



# Bright Spots

Igniting change, together.

**SPEAKERS**

# Roque Barros

*he/him*

## Executive Director, Imperial Valley Wellness Foundation



Roque Barros has 30 plus years of combined experience in nonprofit and foundation management and has developed and led community building approaches and frameworks in urban and rural communities.

Prior to IVWF, Roque served as the director of the Ford Institute for Community Building, at The Ford Family Foundation. At the Jacobs Family Foundation Roque worked as the director of community building and served as interim president. In the nonprofit field, Roque served as the executive director of Los Niños, an international community development organization. In addition, Roque served as a member of Aspen Institutes THRIVE Rural National Advisory Committee. He also served on CF Leads National Cultivating Community Engagement Panel. Co-wrote a chapter "The Role of Philanthropy in Rural Community Development" in the book titled "Investing in Rural Prosperity."



# Neville Billimoria

*he/him*

## Senior Vice President of Membership & Community Relations, Mission Federal Credit Union



Neville Billimoria is an effective communications and values leader, growing organizations through external marketing, media, and sales effectiveness, as well as internal organizational alignment, corporate communications, and leadership development. He brings experience, energy, and empowerment to his leadership role as SVP Marketing and Community Relations at Mission Fed Credit Union, a \$6.5B not-for-profit, and the largest financial services organization exclusively serving San Diego, where he has accountability for a strategic array of crucial outward facing functions for over 20 years including marketing, community relations, corporate giving as well as promoting Mission Fed's public image and brand.

He is a frequent speaker on topics including brand as culture, purpose-driven leadership, social capital optimization and civic engagement for maximum impact.



# Sarah Bowles Carter

*she/her*

**Vice President and Program Officer,  
Global Philanthropy, JPMorgan Chase**

Sarah Bowles Carter is Vice President and Program Officer, Global Philanthropy with JPMorgan Chase where she is responsible for managing the firm's philanthropic investments and strategic community engagement initiatives across Southern California. In this role, she partners with nonprofit organizations with demonstrated success in one of the firm's four focus areas: jobs and skills, small business expansion, financial health and neighborhood development, all aimed at expanding inclusive economic opportunity.

Sarah received her BA in Sociology from Occidental College and her MS in Urban Policy Analysis and Management from the New School University. Sarah serves on the Advisory Board for the San Diego affiliate of the Local Initiatives Support Coalition (LISC San Diego).

Originally from San Diego, Sarah still lives in the area with her husband Tim, two-year-old daughter Charlotte, and their rambunctious English Bulldog, Tater Tot.





# Matt D'Arrigo

*he/him*

## Director of Creative Youth Development, Clare Rose Foundation

Matt D'Arrigo has dedicated the past 25 years of his life to being a champion and advocate for the arts and young people. He is the Director of Creative Youth Development at the Clare Rose Foundation overseeing local, regional, and national strategy, investments, advocacy, and field building activities. He is Co-Founder of The Clare Rose Center for Creative Youth Development (CYD), a backbone organization and philanthropic intermediary established to ensure that CYD funders, practitioners, organizations, and young people have access to the resources, tools, opportunities, and relationships they need to thrive.

He serves as Board Chair for the National Guild for Community Arts Education, Vice-Chair of SD Art Matters, co-chair of the Arts Ed Impact Group for Grant Makers for Education and sits on the Board of Catalyst of San Diego and Imperial Counties, where he co-founded the Arts & Intersections Working Group. D'Arrigo is also co-founder of the National CYD Funders Forum and Arts Amplifying Youth (AAY!). He is a coach and facilitator with the Fieldstone Leadership Network in San Diego.





# Carol Dedrich

*she/her*

**CEO, Girls Scouts San Diego**

Carol Dedrich is the Chief Executive Officer of Girl Scouts San Diego, the nonprofit organization dedicated to building girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. She leads a team of more than 100 staff who support more than 24,000 youth and adult members and five properties in San Diego and Imperial counties with a \$13M budget. Carol attributes the lessons she learned as a young Girl Scout with preparing her for leadership roles in school, the military, and throughout her career. Now, she is a champion of girls and women, committed to helping them overcome insecurities and building collaborations to expand their perspectives and skills.

She has an MBA and is a graduate of both the Harvard Business School Strategic Perspectives in Nonprofit Management and Lead San Diego Influence. At her leisure, Carol enjoys working on her private pilot's license, being a scuba diving enthusiast, and traveling the world with her husband, Alex. Next on their bucket list: Galapagos Islands, Tahiti, Chuuk Lagoon, and a flying experience in Africa. They recently adopted her late sister's tortoiseshell cat, Kenya, who loves making appearances during virtual meetings.





# Lucy Eagleson

*she/her*

**Executive Director, A Reason to Survive (ARTS)**

Lucy Eagleson, Executive Director of A Reason to Survive (ARTS) centers her background in filmmaking and love of storytelling in every aspect of her work. She is dedicated to seeking out places where art and creativity create space for humans to be creative, explore identity, and amplify voice to make meaningful change as individuals, within communities, and throughout the world. With over 20 years of experience in both international and local impact-driven spaces and experience working across programs, advancement, and operations, she supports growth trajectories for initiatives while working alongside school, community, and civic partners. Lucy is passionate about working with youth, communities, and organizations to co-create impact together.



# Lorenza Fabre Vega

*she/her*

## CEO, Latattore Foundation

Lorenza Fabre Vega is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and the CEO of the Latattore Foundation, where she is at the forefront of transformative social impact. Lorenza has dedicated her career to enhancing community well-being through innovative programs and empathetic leadership.

At the Latattore Foundation, Lorenza has spearheaded the restructuring of the family foundation, creating a dynamic program specifically designed for immigrant parents.

In addition to her role at the Latattore Foundation, Lorenza actively engages with the community, valuing genuine connections and collaborative efforts to support and uplift those she serves. Lorenza holds a degree in Clinical Social Work, which has provided her with the knowledge and skills to lead effectively in the non-profit sector. Her approach is marked by a genuine care for individuals and a strategic vision for creating sustainable, impactful programs.



# Nyisha Green- Washington

*she/they*

## Co-Founder/Co-Director of March for Black Womxn San Diego

Nyisha is an active member in the San Diego community advocating for Social Justice and Human Rights. Their journey began getting her degree in Public Health with a focus on reducing barriers in access to healthcare.

Nyisha is now the Senior Organizing Manager for a non-profit fighting at the intersections of environmental health and justice, and the increased risk of breast cancer in underestimated communities. Some of her other work in the community include being the Co-founder/Co-Director of March for Black Womxn San Diego, and sitting as a board member on For The Village, which provides low cost or free birthworker services throughout San Diego County

# Kim Jones

*she/her*

**President, Kinship Fund**

As president of the Kinship Fund, Kim's passion is to practice bold, community-driven, trust-based philanthropy that fosters meaningful, long-term partnerships so everyone in our community can thrive. What sets her apart is how she leads system transformation by disrupting the power dynamic and building bridges between funders and nonprofits. Kim brings a rich background spanning C-Suite experience in healthcare, marketing, higher education, and nonprofit leadership to be a catalyst for change in philanthropy.



# Tess Karesky

*she/her*

**Communications Coordinator,  
Prebys Foundation**

Tess Karesky is the Communications Coordinator at the Prebys Foundation, where she supports storytelling efforts that elevate grantee voices and promote equity across San Diego County. She coordinates the foundation's podcast, Stop & Talk, leads its newsletter production, and helps shape narratives that reflect the region's diverse communities. With over a decade of experience in marketing research and content development, Tess brings a thoughtful, creative lens to mission-driven communications. A proud San Diegan by choice, she's passionate about using storytelling to strengthen connections and contribute to a more inclusive and vibrant region.



# Sarah Lyman

*she/her*

## Executive Director, Alliance Healthcare Foundation



Sarah has served as Alliance Healthcare Foundation's (AHF) Executive Director since July 2019. AHF works to advance health and wellness for under-resourced and underserved populations in San Diego and Imperial Counties through grantmaking, strategic partnerships, and impact investing.

Prior to joining Alliance, Sarah served as the Executive Vice President for Empire Health Foundation (EHF) in eastern Washington State. With over 15 years of experience catalyzing results in health philanthropy, Sarah brings unique leadership to the intersection of population health, systems change and collaboration in order to advance health equity. Sarah is currently an active board member for Catalyst of San Diego and Imperial Counties and a member of San Diego State University's Public Health Advisory Board as well as various advisory boards, including the San Diego Community Information Exchange (CIE) Advisory Board. Recently she served as a Mayoral appointee for the City of San Diego's Middle Income Housing task force.







# Cody J. Martinez

*he/him*

## **Sycuan Band of the Kumeyaay Nation, Tribal Chairman**

Cody J. Martinez is a hands-on and engaged tribal leader providing strong direction to the members of his tribe and the nearly 3,000 employees of Sycuan and its affiliated business entities. Elected as Chairman in December 2014, and overwhelmingly re-elected in 2018, Martinez has moved swiftly to ensure transparency and accountability to his constituents of the Sycuan Tribe.

Creating efficiencies and streamlining operations, the tribal government has already seen improved services and reduced costs. Martinez and the Tribal Council oversee more than a dozen governmental services including police and fire, education, medical and dental, and cultural programs, collectively employing nearly 400 employees with annual budgets of \$75 million.

Chairman Martinez is a fourth generation descendent of Soloman Paipa, an original allottee when the Sycuan reservation was established in 1875. Born and raised on the Sycuan Indian Reservation, Martinez attended all local schools. The proud parent of two sons, he makes education and community involvement a personal emphasis. Business diversification, cultural preservation and sound management are core values held by Chairman Martinez.





# Terry Matsuoka

*he/him*

**Singer/Songwriter**

Terry Matsuoka is a singer-songwriter with intricate musicianship, tight pop songwriting and a soulful voice. Listeners find comfort in the laid-back Southern California vibe and relatable scenarios of his songs.

Terry plays originals, well loved covers, will improvise, human beatbox, loop musical phrases and play percussion on his guitar. He has shared billing with artists as diverse as Steve Poltz, Patricia Barber, Gregory Page, Tim Flannery, Far East Movement, Vienna Teng and Jewel at storied venues like LeStat's, the Viper Room, Petco Park, House of Blues, Java Joe's, Hotel Utah and the Casbah and events like the San Diego Music Awards Acoustic Festival, Kollaboration, Street Scene and the San Diego Asian Film Festival Gala.



# Edgar Ontiveros Medina

*he/him*

## Digital Strategist & Multimedia Designer, Prebys Foundation

With over ten years of experience in photography, video production, and graphic design, Edgar's passion is telling uplifting stories of community power, resilience, and joy.

As an immigrant with a background in community organizing, Edgar uses his bilingual and creative skills to inspire people to take action. He served as Media Specialist at the Mid-City Community Advocacy Network, where he developed and implemented successful digital strategies for community organizing campaigns, civic engagement, fundraising, and leadership development programs. Edgar effectively integrated digital work with traditional organizing, working hand-in-hand with community members to advocate for Youth Opportunity Passes.

Outside of his employment, Edgar supports local organizations and initiatives, creating an impact in the areas of climate change, transportation, bike advocacy, and social justice through photography and video production.





# Stephen Minix

*he/him*

## Vice President of Community at UpMetrics

Stephen is a former educator, now using his experiences to influence the impact space—philanthropy, impact investing, and nonprofits—toward true collaboration and partnership. His background as a PE teacher, Athletic Director, Administrator, and basketball coach in Watts shapes how he works to disrupt harmful power dynamics and foster progress.

As the Vice President of Community at UpMetrics, he helps partners leverage information and relationships to accelerate their goals. Passionate about uplifting communities, Stephen serves on the board of A Reason To Survive, Positive Coaching Alliance San Diego, and is the board chair for MENTOR California. He lives in San Diego with his wife, three daughters and dog Malibu.





# Luz Molina

*she/her*

## Councilmember, District 1 (National City)

Luz Molina, Councilmember for National City, California, is proud to serve as a civic leader in one of San Diego County's most historically rich and culturally vibrant cities. A resident of National City since childhood, she is enthusiastic about the opportunities available to young folks through the A.R.T.S. organization. She loves to inspire students towards STEAM careers.

Her professional background is in academic research projects and the federal grant funding issued to UCSD for pursuits in new science. She worked in the biotech industry for 15 years. She earned a degree in Molecular Biology from UC Berkeley.

On the regional level, she represents National City through roles on several committees of the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), including the Audit Committee (as Vice Chair) and Public Safety Committee, where she advocates for equitable development, infrastructure, and safety policies affecting South Bay communities.





# Susan Naslund

*she/her*

## Director, Good Shepherd Ministry Center



Susan Naslund's journey at the GSMC started with absolutely no experience in the food industry, food acquisition or food storage. But in 2017, upon learning that one in three San Diegans is food insecure, Susan became the Manager of Bethlehem Food Pantry, a part of the Good Shepherd Ministry Center.

With a vision of providing a dignified source of nourishment to their neighbors, the pantry has grown from serving 39 families a week from a converted garage in El Cajon to now greeting an average of about 300 guests every Saturday morning in a client-choice, market-style setting. The journey from garage to market was made possible in large part by the award of several generous grants and the work of more than 200 volunteers.

Susan is a California native, a graduate of the University of California San Diego, and when not at the GSMC, she enjoys the search for the perfect chocolate chip cookie.







# Claudia "Sew Loka" Rodriguez-Biezunski

*she/her*

**San Diego-Based Textile Artist**

Claudia Rodriguez-Biezunski, better known as Sew Loka, is a San Diego-based textile artist and fashion designer who has made a significant impact in the intersection of streetwear, sustainability, Chicana culture and DIY fashion. She gained prominence for her distinctive style of customizing and upcycling clothing, while only using recycled, reclaimed and repurposed fabrics to create all of her one of one fashion designs and textile art pieces.



# Mua "Kiki" Sotoa Solia

*she/her*

## Executive Director, TAUPOU SAMOA

As a Polynesian dance choreographer for over 40 years, Auntie Kiki has dedicated her life to the preservation, perpetuation, and celebration of Samoan and Polynesian culture through the performing arts. In 1990, she founded Taupou Samoa Dance School, mentoring thousands of students and gracing countless stages across prestigious platforms both locally and internationally. Affectionately known as "Auntie Kiki", she is deeply respected by her children, students, peers, and community as a true "Keeper of the Culture."

In 2022, she founded Taupou Samoa Cultural Arts, a nonprofit organization where she now serves as Executive Director. Forty years of mentoring thousands of youth and adults, serving community, elevating culture and enriching Performing Arts, it is with passion and humility that Auntie Kiki continues to uplift her community through the arts, service, and her unwavering commitment to cultural excellence. She shares a cherished Samoan proverb: "E mamae le tava'e i ona fulu" The tava'e bird is proud of its feathers, a cultural expression of pride in one's heritage and identity, and a reminder of the importance of staying rooted in one's culture.



# Brenda Solórzano

*she/her/ella*

## President & CEO of the California Endowment

A self-proclaimed change maker, Brenda Solórzano is known as a leader focused on continual learning while making time to play and enjoy life. Solórzano is the President and CEO of The California Endowment. She was appointed to the position in 2024. This is a return for Brenda, after working at the Endowment early in her philanthropic career.

Brenda began her career in advocacy circles and has continued to ensure community voice remains at the center of her philanthropic work. She is a nationally recognized leader in trust-based philanthropy, a values-driven approach that advances equity, shifts power, and builds mutually accountable relationships between funders and nonprofits. As a founding member of the movement, Brenda understands that democratizing philanthropy, putting the community at the center, and building trusted partnerships and relationships are critical to ensuring positive and healthy change.



# Mark Tran

*he/him*

## **Program Manager at the California Endowment *Catalyst Board Member***

Mark Tran is a Program Manager with The California Endowment. He joined TCE in January of 2016 and currently manages Special Projects for the Programs & Partnerships Department, which is responsible for the development and execution of The California Endowment's strategic plan, to help achieve racial equity in health in California. Programs & Partnerships achieves this through team-based learning, visioning, strategic planning, and strategic grant making.

Mark's background in community development work began years earlier with his post-Hurricane Katrina experience in East Biloxi, Mississippi. For two years, Mark received his grounding in community development and community organizing; working with the historic Black and Vietnamese American communities of East Biloxi.





# Sam Tsoi

*he/him*

## Director of Leadership & Professional Development, Nonprofit Institute at University of San Diego

Samuel Tsoi is the Director of Leadership & Professional Development at the Nonprofit Institute at University of San Diego (USD), where he designs and facilitates leadership and capacity-building programs for social impact organizations and leaders. He also coaches changemakers and teaches nonprofit advocacy at the USD School of Leadership and Education Sciences.

Throughout his career, Samuel is a changemaker, civic catalyst and policy advocate. He built cross-sector coalitions in various local, state and federal-level policy arenas, and consulted organizations on their equity journeys and projects across nonprofits, philanthropy and government. He previously led research, strategy and communications initiatives at across civil society and higher education, including Alliance San Diego, County of San Diego, Citizen University, and the 21st Century China Center at UC San Diego. He also co-founded Welcoming San Diego, a collective impact initiative to advance immigrant inclusion and belonging.





# Loretta Turner

*she/her*

## Founder of Do Good Leadership Collective

Loretta is known for her passion for empowering individuals and organizations that are dedicated to making their corners of the world a better place. She is an exceptional conscious social entrepreneur, leadership coach, and advocate for talent justice and workplace wellbeing. As the Founder of Do Good Leadership Collective, Loretta's work focuses on helping nonprofit professionals prioritize healing, endurance, and wellbeing in their work.

She brings nearly 15 years of experience as both a nonprofit leader and wellness practitioner to her work, alongside a deep connection to intuition. Loretta believes in helping the helpers, and knows that sustainable impact is only possible when we center care for ourselves and those around us.