

many voices one movement

# FIRST GENERATION

arts and youth leadership



**WOW!**

The Performance Project is honored to have received *The New England Public Radio Arts & Humanities Award for Outstanding Organization!*

First Generation Ensemble accepted the award last Monday at the Log Cabin, performed, and had a beautiful evening!

# REVOLUTIONS INTERNATIONAL THEATER FESTIVAL ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO



In the 14 years of the Revolutions International Festival, First Generation is the first youth ensemble to ever be invited to participate. This January, we were able to accept the invitation to bring *fo n' ale (we must go)* to the festival because of the incredible generosity of several individuals.

First Generation Ensemble traveled to Albuquerque, spent a week in production, and performed three times, including one show for an audience of middle school and high school groups. The performances were held at the beautiful Albuquerque Journal Theater of the National Hispanic Cultural Center. It was exciting, very hard work, and, a tremendous success!



## FIRST GENERATION CULTURAL CELEBRATION

Upon returning from Revolutions, Iyawna and Laeticia planned a cultural event, reaching out to Springfield High Schools, First Gen families, friends, community organizations, and artists. Over 80 people crammed into our space and enjoyed performances by professional artists and youth from near and afar. Harmonica and percussion, spoken word by Yissel Rosario and rap performed by Adam Yagoub Abdelrahman, a story from Guinea told by Fynta Sidibe, a song by Tamador Gibreel, performances by Chiino Rios, Iyawna Burnett, original choreography by Nica and Dana Israel, traditional Nepali dance, and so much more!

## STUDY GROUP IS GOING STRONG!



EVERY MONDAY AND WEDNESDAY after First Generation, we have a homework support group with college tutors. We currently have 5 academic mentors, students from Westfield, Amherst College and Hampshire. Over the years we've tried several models of academic support and the current

one has been the most successful. In the Study Group, the college mentors help First Gen members with their homework, studying for tests, with projects such as essays and research, and with the college application process. The Academic mentors also bring their own work, and sometimes work side-by-side with First Gen members.

## FANTASTIC ETHIOPIAN COOKING! GERUMNESH MELESSIE GOES INTO BUSINESS!

### *Cafe Ethiopia Catering*

Gerumnesh Abebe Melessie

ph: 413-505-3241

ph: 413-788-0417

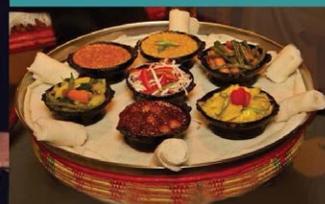
melessieg@gmail.com



Gerumnesh Melessie is native Ethiopian chef, who has been cooking Ethiopian cuisine for over 20 years. She owned a very successful restaurant in Ethiopia, and is continuing her love of cooking in the United States by catering the finest Ethiopian dishes for all kinds of events, from family dinners and small gatherings to large events with up to 1000 people. Experience the taste of Ethiopia here in Western Massachusetts!



### *Fine Ethiopian Dining*



Gerumnesh moved to Springfield with her husband, Bekele and four children, Yabets, Sosina, Tinsae, and Tsenu in December of 2012. She is developing plans to open a restaurant in Springfield. Her three oldest are members of First Generation. The Erkailo Family supports the empowerment of youth! For more information call: 413-788-0417 - Yabets Erkailo

## HIGHLIGHTING OUR INTERNS

### TARA MORRISON

I am currently in my final semester at Hampshire College, where I am doing my thesis in studio art. I am originally from New Hampshire, where my parents moved from New Jersey before I was



born. I am passionate about the ability of art to create and interpret the world in a more inclusive and playful way. Art, for me, is all about playing, and in my ideal world everyone would feel entitled and able to play with words and images, and feel empowered as a creative force. I began working with First Generation three and a half years ago, and have been involved in everything from making props to tutoring, to helping out with field trips. I've learned so much about how a community organization like First Gen really works. I love First Gen because it is so much about collaboration, and everyone who is a part of it has a voice in what goes on. In this way, it serves as a very empowering environment, and this allows for more creative freedom and confidence. I've met so many incredible people through the First Gen family, and feel so lucky to have been able to spend time with First Gen members and be part of a communal creative engagement. I'm always completely blown away by the power of their performances, and the integrity, compassion and honesty of its members. Assisting this group in any way I can is work that is incredibly meaningful to me, and I am so thankful to know this inspiring group of people.



#### VICTOR MARTINEZ-DIAZ

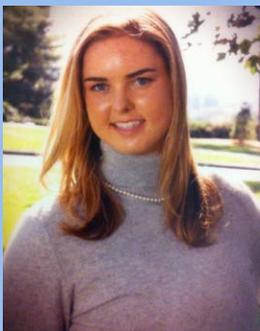
I am currently a senior at Westfield State University but originate from Boston, MA. I've always had a deep, underlying urge to confront the prejudices I encounter, or just simply right what I feel is wrong, In many situations I've come to realize that we are always learning something new about ourselves and the environment around us. I've always been an athlete at heart; athletics had shaped my persona in significant ways, and one could even say, it saved my life. In that sense, I've always wanted to provide young adults with the same kind of

mentorship and structure that helped me. Most recently I've developed a passion for community activism, especially through sports and exercise. I joined First Generation because I saw how committed they were to those same kinds of values of community activism and providing young adults with a structured and productive environment. I am fairly new to First Generation but getting to know these young adults I've noticed the leadership they have within them and it makes me happy to see that contrary to what mainstream media says, there are still youth out there that have the potential to lead. I am honored to know everyone here!



#### CHANDRA HUGHES

I was born in China, adopted, and have grown up in New York City. I currently attend Hampshire College, concentrating in the Animation and Game Business. Mid-way through my sophomore high school year, I became interested in amateur voice acting and I've pursued it along with producing fanubs and games ever since. I enjoy tutoring math, and helping others to understand algebra. I'm very interested in First Generation and what they do, and I enjoy watching their performances.



#### JORDAN BREWER

I am an Academic Mentor at First Gen. I was born and raised in Southern California and am currently a senior/4th year psychology major at Amherst College. This coming fall I'll be attending either Columbia's Graduate School of Social Work, where I will be starting the Master of Social Work program. Two of my main passions have been tennis and serving others. I've played tennis since I was 7 years old and have learned so many valuable life lessons from it, such as losing/winning graciously, time management, motivation to always do better and improve oneself, desire, dedication, and an overall excellent work ethic. I've also had the opportunity to give back to my community through volunteer and summer internship experiences. I've always

enjoyed serving others, finding solutions for individuals' problems and bringing positivity into a negative situation. I decided to be a tutor at First Gen because I wanted to use my Amherst education and my plethora of life experiences to help others improve academically and make futures even better. Being a part of First Gen has been an amazing and heartwarming experience. It's definitely a place where supporting each other, being open-minded, and developing dedication and commitment through dance, self-expression, and academics thrive.



#### MOHAMMAD ABDELMAGID

I'm 22 years of age. I was born and raised in Omdurman, Sudan but my father's ancestry is from Cairo, Egypt. I came to the United States, Springfield to be exact, at the age of 11. My family migrated to America because of education and stayed ever since. I currently attend Westfield State University, class of 2014, with a Bachelor of Arts, concentration in Ethnic and Gender Studies. I picked up Ethnic and Gender Studies because it gives me an opportunity to learn about what makes me passionate. The idea of learning about all different types of cultures and religions is what I strive for and what makes me passionate. I joined First Generation through word of mouth from my friend, Victor Martinez Diaz, and ever since I joined it was an amazing experience. I like First Generation because it's not like any organization. It's a family with a foundation built on love, respect, and welcoming. The group is amazing, and that's what makes me excited to be a part of it. Working for First Generation means more than just an internship, I've build another family, another home. I want to continue to grow with First Generation as much as possible.

#### RENE "TACO" CRUZ

I'm Dominican, and from New York City. I'm passionate about music and helping people and communities through music. I am currently studying at Hampshire College and I



joined First Generation as a part of my interest in this community which successfully brings together people who have traveled many unique paths. Working with First Generation is more than just learning about a community that gives back, it is an opportunity for me to spend quality time with many talented performers.

## **MORE** News

First Generation members joined our Mural Project for a Men's Resources International Training by James Arana. For three days we were immersed in a dynamic process focused on creating greater awareness of the full range of experiences and influences that form our definitions of masculinity. Together the group analyzed how traditional definitions of masculinity are connected to gender-based violence in relationships, families, and communities, and also gender inequity. The MRI trainings engage women and men in becoming allies to identify and promote healthy, compassionate and responsible models of gender identity.

## *and a BIG thank you!*

To the South Congregational Church for letting us meet and rehearse in their beautiful space during the very cold months of this winter, AND to the Springfield Adolescent Health Project and the Community Health Network Area (CHNA) #4 for your support!

**YOUR SUPPORT IS NEEDED !**

**We want to continue First Generation!**

***Please make a contribution so that we can***

***create more performances and leadership opportunities***

**Support Creative Youth Empowerment!**

Donate on Razoo!

web  
performanceproject.org



email  
info@performanceproject.org

The Performance Project/First Generation 5 Taylor Street, Springfield MA 01103  
mailing address - PO Box 5195 Springfield, MA 01101  
web - performanceproject.org email- info@performanceproject.org phone- 413-374-4938

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