

Independent Media Center / Champaign-Urbana - Media Giraffe Profile

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Danielle Chynoweth - City Council member/Vice Presiden of OJC Technologies, Founder IMC

"The success of the IMC movement depends on everyday people realizing that, in our monoculture of information, their eyes and ears are valuable."

(from <http://www.inthesetimes.com/site/main/article/2080/>)"

Address: c/o OJC Technologies, 115 W. Main St - 2nd Floor

Location: Urbana, IL, 61801

Email: danielle@ojctech.com

Website: www.indymedia.org

Work: 217-278-3933

About

Danielle Chynoweth is currently doing graphic design and business development for OJC Technologies, a worker owned company founded to provide high paying paid time work to artists and activists. She says that her main work is organizing public arts, media reform, and progressive policy making. She is the founding member of the Urbana Champaign Independent Media Center, to which she volunteers 30-40 hours a week.

Chynoweth has a Masters Degree in Political Science from the New School for Social Research, New York and a Spinsters of the Arts Degree in Political Science and Sculpture from New College, Sarasota, Florida.

Chynoweth said that she has known she was going to be an activist since she was younger. "When I saw seven, I accidentally walked in on a documentary with actual footage of the Hiroshima bombing and when I read Carolyn Forché's poem, "The Visitor," I am reminded of what I realized then, there is nothing that one man will not do to another. I have been an activist ever since." She attributes her role as an activist to these influences in her life.

The Urbana Champaign Independent Media Centers, founded in 2000, mission is to "foster the creation and distribution of media and art emphasizing under-represented voices and perspectives." The IMC was originally a group of twelve community organizers and artists who met in a living room, who came together to build this organization to "facilitate grassroots media and arts production."

Today, the IMC has over 360 active members who run the associated projects, over 1,000 supporters, and ten thousands of visitors a year. "IMC members operate a radio station, an all ages performance venue, computer workstations, video and print production, a library of books and magazines by small and independent presses, retail space for selling CD's, "zines, handmade books and prints by independent artists, a wood shop, a silk-screening workshop, public access computer terminals and meeting space for community groups."

The group also sells prisoner artwork and ships books to the prisoners, and the IMC sponsors global media arts projects such as Eye of the Storm Films, Critical Movement Magazine, and, Latin American Media Fund.

"My mission is to decrease human produced misery and resist the human tendency towards fascism. When I speak the work fascism, I mean the dynamic of a people giving over control to the powerful alliance of two powers: a militaristic state and profit-driven corporations," said Chynoweth. She also believes that in order to have a democracy people need to resist fascism. She also wants to protect democracy. "Democracy is when people participate with meaningful consequences in the decisions that affect their lives," said Chynoweth. She also says that she is personally motivated by local events that are under reported by the media.

"Indy media is motivated by the need to create parallel institutions to hold the social conversations so essential to democracy." Indy media is a way of restriction of mainstream media. Indy media is driven largely by volunteers and donations.

Chynoweth said, "The IMC empowers people to become the media. Much of our activities involve providing tools, and training, and venues to give voice of under represented point of view."

Links

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