

2022-2023 NEIGHBORHOOD VOICES – ORGANIZATION PROGRAMS

Panelist Bios

David Hunt

David Hunt serves as the Executive / Artistic Director with Prescott Circus Theatre, one of the country's long running social circus programs and the Bay Area's only circus arts organizations that directs 100% of its resources to no-cost programming for children and youth. He has coached youth and developed programming with Cirque du Soleil's Cirque du Monde program, the San Francisco Circus Center, Trapeze Arts, and the Oakland Fine Arts Summer School. He served on the Board of Directors for the American Youth Circus Organization from 2005-2010 and served on its national Social Circus committee from 2018 – 2021. His performing / production credits (juggling, slack rope) include co-founder of Circus Bella, Zoppé Italian Family Circus, the New Pickle Circus, Velocity Circus, and 20th Century Fox's "Water for Elephants" 2011.

Tammy Johnson

Tammy Johnson is an equity consultant, dancer, producer, culture keeper, writer and godmother extraordinaire. Johnson directed living wage, welfare rights, public education and election campaigns as community organizer in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She has partnered with World Trust and spent a decade at Race Forward as a national organizer, trainer, writer, and policy analyst. Johnson co-produced the television special Colorlines: Race and Economic Recovery with LinkTV. She was also the curator of creativesinplace.org, a listening project and digital platform that features the stories of Bay Area artists and their work. Johnson also enjoys helping others connect their behavior and actions to their bodies through somatic coaching and teaching belly dance. For twenty years Johnson has specialized in raks baladi, also known as Egyptian style belly dance. She is currently serving a residency with the Bridge Live Arts Community Engagement Program. The Oakland based Johnson embraces work that is healing and gives her joy.

Ismael Emiliano Plasencia

ISMAEL EMILIANO PLASENCIA (he/him) - I am currently the Senior Community & Engagement Manager at The Crucible. I have been with the organization for over 15 years and love everything about the work we do. I was born and raised here in Oakland and am also a product of OUSD schools. I have two young children 8 and 5 and will often be found showing them all the amazing things Oakland has to offer in hopes they love and appreciate the "Town" as much as I do.

Leva Zand

Leva Zand is a dedicated advocate for refugees, human rights, social justice, and the arts. As a former Iranian refugee, she earned a BA in Sociology from CSU Sacramento and a MA in Feminist and Religious Studies at UC Santa Barbara. Leva has directed a publication for the Institute for War and Peace Reporting, led a gender-awareness program for the Eurasia Foundation, produced the podcast "Narratives of Women," and directed a women's empowerment training program for the Nonviolence Initiative for Democracy. She is the founder and Executive Director of ARTogether and serves on several committees and boards, including Oakland Art Murmur, East Bay Refugee and Immigrant Forum, and Oakland AAPI Unite.