



COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION  
OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS

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**ValleyCreates appoints five local Community Advisors to reinforce commitment to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in the arts in the Pioneer Valley.**

SPRINGFIELD – The Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts’ newly launched arts initiative, ValleyCreates, has announced the appointment of five Community Advisors to support the initiative’s core mission to address the inequities and accessibility issues that face grassroots and underserved communities’ access to arts / culture funding and resources. The Community Advisors’ community representation and diverse expertise will be instrumental in shaping strategies for the initiative. Each Community Advisor will contribute up to eight hours per month for one year and will receive a stipend. ValleyCreates is supported by the Barr Foundation, through The Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts’ participation in the Creative Commonwealth Initiative.

“Our team at the Community Foundation believes that building authentic bridges to communities that may not have traditionally been served by our funding or programming is essential for our work,” says Janet Daisley, Vice President for Programs and Strategy. “We’ve identified the role of the Community Advisor to ensure that a wide range of nonprofits benefit from our Barr Foundation funding—including those who are traditionally underserved by community resources, and who haven’t historically had a seat at the table helping to shape funding strategies.”

Three of the Community Advisors will serve as liaisons to arts and creativity nonprofits, or fiscally-sponsored projects that reside in traditionally underserved communities. These Community Advisors will review grants, provide advice and feedback on programming and logistics to best support underrepresented nonprofits, and participate in planning meetings. A fourth Community Advisor will serve as the ValleyCreates Event Curator, and the fifth will serve as the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Facilitator.



**Gina Beavers**, Gina Beavers, Arts and Culture Editor for *The Valley Advocate*, will serve as a liaison to arts and culture organizations in Hampshire and Hampden counties. Gina is a visual artist, writer, and consultant who has lived in the Pioneer Valley for close to 30 years and has been widely exhibited in Western Mass. She is a past president of the Springfield Cultural Council and is a strategic planning committee member for the Springfield Central Cultural District. “I hope to serve as a bridge between artists of color in Hampden and Hampshire counties, and the nonprofits who may afford them fiscal support for their creative endeavors. By pinpointing the systemic shortcomings of funding criteria, we can explore more creative ways by which to fund these under-served artist communities.” [LinkedIn Profile](#)



**Vanessa Pabón-Hernandez**, Director of Community Engagement and Education for WGBY, will serve as the initiative's liaison to arts organizations in Hampden County. Vanessa is co-founder of WGBY's community-based digital storytelling project, TOLD (Telling Our Legacies Digitally) and is the executive producer of WGBY's award winning bilingual series, Presencia. Vanessa says that "with experience in graphic arts, web design, storytelling and television production, I've had the privilege of leading several projects in underserved diverse communities that integrate the arts and creative community in various ways. I'm looking forward to working with the team to reach underrepresented communities, identify projects making an impact, and explore opportunities where cross-collaboration between artist and organizations address community needs." [LinkedIn Profile](#)



**Matthew Glassman** is the Co-Artistic Director Ensemble of Double Edge Theater in Ashfield, and will serve as a liaison to rural arts and culture organizations with a focus on Franklin County. Matthew is very invested in how community engagement and development is happening in rural communities. "This is an amazing initiative. Strengthening and galvanizing our region's arts and culture assets will have a huge impact on the entire ecology. I look forward to working with artists and organizations and sharing what I've learned working deeply in the rural hill towns of Franklin County for almost twenty years now. I honestly believe our region could become a national model for the impact of a healthy arts and culture sector." [Professional Biography](#)



**Rosemary Tracy Woods** will serve as the ValleyCreates Events Curator. Tracy is the Executive Director and Chief Curator of the non-profit Art for the Soul Gallery in Springfield. She is an experienced arts curator and dedicated arts advocate with deep ties to the Springfield community. Tracy will advise on the curation of ValleyCreates events in the three counties, assist with outreach strategies, and identify community locations to host events. As an experienced arts curator and arts advocate in the Springfield community for over 15 years, Tracy has garnered the respect and trust of artists and community members alike for her long-standing commitment to collaborate, curate, and promote local, regional, and international artists of diverse backgrounds. [LinkedIn Profile](#)



**Kent Alexander** will serve as the initiative's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Facilitator. Kent brings with him years of experience conducting anti-racism and social justice-focused workshops for various local organizations. Kent also has an extensive theater background and has created over 200 plays addressing issues of workplace diversity. Kent will facilitate conversations on DEI with our ValleyCreates Advisory Group, as well as prospective ValleyCreates grantees and training recipients. Kent brings with him a "passionate determination to both

broaden and deepen the conversation and collaborative spirit between the Community Foundation and its many diverse partners, thereby continuing to advance the Foundation's commitment to equitably leveraging the sharing of resources between our ever-increasing diverse and interlocked communities." [LinkedIn Profile](#)

For more information on the ValleyCreates initiative, visit our webpage, <http://communityfoundation.org/nonprofits/creative-commonwealth/>

### **About the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts**

Founded in 1991, the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts administers a charitable endowment consisting of nearly 600 separately identified funds (\$142 million) serving the three counties bordering the Connecticut River in western Massachusetts (Hampden, Hampshire, and Franklin counties). For more information about the reach and impact of Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts, visit <http://communityfoundation.org>.

### **About Creative Commonwealth**

The Creative Commonwealth Initiative is a partnership between the Barr Foundation and five community foundations in Massachusetts. Rooted in the belief that investments in arts and creativity build thriving communities, Creative Commonwealth aims to promote the vital leadership role community foundations can play to advance the arts. To learn more, visit: <https://www.barrfoundation.org/blog/creative-commonwealth>.