

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



Speaker Biographies

(in order of appearance)



Brittany Rabb

Director of K-12 Initiatives, William Julius Wilson Institute, Harlem Children's Zone

Brittany Rabb spearheads the Wilson Institute's K-12 strategy – a neighborhood-level approach to improving academic outcomes for the most vulnerable students – by providing direct support to school districts, establishing place-based school governance structures, and designing cradle-to-career programming. Brittany is a trained school social worker and applied researcher who has provided technical assistance for school districts, education nonprofits, and human services agencies across the country, formerly leading statewide efforts to streamline data sharing across private and public stakeholders, evaluate the results of education programs, and embed equity principles in data collection and sharing. She holds both a bachelor's degree in sociology and a master's degree in social administration (master's in social work equivalent), children, youth and families (school social work concentration) from Case Western Reserve University.



Denisse Arias

Director, Cradle-to-Career Leadership & Learning, EdRedesign, Harvard Graduate School of Education

Denisse Arias is the Director for Cradle-to-Career Leadership and Learning and oversees signature talent development programs and initiatives, including EdRedesign's inaugural Fellowship for

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



Cradle-to-Career Partnership Leaders and By All Means Senior Fellows Program.

Denisse brings experience in equity-focused leadership development, cross-sector collaboration, education systems transformation, and monitoring, evaluation, and learning within education and international development. Prior to joining EdRedesign, Denisse held various roles at Teach For All, supporting leaders across all regions pursuing systems change and collective leadership efforts, most recently as the Director for Leadership Development & Equity. During her time at Teach For All, Denisse also co-led a 17-person team responsible for designing and executing over 50 learning experiences, Fellowships, and communities of practice for network stakeholders. She also supported multiple multilateral partnerships, including with USAID, the European Commission, and the World Bank. Denisse co-launched and co-led the Leading from Lived Experience Fellowship from 2019-2024, a leadership development opportunity for network members who themselves had experienced inequities within their contexts, that reached over 100 network members.

A Teach For America Alum, Denisse taught in her community and served as the inaugural Co-Board Chair for the Teach For America – Massachusetts' Homegrown Alumni Board, supporting engagement with corps members and alumni from Massachusetts. In June 2024, Denisse was selected as a Hispanics in Philanthropy Lideres Fellow. Denisse serves as the co-Board Chair for Shout Mouse Press, an organization that supports youth in the D.C., Maryland, and Virginia (DMV) area dedicated to centering and amplifying the voices of marginalized youth through writing workshops, book publication, and public speaking opportunities. She holds a B.A and B.S. from Boston University and a Master's in Public Administration (MPA) from Columbia University's School of International & Public Affairs.



Rob Watson

**Executive Director, EdRedesign; Lecturer on Education,
Harvard Graduate School of Education**

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



Rob Watson is the inaugural Executive Director of EdRedesign and Lecturer on Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, having previously served as Deputy Director. At EdRedesign, Rob leads an interdisciplinary team of staff, fellows, consultants, research affiliates, and students supporting communities across the U.S. to develop cradle-to-career systems of opportunity. He presides over many of EdRedesign's signature talent development offerings, including the EdRedesign Fellowship for Cradle-to-Career Partnership Leaders, Summer Institute for Neighborhood Leaders, By All Means Senior Fellows Program, and By All Means Communities of Practice initiative.

His work has focused on themes of civic engagement, community development, and educational equity in the U.S., Latin America, and Africa. Prior to joining EdRedesign, Rob served as a consultant and advisor to organizations that include the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, Harvard College, Tufts University, The Social Impact Studio, FUSE Corps, The Foundation for Louisiana, The Institute of Politics at Harvard Kennedy School, The Obama Foundation, and Harlem Children's Zone.

A former Peace Corps volunteer and winner of the Peace Corps' 2023 Franklin H. Williams Award, Rob has co-founded five civil society organizations in Paraguay, including Teach for Paraguay, member of the global Teach For All Network and the Paraguayan Government's first national youth service program. Additionally, he partnered with the mayor, superintendent of schools and community stakeholders from his hometown of Poughkeepsie, New York, to launch the Poughkeepsie Children's Cabinet, a collective impact organization that convenes leaders across sectors to develop a citywide cradle-to-career agenda for children, youth, and families. Rob is also a co-founder of the Poughkeepsie Service Accelerator (PSA), a place-based service year collaborative that aims to attract and retain local talent to pursue social impact careers in the Mid-Hudson Valley region of New York State.

In January 2024, Rob was selected as a Presidential Leadership Scholar. Rob is a member of the Board of Directors of the Children's Funding Project, a former World Economic Forum Global Shaper, and a former Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Millennium Scholar. In January 2025, Rob joined the StriveTogether Board of Directors. He holds a B.A. from Harvard College, an Ed.M in Education Policy and Management from the Harvard Graduate School of

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



Education, and a Mid-career Master's in Public Administration (MPA) from Harvard Kennedy School.



Tauheedah Jackson

Deputy Director; Director of the Institute for Success Planning, EdRedesign, Harvard Graduate School of Education

Tauheedah Jackson serves as the Deputy Director of EdRedesign and the inaugural Director of EdRedesign's Institute for Success Planning at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. As the Deputy Director, she leads EdRedesign's organization-wide strategy and culture-building work and efforts that deepen alignment across all talent development work that provides direct support to communities. As the Director of the Institute, she leads a team that partners with local communities nationwide to design personalized, relationship-based systems of support for children and youth through cross-sector collaboration. Prior to joining EdRedesign, she was the director of Place Based Strategy & Community School Initiatives at the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL). In this role, she was responsible for supporting networks of leaders in local communities to build, scale, and sustain cross-sector, place-based Community Schools initiatives across the country. Tauheedah currently serves as the Vice Chair of IEL's board of directors. Before entering the national landscape, Tauheedah worked as a local cross-sector leader as the Director of the former Hartford Partnership for Student Success, a collaborative partnership that founded and funded the local Community Schools initiative in Hartford, Connecticut. Under Tauheedah's leadership, Hartford Community Schools became locally and nationally recognized as an exemplar for its systems-building work, before being scaled across the entire school district.

A native of Bridgeport, Connecticut, Tauheedah is a first-generation college graduate. She earned her bachelor's degree from Connecticut College in government and secondary education and holds a master's degree in education policy and management from the

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



Harvard Graduate School of Education. Tauheedah is a sought-after presenter and facilitator, has served on various nonprofit boards, and has received several awards recognizing her leadership in the field. As a mother of 3 sons, Isaiah, Isaac, and Ian, she is committed to working toward ensuring more equitable access and opportunity for all.



Sondra Samuels

**Co-Founder, President, & Chief Executive Officer,
Northside Achievement Zone; By All Means Senior
Fellow, EdRedesign, Harvard Graduate School of
Education**

Sondra Samuels is the Co-Founder, President, and CEO of Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ). In partnership with parents, students, nonprofits, schools, and staff, Sondra is leading a revolutionary culture shift in North Minneapolis that is focused on creating generational wealth through education, family stability, and racial equity. NAZ is made up of more than 30 partner nonprofits and schools, collaborating and working toward a single goal — to support and prepare low-income North Minneapolis children of color to succeed in school, college, career, and life. NAZ continues to scale up to serve more students and families while turning the social service model on its head and leading the creation of a college-bound culture across the community. Sondra is a 29-year resident of North Minneapolis and a national leader committed to comprehensive place-based solutions and anti-racist, results-based accountability. She and her team work tirelessly to ensure the integration of effective prenatal-to-professional solutions across the NAZ Collaborative, to scale and sustain results across North Minneapolis, and to achieve the systems and policy changes needed for families and scholars to truly share in the prosperity of the Twin Cities Region. Under her leadership, NAZ was named a federal Promise Neighborhood, achieved membership status in the StriveTogether Network, and has become a nationally recognized model for comprehensive place-based solutions for community transformation and systems change. Sondra co-founded the Education Partnership Coalition

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



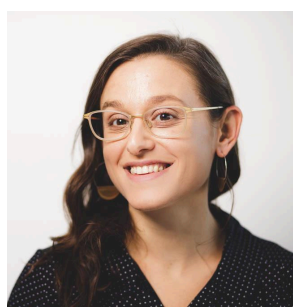
and serves on the Minneapolis Federal Reserve's Inclusion Advisory Board, the Leadership Team of Generation Next, and the Great MN Schools Board of Directors.



Vanessa Ward

President, Omega Community Development Corporation

Reverend Vanessa Oliver Ward is the President of the Omega Community Development Corporation (Omega CDC) and Pastor Emerita of the Omega Baptist Church. As President of the Omega CDC, she oversees the organization's mission of breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty by catalyzing change in Northwest Dayton. Under her leadership, the Omega CDC served as co-developer with MVAH, nka Pivotal, in the construction of an 81-unit, \$13M affordable senior housing facility, Omega Senior Lofts, and as developer of the \$11M Hope Center for Families, which focuses on 2-generational whole family wellness. In addition to Omega CDC, other partners of the Hope Center include Dayton Children's pediatric clinic, Sinclair Community College and Mini University, a daycare center. In 2023, Omega CDC was awarded a \$28.7M Promise Neighborhood Grant from the U.S. Department of Education; the first in the State of Ohio. The Hope Zone Promise Neighborhood serves as a major accelerator to the work Omega CDC has led, driving improved educational and social outcomes specifically for children and families in Northwest Dayton, where the need for investment is great. Omega CDC serves as the backbone convener with over 40 partner agencies delivering services to over 5,200 children.



Wendy Viola

Managing Director, Field Building & Programs, William Julius Wilson Institute, Harlem Children's Zone

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



Wendy Viola oversees field building and research for the Institute, where she develops and leads efforts to deepen and spread understanding of neighborhood-based cradle-to-career strategies across the field and among key stakeholder groups. In this role, Wendy serves as the connective tissue for the organization, ensuring the core ethos of WJWI's mission and approach are infused into every aspect of its field-building work, upholding high standards and reflecting consistent messaging about the power and promise of locally-led approaches. A community psychologist by training, she has 16 years of experience in the field of research and evaluation in academic and applied settings, including the New York City Mayor's Office of ThriveNYC and the Harlem Children's Zone's Research and Evaluation team. Wendy earned her bachelor's degree from Cornell University and her master's and PhD in Applied Psychology from Portland State University.



Nina Carter

Managing Director, Neighborhood Strategy, William Julius Wilson Institute, Harlem Children's Zone

Nina Carter leads the Neighborhood Strategy team which develops and implements strategic initiatives and capacity-building technical assistance for neighborhood and systems leaders. She is a seasoned and sought-after systems-change leader with nearly 20 years of experience advancing equity through place-based cradle-to-career strategies. Nina has designed and led large-scale initiatives within nonprofit, higher education, and public sectors - including an \$8M community-centered planning process to catalyze racial equity and economic mobility in Dayton, Ohio and a district-wide community schools strategy for 70 public schools in Prince George's County, Maryland. Nina holds a bachelor's degree in mass communications, advanced degrees in public administration and human resources, and is nationally certified in nonprofit leadership.



Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



Alexis Headley

Assistant Director, Neighborhood Strategy, William Julius Wilson Institute, Harlem Children's Zone

Alexis Headley supports the Neighborhood Strategy team in equipping neighborhood and systems leaders with the tools and partnerships necessary to end intergenerational poverty. She plays a key role in fostering deep collaboration between internal teams and external stakeholders. With over a decade of experience in education and operations, Alexis has supported efforts to ensure quality programming and alignment across systems. Alexis holds a strong passion for equity, education, and neighborhood-centered strategies that create lasting change for children and families. She holds a bachelor's degree in communications and print journalism from East Carolina University.



Fritz Bondoa

Director, Public Policy, William Julius Wilson Institute, Harlem Children's Zone

Fritz Bondoa oversees Harlem Children's Zone policy and advocacy work, leading engagement with the U.S. Congress, state legislatures, municipal governments and collaborating with other place-based education organizations. He previously served as Special Assistant to Governor Wes Moore as the former CEO of the Robin Hood Foundation, Policy Advisor for the Children's Cabinet in Mayor Bill de Blasio's administration, and Senior Advisor to the Executive Director of the Mayor's Coronavirus-Response Racial Inclusion and Equity Task

Force. Fritz began his career working for Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, holds a master's degree in Public Affairs from Brown University, and a bachelor's degree in Foreign Affairs from the University of Virginia, where he was a Distinguished Majors recipient and graduated with high distinction.

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



Cleo Hirsch

Chief of Staff, Maryland Governor's Office for Children

Cleo Hirsch serves as the Chief of Staff for the Maryland Governor's Office for Children. Before this role, she served as the Deputy Director of Public Health AmeriCorps, a partnership between the CDC and AmeriCorps to build the next generation of public health leaders through national service. Cleo joined AmeriCorps after serving as the Transition Director for Maryland's Governor Wes Moore, where she led a historically inclusive transition process that engaged approximately 10,000 Marylanders in civic dialogue and public service. Previously, Cleo served as the Executive Director of COVID Response for Baltimore City Schools, the Director of Priority Initiatives for Baltimore City Schools, an education policy consultant, a Mayoral Fellow for the City of Chicago, and a middle school teacher at the Harlem Children's Zone. Cleo holds a Master's Degree in Public Affairs from Princeton University, a Master of Arts in Teaching from Relay Graduate School of Education, and a BA in Political Science and American Studies from Tufts University.



Christian Rhodes

Deputy Executive Director, William Julius Wilson Institute, Harlem Children's Zone; By All Means Senior Fellow, EdRedesign, Harvard Graduate School of Education

Christian Rhodes is the Deputy Executive Director of the William Julius Wilson Institute at Harlem Children's Zone, where he helps lead national efforts to support communities in placing one million young people on pathways to social and economic mobility. He also serves as a By All Means Senior Fellow with EdRedesign Lab at Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



Christian has spent over two decades advising education leaders across the country. He most recently served as Senior Advisor to U.S. Secretary of Education Dr. Miguel Cardona, focusing on K-12 strategy, partnerships, and special initiatives. Appointed by President Biden, he also served as Chief of Staff for the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, where he led efforts to expand summer learning, support school reopening, and manage major federal grant programs, including Promise Neighborhoods and Full-Service Community Schools. He played a key role in distributing \$122 billion in education funding through the American Rescue Plan.

Previously, Christian served as Chief of Staff for Prince George's County Public Schools and as a policy advisor to superintendents, mayors, governors, and other education leaders. He is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and American University.



Charmayne D. Turner

Vice President, Civic Engagement & Strategic Partnerships, The Y in Central Maryland

Charmayne Turner is an accomplished professional in organizational leadership and program innovation, with over 25 years of experience and a strong record of success in both business and nonprofit management. She currently serves as the Vice President of Strategic Partnerships and Civic Engagement at the Y in Central Maryland, where she leads efforts to strengthen organizational partnerships, deepen community engagement, and advance advocacy initiatives that align with the Y's mission and values. Ms. Turner holds a Master of Business Administration from Johns Hopkins University and a B.S. in Biology from Morgan State University.

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



Thalia Theodore Washington

**Maryland Neighborhood Engagement Manager,
William Julius Wilson Institute, Harlem Children's Zone**

Thalia Theodore Washington brings her experience in management, fundraising, and strategic partnerships to the Institute, where she manages place-based work in the state of Maryland. Thalia began her career as a public elementary school teacher in the Bronx before moving into leadership roles in the nonprofit sector. She served as Senior Manager of Development at NewSchools Venture Fund, a venture philanthropy focused on early-stage education entrepreneurs; as Executive Director at Higher Achievement, an academic enrichment and mentoring program dedicated to closing the opportunity gap for middle school students of color; and also held a leadership role at DonorsChoose. Thalia holds a B.A. in English from the University of Maryland (go Terps!) and a Master's of Public Administration from NYU's Wagner School of Public Administration.



Jennifer Younker

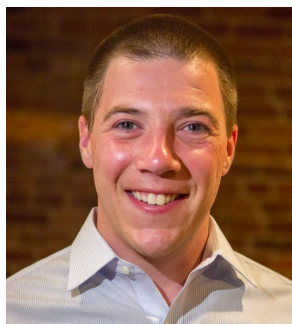
Director, Bester Community of Hope/San Mar Family & Community Services

Jennifer Younker, LCSW-C, Director of Bester Community of Hope, is a seasoned leader committed to promoting family well-being. Her expertise in mental health, residential treatment, and advocacy, combined with her personal journey, positions her to effectively lead the team. She is dedicated to fostering inclusive and supportive environments for marginalized communities. Younker's leadership emphasizes building relationships and empowering individuals.

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



Tom Bartlett

Co-Founder and President, 20 Degrees

At 20 Degrees, **Tom Bartlett** manages day-to-day operations, finances, growth strategy, and client solutions, acting as the key engineer who ensures everything runs smoothly. Tom ensures 20 Degrees' tools and products actually work for clients, affirming their agency to effectively manage their organizations. Since 2018, Tom has honed 20 Degrees' specialties in earned revenue generation, scenario planning and financial modeling, working directly with hundreds of nonprofit and child care organizations to strengthen their missions.

Tom has deep expertise in the business and funding models governing the nonprofit and early childhood education sectors. Through his engineering, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and finance background, he brings over 20 years of experience in building financial models, developing funding strategies, analyzing business opportunities, managing teams, and deploying community investments.

Tom is a prior Washington Business Journal 40 under 40 award winner and a member of the 2020 class of Leadership Greater Washington. An avid runner and middling pianist, he lives in Washington, DC, with his wife and two daughters.



Sara Gibson

Co-Founder and CEO, 20 Degrees

Sara Gibson is the Co-Founder and CEO of 20 Degrees, where she helps nonprofits, early childhood organizations, and social enterprises reimagine revenue and make the math work—especially when the

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



stakes are high and constraints are real. Since 2018, she and her team have supported hundreds of nonprofit organizations across the country with earned revenue strategy, scenario planning, and financial modeling that leads to real decisions and action. With deep experience in early childhood, Sara has worked alongside providers, networks, and funders to strengthen business models, raise compensation, and bring order to back-office systems. 20 Degrees also rolls up its sleeves to support nonprofits with interim development staffing and hands-on implementation, because the work doesn't stop at the strategy. Before founding 20 Degrees, Sara held roles in both corporate and nonprofit settings—including The Advisory Board Company, Miriam's Kitchen, and AppleTree—where she focused on financial strategy, fundraising, and turning ambitious ideas into actual results. She's known for helping organizations see what's coming and act early—whether it's shifting funding, a moment of crisis, or an inflection point for growth. From the early days of COVID to today's economic uncertainty, leaders have turned to her team when the path forward isn't obvious, but the pressure is real. Her work has been featured in The Washington Post, The Chronicle of Philanthropy, and the Washington Business Journal. She serves on the boards of Sitar Arts Center and the National Speech and Debate Association. Sara believes that financial and revenue clarity isn't just possible—it's powerful and empowering. With the right tools and a trusted partner, difficult questions can fuel mission-driven change and impact.



Derek Nunner

Director of Social Finance, 20 Degrees

Derek Nunner leads a team of irreverent optimists in fundamentally changing the game for overlooked and underfunded do-gooders. Our team does this by creating innovative financial tools that help nonprofits and social enterprises build self-directed revenue. Derek's impact journey started working at a nonprofit empowering individuals with disabilities through therapeutic recreation. Moving from services to systems, he joined a foundation focused on innovating philanthropy to build a thriving social sector. This led to his work at Sorenson Impact, a pioneer in impact investing and harnessing business to drive good. Derek

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



graduated Cum Laude from Skidmore College in upstate New York with a BA in Psychology. He currently volunteers at a local adaptive sports program and serves as a volunteer Search and Rescue team member.



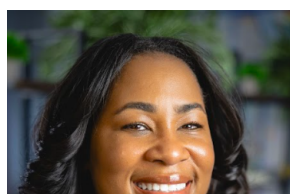
Brian McClendon

Managing Director of K-12 Programs, Harlem Children's Zone

Brian McClendon is dedicated to the mission of the Harlem Children's Zone, having passionately served our scholars, community and national partners during his 29-year tenure with the Zone. Brian began as a participant through our Taekwondo Program at Center 54, the Booker T. Washington Beacon program. He then began receiving academic, mentoring and youth employment through Rheedlan Center for Children and Families. Brian officially became a staff member as a member of the Harlem Peacemaker Program in 1997, receiving the Davidchen Joseph Peacemaker Award in 1999 for his outstanding contributions.

Throughout his time with us, Brian has served in various capacities including as Site Supervisor for the Harlem Peacemakers Program, Coordinator for HCZ, 5th Grade Institute, Director for our A Cut Above (ACA) Program, Director for Promise Academy Elementary Afterschools, and Director for the Employment and Technology (ETC) Programs. He has also played integral roles in our New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) Partnership and our HCZ Safety Task Force, and the Annual Rasuli Lewis Children's March for Peace.

In 2018, Brian joined the Practitioner's Institute as Director and, in 2022, joined our William Julius Wilson Institute as Managing Director of Place. Brian holds a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice and a Master's in Public Administration from John Jay College of Criminal Justice.



Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



Erica Terrell

Managing Director, Practitioners Institute, Harlem Children's Zone

Erica Terrell supports organizations around the world in implementing the Harlem Children's Zone's (HCZ) nationally recognized model of comprehensive, place-based solutions in their communities. With over two decades of experience in early childhood education, youth development, and community engagement, Erica brings deep expertise in designing and leading programs that advance academic achievement and promote family well-being. She previously served as Program Director for Harlem Gems North and Singleton Gems, overseeing high-quality preschool programs for more than 100 children and managing a team of over 20 staff. Erica also led the Harlem Peacemaker Program, where she directed a team of more than 100 staff and partnered with AmeriCorps and public schools to deliver high-impact in-school and after-school programming. Throughout her career, she has exemplified HCZ's core values of servant leadership, innovation, and community empowerment. Erica holds a bachelor's degree in Psychology from Medgar Evers College and a master's degree in Organizational Leadership from Mercy University.



Jorrit de Jong

Emma Bloomberg Senior Lecturer, Harvard Kennedy School; Director, Bloomberg Center for Cities at Harvard University

Dr. Jorrit de Jong is the Director of the Bloomberg Center for Cities at Harvard University and Faculty Co-Chair of the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative, a joint program of Harvard Business School and Harvard Kennedy School, funded by and executed in collaboration with Bloomberg Philanthropies. It is the world's most comprehensive effort to advance effective problem-solving and innovation in cities through executive education, research, curriculum development, and fieldwork. The mayors and senior leaders of more than 200 cities have participated in the program to date.

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



As the Emma Bloomberg Senior Lecturer in Public Policy and Management at Harvard Kennedy School, Dr. de Jong's research and teaching focus on the challenges of making the public sector more effective, efficient, equitable, and responsive to social needs. A specialist in experiential learning, Jorrit has taught strategic management and public problem-solving in degree and executive education programs at HKS and around the world.

Before coming to Harvard, Jorrit co-founded the Kafka Brigade, a social enterprise in Europe that helps governments diagnose and remedy bureaucratic dysfunction. He was also director of the Center for Government Studies at Leiden University and founding co-director of a consulting firm for the public sector in Amsterdam. In 2014, Jorrit launched the Innovation Field Lab, an experiential learning, executive education, and action research project working with 15 cities in Massachusetts and New York to help them leverage data, community engagement and innovation to revitalize distressed and underinvested neighborhoods. He also founded the Organized Crime Lab and Human Trafficking Field Lab, facilitating diverse, multidisciplinary crime-fighting teams in collaborative innovation work. He has been an advisor on public sector reform to cities, states/provinces, national governments, and international organizations, including the United Nations and the OECD.

Jorrit holds a PhD in Public Policy and Management (VU Amsterdam), a Master's in Philosophy (Leiden), and a Master's in Public Administration (Leiden). He has written extensively, including the books *The State of Access: Success and Failure of Democracies to Create Equal Opportunities* (Brookings 2008, co-edited); *Agents of Change: Strategy and Tactics for Social Innovation* (Brookings 2012, co-authored); and *Dealing with Dysfunction: Innovative Problem-Solving in the Public Sector* (Brookings, 2016). Jorrit has written over 50 teaching cases and designed numerous simulation exercises on strategic leadership, collaborative governance, and public sector innovation. His research has been published in various academic journals, including *Public Administration Review*, *Public Management Review*, *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, *International Journal of Public Administration*, and the *Journal of Public Health Management and Policy*.

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



Jamie Gracie

Postdoctoral Fellow, EdRedesign, Harvard Graduate School of Education

Jamie Gracie is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the EdRedesign Lab at Harvard University and a research affiliate at Opportunity Insights. She received her PhD in economics from Harvard in 2025. Her research is in labor and public economics, with a focus on economic mobility.



Rey Saldaña

Chief Executive Officer, Communities in Schools; By All Means Senior Fellow, EdRedesign, Harvard Graduate School of Education

Rey Saldaña is the President and CEO of Communities In Schools® (CIS®), the national organization that surrounds students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life.

Saldaña is a CIS alumnus. Most recently, Saldaña served as the Regional Advocacy Director for the Raise Your Hand Texas Foundation and the Chair of the San Antonio Metropolitan Transit Agency-VIA. Prior to that, he successfully served four terms on the San Antonio City Council, where he was first elected at the age of 24, becoming the youngest councilperson in that city's history.

Concurrent with his elected position, he taught as an Adjunct Professor at Trinity University and Palo Alto Community College. Additionally, he worked with The University of Texas at San

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



At Harlem Children's Zone



Antonio's Office of Community Engagement and served as Chief Engagement Officer with KIPP San Antonio Public Schools.

Saldaña holds a master's degree from Stanford University's Graduate School of Education, where he studied policy, organization and leadership studies, and two bachelor's degrees in Political Science and Communications from Stanford.



Dr. Saskia Brown

Superintendent of Promise Academy Charter Schools and Early Childhood Programs, Harlem Children's Zone

Dr. Saskia S. Brown is a seasoned educational leader with over 20 years of experience advancing equity through comprehensive, student-centered support systems. As Superintendent of Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ) Promise Academy Charter Schools and Early Childhood Programs, she leads a nationally recognized cradle-to-career model that combines academic rigor with holistic, wraparound services to support children and families in Central Harlem.

Driven by the belief that every child deserves access to a high-quality education, Dr. Brown oversees the integration of academics, health and wellness, social-emotional development, and family and community engagement throughout the HCZ Promise Academy network. Under her leadership, these schools serve not only as academic institutions but as central hubs within the broader HCZ ecosystem.

Dr. Brown holds a B.A. in Psychology, an M.A. in Education, and an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership. She is currently completing a Ph.D. in Higher Education Leadership, Management, and Policy at Seton Hall University. Her professional experience spans classroom teaching, public and charter school leadership, and state-level policy. She has served as a general and special education teacher, Title I coordinator, Director of Special

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



Services, and school administrator. At the New Jersey Department of Education, she held key leadership roles as a fiscal and policy specialist and special education consultant, where she directed the Learning Resource Center and developed statewide guidance on inclusion, interventions, and multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS). She also led New Jersey's first federally-funded MTSS initiative and partnered with the U.S. Department of Education to support national school improvement efforts.

Before joining HCZ in 2021 as Deputy Superintendent, Dr. Brown was the Assistant Superintendent of Student Support Services in Sparta Township, NJ, and served as an adjunct professor in teacher preparation programs at Felician University, Drew University, and Ramapo College. Today, she continues to advance HCZ's mission by ensuring that HCZ Promise Academy students graduate not only academically prepared but fully equipped for success in college, career, and life.



Jazmine Lewis

Chief Strategy Officer, Harlem Children's Zone

Jazmine Lewis has over twenty years of non-profit professional experience. She joined the Rheedlen Centers for Children and Families in 1996 as a Harlem Peacemaker with the AmeriCorps program under the leadership of Rasuli Lewis. While committed to broadening her reach, she also served for several years simultaneously as an Ella Baker Trainer for the Children's Defense Fund. During her tenure at HCZ, Mrs. Lewis has managed K-12 and community programs, administrative departments and core operations. She has been in a senior leadership role for over ten years and serves as a key stakeholder for the HCZ community. Mrs. Lewis earned a bachelor's in psychology from MEC, master's in public administration and certifications in conflict resolution, executive leadership and project management.

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



Kwame Owusu-Kesse

**Chief Executive Officer, Harlem Children's Zone;
Co-Founder, William Julius Wilson Institute,
Harlem Children's Zone**

Kwame Owusu-Kesse is Chief Executive Officer of Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ), a nationally acclaimed, anti-poverty organization that has pioneered the field of comprehensive, place-based services. Since being appointed CEO, Owusu-Kesse co-founded HCZ's William Julius Wilson Institute with HCZ President and Founder Geoffrey Canada, and led the organization's National COVID-19 Relief and Recovery Effort to support communities disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. Additionally, he shepherded the launch of Wealth Builds, HCZ's audacious initiative to end intergenerational poverty and close the wealth gap by empowering young people and families with the education and resources to build successful financial futures.

Owusu-Kesse is a national figure, having appeared on numerous lists, including the 2024 TIME100 Next — TIME's annual list spotlighting the world's most influential rising stars shaping the future of our society — Crain's New York Business 40 under 40, and BET's Future 40. Additionally, he has appeared in numerous national media publications and programs, including The New York Times, CBS Sunday Morning, CNN Newsroom with Poppy Harlow, CNBC's Squawk Box, and MSNBC's Live with Stephanie Ruhle. Owusu-Kesse is a sought-after thought leader on various topics, including social and economic mobility, business leadership, community building, youth development, and mental health and wellness.

Owusu-Kesse earned a Bachelor's in Economics from Harvard University, a Master's in Business Administration from Harvard Business School, and a Master's in Public Policy from Harvard Kennedy School. Before his time at HCZ, Owusu-Kesse worked on Wall Street as an investment banking analyst for Morgan Stanley.

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



David Blount

Director of Neighborhood Strategy, William Julius Wilson Institute, Harlem Children's Zone

David Blount co-develops strategies with neighborhood and systems leaders to fully equip communities to break cycles of poverty for children and families. He brings over a decade of experience as a social policy researcher and community practitioner, developing solutions that support child health and development, safe and secure housing, and financial security for families of color. David previously worked at the Urban Institute, a Washington, D.C. economic think tank, where his work focused on housing solutions to make neighborhoods more livable, equitable, and sustainable. David holds a master's degree in social work from the Brown School at Washington University in St. Louis and bachelor's degrees from Loyola University Chicago.



Avarisse Crawford

Chief of Staff, North 10

Avarisse Crawford is a nonprofit leader and strategist committed to building a society where economic inequality is neither a barrier to opportunity nor a source of social division. With over a decade of experience in the nonprofit and social impact sectors, she leverages her background in operations, strategy, and leadership development to help mission-driven organizations grow and thrive.

Avarisse currently serves as Chief of Staff at North10, Philadelphia, where she leads strategic initiatives to improve quality of life in the Hunting Park–East Tioga neighborhoods. In this role,

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



she partners with senior leadership to streamline operations, implement data-informed decision-making processes, and align programs with community needs.

In 2024, she founded Avarisse Monica Consulting, providing strategic and operational guidance to nonprofits serving BIPOC communities. Her practice supports executive leaders in optimizing systems, improving cross-functional collaboration, and advancing equity-centered outcomes.

Previously, Avarisse was Chief of Staff at East Harlem Tutorial Program, a \$35M+ education nonprofit where she scaled strategic initiatives, oversaw program operations, and supported the CEO during a critical phase of growth. She has also worked in corporate communications, business development, and college access and success programs.

A proud Afro Latina, Questbridge Scholar, and North Philadelphia native, Avarisse holds a B.S. in Economics from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania and a certificate in Social Impact Management and Leadership from the Institute for Nonprofit Practice. She was honored with the 2021 Changemaker Award for her leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic. She lives in Mt. Airy with her dog, Archie.



Dr. Olga Martinez Hickman

**Executive Director, Bachman Lake Together;
Cradle-to-Career Partnership Leader Fellow,
EdRedesign, Harvard Graduate School of Education**

Dr. Olga Martinez Hickman is the Executive Director of Bachman Lake Together, a place-based, collective impact initiative focused on ensuring all children in the Bachman Lake community, of Dallas, Texas, are ready for school and on a path to academic success. Bachman Lake Together serves as a neighborhood backbone for the economic and social mobility of all of its citizens.

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



With more than two decades of experience in education and systems change, she leads cross-sector partnerships that align families, schools, nonprofits, and other community stakeholders around a shared vision for equitable, high-quality early childhood education.

A lifelong advocate for educational equity, Dr. Martinez Hickman brings deep expertise in parent leadership, second language acquisition, and culturally responsive systems. Her work is grounded in the belief that community voice and data-driven collaboration are essential to driving lasting change.

A proud product of public education, Dr. Martinez Hickman began her career as a classroom teacher at the same elementary school she once attended. She holds a Ph.D. in K-16 Research, Policy, and Leadership from The University of Texas at Arlington.



Torian Robinson

Managing Director, Neighborhood Engagement, William Julius Wilson Institute, Harlem Children's Zone

Torian Robinson is a seasoned leader and trusted advisor who has guided globally recognized organizations through critical moments across diverse industries and sectors. As Managing Director of Neighborhood Engagement, Torian works with neighborhood-based organizations to strengthen cradle-to-career strategies that aim to place one million young people on a pathway to social and economic mobility. He previously served as Managing Director of K-8 Programs at the Harlem Children's Zone, where he oversaw 10 after-school programs serving more than 2,000 students and their families. Torian is a proud alumnus of Morehouse College, where he earned a bachelor's degree in Business Administration.

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



Shayna Terrell

Engagement Manager, William Julius Wilson Institute, Harlem Children's Zone

Shayna Terrell supports a national portfolio of communities by advising on the design and implementation of scalable, placebase strategies that strengthen cradle-to-career pipelines. Her work centers on advancing equity-driven approaches that address the systemic barriers impacting children and families in historically disinvested neighborhoods. She has over 20 years of experience working with at-risk youth and has been successful in non-profit leadership, positive youth development, community engagement, program development, and building a positive school culture. She co-launched The Center for Black Educator Development and previously served as an administrator and Assistant Principal at a charter management organization. Shayna holds a bachelor's degree from Temple University in political science with a minor in sociology, a master's degree in Business and Organizational Strategic Leadership from Neumann University, and a Certification in School Leadership from Relay Graduate School of Education.



Taylor Toyne

Chief Executive Officer, For Oak Cliff

Taylor Toyne is a third generation Oak Cliffian and serves as the CEO of For Oak Cliff a place-based initiative serving as the backbone organization Southern Dallas with the mission to liberate Oak Cliff from systemic oppression through a culture of education while increasing social mobility and social capital. For Oak Cliff started with Toyne organizing the first back-to-school festival in 2015 with his 4th grade classroom. Over the next 10 years For Oak Cliff has worked hand in hand with the community to see transformational change in the community. For Oak Cliff now hosts their programs at the 10-acre, 20,000-square-foot Community Campus. This year For Oak Cliff is

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



celebrating 10 years of Service and Resilience and strategizing to scale their impact across the Superblock. Toynes is a proud husband to Ariel Toynes and father of Taylor Jr. and Wednesday Jewel.

Taylor is also a graduate of UNT Denton and has a masters from the Simmons School of Education at SMU.



Shanda Crowder

Vice-President for Capacity & Implementation, Partners for Rural Impact

Shanda Crowder, EdD, is the Vice President of Capacity & Implementation at Partners for Rural Impact (PRI), where she leads a national team providing technical assistance, capacity building, and program implementation support to rural leaders and organizations across the country. With over 20 years of experience in education and human services, Dr. Crowder is a trusted leader in building systems that center results, relationships, and restorative practices.

Before joining PRI, she served as a Senior Associate at the Annie E. Casey Foundation, supporting national leadership development rooted in results-based frameworks. Prior to that, she was Senior Director of Collaboration at the Family League of Baltimore and the inaugural Director of the Positive Schools Center at the University of Maryland School of Social Work, where she translated vision into practice and co-authored a chapter in *Linking Health and Education for African American Student Success* (2017).

Dr. Crowder is the co-founder of Promised Season LLC, a family-run consulting firm grounded in the principle of Ujima—collective work and responsibility. Promised Season supports leaders and organizations in doing “more, better, different” to improve lives and systems.

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



She holds a doctorate in Urban Educational Leadership from Morgan State University, a master's from Howard University, and a bachelor's from North Carolina Central University. A proud wife and mother, she resides in Baltimore County, MD, and serves on multiple boards. Dr. Crowder lives by Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."



Eshauna Smith

Director, Community Impact, Ballmer Group

Eshauna Smith is Ballmer Group's National Director of Community Impact, where she focuses on improving economic mobility and reducing racial disparities at scale through Place-Based Partnerships and Talent Development. Eshauna holds two decades of experience building and leading organizations to open pathways for youth, including serving as the CEO of Urban Alliance, Senior Policy Advisor for Disconnected Youth and Workforce Development in the DC Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education, and founding Executive Director of the DC Alliance of Youth Advocates.



Arti Doshi

Engagement Manager, Strategic Partnerships, William Julius Wilson Institute, Harlem Children's Zone

Arti Doshi leads efforts to strengthen partnerships that are critical to the success of neighborhood-based, cradle-to-career strategies across the country, bringing together national partners, community-based organizations, and public sector leaders to advance HCZ's vision to create place-based solutions that open paths to social and economic mobility for young people and end generational poverty. Arti has over 10 years of experience

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



as a program manager across various education institutions and EdTech companies, previously serving as an Education Pioneers fellow and Student Services Manager at Achievement First, East New York Middle School. She is an alumna of the Education Pioneers Fellowship and earned her bachelor's degree from the University of California, Berkeley, and a master's degree in Education Policy from Teachers College, Columbia University.



Patrick Carter

Vice President, State Practice Lead, Results for America

Patrick Carter is Vice President and State Practice Lead at Results for America - a national, bipartisan nonprofit that helps government leaders invest in what works. Previously, Patrick was the State of Minnesota's non-partisan evidence-based policymaking manager where he supported executive branch and legislative decision makers in using data and research to improve outcomes. Patrick also worked

for the Minnesota Department of Human Services in non-partisan policy, performance, and legislative relations roles.

Patrick holds a bachelor's degree from Creighton University and a Master of Public Policy degree from the University of Minnesota.



Amy Ahrens Terpstra

Chief Impact Officer, Promise Partnership Utah

Amy Ahrens Terpstra is the Chief Impact Officer at Utah's Promise, where she leads Promise Partnership Utah and 211 Utah, advancing collective impact strategies that drive measurable, community-wide change across education, basic needs, and early childhood sectors.

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



With 20 years of experience in social impact, participatory research, and results-based accountability, she partners with local community, education, and civic leaders to elevate community voices and promote data-driven action for more equitable outcomes.

Previously, Amy directed the Social IMPACT Research Center at Heartland Alliance in Chicago, leading research focused on poverty alleviation and social justice. She holds a Master of Social Work from the University of Illinois at Chicago. Outside of work, she enjoys hiking, skiing, running, and camping in Utah's red rock deserts, and planning travel adventures with family and friends.



Ashwina Kirpalani-Vasanjee

Vice President, Insights & Analytics, StriveTogether

Ashwina Kirpalani-Vasanjee brings nearly a decade of experience from the Cradle to Career Network member Commit Partnership in Dallas County, Texas. She was a visionary for Commit's extremely robust and effective data practices, which have been instrumental in local and statewide policy changes to advance equitable outcomes, cradle to career.

Ashwina routinely dissects issues strategically by listening deeply and asking the right questions to lead to the greatest impact. Ashwina knows how to build a data-informed culture and processes within organizations, teams and individuals. Her life's work is to support people in their development to realize that their connection to the outside world lies within. She believes that when a person's internal experience aligns with their external experience, decisions, answers, forward momentum, and life flow more easily.

Ashwina has an MBA and a Bachelor of Science in computer engineering from the University of Miami and is a certified coach and trained Cutting the Ties that Bind facilitator.

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



Lynne Sacks

Research Director, EdRedesign; Lecturer on Education, Harvard Graduate School of Education

Lynne Sacks is the research director at EdRedesign and a lecturer at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. She leads EdRedesign's actionable research activities, including developing case studies, toolkits, and other resources to accelerate cradle-to-career place based partnerships and strengthening the evidence base for these strategies. Lynne is the co-author, with Paul Reville, of Collaborative Action for Equity and Opportunity. With over 20 years of research, non-profit, and policy experience, Lynne previously worked for the Center for Equity and Excellence in Education at the George Washington University and the National Center on Education and the Economy. She has conducted research for the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the American Institutes for Research; she has also served as a consultant to New Profit, the Annenberg Center for School Reform, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Education, and the Commonwealth Corporation.

Lynne is a former high school and adult English and English as a Second Language teacher. Lynne received her undergraduate degree from Cornell University, and her M.Ed. and Ed.D. degrees from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.



Russell Booker

Chief Executive Officer, Spartanburg Academic Movement; By All Means Senior Fellow, EdRedesign, Harvard Graduate School of Education

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



Dr. Russell Booker is the Chief Executive Officer of the Spartanburg Academic Movement in Spartanburg, South Carolina.

Dr. Russell W. Booker is a devoted champion of education and community advancement, with over 30 years of leadership experience across the education and nonprofit sectors. His life's work centers on creating opportunity and empowering students for lives of leadership, purpose, and service. As Chief Executive Officer of the Spartanburg Academic Movement, he is spearheading Movement 2030, a bold, integrated economic mobility plan designed to help thousands of Spartanburg's children chart a path to upward mobility.

Following his retirement as Superintendent of Spartanburg County School District Seven, Dr. Booker continues to shape national and local systems of support for children and families. He currently chairs the StriveTogether Board of Directors and serves on the boards of Purpose Built Communities, Wingate University, the Mary Black Foundation, and the Spartanburg Regional Hospital Foundation.

His impact has been widely recognized. Dr. Booker is a recipient of the Whitney M. Young, Jr. Humanitarian Award, was named South Carolina Superintendent of the Year, and has been inducted into the South Atlantic Conference Hall of Fame as a Distinguished Athlete Alumni. In 2020, he received South Carolina's highest civilian honor—the Order of the Palmetto. Most recently, he was named the 2023 Neville Holcombe Distinguished Citizen by OneSpartanburg, Inc.

A proud member of the Spartanburg Alumni Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., and the South Carolina Liberty Fellowship, Dr. Booker is deeply engaged in his community. He earned his B.S. in Education from Wingate University and a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership from the University of South Carolina. In recognition of his contributions, he has also been awarded two honorary doctorate degrees. He currently serves as a By All Means Senior Fellow at the EdRedesign Lab at Harvard University's Graduate School of Education.

Dr. Booker and his wife, Sheryl, reside in Spartanburg and are the proud parents of two sons. Grant, a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, was commissioned as a U.S. Marine Corps officer

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



in 2023, and Maxwell is a member of the Harvard College Class of 2026. The family worships at Mt. Moriah Baptist Church.



Irvin Scott

Senior Lecturer on Education, Harvard Graduate School of Education

Irvin Scott joined the faculty of Harvard Graduate School of Education during the summer of 2016. At Harvard, Scott's concentration is educational leadership. He is excited about his work teaching at HGSE in the School Leadership Program and Doctor of Education Leadership Program. "Both programs are producing amazing leaders who are doing great things on behalf of children throughout the

country," he says.

Before coming to Harvard, Scott served for five years as the deputy director for K12 education at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, where he led the investment of \$300 million in initiatives focused on transforming how teachers are recruited, developed, and rewarded. Prior to his Foundation work, Scott spent over 20 years working in the "trenches" as a teacher, principal, assistant superintendent, and chief academic officer. Right before going to the Foundation, Scott was the Chief Academic Officer for Boston Public Schools, where he was responsible for the academic programming of the school system, as well as overseeing all regional superintendents and schools in the district.

Scott began his professional education experience in the classroom as an English teacher and choral director for fifteen years. He also served as the principal of McCaskey East High School in Lancaster, Pennsylvania for four years. As principal, Scott led a team of teachers and administrators to reform the 3,200-student high school into eight small learning communities, as well as to develop core curricula for all students.

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



Scott holds a bachelor's degree from Millersville University, a master's degree in education from Temple University, and a master's and doctoral degree from Harvard University. He is also the author of the book *Leading with Heart and Soul: 30 Inspiring Lessons of Faith, Learning, and Leadership for Educators*.



Jinelle Hooker

Acting Executive Director of Strategic Partnerships & Fund Development, Hartford Public Schools

Jinelle Hooker is the Executive Director of Strategic Partnerships & Fund Development for Hartford Public Schools, where she leads cross-sector collaboration, resource development, and the alignment of partnerships to district priorities that advance student success and equity. With a deep-rooted commitment to youth, families, and community, Jinelle has over 18 years of experience in Youth Development, career development, non-profit leadership, education, and system-level change. Prior to her current role, she served as the district's Community Schools Manager, where she strengthened the community school model by integrating wraparound services, building school-based partnerships, and supporting family engagement across Hartford Schools. Before joining Hartford Public Schools, Jinelle served as Director of Programs for Our Piece of the Pie (OPP), a leading youth development organization in Connecticut. There, she spearheaded the expansion of OPP's services into Eastern Connecticut, overseeing a team of 27 staff and delivering programs in 45 towns in Eastern and Central Connecticut – enhancing opportunities for youth through education, workforce readiness, and personal development. Jinelle is recognized for her strategic leadership, ability to scale impact, and collaborative approach to building sustainable partnerships that bridge schools, communities, and resources to ensure all young people thrive.



Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



EdRedesign
OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL



Aaron Jennings

Chief of Staff & Wellness, Chelsea Public Schools

Dr. Aaron T. Jennings is a dedicated educational leader with over 15 years of experience at the intersection of education, community engagement, and government policy. His work spans New Jersey, Washington, D.C., Missouri, Virginia, and Massachusetts, with a consistent focus on eliminating non-academic barriers to student success and improving learning outcomes for children, youth, and families. Before joining Chelsea Public Schools, Dr. Jennings served as Vice President of Education and Impact at a leading national EdTech startup. There, he leveraged his deep knowledge of K-12 education to address chronic absenteeism, champion whole-child development, and implement Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) frameworks in schools across the country. In his current role as Chief of Staff at Chelsea Public Schools, Dr. Jennings oversees the district's Wellness Department, which includes the Wellness Coordinator, school social workers, school counselors, and the Student Success Initiative. Under his leadership, the district ensures students receive the comprehensive support they need to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. Dr. Jennings holds a B.A. in Religious Studies and Government from the University of Virginia, an M.S.W. from Washington University in St. Louis, and an Ed.L.D. from Harvard University's Graduate School of Education. Driven by a deep commitment to educational equity and student well-being, Dr. Jennings continues to lead transformative efforts that positively impact schools and communities.



Julie Allen

Senior Director of Strategic Communications, Development, and Operations, EdRedesign, Harvard Graduate School of Education

Julie Allen is Senior Director of Strategic Communications, Development, and Operations at EdRedesign. Julie has been on the EdRedesign team since January 2022. Previously, Julie was a Harvard

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



Advanced Leadership Initiative 2020 Fellow and 2021 Senior Fellow. Prior to her fellowship, she had a distinguished career in corporate law, focusing on capital markets, public company M&A transactions, and boardroom governance and counsel. Most recently, she was a senior partner at Proskauer Rose, where, in addition to her practice, her management roles included hiring partner, practice group leadership, new business intake, and risk management. She served as Senior Editor-Education for the Harvard ALI Social Impact Review from 2021 through 2023. In addition, Julie is a member of the board of directors of Read Ahead (which she chaired from 2019 through 2023), a reading-based mentoring organization serving NYC public elementary school children, for which she has served as a volunteer reading mentor for over a decade. Julie is also a member of the board of The Trevor Project, the largest suicide prevention and mental health organization serving LGBTQ+ youth in the U.S. and Mexico. She also served as a member of the advisory board of the Harvard Kennedy School Carr-Ryan Center for Human Rights from 2021 through 2023 and is a founding committee member of the Carr-Ryan Center's Global LGBTQ+ Human Rights initiative.



Alan Cohen

Founder & CEO, Child Poverty Action Lab; By All Means Senior Fellow, EdRedesign, Harvard Graduate School of Education

Alan Cohen is the Founder and CEO of the Child Poverty Action Lab (CPAL), where he has dedicated his career to breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty. Under his leadership, CPAL operates as an unofficial R&D department for Dallas, rethinking how data can be integrated into public systems, community programs, and neighborhood life. In addition to his work at CPAL, Cohen has had a longstanding commitment to expanding opportunity for children by addressing the broader conditions that shape upward mobility. Cohen served as the Assistant Superintendent of Early Childhood Education in Dallas, where he spearheaded efforts to provide quality early education for young children across the city.

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



Alan is also a Senior Fellow at Harvard Graduate School of Education's EdRedesign Lab, which supports a growing national network of local place-based, cross-sector initiatives in cities across the U.S. He also serves on the boards of local nonprofits such as United to Learn, Groundwork DFW, and the Commit Partnership. Cohen holds an MBA from Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management and a BA in Sociology from Tulane University.



Joe Posner

Producer, The Creator Journalism Project; Director, Fire-Works Film

Joe Posner is a non-fiction filmmaker, motion designer, musician, and creative leader. After early work leading animation for documentary films such as Freakonomics, the Oscar-nominated If a Tree Falls, and Point and Shoot (which received an Emmy nomination for its animation), he created the National Magazine Award-nominated series Op-Video, and then co-founded Vox Video in 2014. Over the next 8 years, he built their award-winning YouTube channel and created Emmy-nominated streaming series like Level Playing Field on HBO, and Explained on Netflix, the most prolific docuseries on Netflix with 70 episodes.



James Watson

Producer, The Creator Journalism Project; Co-Founder, Poughkeepsie Children's Cabinet

James Watson is an Emmy Award-winning journalist with more than a decade of experience helping some of the world's largest media companies launch new ventures on television and in print, including CBS News, NBC Olympics and The New York Times. James was a

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



member of the production team behind “60 Minutes Sports,” a spinoff of the legendary Sunday evening newsmagazine produced by CBS News. While at CBS News, he was involved in the production of nearly 20 stories for “60 Minutes Sports” and “60 Minutes.” Prior to joining CBS, James covered three Olympic Games for NBC. He was also a member of the founding editorial team of Play: The New York Times Sports Magazine, where he worked with leading writers such as David Foster Wallace.

Nearly a decade ago, James returned to his hometown of Poughkeepsie, NY. In 2019, James partnered with Poughkeepsie’s Mayor, Superintendent of Schools and community stakeholders to co-found the Poughkeepsie Children’s Cabinet, a cradle-to-career place-based partnership nonprofit that convenes cross-sector leaders and community members to develop a citywide agenda for children, youth and families. James was also a co-founder of Lead for Poughkeepsie, an AmeriCorps-sponsored public service fellowship program created to attract and retain homegrown talent to pursue social impact careers.

James holds a B.A. from Boston College. He is also a graduate of the Columbia Publishing Course at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. He is a two-time Emmy Award winner and four-time nominee.



Geoffrey Canada

**Founder and President, Harlem Children’s Zone;
Founder, William Julius Wilson Institute, Harlem
Children’s Zone**

Geoffrey Canada is renowned around the world for his pioneering work helping children and families, and as a thought leader and passionate advocate for education reform across the country.

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



Canada created the Harlem Children's Zone, a birth-through-college network of programs that today serves more than 13,000 low-income students and families in a 97-block area of Central Harlem in New York City.

The unprecedented success of the Harlem Children's Zone has attracted the attention of the media and leaders around the world. In 2011, Canada was named one of the world's most influential people by Time magazine and as one of the 50 greatest leaders by Fortune magazine in 2014. President Barack Obama created the Promise Neighborhoods Initiative to replicate the Harlem Children's Zone model across the country,

After 30 years with the organization, Canada stepped down in 2014 as Chief Executive Officer of the Harlem Children's Zone but continues to serve as President.

In June 2020, Canada founded the William Julius Wilson Institute (WJWI), which serves as the national platform to help communities impacted by poverty across the country design and implement their own place-based programs. Currently, we are implementing an innovative initiative focused on narrowing the racial wealth gap and building economic mobility in the Black community.



Mayor Monroe Nichols

City of Tulsa, Oklahoma

Mayor Monroe Nichols was sworn in as the 41st Mayor of Tulsa on December 2, 2024, serving as Tulsa's first African American mayor. Nichols first called Tulsa home when he began attending the University of Tulsa, where he received a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and Economics. Shortly after, he received a Master's degree in Public Administration from the University of Oklahoma. Throughout

his career in government, private business, higher education, and the nonprofit sector, Nichols has focused on creating better outcomes for residents. Before serving as mayor, Nichols represented House District 72 in the Oklahoma House of Representatives and served

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



as Chair of the Oklahoma Legislative Black Caucus. Mayor Nichols is focused on several key areas that he plans to prioritize over the next four years, including ending homelessness, improving student outcomes, expanding economic opportunity, making Tulsa the safest big city in America, increasing affordable housing and improving relations and co-governance with tribal governments.



Paul Reville

Francis Keppel Professor of Practice of Educational Policy and Administration; Founder and Faculty Director, EdRedesign, Harvard Graduate School of Education

Professor Paul Reville returned to the Harvard Graduate School of Education as the Francis Keppel Professor of Practice of Educational Policy and Administration in 2013, having just completed nearly five years of service as the secretary of education for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. As Governor Deval Patrick's top education advisor, Reville established the Executive Office of Education and had oversight of higher education, K-12, and early education in the nation's leading student achievement state. He served in the Governor's Cabinet and played a leading education reform role on matters ranging from the Achievement Gap Act of 2010 and Common Core State Standards to the Commonwealth's highly successful Race to the Top proposal.

Prior to joining the Patrick Administration, Reville chaired the Massachusetts State Board of Education, founded the Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy, co-founded the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education (MBAE), chaired the Massachusetts Reform Review Commission and the Massachusetts Commission on Time and Learning, and served as Executive Director of the Pew Forum on Standards-Based Reform, a national think tank which convened the U.S.'s leading researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to set the national standards agenda. Reville played a central role in MBAE's development of and advocacy for Massachusetts' historic Education Reform Act of 1993. Reville has been a

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



member of the HGSE faculty since 1997 and has served as Director of the Education Policy and Management Program.

Reville is a board member and adviser to a host of organizations, and a frequent writer and speaker on education reform and policy issues. He edited the book entitled, *A Decade of Urban School Reform: Persistence and Progress in the Boston Public Schools*. He holds five honorary doctorate degrees.



Bill Crim

Chief Executive Officer, United Way of Salt Lake

Bill Crim serves as President and CEO of United Way of Salt Lake (UWSL) and Utah's Promise. He joined UWSL in 2004 to help lead its transformation to an organization focused on creating economic opportunity through collaborative, aligned action – and became CEO in 2015. Bill was instrumental in building UWSL's public policy influence and helped develop Promise Partnership Utah, the nationally recognized partnership infrastructure for improving cradle-to-career education outcomes. In 2013, Bill helped facilitate the country's first “pay for success” transaction for early childhood education, helping make high-quality preschool available to thousands of additional low-income children in Utah. Bill is a frequent speaker on the topics of “collective impact,” outcomes financing, and the power of data and shared accountability for results to transform communities. He is a lifelong resident of Utah and a graduate of the University of Utah.

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



Libby Schaaf

50th Mayor, City of Oakland, CA (2015-2023); By All Means Senior Fellow, EdRedesign, Harvard Graduate School of Education

Libby Schaaf served as the 50th Mayor of Oakland from 2015 to 2022, where she set records in reducing gun violence, fixing infrastructure, and increasing housing. She founded The Oakland Promise, one of the nation's most comprehensive cradle-to-career initiatives, to dramatically increase college access and economic mobility for Oakland's youth. Schaaf also launched the Oakland Fund for Public Innovation and the Oakland Thrives Leadership Council, which continue to drive cross-sector solutions for the city.

A champion of economic security, she was a founding Mayor and inaugural Fellow at Mayors for a Guaranteed Income. She now teaches public-private partnerships and public finance at UC Berkeley's Goldman School of Public Policy, and she serves as a Senior Fellow with the EdRedesign Lab at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Recognized for her courageous stands, Schaaf was named to the Politico 50 list of the most influential people in American politics.



Mayor Cherie Wood

South Salt Lake City, Utah

Mayor Cherie Wood is a trailblazing leader and lifelong resident of South Salt Lake, where she became the city's first female mayor in 2010. With deep roots in her community and a passion for equity, she launched Promise South Salt Lake, a groundbreaking initiative providing free youth, adult, and family programs that empower over 2,000 individuals annually. Mayor Wood's philosophy—"What I wish for my family, I wish for everyone in my community"—guides her

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



relentless commitment to education, safety, health, and prosperity. In the wake of tragedy, she led the creation of the Hser Ner Moo Community Center, catalyzing a movement of resilience and opportunity. Under her leadership, South Salt Lake has become a national model for community development, earning honors like United Way's "Changemaker" and the 2025 Pioneers of Progress Award. Mayor Wood's vision has redefined civic service—placing people at the center of policy, partnership, and progress.



Jennifer Blatz
President & CEO, StriveTogether

Jennifer Blatz is the president and CEO of StriveTogether, a national nonprofit working in about 70 communities across the United States to put millions more young people on a path to economic mobility.

Jennifer is a nationally recognized leader and expert in building place-based partnerships to improve outcomes for children, cradle to career. For more than two decades, she has designed, developed and implemented strategies that drive large-scale community improvement through partnership with local leaders and organizations.

At StriveTogether, Jennifer was instrumental in launching the national Cradle to Career Network and creating the StriveTogether Theory of Action™. She led the development of the organization's current strategic plan with a bold vision: to put 4 million more young people on a path to economic mobility by 2030. Under Jennifer's leadership, StriveTogether was named a global Social Innovator of the Year by the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship, an honor she accepted at the 2024 World Economic Forum.

Before leading StriveTogether, Jennifer was a founding member of StrivePartnership, serving Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky. Through her contributions, StrivePartnership became one of the most notable collective impact initiatives in the country. Jennifer began her career in the education sector. As executive director of Ohio College Access Network, she led a network

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



of community-based programs focused on improving access to and attainment of postsecondary education.

Jennifer's work has been published in the Stanford Social Innovation Review, Social Innovations Journal, The Hechinger Report and The 74, among others. She serves on the boards of Partners for Rural Impact and Raising A Reader, as a LEAP Ambassador and as a member of the Cincinnati Business Courier Leadership Trust.

Jennifer has been named a YWCA of Greater Cincinnati Rising Star and a Cincinnati Business Courier Forty Under 40. She is a graduate of United Way of Greater Cincinnati's Volunteer Leadership Development Program, the Billions Institute Skid Row School for Large-Scale Change and the Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce Women Excel Leadership Program.



Dreama Gentry

President & CEO, Partners for Rural Impact; By All Means Senior Fellow, EdRedesign, Harvard Graduate School of Education

Dreama Gentry unabashedly works to ensure rural children, families and places are seen, heard, and invested in. She is the founder and CEO of Partners for Rural Impact (PRI), a national intermediary that works to ensure the 14 million children and youth living in rural America are on a path to upward mobility.

A graduate of Berea College and the University of Kentucky College of Law, Dreama serves on the Economic Mobility Alliance Steering Committee and the National Comprehensive Center Advisory Board.

Dreama has deep roots in rural Appalachian Kentucky. Her family arrived in Harlan County 200+ years ago. They left Harlan under interesting circumstances and settled in Crab Orchard

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



120+ years ago on land that is still in the family. Dreama and her husband, Hasan Davis, have lived in Paint Lick for more than 30 years. They are the extremely proud parents of Malcolm, founder of Affrilachian Arts, and Christopher, who is completing a degree in cybersecurity leadership from Dakota State University in South Dakota.



Cecilia Gutierrez

Managing Director, Portfolio Lead, Blue Meridian Partners

Cecilia Gutierrez provides strategic and executive leadership on critical business priorities and leads innovation efforts that will expand Blue Meridian's work. She explores new philanthropic investment opportunities, leads due diligence on potential Blue Meridian investees, and manages relationships with current investees. Cecilia leads Blue Meridian's Place Matters portfolio.

In 2017, Cecilia was recruited as the Deputy Director of My Brother's Keeper Alliance (MBKA), Obama Foundation. She co-led the development and launch of the MBK Framework to Affect Systems Change, a foundational standard of excellence outlining a set of principles, indicators, and processes to accelerate progress on complex social conditions for boys and young men of color. By 2018, she had certified and onboarded 180 cities, towns, and tribal nations across the country as part of the MBK Network. She also orchestrated a 50-member team in planning and executing MBK Rising! Prior to that, Cecilia spent five years as President and CEO of the Miami Children's Initiative, a place-based cradle-to-career strategy in the community of Liberty City in Miami, FL.

She previously held roles with National Academic Educational Partners, a turnaround company, as Acting COO and Strategic Consultant, and served as Executive Director of Breakthrough Miami, an academic enrichment program that uses a

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



student-teaching-students model to ensure that motivated, under-resourced middle-school students have access to excellent high-school opportunities, graduate from high school on time, and attend college.

Cecilia earned a Master of Public Administration from Baruch College, a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from Boston College, and was a National Urban Fellow.



Carol Naughton

Chief Executive Officer, Purpose Built Communities

Carol Redmond Naughton is the Chief Executive Officer of Purpose Built Communities, the national leader in holistic neighborhood revitalization. Purpose Built Communities® forms long-term partnerships with local organizations fully invested in the hard work of transformation in their neighborhoods. Through expert pro-bono services and support, Purpose Built helps these local organizations center the voices of residents and advance their strategy through its

proven model.

Carol is responsible for setting the strategic vision of the organization, with a focus on expanding the impact and reach of Purpose Built, its Network, and the communities it serves. Carol has been with the organization since its inception in 2009 and became CEO in 2020. Under her leadership, Purpose Built has grown into a transformative force and a national leader in strengthening neighborhoods to create more access to the American dream for families across the country.

Prior to joining Purpose Built, Carol served as the executive director of the East Lake Foundation, where she played a critical role in shepherding the comprehensive revitalization of the East Lake neighborhood. Her prior experience includes serving as general counsel and deputy executive director of The Housing Authority of the City of Atlanta, where she was instrumental in developing the legal and financial model for mixed-income housing. Carol began her career as a commercial real estate lawyer in private practice in Atlanta.

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



Beyond her work with Purpose Built, she's volunteered her time for a number of local and national organizations, including the Low Income Investment Fund, the Charles Drew Charter School Board of Directors, the Fifth Third Bank National Community Advisory Forum, Build Healthy Places Network National Advisory Council, and others. As a member of several Boards and Advisory Councils, Carol advocates for advancing racial equity and developing healthy communities across the country.

Nationally recognized as a leader in place-based partnerships and community development, Carol's published works have been featured in the Huffington Post, TEDx Atlanta, and the Federal Reserve of San Francisco and Nonprofit Finance Fund's book Investing in Results, among others.

Carol graduated from Colgate University with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and from Emory University School of Law with a J.D.



Olivia Allen

Co-Founder and Vice President of Strategy and Advocacy, Children's Funding Project

Olivia Allen co-founded the Children's Funding Project in 2018 and now acts as the organization's Vice President of Strategy and Advocacy. In her current role, Olivia oversees Children's Funding Project's work to identify and pursue new public funding for children and youth at the state and local levels, and directs Children's Funding

Accelerator, a nonpartisan supporter of campaigns for dedicated public funding for infants, toddlers, children, and youth and the advocacy partner of Children's Funding Project. During her time at the Children's Funding Project, Olivia has provided support to 17 successful state and local ballot measure campaigns that resulted in the generation of over \$1 billion annually in public funding for children and youth. Before launching the Children's Funding Project,

Transforming Place through Neighborhood Leadership

SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 9-11, 2025



Olivia spent time at the Forum for Youth Investment and at the National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice (NCMHJJ) at Policy Research Associates, where she assisted with technical assistance for states and tribal nations focused on behavioral health and juvenile justice policy reform. Olivia received her Bachelor of Arts in psychology from Middlebury College in Middlebury, VT.



Elson Nash

**Senior Fellow, Blue Meridian Partners; By All Means
Senior Fellow, EdRedesign, Harvard Graduate School of
Education**

Elson B. Nash has over 30 years of experience in education and the nonprofit sector. He began his career with the Carter Center's Atlanta Project, later working in higher education at local, state, and national levels. As a funder, he identified social entrepreneurs at Ashoka before joining the Corporation for National and Community Service, where he spent a decade and served as Deputy Director of the White House Council for Community Solutions. In 2012, Elson became Team Lead for the Promise Neighborhoods and Full-Service Community Schools programs at the U.S. Department of Education and later directed the \$450M School Choice and Improvement Program Division. He retired from federal service in December 2024 after 22 years and began working as an education consultant in 2025.