

activating power

MOVING FROM THEORY TO ACTION

SPEAKERS



DANIELA ALVARADO

she/her

Chief Operating Officer at The
Partnership for the Advancement of New
Americans (PANA)

As Chief Operating Officer, Daniela Alvarado is responsible for PANA's operational excellence and organizational growth. She oversees compliance, PANA's community-owned property development project, ensures financial stewardship, and supervises operations and facilities management. Before joining PANA, Daniela worked with previously incarcerated youth, provided community education on relationship violence, and led food justice initiatives.

As former Clinic Director of a Federally Qualified Health Center, Daniela brings over 9 years of extensive experience in social services, human rights, and healthcare, with a focus on preserving cultural practices and advocating for migrant and vulnerable populations.

Daniela was raised in the Imperial Valley by Mexican immigrant parents. Her personal and professional experiences deeply informed her commitment to social justice and dedication to working with marginalized communities to build a more just world for future generations. Daniela holds a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from San Diego State University and a Master's in Nonprofit Leadership and Management from the University of San Diego.



DR. NOORI BARKA

he/him

Founder of the Chaldean Community
Council

Dr. Noori Barka, Ph.D., is a distinguished Diagnostic Immunology expert focusing on immunoassay development and applications. With over 30 years of experience in In-Vitro Diagnostics and clinical and reference laboratories, Dr. Barka has made significant contributions to the field. He is the founder and Chief Scientific Officer (CSO) of Calbiotech, Inc., a company he established in 1998 to offer specialized immunoassay products for clinical and research use. His expertise lies in immunoassay manufacturing and custom design and production for human and animal applications.

In addition to his scientific achievements, Dr. Barka is deeply committed to community development and education. He founded two charter schools, the Chaldean Community Council, and Chaldean Radio, all based in El Cajon, CA. Dr. Barka's work has advanced the diagnostics field and significantly impacted the Chaldean community and beyond. He earned his Ph.D. in Diagnostic Immunology from Université catholique de Louvain in 1986, and his extensive skill set includes FDA compliance, drug discovery, clinical trials, assay development, and diagnostics.



JUAN CARLOS BLANCO

he/him

Afro-Cuban Drummer

In his exuberant Afro-Cuban movement and music classes, Juan Carlos Blanco enjoys transmitting cultural knowledge of his ancestors through engaging community activities that focus energy and express joy. It's hard not to have a smile on your face and a bounce in your step when visiting his classroom. At the same time, his teaching is not only about fun. Whether it's dancing or drumming, for him it is also important to take the time to explain and convey historical and cultural context. This, he believes, allows students to gain a well-rounded appreciation of the new skills and art form(s) they are learning.

Since coming to the United States, Mr. Blanco has been featured in various Afro-Cuban productions in the California area, as dancer and guest choreographer for groups such as Olorun, Alafia, and Taifa. Most recently was the musical director for Onstage Playhouse's 2021 production of "[A People's Cuban Christmas Tale.](#)"

Mr. Blanco has traveled throughout the United States teaching master workshops in Afro-Cuban percussion and dance. In the San Diego area, he has taught through community classes and institutions such as UCSD, Palomar College, Grossmont College, San Diego City College, and Cal State San Marcos. For many years, he has dedicated himself to teaching kindergarten through 8th-grade students at King-Chavez schools as well as students in the Sweetwater Union High School District. In Tijuana, Juan Carlos has also taught percussion and dance to elementary students at Escuela Primaria Miguel Guerrero, Primaria Guadalupe Victoria, and other schools through WorldBeat Center's bi-national cultural exchange partnership program with I.M.A.C. (Instituto Municipal de Arte y Cultura). His students have presented their work at community celebrations and festivals throughout the region



KELSEY DANIELS

she/they

Artist & Organizer

As a poet they have garnered international recognition at slam festivals (Stonewall International, Black Arts Matter and Womxn of the World) and has shared her dream space with audiences across the country, most notably opening for renowned poet rupi kaur's world tour.

Kelsey is the recipient of the City of San Diego's Far South Border North grant and is currently serving as the 2023-2024 Artist in Residence for University of California San Diego's Thurgood Marshall College. They are most proud of being able to cultivate brave space for creatives to grow in a community that prioritize connection over perfection through their venue Check, Please! An Open Mic Experiment.

A seasoned community organizer, Kelsey approaches this sacred work as being inextricably linked to dream equity. During her time with local collectives (March For Black Womxn San Diego, Black Lives Matter SD, and We All We Got San Diego) she spearheaded campaigns around mutual aid, abolition and revolutionary joy. She also beta tested possibility models of liberation as the founder of the Black Womxn Save My Life summit and the Black Womxn Deserve mutual aid fund.

She continues to show up as a cultural organizer through her projects Big Dream Energy and Black Dream Experiment, both are creative universes that explore dreaming as an ancestral, wellness and liberation practice.



FARIDA ERIKAT

she/her

Youth Program Manager at the Majdal Center

Farida Erikat has been involved with the Majdal: Arab Community Center of San Diego since 2021 and currently serves as the Youth Program Manager. Farida was born and raised in San Diego and comes from a large Palestinian family. She graduated from UC Irvine where she studied Psychology and Education, with a special interest in working with youth populations at the intersection of social work and education.

Through her work at the Majdal Center, Farida seeks to support the development of her community, as well as help grow the next generation of youth leaders.



ALICE Y. HOM

she/they

Executive Director at CHANGE Philanthropy

Alice Y. Hom (she/they) is a community builder invested in bridging diverse and overlapping communities for social change. She is the Executive Director of CHANGE Philanthropy. Previously, she served as the Director of Equity and Social Justice at Northern California Grantmakers and as the Queer Justice Fund Director at Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy. Before joining NCG, Alice held an OSF Soros Equality Fellowship in a program aimed to support leaders to become long term innovators for racial justice.

Alice serves on the board of the American LGBTQ+ Museum and on the Advisory Council for the Conscious Style Guide, a resource on inclusive, respectful and empowering language on ability/disability, age, ethnicity, gender, race, sexuality, and socioeconomic status. She is a co-founder of Beyond Two Cents: LGBTQ AAPI Giving Circle. Her previous board service includes: Borealis Philanthropy, California Humanities, Los Angeles City Commission on the Status of Women, Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice, Visual Communications, Great Leap, and APAIT Health Center. Alice holds a Ph.D. in History from Claremont Graduate University, a M.A. in Asian American Studies from UCLA, and B.A. from Yale University.



JAMIE LABRAKE

he/him

Sycuan Tribal Government Councilman

Learn more about Jamie's story here:



bit.ly/jamie-labrake



DR. ADRIANA LOSON- CEBALLOS

she/her

Founding Co-Owner of Colmena Consulting

Dr. Adriana Loson-Ceballos is a seasoned evaluation, research, and fundraising consultant. Adriana co-founded Colmena-Consulting, a radical cooperative of consultants with marginalized identities and social justice values working with philanthropic organizations to move resources to communities in alignment with their institutional values and commitments. Drawing from her passion for collective action and shifting power, Adriana works to: systematize and synthesize organizational learning, facilitate stakeholder engagement in strategic design and evaluations, and conduct values-aligned data collection and analysis.

With a background spanning over a decade in fundraising, Adriana brings a unique lens to her work, having been deeply involved on both sides of the philanthropic exchange of funds. This ability to straddle the border of the movement of resources helps her bring community voices into decision-making spaces within philanthropy. Adriana's commitment to collective action is evident in her roles as an embedded evaluator for Philanthropy Together and her recent participatory evaluations of initiatives like the LatinXCEL Fund at the Silicon Valley Community Foundation and the Latino Giving Circle Network at the Latino Community Foundation. Her approach to evaluation and research is participatory and rooted in critical theories, centering community voices often overlooked in decision-making processes.

Based on the US-Mexico border, Adriana's passion for social justice and community empowerment continues to drive her efforts in reshaping philanthropic practices for greater diversity, equity, and inclusion.



MARISA AURORA QUIROZ

she/her

President and CEO of the International
Community Foundation

As the President and Chief Executive Officer of the International Community Foundation (ICF), Marisa leads the continuing evolution of ICF's model of co-powering communities and strengthening vulnerable natural habitats.

Marisa has served ICF in many roles. She was previously the Vice President of Culture and Impact, overseeing a growing portfolio of programs and special initiatives. Prior to that role, she was Senior Program Officer for Environmental Conservation, leading ICF's Environment portfolio, emphasizing marine and terrestrial conservation in the Baja California peninsula, coastal communities of the Gulf of California and the Caribbean. Marisa first joined ICF in 2015, after 7 years at The San Diego Foundation. There, she worked with regional leaders to advance conservation efforts that ensured community access to clean air, water, and nature, while promoting collaborative action on climate change. Her work at the San Diego Foundation led to the creation of the Parks for Everyone report and the Opening the Outdoors Initiative.

Marisa's dedication to community action at the local, regional, and national levels is demonstrated by her many leadership roles. She is a co-founder of the San Diego Latina Giving Circle and currently serves on the board of Olivewood Gardens and Learning Center. She has served on the Advisory Board for the Nonprofit Institute at the University of San Diego, the Center for Diversity and the Environment, and is the outgoing Board Chair for the Environment Grantmakers Association. Marisa holds a master's in Nonprofit Leadership and Management from the University of San Diego and a bachelor's in Anthropology and Sociology from Mills College in Oakland, California. She is a PLACES fellow, a HOPE graduate, a mama and a doula.



KATIE RUIZ

she/her

Craftivist

Katie Ruiz is a Chicana multimedia artist working in fiber and textile art. She is the creator of The Pom-pom Project, a community program that invites participants to make pom-poms, fuzzy yarn balls to contribute to large community art installations.

Ruiz holds a master of Fine Art from the New York Studio School of Drawing, Painting and Sculpture and a bachelor's degree from Northern Arizona University.



RAMLA SAHID

she/her

Executive Director, The Partnership for the
Advancement of New Americans (PANA)

PANA's Founder and Executive Director, Ramla Sahid, is committed to nurturing authentic, community driven campaigns to champion policies and practices to address racial disparities, expand protections, and promote belonging to refugee and immigrant families. Nearly ten years later, PANA is a San Diego regional leader and has a nationally respected voice on issues impacting refugees. Most recently, Ramla has led efforts to secure 2.2 acres of community-owned and stewarded land to become a Refugee and Immigrant Community Hub.

Prior to founding PANA, Ramla spent over a decade organizing campaigns to promote human rights, end youth incarceration, expand access to healthcare, and advocate for food justice. Her commitment to working in service and in-community with refugees stems from her own refugee experience. Ramla was born in Somalia and came to the United States with her family as a young child and grew up in City Heights, San Diego.



NOVIEN YARBER

he/him

Learning Officer, The Prebys Foundation;
Senior Research Associate, The Nonprofit
Institute

Novien Yarber, affectionately known as "Dr. Novi," is a San Diego-based civic leader, educator, and creative artist—a multifaceted practitioner. Beginning his dance training at the age of 16, he quickly developed a fervent love for the art form, propelling him into a successful career in the commercial industry with credits including Nike, iHeartRadio, Bravo, BET, Fox's So You Think You Can Dance, and performances with artists like Boyz II Men, Babyface, Ciara, and Kanye West, to name a few.

Driven by a desire to make a positive impact beyond the stage, Novien relocated to Southern California in 2016 to further his education. He earned a Master's in Higher Education and a PhD in Leadership Studies from the University of San Diego, where his studies fueled his passion for student access and success, equity, philanthropy, and (embodied) leadership development.

Novien's portfolio includes community-serving efforts through Horizon Leadership, The Black InGenius Initiative, Embodied Leadership for Liberative Artistry, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Promises2Kids, and the Scholars Equity Network. Today, he serves as Senior Learning Officer at the Prebys Foundation, continuing to fashion his unique role in community impact through leadership and learning, both being expressions of creative artistry.