Denise Slappy
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(517) 395-6892 | Pittsburgh, PA
https://www.linkedin.com/in/deniseslappy/

EDUCATION

Swarthmore College BA Peace and Conflict Studies, History Minor, 2022
University of Pittsburgh Post-Baccalaureate Theatre Arts Fellow, expected Spring 2027

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

PathLab | University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work | Pittsburgh, PA
July 2026-Present

- Mental health and disability services research grounded in critical social theory and committed to participatory, community-engaged methods
- Documentary Film and Ethnographic Research Assistant for studies on lived experience psychosis

Peace and Conflict Studies Department | Swarthmore College | Swarthmore, PA
August 2020-May 2021

- Authored: *Acts of Solidarity to Heal from the War on Drugs* and *An Open Letter to the Church: Black Survivors Matter*

School for International Training | Dakar, Senegal
January 2020-June 2020

- Authored "Bag Ladies, B-Boys, and the Bible" exploring Hip Hop and youth ministry
- Interviewed 30 students, artists, activists, community leaders, clergy, parents, and educators across Senegal and the U.S. and implemented findings in a youth summer course: "Can Hip Hop be Used to Praise God?"

ARTISTIC WORKS

***The Cost of Change* (2026), Play**

- Producer, Writer, Director
- Managed and raised a budget in grants ($3,000) and community donations ($2,000) for 12 cast members and 3 musicians

***A Night to Remember in Jackson* (2025), Play**

- Producer, Writer, Director
- Managed and raised a $5,000 budget in community donations for 25 cast members and 4 musicians

***Generation 2 Generation* (2024), Play**

- Producer, Writer, Director
- Managed and raised a $10,000 budget (grant-funded) for 25 cast members and 4 musicians

***Bob Marley, the Balm, and the Bible* (2017), Documentary**

- Producer, Writer

***Black Women in Comics* (2017), Documentary**

- Producer, Writer

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CONFERENCES

Progressive Youth Ministry Conference | Austin, TX | Fall 2024

- Core Organizer: Managed hospitality and risk/safety pre-assessment for over 800 attendees at Austin Seminary

National Woman's Studies Association Conference | Atlanta, GA | November 2026

- ReWilding Rosa Parks (Individual Paper), Hoodoo for Survivors (Workshop), Body Sovereignty and Drama: Survivors at Play (Roundtable)

PROFESSIONAL ROLES

Spectrum Youth Solutions/EDUStaff | Albion, MI
Special Education Teacher and Substitute Teacher | August 2021-June 2026

- Served as a teacher managing high school and middle school classrooms in urban and rural alternative and public schools in Michigan
- Raised $200 on LinkedIn to finance copies of Malcolm X's autobiography for an acting and history course at Spectrum (Juvenile Detention Facility)

Michigan Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence | Okemos, MI
Hotline Advocate | November 2020-August 2021

- Supported survivors through national hotline and referral systems
- Completed 100+ hours of trauma-informed, survivor-centered care training

Michigan Dept. of Labor and Economic Opportunity | Lansing, MI
Americorps DEI Policy and Inclusion Research Intern | September 2020-May 2021

- Conducted research and supported the Michigan Poverty Task Force in drafting equity-focused policy recommendations for the Governor's Office

VOLUNTEER ROLES AND INTERNSHIPS

Marshall Public Schools
Drama Club Advisor | September 2023-Present

- Coached 35+ middle schoolers in drama play, creating opportunities for literacy development, social emotional learning, and belonging
- Directed the first annual Martin Luther King Day Assembly at Marshall Middle School and raised $1,500 for costumes, food, AV services, and prizes for participating youth

John and Vera Mae Perkins Foundation | Jackson, MS
Youth Ministry and Housing Intern | April 2018-October 2020

- Directed afterschool arts/STEAM program with tutoring and mental health supports for 40 students and 28 families
- Researched and applied for 10 grants, receiving $3,000 in funding
- Studied the Bible and community development with world renowned Southern Civil Rights figures