The US Grail's Young Women's Initiative

—Pamela Cobey with bios from the women from the US Grail's Young Women's Initiative

Left to Right:
Facilitator: Suzanne Ehly, Tina Kalala, Veronica Guaján, Danette Wilkins, Laura Herschberger, Lisa Petro, and Tiffany Curtis

We, as Grail community, want to express our deepest gratitude to these incredibly gifted women who responded to the call of Council to be a part of a group of young women who would be willing to look at what it is that might make an organization such as the Grail work for future generations. Each of these women were asked to commit to four mandates, the final iteration from the group itself as follows:

- To be antiracist and antioppressive from inception, including representation around the table
- To be interspiritual in a changing religious landscape
- To be committed to the international empowerment of women and girls
- To be of the future for the future.

Council extended the invitation to four women currently members of the Grail, and these four women invited two additional women. While Council was planning for a group of eight, these six gelled well, and have requested to remain a group of six. Their task was to invite women of color to join them--women who would be committed to the articulated mandates and women they would like to work with. We recognized that if the group were to be successful, they would need a facilitator. Tiffany had experienced working with Suzanne Ehly in her training in spiritual direction and believed that Suzanne could be a good match for the group. Initial video-conference calls were set up, then a meeting with the facilitator, and finally a first face to face meeting at the Norbertine Abbey in Albuquerque, NM January 2019.

During their first meeting, this group learned more about each other and thoughtfully considered their mandates. By their second meeting at St. Raphaela Center outside Philadelphia in May 2019 the group had identified Emergent Strategy by adrienne maree brown as a tool they would use to guide them toward an end goal: an articulation of their findings on how movements for persons of their generation and forward work and what they might look like in an organization such as the Grail. They drew upon Emergent principles to continue evaluating what it means to build and foster community within a large global movement while remaining introspective and dedicated to social justice both inwardly and outwardly.

As Council, we believe it is important that these gifted women, committed to Grail values and appreciative of our intergenerational reality, are free to consider their thoughts and findings from their own perspectives—perspectives that are different from ours because they are from a vastly different generation.

Please meet Group Facilitator: **Suzanne Ehly**.

Suzanne Ehly serves as a chaplain/spiritual director for Still Harbor. In addition, she is a professional musician, an equity and justice consultant with VISIONS, Inc., an experienced educator, workshop and retreat leader, and former Artist-in-Residence and Faculty in Voice, Body, Culture and Leadership at Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, MA and faculty at UMASS/Boston. As a white, Protestant, queer, US woman, she considers it both her keen delight and citizen responsibility to engage in the ongoing transformation of herself and of individuals and organizations with which she work. She brings curiosity, compassion, and patience to her expertise in understanding and transforming/healing the intersected and hybrid ways that racism and other oppressions live in the bodies and imaginations of people from both traditionally "included" and "excluded" groups.

Lisa Petro

Lisa Petro is a Curriculum Development Consultant and the Co-founder of Know My World, a Global Education Resource organization, which focuses on the development of Social, Emotional, Academic, and Cultural Learning (SECAL) through virtual exchange and classroom projects. Lisa has designed Global Education curriculum for PrepaTec, Tecnologico de Monterrey, in Monterrey, Mexico, Education for Employment, Ramallah, Palestine, The Albanian Youth Entrepreneurship Project in Tirana, Albania, and Your Success Now (YSN) in conjunction with Bloomberg BusinessWeek and the University of Central Florida in the United States. She has also specialized in intercultural education for primary grades with One Globe Kids Inc. in Manhattan and The Netherlands. Lisa enjoys co-constructing learning communities and works directly with teacher trainers. She has supported capacity building and teacher development programs with the Nepali Education Support Trust in Hetauda, Nepal, Japanese Exchange and Teaching Programme in Hirosaki, Japan, the American School Taichung in Taiwan, and The Boys and Girls Clubs of America in New York. Lisa has a Masters Degree in Multicultural and Humanistic Education from the State University of New York at New Paltz. She spends her free time traveling the world and hanging out with her Boston Terrier.

Danette Wilkins

Danette Wilkins (she/her/hers) currently works as a Program Manager with the Technical Innovation and Evidence team at Ipas, headquartered in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. In this role, she supports access to safe abortion and contraceptive care around the globe by building local and regional capacity to address unmet need for these critical healthcare services and prevent unnecessary injury, disability, or death. Throughout her career, Danette has worked with multilateral, governmental, and non-governmental organi-zations, providing project management and technical support to address diverse global issues with local impact. She also served as a Rotary Ambassadorial Fellow in Ecuador and as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Nicaragua. Danette holds diplomas from the College of William and Mary, Latin American School of Social Sciences in Ecuador (FLACSO), and Emory University. Danette enjoys playing roller derby, being a radio DJ, and learning the art of improv comedy.

Tiffany Curtis

Tiffany Curtis is trained as a clinical chaplain, spiritual director, and group facilitator, and has worked extensively as a community organizer and in prisons. She has ongoing commitments to grassroots community work in the U.S., Ecuador, and Honduras. Tiffany grew up in Los Angeles in a bilingual family and in an immigrant congregation, which has influenced her work around immigration. Tiffany is the minister of First Christian Church of Santa Fe (New Mexico), the Co-Founder and Lead Organizer of the Santa Fe Faith Network for Immigrant Justice, and a Peer Group Convener with the Prison and Jail Ministries Initiative of the National Benevolent Association. Tiffany holds a B.A. from Chapman University in in Peace Studies and Latin American Studies and an M.Div. from Harvard University. She is an ordained minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) tradition. Tiffany hopes to the. facilitate courageous, sacred spaces of communal healing through contemplation and action. Tiffany is nourished by a committed yoga practice, quality time with loved ones, and hiking in the Sangre de Cristo mountains.

Verónica Guaján

Verónica Guaján is an indigenous woman (Kichwa) from Cotacachi – Ecuador. She holds a degree in sociology from Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador, with a Master's degree in Gender and Development, from FLACSO - Ecuador. She has vast experience advising indigenous communities in issues related to human rights, and gender equality. She worked at the Ministry of Social Inclusion and National Assembly from Ecuador, where she acquired relevant experience in public policy. Her current initiatives include the promotion of women's empowerment and fighting all forms of discrimination, as well as evaluating strategies to strengthen indigenous communities.

Laura Herschberger

Laura Hershberger is a clinical social worker from Cincinnati, OH. She studied social work, international studies and theology at Saint Louis University. She has a masters in social work from the University of Cincinnati. She currently works as a mental health therapist in a maternal depression treatment program at Cincinnati Children's Hospital. Laura is experienced in giving trainings locally, nationally and internationally on depression, trauma and cultural competency in social work. Laura has a strong connection to Latin America from her time living and working in El Salvador. She has been a Grail member since 2013 and has been active in the local and international Grail. Laura has a nine year old son named Alejandro and she enjoys volunteering her time at his public montessori school in the Pleasant Ridge neighborhood of Cincinnati. She also loves to read, cook, garden and spend time with her family.

Tina Kalala

Tina Kalala is an Email Marketing Associate in New York City. She is also a Zumba Certified Dance Instructor and has been teaching for four years. She has facilitated a Teen youth group in the Bronx for several years. Her passion is empowering youth and she is currently working on a future project to empower young women and girls with tools for their future. Tina enjoys being active, singing, playing guitar, traveling and writing and hopes to write a book in the near future.

Tina's pic and bio

The Guidelines for Cross-Cultural Communication that YWI is Using:

1) Try on

2) It is okay to disagree
3) It is not okay to shame, blame, or attack self or others
4) Practice self-focus
5) Practice both/and thinking
6) Notice both process and content
7) Be aware of intent and impact
8) Maintain confidentiality
(Developed by Visions, Inc.)

Collaborative art project showcasing values and actions integral to fostering a diverse, inclusive, and equitable process around community building:

(Elizabeth, I am asking Laura Herschberger to name their values and actions integral to fostering process around community building.)