

## Meet the PLAY TANKERS



**Joleetta M. Montalbano** has worked with youth since she was 14 years old. She started by working at the very same camp she grew up going to in Brooklyn, NY. There she realized that working with youth is absolutely what she loves to do. She has worked in after-school for 10 years and at University Settlement's STRIDE After-School and Summer Camp program for a year, where she is an assistant group leader and in charge of clubs such as drama. Her experience at the Settlement has taught her amazing leadership skills.



**Tina G. Stumpf** is a Poet/ Playwright/ Educator/ Performer/ Visual artist born and raised in the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Her performance credits include shows at the Nuyorican Poets Cafe and the Bowery Poetry Club. Besides being a member of PLAY TANK, she has worked in University Settlement's After-School program for three years, where she has implemented various poetry, visual, and theater arts clubs. She is currently the theater arts specialist and creator of Soul on the Go, which focuses on bringing concepts of soul and discovery to kindergarten through high school students through theater, poetry and visual arts in after-school programs throughout the city. She is the creator of a custom collage journal, notebook, and sketchbook line Paper Soul which she created two years ago to bring a unique, original, unruly, self-made vibe to the market as well as the creative souls of New York. Paper Soul can be seen in various pop up shops around the city.



**Kiema Richards** was born and raised in Brooklyn, NY. She graduated from Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Performing Arts as a vocal major, danced for Flex'n Brooklyn on BCAT TV for three years, and went on to attend New York City College of Technology for Advertising Art and Graphic Design. Kiema has worked in after-school programs for a little over six years and with University Settlement for four years. Play Tank is a new world she is exploring. It helps her tap into new talents and forms of art.



**Angel Sacarello** has been a part of University Settlement for over 14 years as a participant, volunteer, and now as an employee. University settlement is not just a job for him, it's his second home. He is grateful to this program for all of the opportunities it has given him. This program has played a huge role in shaping him into the man he is today. It makes him happy knowing that he gets to play a part in helping youth be the best they can be. The only thing he can say to University settlement is thank you.



**Zachary Cruz** was born and raised on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, NY. Starting off as an underground B-boy, he soon began his classical dance training at LaGuardia Performing Arts High School (the Fame school) and at Abrons Arts Center where he studied ballet, modern dance and jazz. By his senior year of high school, Zack was professionally dancing with The Company of Dance Arts in Red Bank, NJ, as well as an apprentice with Urban Ballet Theater. For the past five years Zack has worked as a youth specialist and teaching artist with several nonprofit organizations in New York such as University Settlement, Henry Street Settlement and Downtown Dance Factory, which was titled as “the best of New York” by the *New York Times*. Last summer Zack spent his time working as a teaching artist at the University of California at Santa Barbara as well as working at a local orphanage in La Fortuna, Costa Rica. Zack’s ultimate goal is to educate people in a fun, creative and artistic way.



**Mercedes De Jesus** was born in the Dominican Republic and raised in San Francisco. She has worked in all areas of after-school for about 13 years in San Francisco, CA. After-school is her life! When she moved to NYC, she interned at University Settlement, where she was able to continue working with youth at the Beacon Program for a year and a half. Play Tank keeps her connected and creative. She is pursuing her dream to one day have a program of her own.



**Andy Nuñez** was born in Red Hook and raised in the Lower East Side by his two loving Dominican parents. He grew up loving art, and as a kid wished he was a superhero. He has worked in after-school for seven years on and off, and has been at University Settlement for six years.



**Andre Howard** has worked at University Settlement since 2009, but he's been working in after-school programs since the age of 12. He always imagined himself as a kid in TV commercials and he is exciting to finally be exploring the actor that has always been living inside him. He's pleased to have transitioned from a trouble youth into a positive role model and proud father of a beautiful 3 year old girl. Look out for him coming to a big screen near you.



**Karl A. Valere** is a 23-year young man born of Haitian immigrants. Born in Queens, NY but raised in Elmont, Karl is currently a full-time student at CUNY Queens College pursuing his BA in Psychology with a Minor in The Africana studies. Karl is a passionate writer, speaker, educator, musician, DeeJay, food enthusiast and practical joker-- firmly believing in achieving balance between both the silly and the serious. Karl grew up in the church playing drums and piano for years until he eventually found his voice as a Youth Coordinator. Karl credits University Settlement staff trainings and development in helping him to rediscover his inner child. A group leader of just one year, every day he is humbled at the opportunity to build with and educate kids. He is also grateful for the chance to take part in PLAY TANK--what he considers such a seamless extension of University Settlement. With ambitions of a career in public service and community redevelopment, Karl is excited about his future and plans to leave behind a legacy of making people think, smile and feel.

---

## MEET THE PLAY TANK CREATIVE MENTORS



**Alison Fleminger** is the founding program curator of *The Performance Project @ University Settlement*. This comprehensive arts program offers a public presenting series, an artists-in-residence program, and community arts projects that are collaboratively designed by artists, University Settlement staff and participants in various settlement programs. Alison's vision for The Performance Project arises out of 20 years of experience creating and implementing arts curricula for theaters, schools, camps, after-school programs, adult literacy and professional development programs. Among others, she has worked for Manhattan Youth, Project Reach Youth, Arts Connection, Abrons Art Center and The Kitchen. Her work as a Teaching Artist has been featured on ABC News and CUNY TV. While earning her graduate degree in Theater Education at NYU, she had the transformational opportunity to apprentice the award-winning director of The Creative Arts Team Youth Theater. In the spring of 2011, Alison established PLAY TANK, a theater company comprised of young adult who work for community-based organization. As the Artistic Director of this company, Alison seeks to prove that the opportunity to learn through our own creative play, at any age, is an essential and needed antidote to our current broken system of education. Currently Alison is earning a certificate in Organization Design from the Empowerment Institute for Social Change.



**Pamela Jackson**, using her skill set in trust-building and team cohesion, employs personal storytelling in the theater environment to increase the collaboration amongst PLAY TANKERS, and to shape scenes inspired from true stories so that they reflect the heart and authenticity of personal truth on the stage.

Pamela is a Moment Guide who walks her clients and students through single events in their lives to attain information, awareness, and art from inside of them. She currently teaches at The New School, working on the practice of “being read and learning how to read an individual” in her class Personal Storytelling and the New York City Settlement House Movement. She is passionate about challenging and being challenged by the dynamic of students, their experience, and their outlook on social issues and their own lives.

Outside of teaching Pamela uses her work as a consultant at Sow Leadership Institute, facilitating recovery groups for men and women in re-entry programs in Brooklyn. Her clients seek to remove their story from the setting of incarceration into a life of self-governance. She supports them week by week through excavating difficult moments and areas in their lives for uncovering power to make new choices and discover their post traumatic growth.

Finally, a writer, producer, and co-director of her one woman show G.E.M.S., Pamela completed the piece as her MFA thesis at Sarah Lawrence College. Since then she has performed for the past two years at The Nuyorican Poet’s Café, Irondale Theater, YWCA, to name a few, and most recently Off-Broadway at Theater Row. G.E.M.S. is a solo performance based on a series of transformative conversations Pamela held with her mother in 11 months. Pamela’s principle is to “turn herself inside out first” to show her audiences, clients, and students that vulnerability can lead to great awareness and great art.



**Marília Lauria** has been engaging with children, families and young people through the medium of theater arts since 1997. She first started at a young age in her native city in Brazil, by developing and managing the Klavier Arts School’s first ever program of youth theaters for over four years. While undertaking her studies at the University of London in the UK, she has worked for a variety of organizations coordinating and delivering arts projects. After concluding her Master’s studies in Applied Drama, she has founded Green Shoes Arts; an award winning non-for-profit organization developing participatory led projects in East

London. She has led the company for its first 3 years as the Artistic Director, supporting its significant growth and development as a local community company offering high quality arts projects for young people. Living in New York since 2011, she continues to take part in the decision making process of Green Shoes Arts as an Associate Director.

Marília has been developing and carrying out a practical assessment framework based on The Soul Record tool kit developed by City College Norwich, UK. Such framework aims to measure the progress of its participants by regularly assessing soft outcomes, such as confidence, decision making and adaptability. Skills that are necessary in order for the staff participants to gain the tools to further

develop their careers and complete their college degrees. She has also been carrying out assessments with the young people involved in the youth ensembles delivered by PLAY TANKERS'. Such assessments share similar goals as well as analyze the impact of the Play Tankers' career development into the young peoples' views of themselves.



**Jordana de Lory** is arts educator and facilitator residing in Brooklyn, NYC. She received a BA in Theater Arts from University Santa Cruz, with a focus on Theater & Performing Arts Education. She served as the Supervisor of Arts & Recreation at The Door, and has collaborated with partnering organizations including University Settlement, Primary Stages Theater, Developing Artists Youth Theater, Downtown Arts, Joan Mitchell Foundation and more. In 2003 Jordana De Lory founded The Door's Bustin Out Theatre Repertory which trains aspiring youth artists in various professions of the performing arts.

Bustin' Out members created original work aimed to educate, entertain and empower its participants and audiences on the political, social and cultural issues which are experienced and observed in NYC communities. Jordana has facilitated and created comprehensive youth programs for NYC agencies such as The Leadership Program, University Settlement, Exploring the Arts, and Children's Aid Society. She has served as an arts education program consultant, as well as conducted arts educations professional development workshops for educators and NYC public school teachers. Jordana is also a professional vocalist, singer and songwriter. She has performed at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and has toured throughout Europe, Japan and the US with singer Jose James. Notable performances include Lincoln Center Outdoors, Jazz Cafe London, and Billboard Live Japan.