

2021 Artist Opportunity Grant Panel

Jordan Knepper (Panel Facilitator) is the Executive Director of the Piqua Arts Council. Having earned a Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics from Muskingum University in New Concord, Ohio, Knepper thought his future was in educating young minds and unraveling the mysteries of mathematics for future generations. But after a brief foray into teaching, he reengaged with his passion for the arts and began applying his analytical background to arts event management and organizational stabilization. Today, when Knepper isn't working for the Piqua Arts Council, he's volunteering for the Ohio Watercolor Society as their Traveling Show Coordinator, serving as the Treasurer for the Jackson Center Greater Growth Association, which is responsible for community events in the Village of Jackson Center, Ohio, or assisting in the development of Fusion - Spiritual Community, a nonprofit community center.

Originally from Twin Cities, Minnesota, **DeMarcus Akeem Suggs** is a dance artist, educator, and arts administrator. A graduate of Belhaven University's dance program (BFA), his professional experience includes performing with Dayton Contemporary Dance Company (DCDC), Dayton Ballet, Neos Dance Theatre, Verb Ballets, as well as collaborating with various project-based choreographers. His passion for building and sustaining a vibrant, equitable, and artist-centric culture sector has developed over the course of his 10 years serving in various leadership roles such as Program Director at The Victory Project (Dayton, OH); Coordinator of Education & Engagement at Victoria Theatre Association (Dayton, OH); as well as Director of Education & Outreach for Neos Dance Theatre. He has also served as a panelist for Ohio Arts Council and Dance/USA and was selected for Dance/USA's 2018 Institute for Leadership Training. DeMarcus currently serves as Development Director for Alternate ROOTS, a regional arts service organization that supports the creation and presentation of original art that is rooted in community, place, tradition, or spirit.

Andrew Dailey received his MFA from Miami University, Oxford and his BFA from Wright State University. He has won numerous awards for his work in exhibitions throughout the region. He has a myriad of teaching experience and experience in arts administration from his role as the Cultural Arts Program Supervisor for the City of Kettering. His initiatives, including community events for children and the arts, have attracted several thousand participants each year. His recent accolades include Distinguished Alumni Award from Wright State University, Special Way Award from the City of Kettering, and the Ohio Arts Council Individual Excellence Award.

Desirae "The Silent Poet" Hosley is a spoken word artist and community organizer dedicated to creating spaces that help people speak their truth. During her time with AmeriCorps Volunteers of America, she worked with the Urban Appalachian Council

(now known as the Urban Appalachian Community Coalition) in Lower Price Hill, which sparked a love for the nonprofit world. Since then, she has collaborated with Community Matters, helped to bring Louder Than a Bomb Poetry Teen Slam to Cincinnati, and founded SlamCatz, The University of Cincinnati's spoken word poetry slam and dialogue team. As a performer, she's taken the stage at the University of Cincinnati, Fringe Festival Cincinnati, Poetry Museum without Walls, the Aronoff Center, and many other venues. Most recently, she has created Social Therapy 2020, a virtual community where young adults and adults come together to bridge the social gap in this new pandemic world through writing and storytelling.

Lisa Shininger is a writer, editor, podcast producer, and digital marketing strategist who is passionate about creating a robust and diverse arts community in the Dayton Region. She has served as a fiction reader for *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction* and Fireside Fiction Company. As a fiction writer, she gravitates toward subject matter involving pop culture, entertainment, feminism, nostalgia, and science fiction/fantasy.

Sharon Short is the author of the novel *My One Square Inch of Alaska* (Penguin Plume) in which a pair of siblings escape the strictures of the 1950s industrial Ohio town on the adventure of a lifetime. Sharon is a recipient of three Ohio Arts Council (OAC) Individual Artist Grants (2012, 2016 and 2018), a Montgomery County Arts & Cultural District Literary Artist Fellowship (2010), and a Montgomery County Artist Opportunity Grant (2018). Sharon is the Literary Life columnist for the *Dayton Daily News* and is the former Director of the Antioch Writers' Workshop. She holds a BA in English from Wright State University and in 2013 was named the university's Outstanding Alumna for the College of Liberal Arts Department of English based on her achievements as a writer, columnist and director of a literary arts organization. She also holds an MA in English from Bowling Green State University.

Belinda Wright is a House Manager for Dayton Live. She is also a contributor to *The Dayton Anthology*, edited by Shannon Shelton Miller (2020). Belinda enjoys writing, reading, attending live theater productions, and traveling to quiet, out-of-the-way destinations for reflection and relaxation.