



**Cecilia Nadal**  
**Executive Director of Gitana Productions**

Cecilia has balanced the hats of trainer, social developer, former business owner and founder of Gitana Productions, a nonprofit arts and education firm. Her interests include global education, workforce development, social services to at risk and immigrant communities, economic development and the protection of life and liberty for vulnerable groups such as the poor, the elderly and the sick.

In 1996, Cecilia founded Gitana Productions, an arts and education organization that engages diverse cultures through music, dance and drama. The goal of this organization is to promote global healing by bringing groups together to learn more about one another and increase cross-cultural acceptance.

Cecilia has produced more than 15 major shows featuring international artists, produced an award-winning film on Chinese music and produced two plays dealing with Darfur and women refugees from Afghanistan. She is a world traveler and is an expert on Roma (Gypsy) history, culture and music. Cecilia is very fond of religious and spiritual studies and hopes to write about her experiences in the near future. Gitana Productions has a reputation for attracting some of the most diverse audiences in St. Louis.

In February 2008, as a result of Cecilia's leadership, Gitana began the first community arts project in south St. Louis, which focuses on African Americans and immigrant youth. The project, Global Education through the Arts, is funded by Monsanto and teaches intercultural communication, cultural diversity and the arts. Currently the program includes youth from Liberia, Haiti, Bosnia, Tanzania, Vietnam and the U.S. This is the first program in St. Louis and Missouri to consciously bring at-risk African American and immigrant youth together for better understanding of each other through the arts.

Cecilia received her bachelor of art in sociology from St. Louis University and a masters degree from Webster University. She entered a doctoral program at the St. Louis University School of Social Work, and completed training in organizational analysis, social administration and research.

In 1984 Cecilia started Productive Futures Inc., an employment and training company serving economically challenged African Americans and immigrants. After 23 years of service to over 8,500 clients and 2,500 companies, Cecilia left the company as its CEO to pursue her interest in arts and education and to take care of an ailing mother. Productive Futures has received local, statewide and international recognition for its effectiveness in matching clients to the right companies and corporate culture.

In addition to these roles, she raised her daughter Maria Chappelle-Nadal, who is State Representative of the 72nd District, which includes University City, Wellston and Pagedale. Maria has been recognized for her leadership in fighting repressive immigration legislation, supporting public education and being a champion for senior citizens

Cecilia is a fellow of Leadership St. Louis and sits on Boards including Harmony In Life, a Bosnian mental health agency; the Community Conflict Services Board; and the Health and Safety Committee of the American Red Cross. She recently was a grants review panelist for the Regional Arts Commission and sits on their Cultural Initiatives Advisory Council. Cecilia also teaches courses in nonprofit management, proposal writing and grantsmanship, workforce development and cultural competence.

Cecilia's father was Puerto Rican and her mother was a St. Louisan. An interest in the arts runs in the family, as evidenced by the fact that her cousin, Luis Torres Nadal, is one of the foremost playwrights and poets on the Island of Puerto Rica. Nadal also is a writer, focusing primarily on social commentary, nonfiction and poetry.

For more info on Gitana Productions, visit [www.gitana-inc.org](http://www.gitana-inc.org).

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