



## **Artist Residency Program in Fairfax County Senior Centers**

**Background:** In support of the Fairfax 50+ Community Action Plan Initiatives: Safe and Healthy Community, ARTSFAIRFAX, county government agencies, and community arts organizations have partnered for the Creative Aging Initiative.

**Benefits of Creative Aging:** Research supports the therapeutic link between creative self-expression and well-being. Regular arts participation stimulates imagination and reminiscence; diminishes stress; and has been shown to reduce the use of medications and the need for doctor visits, overall improving physical, intellectual, and emotional health.

**Creative Aging Festival:** The county's signature 50+ arts initiative is the **Creative Aging Festival** which takes place each May in senior centers and other community locations throughout the county. These classes, workshops and interactive performances will continue with expanded offerings and partnerships to better serve the community. A Creative Aging Resource Guide is available at [www.artsfairfax.org](http://www.artsfairfax.org) and the Vendor Fair is coordinated to encourage networking with teaching artists and creative aging program providers.

**New Artist Residency Program:** To provide deeper arts experiences, we will pilot an **Artist Residency Program** with four senior centers in late Summer of 2019. Select Senior Centers will be paired with professional teaching artists. The artists will be drawn from disciplines including theatre, visual arts, literary, music, and dance and are intended to offer unique high impact arts experiences to senior residents.

**Artist Residency Planning Process:** Once participating centers have been selected, ARTSFAIRFAX will work with designated staff to match teaching artists with centers and determine the schedule and class size. Each residency will be a total of 12 contact hours, and scheduling options include shorter intensive residencies such as daily meetings for one to two weeks, once a week over the course of 3 months, or biweekly for 6 weeks.

### **Artists, Senior Centers, and Pilot Residency Topics:**

**Heidi Fortune Picker/Lewinsville** has 15 years of experience as a teaching artist and as an actor in theatre, tv, and film; singer; and voice-over artist. Heidi's residency will focus on improvisation, which will allow participants to use their body, voice, mind, and imagination to create short- and long-form improvisations with other participants.

**Suzy Scollon/South County** is a ceramicist, sculptor, and arts educator with over 20 years of experience. Suzy plans a residency working with participants to create self-portrait relief tiles, through a process in which they will learn proportion and carving techniques. By taking the time to study their faces, participants see themselves differently and, as they look inward, learn to appreciate their uniqueness and see others with more observant and tolerant eyes.

**Emmanuel (Kofi) Dennis/Sully** is a drummer, performer, and educator. He has educated and entertained as a drummer, storyteller, singer, and dancer at venues such as the Kennedy Center, Discovery Theater, and the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. He is recognized as a master teacher/trainer/presenter of West African Culture who has participated in the Creative Aging Festival. In his Artist Residency, participants will be introduced to West African culture through the experience of West African polyrhythmic drumming. Throughout the program, participants create, practice, and perform original works and ultimately respond to their learning in meaningful ways.

**Janet Stormes/Lincolnia** is a dancer and choreographer who recently completed her Master's degree in Creativity. Her dance residency will focus on movement, improvisation, and contemporary dance which allows participants to use their bodies and imaginations in new and expressive ways.