

To: Meridian Arts and Culture Coordinator
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Meridian Parks and Recreation Department
33 E. Broadway Ave. Ste. 206
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From: Idaho Fine Arts Academy
Rachel Swenson
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915 East Central Drive
Meridian, Idaho 83642

APPLICATION: Meridian Arts and Culture Youth Performing Arts Project Grant

Project Title: *Sabiduria Conectada (Connected Wisdom)*

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- 1. Applicant's contact information** (address, phone, e-mail, website), mission statement, and history; resumes and biographies of key staff and volunteers.

This grant proposal focuses on the West Ada School District (WASD) K-8 grade schools, Idaho Fine Arts Academy (IFAA) 6-12 grade public school, local Latina/Chicana Artists, and the Meridian community.

Idaho Fine Arts Academy (IFAA)
915 East Central Drive
Meridian, Idaho 83642
208-350-4420

IFAA Leadership:

IFAA Principal, Chris Housel, housel.chris@westada.org
IFAA Administrative Assistant, Cynthia Anderson, anderson.rachel@westada.org
IFAA Artistic Director and Dance Teacher, Rachel Swenson, (grant facilitator), swenson.rachel@westada.org

IFAA's Guest Latina Artists:

Marianna Jimenez Edwards, Visual Artist, edwards.marianna@westada.org
Estafania Sanchez, Flamenco Dance Artist,
Monique Michel, Ballet Folklorico Mexico Lindo Artist, moniqueduarte@msn.com

The West Ada School District, the largest school district in Idaho, serves a diverse population and recognizes the importance of offering schools of choice for families. IFAA is the only audition-based free public arts school of choice in the state of Idaho. Idaho Fine Arts Academy is a performance-oriented school, centered around the arts and core academic content. IFAA was established in 2014 and serves 300 students in grades 6-12. Students declare a major from seven pathways (dance, visual art, theater, vocal, classical instrumental music, contemporary instrumental music, and film).

IFAA's Mission Statement is "Building Lives Through Artistic, Scholastic, and Civic Excellence."

IFAA Website: <https://www.westada.org/o/ifaa>

IFAA Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/idahofineartsacad/>

IFAA YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@idahofineartsacademy/featured>

Grant facilitator, Rachel Swenson's Bio:

Rachel Swenson is a dance specialist at the Idaho Fine Arts Academy and a dance teaching artist for the Idaho Commission on the Arts. She holds a K-8 all content teacher credential, 6-12 Visual Arts Teaching Credential, and Humanities Endorsement. She teaches both the art of dance and how to incorporate dance as an integrative learning tool through project-based choreography with students that focuses on connections to dance history, current events, life skills, environmental issues, and social issues. Swenson is the co-director/co-founder and curator of the Idaho Screendance Festival and writes for the Dance and the Child International USA newsletter. She has performed professionally in various venues in Utah and was a guest performer for Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company. She has also performed for choreographer Meghan Durham Wall for the Paradigm Dance Project, and for Jim Moreno's Proving Ground Dance Company. Performing the works of Hanya Holm and Alwin Nikolais have been highlights of her professional experience. Throughout her career, Swenson has worked in many K-12 schools in Utah and Idaho, including as an Art Works for Kids teaching artist at Knowlton Elementary and William Penn Elementary schools in Utah; as a visual arts teacher at Christine Donnell School of the Arts in Idaho; and as a creative dance teacher for the Virginia Tanner Dance Arts in Education program at the University of Utah. Swenson has extensive experience providing professional development for educators, including Idaho's Arts Powered Schools, West Ada School District, BYU Arts Partnerships, Utah Valley University, EduFest, the Utah State Office of Education, Dance and the Child International, Utah Arts Council's Arts Networking Conferences, Artworks for Kids, Tanner Dance Program, Idaho Dance Education Organization, and the National Dance Education Organization. Swenson has been awarded over eighteen grants for dance education from the Idaho Commission on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Jeker Foundation, the Inukai Family Foundation, VSA Idaho, West Ada Education Foundation and is the recipient of the 2023 IDEO Dance Educator of the Year Award, 2019 Teacher of the Year for Idaho Fine Arts Academy and the 2017 NDEO Executive Director's Award for Outstanding Advocacy. In her commitment to advocating for equality in arts education in public and private schools, Swenson has been active in establishing and serving state and national organizations. She is the founding President and current board member of the Idaho Dance Education Organization and former Northwest Region Representative for the National Dance Education Organization, where she was also a contributing committee member for the NDEO "Priorities Pamphlet." She has also served on multiple committees for the State Board of Education and West Ada School District for arts education standards revisions and arts education textbook adoptions. Swenson earned a B.F.A. in Modern Dance and an M.Ed. in Education from the University of Utah. Swenson is pursuing an Interdisciplinary specialization as a doctoral candidate within the Ed.D. Dance Education Program at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City, New York. Her research interests include social-emotional learning and social processes in collaborative choreography, cognitive processes in creativity, cultivating creativity, the cultural hierarchy of arts education, dance literacy, dance education history, and improving arts education leadership.

Guest Artists:

Marianna Edwards Jimenez, Artist's Bio:

Frequent trips to stay with family in Mexico exposed Marianna to the roots of *her* Mexican culture. Curiosity to investigate and create was nourished by her family. She studied at the San Francisco Art Institute, receiving a BFA in Painting.

Further awareness of her indigenous heritage and Chicano culture blossomed during art school. Also, during that time, visiting her grandmother's village in Oaxaca and various archaeological sites in Central Mexico and Chiapas on separate occasions transformed that awareness into the passion and central ideas for her work.

After art school, Marianna taught drawing and painting at two separate private studios. One of those studios belonged to classically trained, Venezuelan artist, Conchita Firgau, which led Marianna to want to

explore a blend of Western realism and Pre-Columbian themes and subject matter. The drips, lines, and marks explore ideas of the fraying of time woven into a sense of existing within two different and distinct cultures.

In 2019 Marianna received an Alexa Rose Foundation Grant to travel to the Museo Textil in Oaxaca, Mexico (postponed due to COVID). In 2020 she created *Ancestral Steering* for the City of Boise Traffic Box Project. In 2021 she was again awarded with an Alexa Rose Foundation Grant to purchase a camera for quality reference photos and documenting her portfolio through photographs and videos.

Marianna teaches art at the high school level and is a Boise resident. She draws and paints in oil, acrylic, and mixed media, incorporating cultural objects, collage, portraits, animals, textiles, and patterns into her visual language.

Artist website: <https://www.mariannajimenezedwards.art/>

Estefania Sanchez, Artist's Bio:

Estefanía is an alumni of the Solo Flamenco Academy in Portland OR. She graduated in 2008 under the guidance of Maestra Laurena Marrone-Campos and moved to Spain shortly afterwards to improve her skills as a vocal performer. With Flamenco dance as her base for narrative, Estefanía makes personal stories come alive on stage while preserving history and Spanish culture. Transmitting emotion with each hand movement, facial expression and dynamic foot stamp, Estefanía guides audiences through an intimate celebration of the human experience. She is a two-time recipient of the Traditional Arts Apprenticeship grant by Idaho Commission on the Arts (2016, 2019). She collaborated with guitarist Mark Ferguson and percussion vocalist Luis de La Tota in creating a video 'The Language of Flamenco' that teaches the language that passes between dancer and guitarist. She performs in Flamenco San Francisco, Seattle and Portland Flamenco communities. She currently teaches and performs in the Boise area with her group Shimi Tree.

Monique Michel, Artist's Bio:

Ballet Folklorico Mexico Lindo was established in 2003 in Nampa, Idaho. Since then, the group has been committed to providing authentic Mexican folkloric dance education while sharing their time and talents through dance in Idaho. Executive Director, Monique N. Michel is the owner, creator and director of Ballet Folklorico Mexico Lindo. It is her whole heart and soul (after her 2 children and her favorite GSD, Pirate!). She works with each and every student- from dance enthusiasts to seasoned professionals, to develop their individual skills while fostering movement and body awareness. Through sharing the history of Mexico's cultural heritage and maintaining cultural integrity, Ballet Folklorico Mexico Lindo taps into the passion for the art of baile folklorico and brings it to life both on stage and in the dance studio.

Monique believes that dance is where artistry and athleticism meet, and this theme carries through all classes taught at Studio Alma Folklorica, the home of the Ballet Folklorico Mexico Lindo. Students receive the type of training that turns them not just into successful dancers, but accomplished human beings, prepared to achieve whatever they set their minds to.

2. Detailed project budget: *Sabiduria Conectada* (Connected Wisdom) Latina Inspired Art and Dance Project with IFAA Dance Majors, Marianna Jimenez Edwards, Estefania Sanchez, and Monique Michel.

- Rental of PSI's High-Def. Projector to project Marianna Jimenez Edwards' artwork = **\$2000**
- Estefania Sanchez (Flamenco artist and choreographer), \$50 an hour contact time to choreograph two dances and perform four dances in two concerts = **\$1250**
- Monique Michel (artistic director of Ballet Folklorico Mexico Lindo), \$50 an hour contact time to teach four master classes to dancers = **\$300**
- Chaz Gentry (lighting director) \$300 per concert = **\$600**
- Sound engineers \$500 per concert = **\$1000**
- Mike Reid Professional Photography: \$300 per concert = **\$600**

- Professional Videography and Editing: \$600 per concert = **\$1200**
- Program Booklet Printing: \$220 per concert = **\$440**
- Poster Printing: **\$100**
- Marley Tape for Dance Floor: **\$80**

Total Budget: \$7,570

Projected Income: \$4200

- **\$1000 fundraised by IFAA dance majors.**
- **Projected \$200 in bake sale earnings.**
- **Projected \$3000 to \$4500 in ticket sales.** \$10 General Admission tickets for sale. Projected 300-400 pre-sold audience members buying tickets - \$3,000 - 4,000. Giving away 400 tickets per concert to students in the community. The auditorium seats 900.

Asking MAC for \$3,370

3. Detailed project timeline.

January 2024

- Recruit guest artists and technical crew
- Reserve technical equipment
- Introduce IFAA students to guest artists and their work

February 2024

- Research Latina/Chicana art, dance, and guest artists
- Attend Malevo concert as Latin dance research
- Analyze Marianna Jimenez Edwards' art using Edmund Feldman's Four Steps to Art Criticism
- 45 IFAA dancers choreograph and co-choreograph Latin inspired dances
- Conduct Laban Movement Analysis of Flamenco and Ballet Folklorico Mexico dance
- Study Flamenco and learn a dance once a week under Estefania Sanchez
- Study Ballet Folklorico Mexico and learn a dance for high school and a dance for middle school

March 2024

- Study Flamenco and learn a dance once a week under Estefania Sanchez
- 45 IFAA dancers choreograph and co-choreograph Latin inspired dances
- Mount the concert (costumes, program order, program, posters, tickets)
- Press Release shared with district websites and social media
- Print and hang posters in the community and share on social media
- Give 400 free tickets away to each concert to WASD Meridian elementary and middle schools and arts elementary schools
- Rehearse and refine dances
- Rehearse with musicians
- Contact the *Idaho Today* show and Latin organizations

April 2024

- Continue to mount the concert (lighting design, time show, finalize program)
- Print programs
- Rehearse and refine dances
- Rehearse with musicians
- Space, light, and rehearse concert on the stage
- Concerts April 27 and 30, 2024
- Concert Assessment and Reflection. Students view concert videos and photographs, discuss feedback, fill out performance and choreography rubric assessments and written reflections.
- End report to MAC and share findings with school community and guest artists

4. Description of previous work in youth performing arts.

Rachel Swenson has produced, directed, and choreographed over a hundred youth performances from 1998 to present in Utah and Idaho for public school districts, private studios, arts and arts education organizations. She has been an arts educator for over twenty-five years and a professional filmmaker for television and film since 1995. Swenson is a co-founder and curator of the Idaho Screendance Festival and has made award winning dance film shorts with the IFAA dance students. She has facilitated and presented at local and state arts education conferences since 2001. Swenson is an expert at arts productions.

Below are recent examples of the youth concerts she has produced, directed, and choreographed:

IFAA YouTube Channel: Swenson has directed all the concerts on the Collaborative Performance Playlist (115 videos) <https://www.youtube.com/@idahofineartsacademy/playlists>

IFAA Dance and Music Concerts with Guest Artists as Examples:

- 1) IFAA's *Elemental Pulse* Concert with Guest Artists Shaun Brazell, Bill Evans, and Justin Nielsen at the Morrison Center <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1FAr6WkDuTc>
- 2) IFAA's *Elemental Pulse* Concert with Guest Artists Bristol Lightning at Mountain View High School <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jQSc8r71Qm8>
- 3) IFAA's *Terpsichore* Concert with Guest Artist Karen Eastman and Marla Hansen <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZy8lDWMmSg&list=PLWi2NthkAg40q39CHZltVS4FnLYbVIhT8&index=55>
- 4) IFAA's *Zero and knwbdy* Concert with Guest Artists Bobby Gayton, Zero, and knwbdy <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BVejxwsbWx0&list=PLWi2NthkAg40q39CHZltVS4FnLYbVIhT8&index=97>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V7rHnUTQt7Y&list=PLWi2NthkAg40q39CHZltVS4FnLYbVIhT8&index=95>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=thLWnZOGLs0&list=PLWi2NthkAg40q39CHZltVS4FnLYbVIhT8&index=78>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-Mm5hSJS28&list=PLWi2NthkAg40q39CHZltVS4FnLYbVIhT8&index=77>

Marianna Edwards (visual artist)

Watch this video about her and her art:

https://youtu.be/NLKwKxBskOc?si=OT_rN-cCbCoi6whn

Marianna's Art:

Gallery — Marianna Jimenez Edwards Art

1. untitled falling girl with astronaut (2020)
1. *El Paso* (2020)
2. *Star Chatter* (2020)
3. *Fringe* (2020)
4. *Star Child* (2020)
5. *Somos Estrellas* (We are Stars) (2021)
1. *Sabiduria Conectada* (Connected Wisdom) (2021)
1. *H-H Objects* (El alumno destinado ser mi papa) (2021)
1. *Dreamwaver* (Tejedora de Suenos) (2021)
1. *Runs Over Mountains* (Lorena Ramirez) (2022)
2. *Bano de Bosqu* (Forest Bath) (2022)

3. *El Bello* (2022)
1. untitled portrait of a woman (2023)

Estefania Sanchez (flamenco dancer)

We would love for Stefanie to perform in our concert 3 to 4 dances.

Estefania Sanchez | Alexa Rose (alexarosefoundation.org)

Video of Estefania guest artist dancing Flamenco: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oPsMpsWl7gs>

Video of Estefania guest artist at Foothills School of Arts:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3UT9hQUa5ek>

Monique Michel, Ballet Folklorico Mexico Mi Lindo videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/@folkloricotakeover9687>

5. Narrative describing the proposed project, including:

a. **MAC's financial contribution will be utilized to help pay for the *Sabiduria Conectada* (Connected Wisdom) project's guest artists honorariums, production expenses, and documentation.** The project includes three artists in residencies, six master classes, nine professionally choreographed dances, eighteen student choreographed dances, two performances with guest artists, and two art exhibits all open to the public.

The IFAA students and teachers will collaborate with local Latina guest artists on upcoming April concerts and art exhibits. The focus is on Latin dance and visual art. We have reserved the Centennial Performing Arts Center (CPAC) theater on Saturday, April 27, 2024 (middle school concert), and Tuesday, April 30, 2024 (high school concert). The art themes will be inspired by Latin culture or the students' own personal narratives, encompassing themes of home, family, heritage, culture, identity, and lived experiences. The dance repertoire for the concerts will span a diverse range of styles, including contemporary, tap, jazz, folk, Flamenco, Latin, lyrical, and fusion of dance styles, ensuring a dynamic and engaging showcase of talent. The concerts will be professionally documented, with photography by Mike Reid and videography by Kody Newton.

Our esteemed guest Latina artists include Marianna Jimenez Edwards, renowned visual artist; Estefania Sanchez, a Flamenco dance artist; and Monique Michel, representing Ballet Folklorico Mexico Lindo. Estefania and Monique will conduct master classes for our dancers, while Marianna will engage with students remotely to discuss her art. She will provide high-definition digital scans of her work, which will be featured prominently on the concert poster.

Throughout the preparation leading up to the April concert, guest artists will collaborate with IFAA students intermittently. During the concert, Marianna's captivating artwork will be projected, serving as inspiration for student choreography, music, and costumes. To ensure cultural and artistic sensitivity, guest artists will approve music selections and offer guidance.

In the classroom, students will have the opportunity to analyze Marianna's artwork in small groups using Edmund Feldman's four steps to art criticism (Describe, Analyze, Interpret, Evaluate). Students will create four dance phrases for two pieces of art and create two short solo compositions. The students will create three versions of the solo composition: original art inspired version, body percussion version, and Flamenco elements version. The solo compositions will be incorporated into the choreography for the concert. Our goal is to celebrate and draw inspiration from Latin visual art, music, and dance while avoiding cultural appropriation.

During their analysis of the artwork, the dancers identified one of the three Latina Feminism themes depicted in each art piece:

1. **Testimonio:** These narratives serve a purpose, fostering critical consciousness and a connection to lived experiences. They involve reframing the narrative, taking ownership, and harnessing the power of storytelling. Testimonios not only inform the next generation but also transmit essential information, acting as a link to identity and culture.
2. **Borders:** Representing critical inflection points, borders are areas of tension linked to lived experiences and identity. They offer room for movement back and forth, evoking emotional intensity and presenting opportunities for empowerment.
3. **Nepantla:** Describing the space between two worlds or the land in the middle, Nepantla represents a realm of discomfort that leads to the possibility of empathy and shared understanding. Living within this middle space allows individuals to learn valuable lessons and raise critical consciousness.

Dancers will employ Rudolf Laban's Movement Analysis, focusing on Body, Effort, Shape, Space, and Time, to analyze Latin dances. This exploration will commence with Flamenco and Ballet Folklorico Mexico, allowing students to delve into the intricate movements and cultural nuances of these rich dance forms. Youth visual art will be exhibited in the lobby.

Here is an example of what one of the concerts will look like. The highlighted dances will have art projected during them and the dances were inspired by the art:

***Sabiduria Conectada* (Connected Wisdom):** Saturday, APRIL 27, 2024:

ACT I:

- 1) **Estafania Sanchez: FLAMENCO SOLO**
- 2) *"All Together"*: ALL DANCERS LARGE GROUP
- 3) **Ballet Folklorico: large group dance (guest artists)**
- 4) *"Sabiduria Conectada (Connected Wisdom)"* Bridget: QUINTET - Makena, Callay, Chloe, Haddyn
- 5) **Rylee: SOLO**
- 6) **IFAA Ballet Folklorico**
- 7) **Mailee: SOLO**
- 8) *"Star Chatter"* Baylee: QUINTET - Kylee, Lyla, Pippa, Anneliese
- 9) **Abby: SOLO**
- 10) *"Somos Estrellas (We are Stars)"* Savannah: SEXTET - (Dive by Sherry Fino) Rylee, Charlotte, Tegan, Olivia, Harper
- 11) **Makena: SOLO**
- 12) *"Fringe"* Mailee: QUINTET - Jaylin, Gracie, Alena, Amelia
- 13) **Vivian: SOLO**
- 14) *"untitled"* Ava: QUARTET - Peyton, Abigail, Eliana
- 15) **Estafania Sanchez: FLAMENCO SOLO**

ACT II:

- 1) **Estafania Sanchez: FLAMENCO SOLO**
- 2) *"Open Arms"*: ALL DANCERS LARGE GROUP
- 3) **Ballet Folklorico: large group dance (guest artists)**
- 4) **Bridget: SOLO**
- 5) *"Bano de Bosqu (Forest Bath)"* Vivian: QUINTET - Bridget, Alena, Lyla
- 6) **Savannah: SOLO**
- 7) *"H-H Objects (El alumno destinado ser mi papa)"* Kylee & Charlotte (SEVEN DANCERS): (Quisimos Ser Dioses) Olivia, Harper, Anneliese, Pippa, Chloe, Rylee

- 8) "*Dreamweaver* (Tejedora de Suenos)" Makena: TRIO - Maile, Ava
- 9) **Amelia: SOLO**
- 10) **Charlotte: DUET** Lyla
- 11) **Baylee: SOLO**
- 12) "*El Paso*" Amelia: QUINTET - Savannah, Callay, Tegan, Haddyn
- 13) **Ava: SOLO**
- 14) "*Somos Estrellas* (We are Stars)" Abigail: (SEXTET): Eliana, Peyton, Jaylin, Baylee, Gracie
- 15) **Estafania Sanchez: FLAMENCO SOLO**

b. This project aims to benefit the lives of Meridian residents and local youth by honoring and celebrating Latin culture, youth art, professional art, and the contributions of local Latina artists. The performance promises to be not only thoughtful and artistic but also touching and joyful, offering a meaningful experience for all attendees.

With the participation of 300 IFAA students in grades 6-12, 800 WASD students in grades K-8, two teachers, three local Latina guest artists, and the Meridian community as the audience, this project brings together a diverse group of individuals. The theater, which seats 900 for each concert, provides ample space for everyone to come together and enjoy the event. We aim to fill every seat and create a memorable experience for all.

c. Our target audience comprises students from grades K-12 within the West Ada School District (WASD), families and community members residing in Meridian and the surrounding Ada County areas. We anticipate reaching approximately 1,900 residents and visitors in Meridian through our events.

Our marketing efforts include utilizing the WASD email system, as well as WASD and Idaho Fine Arts Academy (IFAA) social media platforms, websites, and printed posters displayed in local businesses. Additionally, we distribute letters and complimentary tickets to K-8 schools within the WASD, collaborating with school counselors and principals to facilitate ticket distribution.

Furthermore, forty-five IFAA dance majors will presell 10 tickets each to the concerts, and we will provide complimentary tickets to guest artists and their families. We also plan to engage with the Idaho Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Idaho Hispanic Foundation, and other Latin organizations to promote our event within the Latin community.

Moreover, leveraging our past success, we aim to secure coverage for our event through media outlets such as the *Idaho Today* show, extending our reach and visibility within the community.

d. MAC's generous contribution will be acknowledged comprehensively across all communication channels associated with the project. This includes verbal recognition during classes, concerts, and art exhibits, as well as in written, printed, published, and digitally posted materials. Additionally, letters sent to schools will prominently feature MAC's support and dedication to enriching our community through the arts.

e. There will be 100 participants and 1800 audience members to be impacted by the *Sabiduria Conectada* (Connected Wisdom) project.

In conclusion, the *Sabiduria Conectada* (Connected Wisdom) project is poised to make a profound impact on the lives of Meridian residents and local youth by celebrating Latin culture, youth art, professional art, and the invaluable contributions of local Latina artists. With a thoughtful and artistic performance that promises to be touching and joyful, we aim to provide a meaningful experience for all attendees.