currently living in New Orleans where he is a Master of Fine Arts candidate at Tulane University. Jeffrey's work has been exhibited in California, Texas, Oregon, Montana, and Colorado. His work is also part of the permanent collection of the Museum of Northern California Art.

Jeffrey Thurston

New Orleans, LA

Ceramics



Elise Toups

New Orleans, LA

Visual Arts



Elise has a background in Psychology and Painting from Louisiana State University graduating in 2005. She completed her Masters in Studio Art at Michigan State University in 2014. Her Louisiana roots influence her work and masquerade plays a reoccurring role. She will happily share her costume box, wigs, and estate sale finds with others. Bouncing between painting, sculpture, video, performance, and social engagement keeps her absorbed in endless art possibilities. She has shown and has work in museums, galleries, and private collections across the United States, and recently had a performance piece in Brazil.

Ruby Troyano

New Orleans, LA

Visual Arts / Wood Working

Ruby Troyano is a native New Orleanian who grew up spending her summers in the Country Day Creative Arts Program. She attended the College for Creative Studies in Detroit, MI where she received her BFA. After spending some time traveling the country side, Ruby moved back to New Orleans to be a part of the unique vibrant culture here. During the year, Ruby teaches Visual Arts to elementary students at Bricolage Academy.



Julie Wallace

Sedona, AZ

Yoga / Visual Arts / Costuming



Julie Wallace is the owner of Creative Life Studies, an arts and yoga studio in Sedona, Arizona, where she lives, teaches Bikram Yoga, and spends hours hiking in the sublime terrain of Northern Arizona's red rock country. Julie has been teaching visual arts classes and sharing her love of the creative spirit and art making process at Country Day Creative Arts since the summer of 1999. Each year she is motivated to return to CDCA because she places the highest value on working within a community of individuals who possess amazing creativity, spirit and integrity.

Irma Watson

Kenner, LA

Fencing / Gymnastics

Irma Watson is a native of Lima, Peru and was a physical education teacher for 42 years. She began gymnastics at the age of 8 and has been in love with the art ever since. As she honed her craft as a rhythmic gymnast, she also learned how to fence for her high school team. Chosen for her gymnastics skills, Irma was placed on the Peruvian Pan American team and went to Mexico to compete against gymnasts from around the world. Shortly after arriving to America she learned how to play tennis and joined a dance team where she excelled and brought home many medals for her victories. Irma never misses a beat.



Bob Weisz

New Orleans, LA

Video



Bob Weisz is an internationally-despised cheesemaker who is hiding from the International Cheese Police (ICP) by teaching at CDCA. He moonlights as a gas lighter. He likes Bernie Mac, Burning Man, and Birmingham. He has one X chromosome and one Y chromosome. He is smarter than a 5th grader, but not a 6th grader — so this summer should be a real learning experience!

Alison Wells

New Orleans, LA

Photography / Visual Arts

Alison Wells is a New Orleans native who has been spending her summers at CDCA since the early '90s turning watermelons into pin-hole cameras, printing portraits on eggs, and training ring leaders for a Flea Circus. When not at CDCA, Alison keeps busy teaching elementary arts at Louise S. McGehee School and raising a family in Bywater.



Abby Wetsman

New Orleans, LA

Fabric Art / Costuming



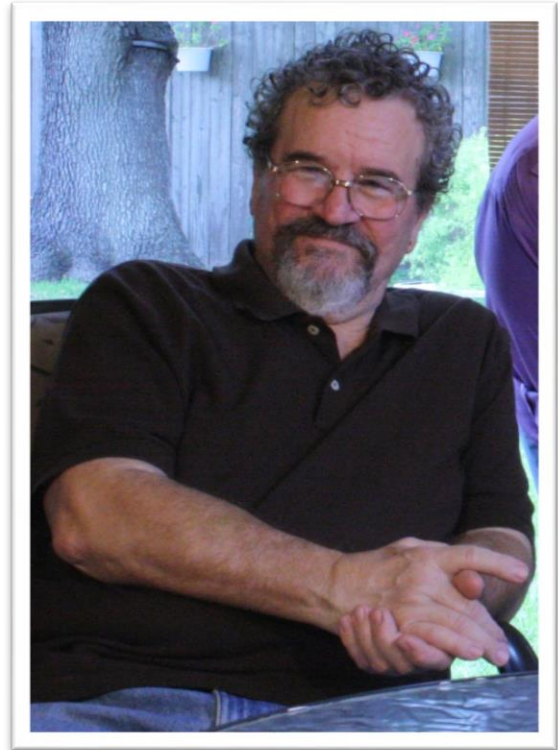
Abby Wetsman stepped into the world of CDCA as a 7 year old, constructing beds out of match boxes for the fairies that lived in one of her classrooms (there were tiny blue foot prints to prove it). She then continued, not missing a year, as an intern for 9 years. She graduated with a B.F.A. in Fibers from Savannah College of Art and Design. As a collector and analyzer of objects, words and ideas, she continues creating, often utilizing the processes of natural dye and embroidery to transform fiber and found material. She has just begun Derive Studio, where she teaches art classes to children after school and on Saturdays. She is excited to begin her first summer as senior staff.

Tom Woodin

New Orleans, LA

Ceramics

Tom Woodin taught in the gifted visual arts program in Orleans Parish for 14 years. He teaches carpentry and woodworking at Chalmette High School. With an MFA in sculpture from the University of New Orleans, Tom uses a wide array of materials in his work, which manifests in organic forms and man/nature themes.



The 2015 Country Day Creative Arts Program

is dedicated to

Leo Elston Jones

1955 - 2015

This year we celebrate the one and only Leo Jones. Leo impacted the lives of many hundreds of children in his 27 years at CDCA by guiding them through musical performances, acting and dance performances, and through song. Leo loved CDCA and we in turn loved him. This one's for you, Leo!

