



NEW JERSEY

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QuickTakes!

New Jersey City University's Center for the Arts Announces its Inaugural Director

July 16, 2018

New Jersey City University (NJCU) announces the appointment of Stephanie Chaiken as the inaugural full-time director of the NJCU Center for the Arts, a cultural hub for diverse performing, visual, film, and literacy arts in Jersey City and the surrounding metro-area.

Ms. Chaiken, a director with 25 years of experience in both the private and non-profit sectors, specializes in leadership, fundraising and community development for arts, education, and performance organizations. She was selected following a national search, and her appointment is effective July 16, 2018.

In announcing the appointment, President Sue Henderson said, "We are delighted to have Stephanie Chaiken, a talented professional with extensive experience in the arts, as a driving force on our creative team and as the inaugural director of NJCU's Center for the Arts."

"Nurturing and promoting the arts in the Jersey City community is one of our top priorities. We have achieved much since establishing the Center in 2016, and with Stephanie's savvy and experience, we anticipate making many more contributions to cultural diversity and opportunity in Jersey City and Hudson County."

The director of the Center for the Arts will work closely with Jason Kroll, NJCU vice president and chief strategy officer, who commented that "Ms. Chaiken will have the opportunity to assist the university in strengthening and expanding its arts identity and initiatives at a critical time in our development. NCJU is fortunate to have Stephanie on board to collaborate with our senior executive team, our faculty and staff, civic and arts community leaders, and members of the Center's Arts Advisory Board, who are key individuals in the metropolitan cultural community.

"Ms. Chaiken will build upon the solid foundation that Alyssa Alpine so capably constructed in an advisory capacity as the Center for the Arts moved from concept to the thriving cultural resource it is today."

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Acknowledging the news of her appointment, Ms. Chaiken said “I am thrilled to join the team at NJCU and look forward to collaborating with other arts organizations and artists in Jersey City and the region to support the exciting work that’s under way and to contribute to the cultural landscape of the area in the future. I hope to build strong connections with the business community to shine a national light on the amazing talent that Jersey City has to offer, and to bring in artists from around the world.”

Ms. Chaiken comes to NJCU from Ramapo College of New Jersey, where she served for six years as the Interim Director of the Berrie Center for Performing and Visual Arts.

Since 1993, Ms. Chaiken has headed an entertainment and consulting company in New York City and worked with artists, communities and colleges nationwide. She launched the education and outreach program at Mountain Laurel Center for the Performing Arts in Bushkill, PA, for which she built partnerships with school administrators, parents, teachers, and students in four Pennsylvania counties, and utilized local artists and members of Jazz at Lincoln Center’s Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra. On the corporate front, Ms. Chaiken produced and directed entertainment and events for such clients as Intrawest Corporation Resorts.

A successful grants writer for numerous organizations, including Minute Man Arc for Human Services in Concord, MA, the Strand Center for the Arts in Lakewood, NJ, and Skylands Performing Arts Center in Newton, NJ, she also has served on the boards of directors of two non-profits – The Consortium of Eastern Regional Theatres (14 years) and The Children’s Entertainment Association (18 years).

From 2008 to 2009, Ms. Chaiken was the artistic director of the Algonquin Arts Theatre, a 540-seat venue in Manasquan, NJ. In addition to programming and business development, she appeared regularly on regional TV and radio advocating for the performing arts and significantly extending the public profile of the Theatre. She also expanded the scope of the Algonquin Arts Theatre School to become the area’s first conservatory-style program, wrote grant proposals, and worked with the Arts-in-Education staff to increase revenues by 30 percent.

Ms. Chaiken served from 2007 to 2008 as the program director of the Huntington Arts Council on Long Island for which she ran three annual large-scale outdoor festivals, including the Huntington Summer Arts Festival, comprised of 51 consecutive days of music, theatre, visual arts and dance. She partnered with the Huntington Township Chamber of Commerce for the Long Island Fall Festival, collaborating with local arts groups and businesses.

Ms. Chaiken is a volunteer fundraiser for the Race for Hope DC, a 5K race co-founded by her family. Over 21 years, the event has raised \$29 million for brain tumor research. Funding goes to the National Brain Tumor Society in Boston, MA and Steve Case’s Accelerate Brain Cancer Cure in Washington, DC.

A graduate of Franklin & Marshall College, Ms. Chaiken has also studied at Boston Conservatory of Music and Emerson College in Boston.

About the NJCU Center for the Arts

The NJCU Center for the Arts was established in 2016 to bring the University's performing, visual, film, and literary arts activities under one creative umbrella. An interim director, Alyssa Alpine, guided the Center during its first two years.

With New York City just across the river, the NJCU Center for the Arts is a cultural hub of North Jersey, hosting guest artists and speakers in the performing, visual, film, and literary arts, alongside student presentations. NJCU's theaters and galleries present an array of performances, recitals, lectures, screenings, and exhibitions, and the Center partners with members of the community to produce events at local public schools and other off campus venues.

In May 2018, the Office of Cultural Affairs of Jersey City and NJCU announced their partnership on the creation of a Cultural Asset Map of Jersey City. The genesis of this initiative was a result of discussions of NJCU's Arts Advisory Board as to how NJCU could partner with arts and cultural stakeholders to positively impact the vitality of the arts in Jersey City and the region. The Cultural Asset Map of Jersey City will collect and synthesize useful data about Jersey City working artists and established arts organizations.