



PRESS RELEASE: *For Immediate Release*

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Inner-City Arts Names New President/Chief Executive Officer

Starting June 1, Arts Education Executive Shelby Williams-González To Guide Los Angeles Nonprofit Through Campus Re-Entry and Future Growth

Los Angeles, CA, May 24, 2021 — Inner-City Arts, widely regarded as one of the nation's most effective arts education providers, will welcome new leadership when nonprofit executive Shelby Williams-González assumes the position of President and Chief Executive Officer on June 1, 2021.

Williams-González' passion for arts education has spanned a two-decade career as a teaching artist, senior level administrator, and executive director, as well as professional dancer and choreographer. Beginning during her education at UC Berkeley, her commitment to social causes has been driven by the belief that investing human and financial resources in young people is critical for them to grow as unique individuals and thrive as creative adults.

"Shelby is uniquely positioned to serve our young people, our educators, and our mission," shared Inner-City Arts Board President, Jonathan Schreter. "Her energy, authenticity, and enthusiasm suggest that the next decade for the organization will be about more than just a successful re-entry to the post-COVID landscape. Shelby is poised to amplify the spaces in which we have historically excelled—vision, strategy, creativity, and innovation—leading our team and our students to the next level."

This exciting development also comes on the heels of the recent announcement that Inner-City Arts has been awarded a \$1.2 million grant through the LA Arts Recovery Fund, administered by the California Community Foundation. This two-year funding safeguards the nonprofit's future stability, as it continues to recover from the past year of unexpected change. To learn more about this historic funding, [please read the Fund's recent press release](#).

During her recent listening tour, Williams-González has worked to gain a fuller understanding of the current organization, existing staff initiatives, and culture. Committed to collaborative engagement and administrative transparency, Williams-González believes that creating a culture that is passionate about the Inner-City Arts mission but also supportive of its staff is essential to sustained success.

A rigorous and thoughtful process engaging the community, staff, Board, and Envision Consulting preceded the selection of Williams-González as CEO. Board member Kevin Pleasant, serving as chair of the Executive Search Task Force, shared how inclusive surveys and stakeholder interviews, unbiased job descriptions and anti-biased decision making helped place equity and inclusion at the forefront of the process. He said, "The outcome of this uplifting and invigorating search is something about which our entire community should be excited."

Drawing from her experiences as an artist and educator, the native Angeleno has established herself as a community leader pushing for equity and access in the arts. As the previous Executive Director of artworxLA, Williams-González helped create sustained arts exposure and educational immersion for alternative high school teenagers. As a professional dancer and choreographer, Williams-González has been a member of the national touring and critically acclaimed Afro-Brazilian dance company Viver Brasil since 2006.

"The mission of Inner-City Arts in its full scope represents a true culmination of my professional and artistic travels," shared Shelby Williams-González. "I'm excited and honored to bring my full self in service to the young people, staff, and supporters who power this critical work, especially as we embark on an exciting return to campus instruction."

Williams-González' leadership is informed by a deep understanding of the needs of both young people and educators, seasoned by experiences as a teacher in dance and performing arts for Los Angeles Unified School District and program development for non-profit organizations such as The California Dance Institute, A Place Called Home and the L.A. Opera's Education Program. Williams-González has additionally participated in cross-sector advocacy and training through Southern California Leadership Network's Leadership L.A., Downtown Women's Center's Durfee LEAD Program, and the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond.

Shelby Williams-González serves on the Board of Directors for the Arts for Healing and Justice Network, a collaborative that provides arts programming to build resiliency, eliminate recidivism, and transform the juvenile justice system. She also serves on the Board of Directors of Suarez Dance Theater and is a member of the Los Angeles' Chapter for the Undoing Racism Collective.

During this time of upheaval and transformation, Shelby Williams-González joins a handful of new appointments reshaping the style and approach to executive arts leadership across the Los Angeles region. Irwin J. Jaeger, who co-founded Inner-City Arts alongside current Artistic Director Bob Bates in 1989, offered: "I was delighted to be able to speak with Shelby during the search process, and it was clear to Bob and me that her informed experiences and fresh perspective at the helm will lead the work of Inner-City Arts into a future we all want to see."

ABOUT INNER-CITY ARTS

Founded in 1989, Inner-City Arts is a learning oasis in the heart of Downtown Los Angeles. Under the guidance of professional teaching artists, Inner-City Arts' students are immersed in a safe and supportive environment where they may engage in a variety of visual, media, and performing art forms in a studio setting. Services include core classes during the instructional

day for grade K-8 students, self-select classes for teens, workshops and performance opportunities through the Rosenthal Theater, and creativity-based professional development training for educators. Young people who attend Inner-City Arts develop skills that are highly valued in the 21st century workforce such as collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking, as well as the social and emotional skills that support wellness throughout their development.

WWW.INNER-CITYARTS.ORG

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Please direct questions and media inquiries to Christopher Maikish, Senior Manager, Communications for Inner-City Arts at communications@inner-cityarts.org.

Those wishing to support Inner-City Arts' efforts to help youth and families with creative arts learning can get involved at www.inner-cityarts.org/get-involved.