

EDI FRIDAYS

LEARNING ABOUT EACH OTHER — ONE FRIDAY AT A TIME



EQUITY / DIVERSITY / INCLUSION

Friday, Nov 10, 2023

Learning about each other...one Friday at a time

NOVEMBER NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

DEFINITIONS

POWER

The ability to influence and make decisions that have lasting impact on others.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



When properly understood, **Power** is the ability to achieve purpose.”

“**Power** is the strength required to bring about social, political, or economic changes.”

“In this sense **power** is not only desirable but necessary in order to implement the demands of love and justice.”

– Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

SPOTLIGHT

Faculty/Staff Spotlight

Maritza McGraw

Director of Operations &
Events



Biography

Hobbies | playing beach volleyball, traveling, painting landscapes, volunteering, quality time with family

“I center EDI principles in my work because the fair treatment of individuals across the board is about giving everyone the same access to opportunities and resources regardless of their differences -- and that is very important to me.”

“Finding ways to promote diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace is beneficial for everyone. Being aware of unconscious bias and communicating the importance of managing biases are key to promoting a healthy atmosphere at work and in life.”

“Workshops, training, conversations, potluck lunches with diverse entrees, etc. are great ways to start conversations to value our differences and see how we are the same.”

“Equity work is valuable to me because employees should be valued based on their skills, abilities and knowledge in the workplace, not their characteristics. In our society, we do not start from the same place and acknowledging and making adjustments to imbalances and working towards each individual getting the resources they

need to succeed is key to equity.”

Artist Spotlight



JANIS McDAVID

“Ms. Janis”

She/her

Singer/Songwriter, Teaching Artist, Educator,
Voiceover Artist, Actress

Howard University – Theater - BFA
Mason Gross School of the Arts - MFA

[Video](#)

[Website](#)

[Ms. Janis Youtube Channel](#)

“Ms. Janis is the best Children's entertainer I've ever encountered!

She was so interactive with the kids and the most valuable trait is that SHE herself was having fun with them!!”

-Carol M.



Did you plan on creating Ms. Janis from the time you were little?

No! Being a teacher was nowhere on my radar. I wanted to be an actor. But what I used to tell my dad, “Hey, I can always teach.” It was the mid-90’s, so Billy and Diane McDavid weren’t thrilled about their daughter studying Theater at Howard University. Ms. Janis just sort of happened.

How so?

After I graduated from Rutgers with my MFA in Acting, I was ready but, well, you know, I had to eat and pay the rent. I was hired to teach poetry through this Title 1 program about bullying and in the very first class, the reaction from this 12-year-old moved me to tears. Right then, I realized I had a gift with kids.

Even then, teaching was on the side, I’m an actor and a singer. But the more I did, the more people asked for me. I’m a certified yoga instructor too so I added movement to my songs as a way to teach kids about life and so, Ms. Janis was born.

And you created a business?

Yes, Ms. Janis became a business. I know my work changes kids' lives and I like that. I have no children, but I have many children, you know.

How do equity and social justice appear in your work?

I show up! That says it all because I live in a gated community in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, OK. I'm in the heart of Trump country. But I show up as a proud black woman. My presence and my excellence are how I fight racism.



You went to Howard, a historically black college (HBCU) where you were surrounded by black people and blackness, so how do you cope in Trump territory?

Howard prepared me to be in spaces like Palm Beach Gardens, which is all white. And wealthy. Being around brilliant black minds and my brilliant classmates provided a foundation where I know I belong. That taught us to believe in ourselves. Hey, and I just went to Homecoming too!

You were at Howard at the same time as a pretty famous Black Panther.

Chad, my cousin. It still hurts. I hope I don't start crying. I was a year ahead of him. A relative called and said your cousin's coming to Howard so you gotta look out for him. And I did. I showed him around, stuff like that.

Editor's note: Chadwick Boseman, award-winning actor best known for his role as the Black Panther, was a 2000 graduate of Howard University. In May 2021, Howard's College of Fine Arts was renamed to the Chadwick Boseman College of Fine Arts.

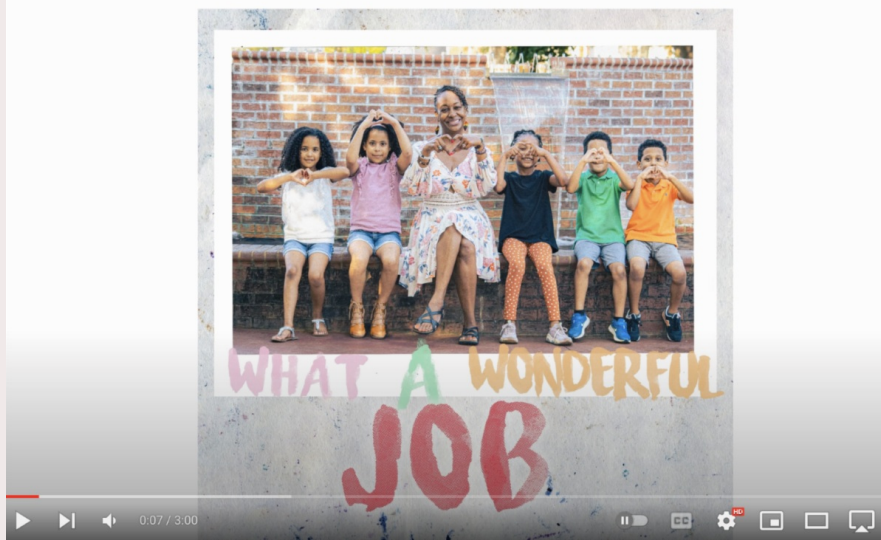


Janis and Chad on a rooftop in Brooklyn – circa 2000

Do you have a song that captures the essence of your artistry?

Yes – “What a Wonderful Job.” It's very reaffirming for the kids. It's about wellness and breathing. It teaches kids how to regulate themselves.

What A Wonderful Job



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bollywood Dance & Dessert Night

Monday November 13 – Livingston Recreation Center

[More info](#)

MFA Visual Arts – first-year exhibition

November 27 to December 14, 2023 – Mason Gross Galleries

[More info](#)

Writers at Rutgers – novelist Angie Cruz

Wednesday November 29, 2023

[More info](#)



EVENTS

FOR THE NEXT 30 DAYS

Storytime & Art Activity with Juana Martinez-Neal
Zimmerli Art Museum – *event designed for children*

November 12, 2023 | 1:00pm to 4:00pm

[More info](#)

Building an Inclusive Academy

Diversity Plan Progress Summit

November 15, 2023 | 9:30am to 6:00pm

[More info](#)

Indigenous Arts & Culture Series: Alan Michelson
Zimmerli Art Museum – *event designed for children*

November 16, 2023 | 9:30am to 6:00pm

[More info](#)

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