

Recommended Slate of Officers and At-Large Candidates – 2023

The AVP-USA Nominations Committee vetted all applicants for officer and board positions and recommended the following slate of candidates to the Board of Directors.

President: Alisha Kohn AVP-NY

Vice President: Jonathon Jones AVP-NY

Secretary: Anika Flagg AVP-NY

Treasurer: William Zuck Jr. AVP NE

At-Large Board Member: Leo Luna AVP NJ

At-Large Board Member: Rae Lief Axelbank, AVP MD

At-Large Board Member: Emilio Elmo Reyna, AVP Northern NM

Each candidate submitted information about their previous experience, qualifications, and their ideas for what will make AVP-USA a more inclusive and well-functioning organization. That information is below.

Respectfully submitted,

Chad Dell

Archer Bunner

Mital Lyons-Warren

Carla Walker

Nominations Committee

Position: President

Nominee: Alisha Kohn

Previous relevant work:

I have been Vice President for two years working closely with several members to represent AVP USA in my capacity as Vice President. In this year I have worked with board members to reframe the peace fellowship program that went into effect September 2021 and will run to May 2022. This fellowship provided community building, leadership development, and access to a degree of financial stability.

Prior to that, I was AVP NY Treasurer for two years. I have also co-led mini-workshops for reentry-based services across the City of Newburgh. From 2010-2011 I was co-coordinator inside Woodburne Correctional Facility in New York State. I also Currently lead the AVP NY Accessibility Sub Committee.

AVP Passions:

The vision that I have for AVP-USA moving forward is to build a stronger bond with the AVP regions and AVP Facilitators on a national level to further the vision of the original green haven think tank.

What would make AVP more inclusive:

The idea I wish to bring forth if I am elected president is the redistribution of wealth and resources to our most valuable AVP Facilitators who are impacted by the different intersections of oppression. Providing accessibility to AVP Facilitators that are coming home from prison, BIPOC

facilitators and those who are impacted by systemic racism, homophobia, transphobia, and a variety of other points of oppression. Redistributing the wealth and resources that AVP USA has will make AVP USA a more inclusive and well-functioning organization. Having ongoing conversation about the things that make us feel uncomfortable

Why do you feel qualified:

Being a leader is not telling people what to do but in fact, it's about empowering others to work together for the greater goal of Non-Violence through transformative change. I currently co-lead multi-program spaces: Legislative advocacy program inside NYS Prisons, community healing circles for the loved ones of the incarcerated, and abolitionist educational program between incarcerated community members and non-incarcerated community members. In each of these positions I have co-founded and co-led among many others. My greatest skill is bringing people together to build and create change together.

What are you passionate about seeing changed in AVP? What makes you wake up each day and motivates you to continue this work?

AVP paved the pathway for me to get a second chance on life everyday I wake up making the second chance worth it. I do that by being in AVP as the president in hopes of becoming president again because we can all work together and we all deserve a second chance.

Position: Vice President

Nominee: Jonathon Jones

Previous Relevant Work: Long time AVP Facilitator, Landing Strip Facilitator, 2021-2022
Peace Fellow, Current Peace Fellow Coordinator 2022-2023

AVP Passions:

I feel my first year on the AVP-USA Board was tied down reacting to issues and concerns. I wasn't proactive with why I continue to give my time and energy to AVP. This year I want to build community with the AVP-USA Board, talk more about transforming powers, nonviolence and conflict.

What would make AVP more inclusive:

I believe this will be accomplished by institutionalizing these powerful AVP principles and everything we do; Transforming Powers, nonviolence education, beloved community and conflict resolution with the emphasis on reconciliation.

Position: Secretary

Nominee: Anika Flagg

AVP Passions: I would love to see AVP (AVP-USA) become more inclusive; openly accepted, appreciated & valued additions of BIPOC, differently gendered/identified and differing ability

facilitators. I am motivated by my love of ALL people. I enjoy learning of and about others, while I share of myself as we work together in commUNITY to teach an alternative to violence in a violent world.

Ideas: My ideas are to have more commUNITY building within our local chapters, then state and the national level. The change must begin within ourselves first, then spread outward and upward. We all must look at what our biases, blocks, lived experiences or unhealed traumas are that create disconnects within our interpersonal relationships that can affect our work whether we are community and/or inside facilitators.

Position: Treasurer

Nominee: William Zuck Jr.

Previous relevant work:

- Have always done my own accounting and taxes
- Owned and ran a residential rental real estate business.
- Pi Mu Epsilon - National Honorary Mathematics Society elected in May, 1989 in recognition of superior achievement in the field of mathematics.
- Have and will work with the AVP Finance Committee and current Treasurer Mariam Bunner to learn and carry out the AVP USA Treasurer position.

What are you passionate about seeing changed in AVP? What makes you wake up each day and motivates you to continue this work?

I enjoy the great work that AVP does to help people overcome trauma and seek a non-violent path in life.

What would make AVP more inclusive:

Open honest communication between all persons involved.

Position: At-Large Board Member

Nominee: Lucky Lee Luna

My AVP journey began in 2014 while serving a 7-year sentence in a New Jersey Correctional facility. I learned very quickly that I wasn't alone. On every step of my journey I have met more people that I can count that have positively impacted my life. And in more ways than I can say, they have shown me that they weren't going anywhere and that AVP is family.

I completed a degree, I have successfully navigated business school at Rutgers University and will be graduating in 2024. I started my own business, and I have the honor of being a board member for an organization that has taught me the true meaning of community, trust, and transformation.

The people I have met and grown to love, the relationships I've molded and have come to cherish are beautiful products of my AVP journey. Chad and Eleanor, my mentors, taught me the meaning of transforming power. I've used transforming power more times than I can count and with it I have maintained my freedom, changed my life, found my peace and happiness, and stopped feeling bad about being happy, and I took back what I believed was lost - myself.

Position: At-Large Board Member
Nominee: Emilio Reyna

Previous relevant work:

Been involved with AVP since 2010 I have over 1k hours of volunteer work with AVP my local chapter has actually lost count. I been not only a help in my local chapter but also someone that they rely on.

Why you feel qualified:

I love AVP. I wanna help make it better place to volunteer and take it to another level being a former incarcerated volunteer.

Ideas:

Being more open to help each other when other organizations don't have the help sending others from other chapters to help expand AVP. To help each other with non violent situations and seeing each others as human being not just race color or creeds to help promote unity and community

Position: At-Large Board Member
Nominee: Rae Axelbank

Previous relevant work:

I first came into contact with AVP in New York, in 2017, at a friend's suggestion for how to broaden my conflict transformation activities. Since then, I have participated in a number of AVP-NY community workshops as a learner and then a facilitator, in person and online. I have benefitted from AVP-Colorado specialty workshops (e.g. Facilitation for Trauma) and connecting with AVP-Bay Area when travels took me across the country from New York to California and with leaders from AVP-Seattle and AVP-North Carolina. Over 2020-2021 I worked with a follow

AVP-NY facilitator to develop plans for an AVP chapter on the Caribbean island of Montserrat (which were eventually suspended due to covid-related visa restrictions). Having recently settled in the DC-Maryland-Virginia area, I've connected with AVP-Maryland and am looking forward to beginning inside facilitation as well as community workshops here!

Why you feel qualified:

Professionally, I am a facilitative mediator (previously within the Hawai'i State and County court systems; now I am applying to jobs in the DC area), and I also have experience in hospitality, public health, and journalism, which make me a great listener, versatile leader, and collaborative problem-solver. My formal education is in anthropology and writing, and I'm particularly skilled at weaving narrative from life and at other forms of storytelling. I have spent a lot of time in the United States and abroad studying conflict between human (and non-human!) animals and love to engage in questions of "How did we get here?" and "What do we do now?"

Ideas:

I'm particularly interested in the demographics of who makes up the AVP participant population, and extra-interested in questions about the self-perpetuating cycles that are at play here: How do we make our programs available and accessible to the groups we're missing? How do we reframe our *presentation* of the core elements of what AVP offers so that these skills and principles — and the movement they embody — can more authentically serve more people? Et cetera.

In addition to my hope, described above, to help reimagine the *way* we think about what forms AVP takes and how that can be driven by an ever-widening set of populations we can serve, I'm keenly interested in helping to seed chapters or other interstitial/support programs in the places where there are none. I have long missed having an AVP chapter in Hawai'i, where the archipelago land formation presents some unique challenges AND advantages in terms of community cohesion and where I think the tapestry of what AVP offers would be enriched endlessly by interaction with Ho'oponopono and other traditional conflict transformation modalities. I'd also like to support AVP-USA initiatives in other countries, including a resumption of my collaboration on a Montserrat chapter. Finally, I'm interested in questions of how to balance a wish for unity and accountability across chapters with a need to not impose undue influence.