

Event Information



The 2025 Hope in Action Conference:

A Conference for Non-Profit Leaders Who Serve

Hosted by the Minnesota Community Action Partnership
September 10th, 2025 at The Park Event Center in Waite Park, MN

Overview

 **Event title** 2025 Hope in Action Conference: A Conference for Non-Profit Leaders Who Serve

 **Hosts** MinnCAP

 **Start time** Sep 10, 2025 8:00 AM

 **End time** Sep 10, 2025 4:30 PM

 **Location**  The Park Event Center

 **Information**

The 2025 Hope in Action Conference is a one-day conference hosted by Minnesota Community Action Partnership.

Through keynotes and workshops, we will provide actionable strategies so organizations can thrive, even in challenging times.

Workshops will cover topics around leadership, data & evaluation, technology, employment law, service design and delivery, and innovative approaches to serving people and communities.

Breakfast and Lunch are included.

Registration Cost:
\$225 per person.

Hotel block for Sept 9 (open until 8/9)
Hilton Garden Inn \$164.00
Residence Inn \$169.00
Both adjoining the conference center

Cancellation requests received before August 10, 2025 will have a \$50 cancellation fee. No refunds will be offered after this date. Registrations may be transferred to another attendee.

Agenda

The Hope in Action Conference

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Park, MN

Agenda

Time	Description	Location
7:00 AM	Registration/Check-in Opens, Breakfast Served	The Park Event Center
8:15-8:30 AM	Welcome Message, Announcements	The Park Event Center
8:30-9:30 AM	Keynote Speaker: Nancy Lyons – <i>Work Like A Boss</i>	The Park Event Center
9:30-9:45 AM	Morning Break, refreshments	The Park Event Center

Time	Description	Location
9:45-11:00 AM	Workshop Breakout #1	Glacier, Badlands, Yosemite, Rushmore and Central Park Rooms
11:15AM-12:30 PM	Workshop Breakout #2	Glacier, Badlands, Yosemite, Rushmore and Central Park Rooms
12:30-1:30 PM	Lunch, Keynote: Joe Schmit – <i>The Impact Playbook: Influence Through Purpose, Persistence and Passion</i>	The Park Event Center
1:45-3:00 PM	Workshop Breakout #3	Glacier, Badlands, Yosemite, Rushmore and Central Park Rooms
3:00-3:15 PM	Afternoon Break, refreshments	The Park Event Center
3:15-4:30 PM	Workshop Breakout #4	Glacier, Badlands, Yosemite, Rushmore and Central Park Rooms

Schedule Grid

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Schedule Grid

<u>Time</u>	<u>Glacier Room</u>	<u>Badlands Room</u>	<u>Yosemite Room</u>	<u>Rushmore Room</u>	<u>Central Park Room</u>
<u>9:45AM-11:00AM</u>	Leading Through Stress: Resilience for Nonprofit Leaders- Chris Tatarka	Building Powerful Relationships with State Legislators- Pam Johnson & Josh Ney	Supporting the Well-Being of Employees and Our Communities: Cultivating Space for GRACE- Dr. Jill Amsberry, Melody Vachal,	Data and Evaluation for Service Design- Dr. Catherine Solheim & Sarah Priest	MN Paid Leave, Employer Responsibilities- James Olney

			Brittany Pfannenstien, Angel Hight and Sylvia Amlie		
<u>11:15AM-12:30PM</u>	Foster Collaboration to Fuel Engagement- Dana Haagenson	Minnesota Compass: A Social Indicators Project- Anne Li	Using Labor Market Data for Workforce Development- Cameron Macht	Essential Document Retention & Destruction Policies for Nonprofits: Protecting Your Mission Through Data Management- Dean Dalzell	AI for Non-Profit Leaders- Mike Kutzke
<u>1:45PM-3:00PM</u>	The Power of Hope in Retaining and Engaging Employees- Dana Haagenson	Advocacy in Action & Communicating Impact Panel: Preparing to Hit an Advocacy Grand Slam!- Pam Johnson, Annie Levenson-Falk, Laura Mortenson, Dave Snyder & Maria Steen	Financial Services & Supports for Low-Income Communities and Individuals- Claudia Holt, Michou Kokodoko, Ben Lien & Nichole Szczesniak	Policy Shift, Fiscal Lift: The Policy Landscape- Marie Primus and Kristie Sams	Mental Health Prevention 101- Shannah Mulvilhill
<u>3:15PM-4:30PM</u>	"Hot Topics" in Human Resources Amy Sip	Poverty Simulations: A Tool for Community	Housing Panel: Best & Promising Practices in	Policy Shift, Fiscal Lift- Financial & Operational	

		Awareness and Engagement- Debi Brandt, Kelly Dicke & Jenna Taubel	Services and Policy- Jenny Larson, Michael Dahl, Elizabeth Glidden, Jason Krebsbach & Julie Laramie	Response Planning- Marie Primus and Kristie Sams	
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Keynote Speakers & Presenters

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Keynote Speakers

Nancy Lyons, author of Work Like a Boss, leader, speaker



Nancy Lyons is an author, keynote speaker, entrepreneur, and work culture architect. As the co-founder (and former CEO) of Clockwork, Nancy has helped organizations embrace change, foster human-centered workplaces, and drive meaningful results. She is the author of 'Work Like a Boss' and is known for her candid, engaging keynotes that challenge audiences to think differently about leadership and work.

Joe Schmit, Sports Anchor, author and motivational speaker



Keynote Speaker

Joe Schmit is an award-winning broadcaster, community leader, author and popular keynote speaker. He has written 3 books on people who make a profound impact and is a member of the Minnesota Speakers Hall of Fame. The children's book he wrote with the Minnesota Twins Hall of Famer has raised over \$125K for charity and is being made into a major theatrical musical production.

As a sports broadcaster he has covered every major sporting event in the past 4 decades and has won 19 Emmys from the National Television Academy. In 2020, Joe was awarded The Silver Circle designation by the Upper Midwest Chapter of the Emmys for extraordinary contributions to the broadcasting industry.

Presenters:

Sylvia Amlie is a Regional Community Health Specialist at CentraCare. She is dedicated to building strong community relationships and advancing health equity through education, advocacy, and collaborative partnerships.

Dr. Jill Amsberry D.O. is a pediatrician who serves as the Director of Undergraduate Medical Education at CentraCare and the Assistant Dean of Undergraduate Medical Education at the University of Minnesota Medical School. Dr. Amsberry completed her pediatric residency at the University of Iowa

and is currently pursuing a master's in health professions education at Johns Hopkins University. She is honored to support the rural mission of the CentraCare Regional Campus in St. Cloud—the state's first new medical school campus in 50 years.

Debi Brandt, Executive Director at United Community Action Partner, has 41 years of community action leadership history. She has extensive experience and a proven track record in designing and implementing programs and agency-wide processes, engaging and mobilizing community members, and leading innovative development initiatives. She extends her passion for making a difference by being involved in her community by serving on an ambulance service and the MACCRAY School Board, and teaching CPR and 1st Aid classes.

Michael Dahl - HOME Line

Dean Dalzell, Vice President of Operations, CFO, All In One Accounting. Dean has a three-decade history of leadership experience in administration, accounting, and finance for both nonprofit and for-profit organizations. He has worked closely with nonprofit boards, CEOs, and other executive leaders, led auditee teams, and has deep experience in the interpretation and application of government grant regulations.

Kelly Dicke is the Planning & Development Director for Semcac, a Community Action Agency serving 7 counties in southeastern Minnesota. Working with Semcac's strategic planning, grant development, communications, and program growth, working to connect resources with local needs in areas like energy assistance, housing, Head Start, senior nutrition, and public transportation. Kelly is passionate about building partnerships that strengthen communities and create lasting impact.

With a career rooted in nonprofit service and community engagement, Kelly brings a collaborative, solutions-focused approach to every project. She believes that lasting change happens when agencies, organizations, and residents work together toward shared goals—and she's committed to making sure every voice is heard in that process.

Elizabeth Glidden- MN Housing Partnership

Dana Haagenson, SHRM-CP is the Director of Business Training at MN State Community and Technical College in Moorhead. In that role, she develops and delivers customized leadership, team, and personal development sessions

for organizations across various industries. As a Gallup Certified Strengths Coach, Dana has coached over five-thousand individuals and teams in discovering and harnessing the power of their individual and collective strengths to achieve success - both personally and professionally. Dana was also a professor at MN State Community and Technical College where she taught in the Human Resource and Accounting programs. Prior to teaching, Dana spent over a decade in the software industry serving in individual contributor and leadership roles from Product Development to Product Management/Strategy to Human Resources. She earned an Accounting degree from MN State University Moorhead and is a CPA, as well as a Certified Professional in Human Resources. Dana lives in Moorhead, MN. She and her husband have 3 daughters, a son-in-law and 2 sweet grandchildren.

Angel Hight, BSN RN-BC is a registered nurse with over 25 years of experience, specializing in gerontological nursing. With nearly two decades dedicated to long-term care, Angel has honed her expertise in supporting aging populations. Currently, she is part of CentraCare's Community Health Improvement team, where she focuses on providing health education and resources to address social drivers of health. Passionate about advocacy and inclusivity, Angel also plays a vital role in the LGBTQ+ community, offering education and fostering social connections as a board member for St. Cloud Pride. Her work embodies a commitment to compassionate care, health equity, and community empowerment.

Claudia Holt- Prepare & Prosper

Pam Johnson has committed the past 35 years to anti-poverty efforts in communities throughout Minnesota and in Washington DC. She is a Licensed Independent Social Worker with a Masters of Social Work from the University of Minnesota-Duluth, where she forged deep ties to the North Shore and Community Action network. Pam spent eight years in community organizing, program development, and direct service efforts through Community Action Duluth. She helped launch the city-wide Mentor Duluth youth mentoring program and initiation of a Big Brothers Big Sisters program in Winona before shifting to statewide public policy and advocacy work with the Minnesota Community Action Partnership (MinnCAP). Securing her Master of Public Affairs (MPA) degree from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs, Pam spent twelve years with MinnCAP leading statewide membership efforts to advocate on a broad range of economic empowerment solutions at local, state, and federal levels. Taking an eight-year hiatus from Community Action, Pam worked with

Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity in policy and direct service roles with Habitat's Age Well at Home Program. Pam is thrilled to "return to her roots" in Community Action this past year as Director of Policy, Advocacy and Impact!

Michou Kokodoko is a Senior Policy Analyst in the Minneapolis Fed's Community Development and Engagement department. He leads the Bank's efforts to promote effective community-bank partnerships by increasing awareness of community development trends and investment opportunities, especially those related to the Community Reinvestment Act. Prior to joining the Minneapolis Fed, Michou managed a community development corporation, providing management consulting and financial planning services to hundreds of ethnically diverse entrepreneurs in one of the most economically depressed neighborhoods in Minneapolis. His work resulted in the rebuilding of pockets of the neighborhood that had suffered from long-term disinvestment. Michou holds an M.B.A from Metropolitan State University and an M.S. in software engineering from the University of St. Thomas.

Jason Krebsbach is the Community Development Director at Central Minnesota Housing Partnership, Inc., a non-profit affordable housing organization serving central Minnesota. In his 21 years at the organization, he has worked with a variety of affordable housing programs, including first-time home buyer education, single-family homeownership, community land trust, rehabilitation programs for housing serving low- and moderate-income households, and affordable multi-family housing development. He has a Housing Development Finance Professional Certification from the National Development Council. Currently he is working on a variety of affordable multi-family housing developments, utilizing local, state, and federal funding sources. Seeing a project transform from a blank piece of land into a brand-new building that provides affordable housing for low- and moderate-income households is the most rewarding part of his job.

Mike Kutzke is a speaker, trainer and life-long learner. He is interested in technology, artificial intelligence, social media and how people and groups adapt to change. He has an M.S. Degree in Social Sciences from North Dakota State University and a B.A. Degree in Criminal Justice from Minnesota State University Moorhead. Mike presents a wide range of topic areas and takes pride in his ability to blend humor, information, and adult learning principles in his training events.

Julie Laramie- TriCAP

Jenny Larson- Three Rivers CAP

Annie Levenson-Falk In 2016, Annie was named the first executive director of the Citizens Utility Board of Minnesota. She joined CUB after serving as the executive director of the Legislative Energy Commission, a nonpartisan office of the Minnesota House and Senate. In her role, Annie staffed the bipartisan commission of 20 legislators charged with evaluating the environmental and economic impacts of state energy policy. Previously, Annie was the Senior Policy Manager of the Citizens League.

Annie co-founded the Capitol Pathways Internship Program, which places students of color and Native American students in legislative internships, so that the Minnesota government better represents the state's diversity. She was also the founding board chair of NAVIGATE MN, a nonprofit run by and for immigrant youth seeking higher education.

Annie received a bachelor's degree in Political Science from Haverford College and lives in rural Cannon Falls.

Anne Li (she/her) is a research associate at Wilder Research and Minnesota Compass. Anne supports work that engages with the community in creating a shared understanding of data. To track quality of life indicators in Minnesota, Anne extracts, transforms, and processes data from a variety of sources. She also supports a number of research and evaluation projects through project management, literature reviews, data analysis, and preparing reports.

Ben Lien comes to Exodus lending with a decade of experience in state and federal government. His professional experience includes serving as a Minnesota State Representative for the Moorhead region and working in Sen. Amy Klobuchar's office as her Regional Outreach Director for Northwest and Central Minnesota. He is passionate about meeting people, learning community issues and working to improve the financial wellbeing of others. In his free time, he enjoys home improvement projects with his wife, Sarah, traveling and music.

Cameron Macht is the Regional Analysis & Outreach Manager in the Labor Market Information office of the Minnesota Department of Employment and

Economic Development (DEED), managing a team of 5 regional analysts that serve economic and workforce development professionals across the state.

Laura Mortenson is communications director for the Minnesota Budget Project, a nonpartisan research and advocacy project of the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits, that pursues policy solutions so that all Minnesotans can thrive, regardless of who they are or where they live. As part of the leadership team, Laura leads the organization's brand strategies, advances policy priorities through communications and engagement tactics, and contributes to strategic collaborative projects. She currently co-leads a 90-organization statewide coalition to protect Medicaid from harmful federal policy changes and funding cuts. Her 30 years in communications includes serving as comms director for a mayor of a large city, managing public and media relations for city membership organizations, and reporting for a suburban newspaper.

Shannah Mulvihill has served as the Executive Director/CEO of Mental Health Minnesota since 2015, and also serves as a Regional Policy Council Representative for Mental Health America. She has worked in the non-profit and public sectors for 20+ years in the areas of communications, development, public policy and organizational leadership. Shannah holds a Masters Degree in counseling psychology from St. Mary's University of Minnesota, and has served as a volunteer counselor for the Walk-In Counseling Clinic and Crisis Connection. She is also a certified trainer in ASIST, safeTALK, Mental Health First Aid, and other evidence-based mental health and suicide prevention trainings. Shannah is a board member and treasurer of Wright County Community Action, as well as a member of the HLWW School Board and the Wright Technical Center. She is a former board chair of Open Your Heart to the Hungry and Homeless and former disaster services volunteer and advisory committee member of the Twin Cities American Red Cross. Shannah is a Certified Fund Raising Executive and a member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals.

Josh Ney has spent the last twelve years working in and around Minnesota state government and currently serves as senior government relations manager at Ewald Consulting. Previously, he was policy advisor for human services and housing to Governor Tim Walz and Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan, where he led budget and strategy development and helped advance historic human services investments through the legislative process. Before joining the Governor's Office, Josh was manager of state affairs for the Alzheimer's Association, a legislative aide to two state senators, and committee legislative assistant to the Minnesota Senate Finance Committee. He also worked in Washington, D.C., as deputy legislative assistant for appropriations to a U.S. senator.

Josh brings a deep understanding of state government, particularly the budget and legislative processes. Known for his sharp governmental insights, he is respected for his thoughtful, strategic approach to legislating and his ability to navigate complex policy landscapes. He holds a Master of Science in Public Affairs from the University of Massachusetts Boston and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and French Linguistics from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. Josh currently serves as Board Chair of the Minnesota Humanities Center and as a member of the Minneapolis Charter Commission.

James Olney works with organizations of all sizes to provide in-depth guidance on a broad spectrum of workplace issues, including such things as employment law compliance, human resources matters, best practices, liability exposures, workers' compensation, etc. In addition to advising our clients, he writes articles on employment and risk management issues, and regularly conducts leadership, harassment, and legal compliance training for our clients' managers and staff.

James has decades of experience advising employers and was a plaintiff's attorney for many years before joining USI. He is a frequent speaker at trade shows and conferences and is a popular instructor at the University of Minnesota's College of Continuing and Professional Studies. James received his law degree from the University of Minnesota, and his undergraduate degree from Washington University in St. Louis.

Brittany Pfannenstien is the Manager of Community Health Improvement at CentraCare, leading collaborative efforts to advance population health and reduce health disparities across Greater Minnesota. She collaborates with community partners to improve access to care and address social drivers of health through Community Health Improvement Plans, driving strategies that promote equity and better health outcomes.

Sarah Priest joined the State of MN, Office of Economic Opportunity, three years ago as a Community Action Grant Manager. She works with the federal Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) and the complementary Minnesota Community Action Grant (MCAG), supporting agencies and Tribal Nations with training and technical assistance, and conducting annual compliance monitoring. She's also responsible for the state's individual development account program funding (Family Assets for Independence in MN – FAIM) and supports the fiscal agent along with the network of provider agencies. Sarah's no stranger to the Community Action/ anti-poverty network, previously serving at 2 Minnesota agencies over 13 years in a variety of program development, coordinator, and director roles, championing asset development, community

building, and equity work, and promoting outreach, communications, fundraising/development, data integrity, strong outcomes, and agency change/transformation work. Since being with the state, she's earned her CCAP and become a Certified ROMA Trainer. She loves spending time on the water, in the woods, with music and theatre, and with her partner Rich and their 2 dogs – Ollie and Dory and cat Sophie.

Marie Primus has spent over 21 years supporting nonprofit organizations through complex regulatory environments, financial oversight, and operational accountability. She specializes in nonprofit audits, federal grant compliance, and internal control systems, particularly for organizations managing restricted funding, multi-source revenue, and heightened public scrutiny.

Marie's nonprofit work includes leading Single Audits under Uniform Guidance, advising boards on audit readiness, and designing internal audit frameworks that align with 2 CFR 200 and GAAP standards. She has delivered training on key topics such as documentation standards, funder compliance, and audit preparedness.

Her experience includes auditing compliance requirements of federal and state grants, supporting organizations through OMB audit findings, and guiding leadership teams through corrective action plans. She has worked with numerous government-funded entities to strengthen fiscal governance, improve audit outcomes, and build sustainable financial infrastructure. Marie has also supported nonprofit missions by serving as Treasurer and active board member for several organizations.

Marie is known for her ability to translate complex audit requirements into practical, mission-aligned solutions. She thrives in high-stakes environments—whether preparing for a first-time audit, responding to funder inquiries, or untangling years of financial backlog— and is recognized by boards and funders as a dependable partner in financial stewardship.

Kristie Sams is a senior finance and operations executive with over 20 years of experience leading organizational transformation across nonprofit, public, and private sectors. She specializes in financial turnarounds, grant compliance, and operational restructuring, particularly for organizations navigating complexity, constrained resources, and elevated accountability.

Kristie has served as CFO, COO, and as a Founder across industries including housing, education, F&B, real estate, manufacturing, and professional services. Her nonprofit leadership includes designing state-backed financial literacy

programs for foster youth, overseeing grant-funded program operations, and advising boards on audit readiness, internal controls, and funder risk. She has rebuilt finance departments from the ground up, implemented compliance-aligned SOPs, and developed cost allocation plans for grant-funded entities facing federal scrutiny.

Her experience includes managing a full financial and operational wind-down of a global hospitality group's U.S. division post-acquisition, relaunching a mortgage unit under a federal cease & desist order, and scaling CPG brands through international supply chains and national retail distribution. Kristie has advised grant-funded organizations on everything from 2 CFR 200 compliance to drawdown timing, fiscal policy design, technology integration, and board financial communication.

Kristie's strength lies in bridging technical financial strategy with hands-on operational execution. She's known for stepping into messy, high-stakes environments, where audits are looming, systems are fractured, or funding is uncertain and restoring structure, clarity, and results. Her work consistently earns the trust of auditors, funders, boards, and program teams alike.

Amy Sip, SHRM-CP- ASip Consulting

Dave Snyder grew up in Minneapolis, the grandson of Holocaust survivors who fled Austria in 1939. He has spent the last 30 years as a campus living wage activist, labor organizer with the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union local 7, housing justice organizer and then deputy director of Jewish Community Action (JCA), convenor of the Minnesota Asset Building Coalition (MABC), then statewide program director for "Family Assets for Independence in Minnesota" (FAIM). Dave has served on the Board of Directors of the National Community Reinvestment Coalition (NCRC), and currently serves on the Board of Directors of Unidos MN, and as co-founder of the MN chapter of Friends Of Standing Together (FOST) - Israel/Palestine.

Dave lives in Richfield with his wife Kristy, plus two massive teens, two obnoxious puppies, and two persnickity cats.

Dr. Catherine Solheim is professor and Director of Graduate Studies in Family Social Science at the University of Minnesota. She currently teaches two graduate-level courses on theories in family science and an undergraduate course on the opportunities and barriers to building wealth in multi-cultural America. Her community-engaged research centers on ways that culture and social location influence a family's access to resources and ability to develop

financial capability and create wealth. A consistent goal in her research agenda is to study questions that persist in vulnerable communities, specifically related to low-wage earners and immigrant and refugee families in Minnesota. Solheim recently published two book chapters, one in an edited volume titled *Flourishing and Floundering Financially in Emerging Adulthood: A Handbook* and the other in an edited book titled *Adolescents and their Families: A Global Perspective*.

Maria Steen, CCAP, joined the CAPLP family in 2012 and quickly fell in love with the community action world. She currently serves as the Director of CAPLP's Child Care Connections Division where she guides a team of 40 early childhood professionals who support and advocate for all aspects of high-quality early childhood experiences for children, families, educators, and our community. Maria has a BA in Psychology with a Minor in Early Childhood Policy from Macalester College. In addition to being the proud parent of her teenager, Isaac, and a sub-par bowler, Maria is passionate about living out the Promise of Community Action through advocating for and implementing innovative solutions to improve our communities.

Nichole Szczesniak serves as the Program Director of Counseling Services at LSS Financial Counseling. In her role, she leads a team that provides support in debt management, budgeting, student loans, and housing counseling. Drawing from her own experiences and a strong passion for personal finance, Nichole is dedicated to training and empowering financial counseling staff. Her work helps bring the organization's mission to life every day: believing that everyone has the ability to overcome debt, build assets, and achieve lasting financial wellness.

Nichole started with LSS Financial Counseling in 2002 as a debt and foreclosure counselor and began reverse mortgage counseling in 2016. She has prior experience in banking and finance and holds a Bachelors of Science Degree in Business Administration from SMSU.

Jenna Taubel- First Alliance Credit Union AVP of Marketing and Chair of Foundation

Chris Tatarka, PhD currently works as a Leadership Instructor for MRA – The Management Association, having joined MRA after over three decades of public service in the U.S. Army and in federal law enforcement. He has an array of experience in organizational leadership, program management, threat analysis and as a leadership trainer, facilitator and coach. Career highlights include leading a team of over 180 personnel in the collection and analysis of critical information during Operation Iraqi Freedom and delivering Psychology

courses as a faculty member at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. He holds a doctorate in Business Administration and master's degrees in Psychology and Public Administration.

Melody Vachal CCC-SLP, MCHWC is a speaker, author, and caregiver advocate with three decades of experience as a family caregiver. She is the best-selling author of *Still, I Rise: A Guide to Navigating the Caregiver Journey* and serves as Co-Owner and Director of Aging Services and Outreach at Arise Cares, a Central Minnesota home care company. Her signature framework, Space for GRACE, helps people reconnect with themselves and others amid stress, change, or burnout.

Descriptions of Workshops and Keynotes

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Workshop and Keynote Descriptions

8:30-9:30AM

Keynote Speaker- Nancy Lyons

Work Like A Boss

Workplaces want motivated employees who take initiative. People want to care about work and contribute to a bigger purpose. Rolling out engagement programs or adding new professional development tracks won't help. The answer is developing work cultures and personal mindsets that embrace change, accountability, and risk.

In this talk, Nancy inspires people and teams to change their perspectives on work. With humor, humility, and a lot of energy, she reframes hierarchy

and power, and focuses our attention on the mindsets needed for future-forward workplaces.

9:45-11:00AM

Glacier Room

Leading Through Stress: Resilience for Nonprofit Leaders- Chris Tatarka of MRA

Many nonprofit organizations today are grappling with a period of ongoing, compounding crises—often referred to as a permacrisis. This environment of sustained instability is taking a toll on organizational health and contributing to elevated stress levels among employees, leaders, volunteers, stakeholders, and the broader nonprofit ecosystem. In this interactive and facilitated session, we will explore the concept of permacrisis, assess its impact on stress within your organization, and collaboratively examine strategies to strengthen resilience and better navigate these ongoing challenges.

Badlands Room

***Building Powerful Relationships with State Legislators-* Pam Johnson & Josh Ney**

In this workshop we will explore the questions: *Why should I build relationships with Legislators? What Barriers do I need to Address? What is the difference between lobbying and education?* We will discuss specific tactics, including how to tell your story, to develop strategic relationships with your elected leaders. We will review various scenarios for engagement, highlighting common pitfalls that lead to a win-win outcome for both you and the legislator. We hope that you will leave this Session empowered to build new, or strengthen, relationships with the people that represent you and the communities you serve.

[Power Point](#)

Yosemite Room

***Cultivating Space for GRACE: Supporting the Well-Being of Employees and Our Communities* Dr. Jill Amsberry, Melody Vachal, Brittany Pfannenstien, Angel Hight & Sylvia Amlie of Centracare**

Caring for others—whether at work, at home, or in our communities—requires empathy, energy, and endurance. But when we give without pause, it can take a toll on our own well-being. In this

session, you'll hear personal stories of amazing caregivers, participate in an interactive workshop to promote self-care, and learn about innovative services offered by CentraCare to enhance the health and wellbeing of the vulnerable populations we serve.

Cultivating Space for GRACE is an empowering workshop that invites participants to slow down, reflect, and re-center through a simple yet powerful framework for sustainable self-care.

Using the Space for GRACE model, attendees will explore practical ways to create space—physically, mentally, and emotionally—to reduce stress, restore energy, and reconnect with what matters most. This workshop offers meaningful tools to support personal well-being, foster healthier work environments, and encourage community-wide compassion and resilience.

Whether you're a caregiver, a colleague, or a community leader, this session will help you show up with greater clarity, intention, and grace—without burning out.

Rushmore Room

Data and Evaluation for Service Design-

Dr. Catherine Solheim & Sarah Priest

People who work in non-profit organizations *KNOW* that they are making a difference in the lives of their clients through the programs they deliver and the services they provide; they see the changes on a daily basis. However, non-profit leaders and staff also *KNOW* that their organizations are dependent on grants and contracts from a variety of sources, and the support of local, state, and federal policy-makers to sustain their existence and have adequate resources to meet clients' needs. An integrated evaluation strategy is critical for documenting evidence (outcomes) of program effectiveness that funders and policy-makers require, and for continuous quality improvement that staff desire and from which clients benefit. This session will draw on facilitators' and participants' knowledge and experience to remind us of the key ideas that inform a useful evaluation strategy. Participants will apply what they've learned as they work through an actual program evaluation task that is currently underway in their organization.

Central Park Room

MN Paid Leave, Employer Responsibilities-

James Olney

MN Paid Family Medical Leave: recent updates and key compliance considerations.

Minnesota's Paid Family Medical Leave (PFML) program launch date is rapidly approaching and for employers who haven't yet developed a compliance plan, time is running out. Join us for this session in which we will cover:

- What did (and didn't) happen in the recent legislative session
- What the final Rules mean for employers
- Department of Employment and Economic Development updates
- Key compliance considerations

[Handouts](#)

11:15AM-12:30

Glacier Room

Foster Collaboration to Fuel Engagement-

Dana Haagenson, SHRM-CP

According to recent Gallup research, employees with at least one collaborative relationship at work are 43% more likely to intend to stay with your organization their entire career. That's a big deal! In this session, we will explore the difference between teamwork and collaboration, identify three keys to developing better collaboration in your organization, and discuss how focusing on strengths can maximize the impact of collaboration.

[Power Point](#)

Badlands Room

Minnesota Compass: A Social Indicators Project-

Anne Li

Anne Li will share about Minnesota Compass– a social indicators project that tracks demographic and quality of life trends. She will share insights into Minnesota's changing demographics, and what that means for economic development and community growth using place based data. This interactive workshop will give attendees the opportunity to dig into their communities' data and walk away with tools to tell their own data stories.

Yosemite Room

Using Labor Market Data for Workforce Development-

Cameron Macht of DEED

Minnesota's economy is constantly changing, with new challenges and opportunities across the state. This presentation will be focused on

providing updated demographic, social, and economic data and trends. The session is designed for staff who are interested in learning more about state and local labor markets and resources accessible through the Labor Market Information Office.

Rushmore Room

Essential Document Retention & Destruction Policies for Nonprofits: Protecting Your Mission Through Data Management-

Dean Dalzell of All In One Accounting

Nonprofit leaders invest tremendous energy in delivering their mission and ensuring organizational sustainability, yet often overlook a critical risk area: effective data management. While nonprofits accumulate, analyze, and archive massive amounts of sensitive data daily, many lack proper policies for storage, security, and disposal of this information. This gap creates significant vulnerabilities that can result in legal issues, reputational damage, and potentially irreversible harm to the organization.

This workshop will equip nonprofit leaders and board members with the knowledge and tools needed to develop, implement, and maintain robust document retention and destruction policies. Participants will learn to identify data-related risks, create comprehensive policies tailored to their organization, establish implementation strategies across all levels of the nonprofit, and build monitoring systems that adapt to the evolving landscape of data governance requirements. By treating document management as a crucial organizational control, attendees will better protect their mission while fulfilling their fiduciary responsibilities.

[Power Point](#)

Central Park Room

Be Curious: AI for Non-Profit Leaders-

Mike Kutzke

AI is no longer optional, it's essential. This engaging session builds your AI literacy by breaking down core concepts and showcasing how AI is quietly (and not-so-quietly) shaping your professional landscape. From real-world tools to ethical challenges, you'll gain insight and strategies to make AI work for you and your organization. Discover how to stay curious, adaptable, and ahead of the curve with practical examples and a touch of humor.

12:30-1:30PM

Keynote Speaker- Joe Schmit

THE IMPACT PLAYBOOK: Influence Through Purpose, Persistence and Passion

In this high energy, high-impact presentation loaded with humor, Joe Schmit inspires you to discover how to ramp up the profound power of your influence. Joe inspires you to make one more positive impact a day and over time, you will be healthier, happier, more productive and have more meaningful, deeper relationships. Through research, Joe has discovered that, “we make our biggest impressions when we are not trying to be impressive.” The Impact Playbook is a game changer in your personal and professional life.

[Power Point](#)

1:45-3:00PM

Glacier Room

The Power of Hope in Retaining and Engaging Employees-

Dana Haagenson, SHRM-CP

Did you know that 69% of employees who say leaders help them feel hopeful about the future are engaged in their jobs; compared to 1% engagement of employees whose leaders don't help them feel hopeful about the future. In fact, 2025 research from Gallup shows that hope has now surpassed trust as the most mentioned characteristic of positively influential leaders. In this session, we will explore what Gallup defines as *the four needs of followers* – of which hope tops the list. We will then explore practical, everyday actions leaders can take to help instill hope within their team.

[Power Point](#)

[Handout](#)

Badlands Room

Preparing to Hit an Advocacy Grand Slam! A Panel Discussion-

Pam Johnson (moderator), Annie Levenson-Falk, Laura Mortenson Dave Snyder & Maria Steen

What's the secret sauce that helps pass antipoverty policies? YOU ARE! Lobbyists depend on the front line and lead staff who know your clients, your programs and your communities. You keep it real! But it can be overwhelming to get a last minute “call to action” to send an email, make a call, or testify. Come hear from expert policy advocates who will share stories of brilliant success and heartbreaking defeat, and help you think through how to prepare your team to play the critical role of educating

legislators and sharing insights from the frontlines, at the local, state and federal level!

[Power Point](#)

[Handout](#)

Yosemite Room

Financial Services & Supports for Low-Income Communities and Individuals-

Claudia Holt of Prepare & Prosper, Michou Kokodoko of the Federal Reserve Bank- Mpls, Ben Lien of Exodus Lending & Nichole Szczesniak of LSS

Everyone deserves access to financial wellness, economic justice and wealth-building opportunities regardless of income. Hear from organizations that are working with people, communities, and systems to break down barriers and develop solutions to real financial opportunity and success.

[Power Point](#)

Rushmore Room

Policy Shift, Fiscal Lift: The Policy Landscape-

Marie Primus and Kristie Sams of Creative Planning

As funding structures shift and tax rules evolve, fiscal leaders face mounting pressure to adapt quickly and operate with precision. This session, led by Marie Primus, CPA, and Kristie Sams, offers practical strategies for turning external policy changes into internal planning opportunities. Attendees will gain a clear understanding of the current policy landscape and walk away with concrete tools, budget templates, risk response frameworks, and operational checklists, to strengthen resilience and improve decision-making under uncertainty.

[Power Point](#)

Central Park Room

Mental Health Prevention 101-

Shannah Mulvilhill of Mental Health MN

Mental health prevention work is incredibly important in helping people take care of their mental health in a proactive way, but it is not well understood. In this presentation, we will talk about primary, secondary and tertiary prevention, and what you can do to take care of your mental health (and help others) in a way that supports well-being and helps prevent crisis. Those attending this session will leave with a better understanding of mental health, how to recognize signs of concerns or distress in those they serve, and options for referrals to services that are anonymous, confidential and free of charge.

3:15-4:30PM

Glacier Room

“Hot Topics” in Human Resources

Amy Sip, SHRM-CP of ASip Consulting

Amy will discuss some of the Hot Topics she experiences in her consulting business. Many times, Amy’s clients don’t know what they need to know about Human Resources. Amy will address current laws, upcoming laws for 2026, some HR best practices, and provide an overview of the current job market & talent pool.

Badlands Room

Poverty Simulations- A Tool for Community Awareness and Engagement-

Debi Brandt, MyKitta Davis, Kelly Dicke & Jenna Taubel

Want to host a Poverty Simulation in your community? Not sure how to go about it? Meet with trained facilitators who will share all the details on how to pull off an experience that will leave people walking away ready to change their communities for the better. If you are a new facilitator and want to learn some best practices, this is a great session for you, too! Never heard of a poverty simulation? Come learn more!

[Power Point](#)

Yosemite Room

Best & Promising Practices in Services and Policy: A Housing Panel

Jenny Larson, Michael Dahl, Elizabeth Glidden, Jason Krebsbach & Julie Laramie

From ending homelessness to providing rental opportunities to promoting homeownership, creating and maintaining affordable homes for all requires work across a wide spectrum. Hear from a variety of policy experts and service providers about the types of strategies being used to address the need for affordable housing.

[Power Point](#)

Rushmore Room

Policy Shift, Fiscal Lift- Financial & Operational Response Planning-

Marie Primus and Kristie Sams of Creative Planning

As funding structures shift and tax rules evolve, fiscal leaders face mounting pressure to adapt quickly and operate with precision. This session, led by Marie Primus, CPA, and Kristie Sams, offers practical strategies for turning external policy changes into internal planning opportunities. Attendees will gain a clear understanding of the current

policy landscape and walk away with concrete tools, budget templates, risk response frameworks, and operational checklists, to strengthen resilience and improve decision-making under uncertainty.

[Power Point](#)

Hotel Information

The Hope in Action Conference

Hosted by the Minnesota Community Action Partnership
September 10th, 2025 at The Park Event Center in Waite Park, MN

Hotel Information

We have hotel blocks at two great hotels for the night of September 9th, 2025. Both of the hotels are adjoining The Park Event Center.

Hilton Garden Inn St. Cloud

Booking Closed

Residence Inn St. Cloud

Booking Closed

Sponsors

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