

WINTER 2016

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# THE DORNSIFE CONNECTOR

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**CELEBRATING**



**CREATIVITY**

*Chef Yolanda Lockhart-Davis*

## DIRECTOR'S WELCOME

Happy New Year to all of our Dornsife Center friends and program partners. This time of the year - as we bring the holiday season to a close and welcome a new year - is often a time of reflection and introspection.

And as I reflect on my time so far here at the Dornsife Center, on the wonderful and passionate people I've met, and on the positive energy of our community dinners, I am reminded of the sixth Kwanzaa principle of "kuumba," or creativity. The launch of a new year is a great time to think about how we can make use of our creative energies to build a strong and vibrant community.

And certainly this edition of the Connector speaks to the work we are doing in partnership with community artists and creative entrepreneurs who commit their inspiring and hands-on visions to our collective effort to forge strong community ties between Mantua, Powelton Village, and Drexel University.

I hope you will enjoy this edition of the Dornsife Connector as we introduce you to Chef Yolanda and her story of resilience and creativity, and to Rebecca Rose, who shares her gifts and passion for art in so many ways with all of us.

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## STAFF MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

*Name:* Cicely Peterson-Mangum  
*Job:* Executive Director  
*Hometown:* Philadelphia  
*Current residence:* The Mount Airy neighborhood of northwest Philadelphia  
*Favorite movie:* The 1976 film *Sparkle*  
*Favorite Food:* Seafood, sweet potatoes

### *What is your job?*

I oversee the day-to-day operations of the Dornsife Center. My goal is to develop a collective vision for the Dornsife Center, leveraging the skills and strengths of our talented staff and the Dornsife Community Advisory Council to identify and develop programming that is responsive to residents' needs, priorities, and aspirations. I also work closely with the University and Community Partnerships team to develop new opportunities for programming and funding the Dornsife Center.

### *Where will we find you at the Dornsife Center?*

When I'm at the Dornsife Center, you will often find me in my office in the Lindy House. If you can't find me there, I'm out spreading the word about the Dornsife Center!

### *What is your favorite thing about the Dornsife Center?*

The warmth. Whenever I walk onto the campus, I feel a sense of warmth and ease. That feeling is even greater when I enter any of the buildings, which are often buzzing with visitors taking advantage of the wide range of programs *and* with our wonderful staff!

### *What do you do when you're not at work?*

Spending time with my family - shuffling my four boys to and from their sporting activities, music lessons, or school events and enjoying time with my husband. I love digging my hands into the soil and tending to my garden, practicing hot yoga, and running.

## LOCAL ENTREPRENEUR YOLANDA LOCKHART-DAVIS

As part of Drexel's and the Dornsife Center's commitment to supporting local economic development and entrepreneurship, we are aiming a spotlight at some of our local community's culinary talent through the monthly community dinner. Helping us kick off the first dinner of 2016 is Yolanda Lockhart-Davis, a chef and caterer who is using her creative and caring spirit to build a new food service business.

A native Philadelphian, Lockhart-Davis recently became a Mantua resident to be closer to The Enterprise Center, where she rents commercial kitchen space in the Dorrance H. Hamilton Center for Culinary Enterprises and participates in the Elevate! coaching program for small businesses. But catering wasn't her first career move. After spending 20 years in information technology and experiencing a lay-off, she realized she was suffering from burnout. "I took time off through the holiday season to think about what I REALLY wanted to do next, and had a thought: what if I could take my cooking to a higher level, and actually make a living at it?" She'd been cooking and preparing meals for family and friends since she was 12 years old, and suddenly she was reconnecting with that passion and launching Salt Pepper and Soul LLC.

To anyone who feels like the time for pursuing a creative ambition has passed them by, Lockhart-Davis offers inspiration. "At 50 years old, I'm truly amazed to feel like I'm finally stepping into my purpose. Working in this business has helped me find my voice, in a way that I never imagined possible, and I'm thrilled to learn that I have a culinary point

of view. The challenges have included frequently questioning my sanity, and wondering whether or not this dream would be better served by a younger version of myself. In spite of that, I feel that moving forward is my only option, and I'll continue to do something every day that gets me a little bit closer to fulfilling my dream."

Has it been worth the effort, the investment of time building her own business, though? "I'm finding that the rewards are completely and consistently worth the pain. The greatest reward is having the opportunity to see people enjoy my food. I love preparing and serving meals, describing the meals, and seeing the looks on the faces of my clients when they taste what I've prepared for them."



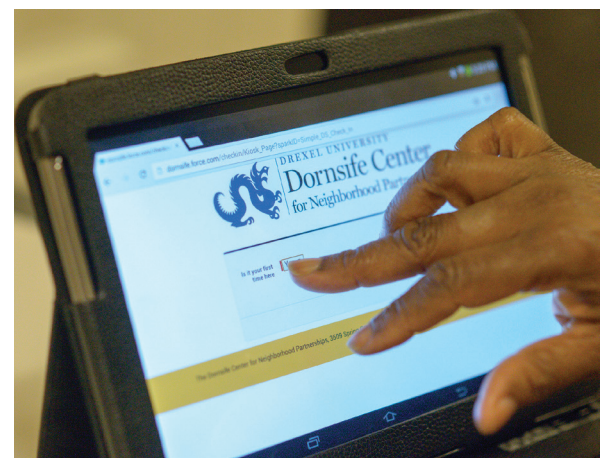
Food delivers us sustenance while also acting as a vehicle for expression. As Lockhart-Davis notes, "my culinary training (at The Restaurant School and The Art Institute) has helped me see food as an artistic medium. I love deep, complex flavors, I love finding new ways to present familiar ingredients, and I love seeing how I can balance colors, textures, and flavor elements on a plate. I definitely believe in, and practice mindful cooking. If I am able to connect with the food that I'm preparing, I'm ultimately connecting to the person I'm serving."

To learn more about The Enterprise Center's Elevate! program for emerging small businesses, visit their website at [theenterprisecenter.com](http://theenterprisecenter.com).

## WE'RE GOING DIGITAL

If you've visited the Dornsife Center recently you've probably used our new computer-based sign-in system. You might even have wondered "well, what was wrong with the old easy to use paper system?"

We've been working on building this new sign-in process for several months, in consultation with the Dornsife Community Advisory Council. It will be an important part of how we handle safety and security on our site. As operators of a public space, we feel responsible for our visitors' safety, and knowing who's using our buildings is part of that job. Just as importantly, it helps us stay accountable. Being able to tell our funders how many people are coming to our programs means we can tell an accurate story about how the Dornsife Center is doing. That means understanding how many new and repeat participants visit each day. We will also ask folks to tell us a little bit about themselves if they choose, so we know whether we need to do a better job reaching out to and providing programs for different audiences. Sign-in sheets just don't allow us to meet these safety and accountability responsibilities.



So please remember to bring a valid photo ID when you visit. The new system asks you for a phone number or email address to use as your unique identifier - so you can also help us keep your entry unique by using the same phone number or email each time you sign in. We appreciate everyone's patience as we bring the new system on-line and as everyone gets accustomed to the new process. Please be assured that your information is kept completely confidential and secure in our database system, will not be shared with any other party, and will only be used to contact you about future Dornsife Center programs.

## COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR

### REBECCA ROSE

You can reliably find Rebecca Rose at the Dornsife Center just before the monthly community dinner gets started on the first Tuesday of each month. This energetic local artist curates the mini art exhibit that diners can view while waiting in the dinner buffet line. She created the mini-exhibit

blowing and stained glass while at CMU, and she also works in ceramic tile, sculpture, and painting. "I enjoy exploring concepts and life forces in painting and sculpture," Rose says. Her most challenging work was the 18-foot-tall masonry sculpture of an iris, located at 52nd and Vine Streets here in West Philadelphia. "It was quite an undertaking" she notes.



*Rebecca Rose, shown here with a painting by Drexel's Josh Weiss, at the Dornsife Center's monthly dinner mini-exhibit.*

last year, recognizing an opportunity in the monthly community dinner to bring attention to the creative work being done by members of the Mantua, Powelton Village, and Drexel University communities.

Born in New York, Rose lived in Powelton Village for 37 years before moving to a house on Spring Garden Street - right between Powelton Village and Mantua - in 1997. She came here with her mother and grandmother.

And indeed, art is a family legacy: "My grand-mom Rose Metzgen aspired to painting while living in New York during the Harlem Renaissance, taught my mom, then after coming to Philadelphia taught me and my brothers. I so enjoyed my grand-mom and the art she taught me that I had decided in fourth grade that I would be an artist."

Building on her family training, Rose went on to get a bachelor's degree in fine art from Carnegie Mellon University, a master's degree in Human Services from Springfield College, and a post-baccalaureate certificate in painting and sculpture from the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art. Today she works in several mediums; she learned glass

supplied artists with studio space and resources in exchange for their work with residents in Mantua, Belmont, Mill Creek, Saunders Park, and West Powelton to develop creative community-led projects. "I engaged members of the community to envision projects that artists could help them complete, and although difficult for most to conceive originally I was able to make it a success for many."

Rose likewise collaborated with the Dornsife Center and a Drexel Museum Leadership class taught by Danielle Rice this year to create "pARTicipate," a community arts festival. Interested in learning more about how you can get involved in arts-based community projects? Come to one of the Dornsife Center's community dinners on the first Tuesday of each month: Rebecca Rose will be there to give you some great ideas.

Rose has brought her experience with ceramic tile together with her passion for community work as a leader with the local Brandywine Street Park rebranding project, in which neighborhood individuals and families are creating personalized tiles at Dornsife Center workshops to adorn the re-imagined pocket park. Showcasing family stories reflects her own vision of the role of art in community building. "I think through art we can recognize the intrinsic value of each person. I see my role as both sharing and engaging creativity in all aspects of life to promote introspection and beauty."

A natural collaborator, Rose has also been the studio coordinator and community liaison for the Neighborhood Time Exchange, a project sponsored by People's Emergency Center and the Mural Arts Program that



*Rebecca Rose's portrait of President Ronald Reagan*