

## **Any Given Child Bethlehem expands presence in Bethlehem schools**

*Adam Ercolani will direct the initiative as program manager*

Adam Ercolani (he/they), teaching artist, performance artist, arts administrator and advocate, has been announced as the program manager for Any Given Child Bethlehem.

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in 2017 chose Bethlehem as the 24th site—and the first in Pennsylvania—for its Ensuring the Arts for Any Given Child program. The primary goal of the program is to assist communities in developing and implementing a plan for expanded arts education in their schools, ensuring access and equity for all students in grades K-8.

The [Zoellner Arts Center](#) at Lehigh University leads the initiative in collaboration with Bethlehem Area School District, the City of Bethlehem and the Kennedy Center.

The initiative supports K-8 schools with visiting community arts venues, community teaching artists, and learning through arts-based instructional methods as a result of teacher professional development. As of fall 2024, approximately 55 teachers at Donegan Elementary School, Fountain Hill Elementary School, and Broughal Middle School have received professional development in creative teaching strategies, resulting in impact to 800-1,000 students.

In this new position, Ercolani will drive Any Given Child Bethlehem's vision of building a learning community where every child experiences, creates, and values the arts through providing professional development for teachers and coordinating in-school and out-of-school arts experiences for K-8 students.

"I'm immensely grateful to have the opportunity to support a transformative initiative for our teachers, our students, and our city," says Ercolani. "It's beyond exciting to be a part of such a vibrant community that considers the arts to be not just important, but essential."

"Zoellner Arts Center at Lehigh University is proud to strengthen our collaboration with the Bethlehem Area School District and the City of Bethlehem through the Kennedy Center's Any Given Child Initiative," said Mark Wilson, executive director of Zoellner Arts Center. "Jack Silva's vision in appointing Joe Anthes as the district's leader laid a strong foundation, and with Adam now leading this initiative on behalf of Lehigh University, we have a clear path toward success. We are also deeply grateful to The Dexter F. and Dorothy H. Baker Foundation for their support in helping us move forward with this impactful work."

Ercolani previously worked as the Campus Engagement Manager for Zoellner, where they focused on infusing the arts into the everyday lives of Lehigh's campus community. They continue to teach with Touchstone Theatre, are an adjunct professor of theatre at Lehigh, and will continue working as a creative teaching strategies coach for BASD as a part of the Any Given Child initiative.

“BASD, Zoellner Arts Center, and the City of Bethlehem work together to create a learning community in which every child creates, experiences, and values the arts. We look forward to Adam's leadership helping to reach our vision and taking AGCB to new heights,” said Joseph Anthes, K-12 supervisor of Related Arts and Social Studies at Bethlehem Area School District.

Ercolani earned degrees in Business Administration and English Literature from Misericordia University prior to completing an MFA in Performance Creation from Moravian University, and recently completed a Graduate Certificate in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Lehigh University. They are the recipient of the Donald and Mary Ann Hopkins Award for Excellence in Theater Arts and the Mary Ann Thompson Memorial Student Achievement Award, both from Misericordia University, and is a graduate of both the Intercollegiate Leadership Wilkes-Barre program and the Leadership Wyoming Program with the Wyoming County, PA Chamber of Commerce, as well as a member of the Association of Performing Arts Professionals' Emerging Leadership Institute, Class of 2025.

#### About Lehigh University

Located in Pennsylvania's beautiful Lehigh Valley, Lehigh University is one of the nation's most distinguished private research universities. Through academic rigor, an entrepreneurial mindset and collaborative opportunities we challenge our students to become the leaders of the future. [www.lehigh.edu](http://www.lehigh.edu).

#### About Zoellner Arts Center

Located on the campus of Lehigh University, Zoellner Arts Center has been a cultural hub in the Lehigh Valley since its opening in 1997. The center is dedicated to enriching the community through diverse artistic experiences, presenting performances and programs that inspire creativity and foster connection. From hosting renowned artists to supporting emerging talent, Zoellner Arts Center remains committed to its mission of bringing world-class art and culture to the region.