

CATALYST ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2022

HERE ^{AND} NOW

SPEAKER BIOS





ALEJANDRA PEREZ
External Affairs Manager, San
Ysidro Health

she/her/ella

Alejandra C. Perez is the External Affairs Manager at San Ysidro Health (SYHealth). With over 10 years of experience in policy advocacy and nonprofits, Alejandra supports the organization's government affairs/advocacy, strategic partnerships, outreach, social media, media relations and corporate communications.

Alejandra is committed to SYHealth's mission of improving the health and well-being of the communities served with access for all.





ANA MELGOZA
Vice President of External Affairs,
San Ysidro Health

she/her/ella

Ana R. Melgoza, MPA, is Vice President of External Affairs for San Ysidro Health (SYHealth). Ms. Melgoza is committed to SYHealth's mission of improving the health and well-being of the communities served with access for all and has been a part of SYHealth leadership for nearly 20 years. As part of the Executive Team, Ms. Melgoza oversees government relations/advocacy, public/private/non-profit partnerships, private fund development, social media, media relations and corporate communications.

She is a graduate of the National Urban Fellows Program, earning her Masters Degree in Public Administration from the Baruch School of Public Affairs in New York City. Ms. Melgoza is an alumna of the Hispanas Organized for Political Equality Leadership Institute and a graduate of LEAD San Diego.

Ms. Melgoza serves as: Advisory Member for the National Council on Aging- Equity in Aging Collaborative; Commissioner and Inaugural Chair for the Healthy Chula Vista Advisory Commission; District 1 Representative -San Diego County Health Services Advisory Board; and Boardmember for Circulate San Diego. Ana was honored with the San Diego County Health Equity SHERo award for her advocacy and exemplary representation of service to all especially underserved families by County Vice Chair Nora Vargas.





ANDREA GUERRERO
Alliance San Diego

Andrea Guerrero leads an outstanding team that is building coalitions and mobilizing resources to achieve greater impact on the issues that matter. Before joining Alliance San Diego, Ms. Guerrero was the Field & Policy Director of the ACLU of San Diego & Imperial Counties. Prior to that, she practiced immigration law before administrative, federal district and appellate courts. She is a graduate of UC Berkeley Law School (J.D. 1999), University of Texas LBJ School of Public Affairs (M.A. 1994), and Stanford University (B.A. 1992). Originally from Mexico City, Ms. Guerrero views the world from a binational, bicultural, and bilingual lens. She has dedicated her professional life to protecting civil rights and advancing social justice.





ANDREW STRONG
Director, County of San Diego,
Office of Equity and Racial Justice

he/him/his

Andrew Strong serves as the County's first Director of the Office of Equity and Racial Justice. In this role, he works to identify and eradicate systemic bias and racism while co-creating, with the community, a culture of equity and belonging within the County of San Diego.

Prior to this role, he was the Chief of Staff to the Chief Administrative Officer of the County of San Diego. Reporting directly to CAO Helen Robbins-Meyer, Mr. Strong worked closely with the County's Executive Team to implement policies directed by the Board of Supervisors, coordinated day-to-day operations of the Chief Administrative Office.

Mr. Strong served in the United States Navy as a Hospital Corpsman before joining the County of San Diego in 2007.

He's held several leadership positions in County government including in Human Resources, the Finance & General Government Group Executive Office as a CAO Staff Officer; and Chief of Departmental Operations for the Department of Planning & Development Services. Mr. Strong also serves as a Commissioner for the City of Chula Vista's Growth and Oversight Management Commission, and he is a proud alumni of RISE San Diego's Urban Leadership Fellow program.





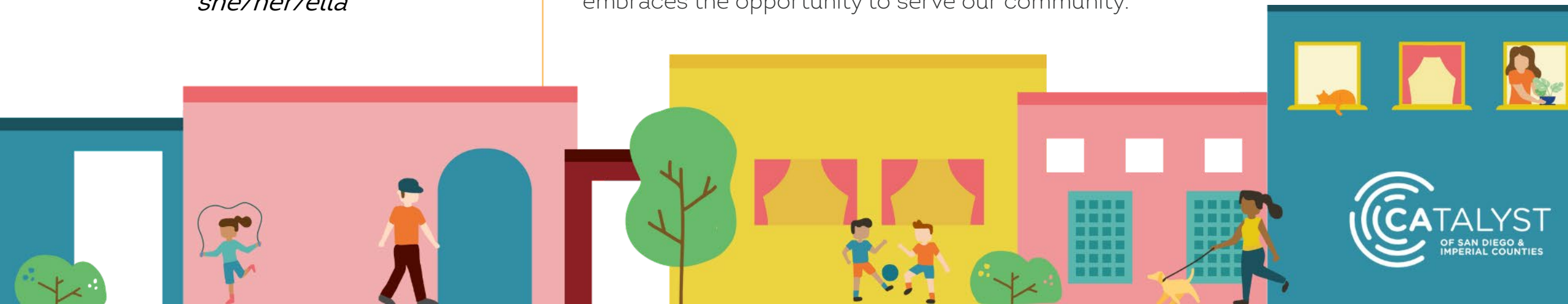
ARCELA NUNEZ-ALVAREZ
Co-Founder & Co-Director,
Universidad Popular

she/her/ella

Arcela Nuñez-Alvarez is the Co-Founder and Co-Director of Universidad Popular, a community-based education organization cultivating leadership, freedom, health, wisdom, and dignity. With a team of maestras del pueblo (community educators), she brings to life key principles of democracy, empowering ordinary people to own their voice and use our collective power to shape our community. As a grassroots community representative, she brings a personal commitment, professional expertise, and community-centered approach to participating in the community's civic and political life.

She is embedded within a community that she has helped educate and mobilize with historic civic and electoral firsts throughout North County. Being part of the movement to build people power has given her first-hand knowledge of privileges and barriers affecting civic participation among immigrants and Latinx communities who are still grossly underrepresented in key positions. She is dedicated to promoting precious ancestral knowledge, community service, and civic participation.

She is a Chicana immigrant who came from Mexico and settled in San Marcos when she was 12 years old. She was raised by a single mom who worked tirelessly in sewing factories earning minimum wage to afford basic necessities for six daughters. She understands first hand the struggles immigrant families face in San Diego County and embraces the opportunity to serve our community.





DR. CARMEN ROJAS
President & CEO, Marguerite Casey
Foundation

she/her/hers

Dr. Carmen Rojas (she/her) is the president and CEO of the Marguerite Casey Foundation. Prior to joining Marguerite Casey Foundation, Dr. Carmen Rojas was the co-founder and former CEO of The Workers Lab, an innovation lab focused on making real the promises of safety, dignity, and mobility to all working people. For more than 20 years, Carmen has worked with foundations, financial institutions, and nonprofits to improve the lives of working people across the United States.

Carmen currently sits on the boards of Beyond12, Blue Ridge Labs, Children's Defense Fund, as well as the San Francisco Federal Reserve's Community Advisory Council, and Confluence's Racial Equity Initiative Advisory Committee.

Carmen holds a Ph.D. in City and Regional Planning from the University of California, Berkeley and was a Fulbright Scholar in 2007.





BERNICE PAIPA

Chairwoman, Iipay Nation of Santa Ysabel

Bernice Paipa is an enrolled citizen of the Iipay Nation of Santa Ysabel and for has held the honor as Vice Chairwoman and finishing her last 3 years as Chairwoman. She is a mother of 5 and has raised her children with her husband on both Santa Ysabel Reservation and Manzanita Reservation. Carrying out the preservation of cultural resources and active revitalization of Kumeyaay traditional life ways within her family and communities.





CHRISTINA SNIDER
Tribal Affairs Secretary to
Governor Newsom

Christina Snider serves as Tribal Affairs Secretary to Governor Gavin Newsom and leads the Governor's Office of Tribal Affairs established within the Office of Governor Gavin Newsom on July 1, 2022. Snider was appointed February 19, 2019 by Governor Newsom to continue her service in the Governor's Office following her appointment on February 6, 2018 by Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. On July 1, 2020, Snider has also previously served as Executive Secretary of the California Native American Heritage Commission, appointed by Governors Newsom and Brown. She is an enrolled member of the Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians.

As a member of the Cabinet, Secretary Snider serves as the Governor's Tribal Advisor and oversees effective government-to-government consultation between the Governor's Administration and California tribes; informs, develops and implements policy directives related to tribal governments and Native American communities; leads the California Truth & Healing Council and California Indian Heritage Center Task Force and oversees the Tribal Nation Grant Fund Program.

In addition to her duties leading the Governor's Office of Tribal Affairs, Secretary Snider serves as a member of the California Broadband Council, the Judicial Council Tribal Court-State Court Forum and an ex officio member of the California Advisory Committee on Geographic Names.





EMILY BURGUENO

Head Seed Keeper, Maat Hetemii

she/her

Emily Burgueno is an enrolled citizen of the Iipay Nation of Santa Ysabel which is one of twelve bands. Ms. Burgueno's commitment as the Head Seed Keeper at Maat Hetemii (the local community garden on the Reservation). Here she has developed a space to prioritize the Tribal Members' wellbeing with the support and foundation of her mentors. Ms. Burgueno is rooted in the Kumeyaay life ways she was raised with and tries to implement these teachings in her daily work for the community and land. One of Ms. Burgueno's many goals is to support rematriation throughout the Kumeyaay Nation. "Rematriation" can be defined as: "to restore a living culture to its rightful place on Mother Earth," or "to restore a people to a spiritual way of life, in sacred relationship with their ancestral lands, without external interference." As a concept, rematriation acknowledges that our ancestors lived in spiritual relationship with our lands for thousands of years, and that we have a sacred duty to maintain that relationship for the benefit of our future generations.

From learning and teaching, Emily knows the importance of the relationships we develop within ourselves, our community/ecosystems, and the natural world.





GINGER HITZKE
President, Hitzke Development
Corporation

Ginger Hitzke is the President of Hitzke Development Corporation and is a first generation apartment builder and owner who is committed to providing high quality homes for lower income families and fixed income seniors. She is a tireless champion for renter protections and believes everyone deserves a stable home that they can afford.





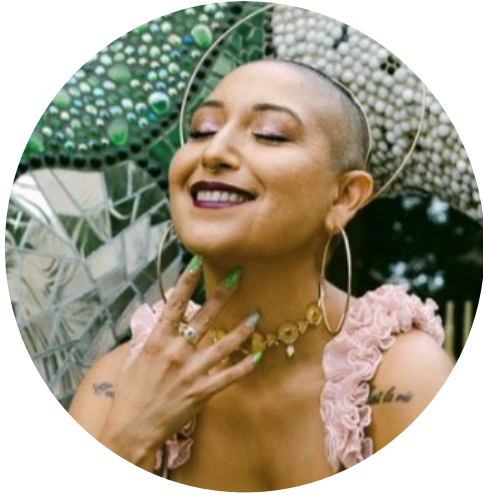
JOEY ESPINOZA

Outreach Supervisor, Imperial
Valley LGBT Resource Center

they/them/she/her

Joey is a Calecianx community organizer, advocate and writer. They graduated from CHS in 2017 and from UCR in 2022 with a double B.A. in Psychology and Education with a concentration in Social Justice, Policy & Community Leadership. They are the co-founder of the grassroots organization Calexico Needs Change and currently work as an Outreach Assistant at the IV LGBT Resource Center helping people get connected to mental health and financial resources.





IANNE CELESTE RIVERA
Embodiment Composer, One
Thread LLC

she/her

As an Embodiment Composer, Ianne (she/her) brings 16 years of Cancer Biology research experience and 10 years in the contemplative healing arts to the creation of her take on sound healing called Sonic Rituals®. In a mosaic of hip-hop inspired meditative music, nature soundscapes, guided visualization, and spoken word, Ianne creates ceremonial, sensual experiences for self-exploration, emotional wellness, and pleasure liberation. You can explore these journeys through the immersive audio healing blog, Pleasure Revolution.

Ianne is also the founder + creator of the first World Pleasure Day on August 18th - a day to open the mind, celebrate the body, and elevate the Spirit of pleasure (www.worldpleasureday.com). In addition to these virtual offerings, she holds 1:1 “Sensual Activations” for those needing support to ground themselves as they navigate life’s great transitions and changes.





KIM DESMOND

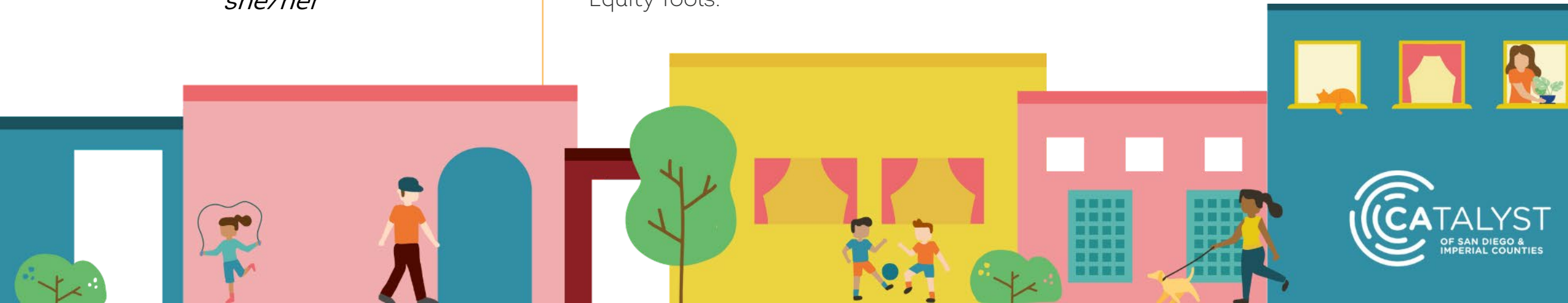
Chief of Race & Equity, City of San Diego

she/her

Kim is currently the Chief of Race and Equity for the City of San Diego, leading the Department of Race and Equity for Mayor Todd Gloria. Prior to this appointment, Kim served as the Director and Interim Chief Equity Officer for Mayor Michael B. Hancock, overseeing the Mayor's Office of Social Equity and Innovation within the City and County of Denver.

Kim has an extensive background operationalizing racial equity into local government programs, budget allocations, and policies through building equitable outcomes with a targeted focus on eliminating systemic racism.

Kim's areas of experience include: Policy and Operations: Improving policy, service delivery and equitable distribution of resources to ensure that priorities of equity are integrated in key programs, practices, and budget decisions. Implementation: Coordinating and developing city-wide Race and Equity offices through normalizing racial equity tools and social justice practices across two large local government systems comprised of over 11,000 employees. Learning and Development: Designing curriculum and facilitating training on racial equity and inclusion that contextualizes historic oppression, systemic racism, and implicit/explicit biases to guide departments on building equitable outcomes. Evaluation, Assessment and Process Improvement: Creating infrastructure and systems to evaluate equitable outcomes and integrate Racial Equity Tools.





KRIS LIN BRONNER
Executive Director, Dr. Bronner's
Family Foundation

she/they

Kris Lin-Bronner is the Executive Director & Chief Grants officer of Dr. Bronner's Family Foundation, which supports the humanitarian goals of the descendants of E.H. Bronner, founder of Dr. Bronner's, the top-selling brand of natural soaps in North America. Kris oversaw the creation of Migration Justice Initiative, which is dedicated to serving refugees, displaced persons, and forced migrants, and is responsible for the program's administration. Prior to taking charge of the foundation, Kris worked as the Strategic Adviser and Corporate Social Responsibility Manager for Dr. Bronner's. She oversaw and managed many diverse projects under the umbrella of sustainability and social responsibility, including advising the company's Fair Trade supply chain projects on financial and operational matters, providing integrated risk assessments on new business ventures, and worked to institutionalize Dr. Bronner's sustainability efforts across multiple levels of the company, from operations to governance. While at Dr. Bronner's, Kris guided the company through the process of becoming a benefit corporation in California and a Certified B-Corp.

Kris earned an undergraduate degree in English Literature from Harvard University and a graduate degree in International Affairs from UCSD. She is a hospice volunteer, a design enthusiast, and enjoys adventure travel. Kris was born in Taiwan, emigrated to the United States at the age of 12, and currently lives in Oakland, California.



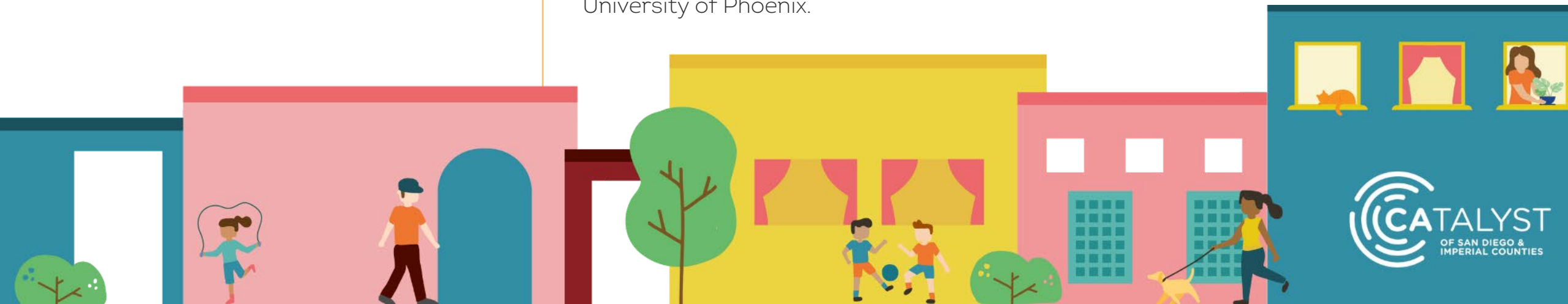


LISA CUESTAS
President & CEO, Casa Familiar

she/her/ella

Lisa Cuestas is currently Chief Executive Officer of Casa Familiar, a 501(c)(3) non-profit community-based organization in San Ysidro, CA. Lisa has worked for Casa Familiar for 20 years and nearly 25 years of experience in the non-profit sector. She is the embodiment of an emerging Latina leader. She is a Fronteriza – raised along the U.S./Mexico border. Her mother is from Ciudad Juarez and her father from Tucson, Arizona. Lisa's parents and grandparents imparted on her the importance of community and the notion of rising by uplifting others, which are the values she and her husband are now passing along to their own children. Lisa has committed her life in service to her communities and this trajectory has led to becoming the Chief Executive Officer for Casa Familiar (Casa), a community service and development agency dedicated to ensuring residents of San Ysidro and the South Bay have a leading role in all aspects of the development and sustainability of their community.

As Casa Familiar's Chief Executive Officer, Lisa oversees an annual budget of \$5.0M+ with a growing portfolio of 1,300 affordable housing units in San Diego's South Bay. Under her leadership, Casa Familiar secured \$10 million of New Markets Tax Credit Financing in 2018 for its Living Rooms at the Border project completed in February of 2020, a 13,469 square-foot mixed-use project in San Ysidro, a predominantly Latino community in San Diego. Lisa holds a bachelor's degree in Human Services and Management from the University of Phoenix.





OMAR LOPEX

Director, Standard Fantastic
Pictures

he/him

Omar Lopex is a writer, director, artist, and academic whose work has been exhibited at Big Muddy, San Diego Underground, and Harkat 16mm Film festivals, as well as the Mingei International Museum, San Diego Museum of Art, La Jolla Athenaeum, and Shakespeare and Company Paris. He is the recipient of grants from American Artists, the Avery-Tsui Foundation, and the William Male Foundation. Lopex shoots exclusively on celluloid film and won the Binational Filmmaker Award for his debut feature *Ana, Who They Pulled Out of the River* from Film Consortium San Diego 2018.

Lopex helms Standard Fantastic Pictures, an artist-run production studio emerging from the front lines of cross-border politics and whose collaborative form of production values the unique Cultural Capital of the Transborder Region. By centering Transborder experiences, Standard Fantastic disrupts an existing system of marginalization and cultivates a community of inclusion; providing the resources, care, and support for projects the Hollywood film industry ignores.

In 2022, Lopex established the inaugural Standard Fantastic Transborder Film Fellowship providing materials, equipment, and mentorship for two teams of young filmmakers to produce narrative films about the border. He also serves on the Advisory Council Board for the Suraj Israni Center for Cinematic Arts at the University of California San Diego.





PAUL CUERO
Cultural Icon, Campo Kumeyaay
Nation

he/him

Paul Cuero, Jr. is a leader, mentor and cultural icon of the Campo Band of the Kumeyaay Nation. Since the age of 19, he has been involved in various aspects of tribal government, serving as treasurer and chair. He played a crucial role in drafting, analyzing and refining the California Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. In 2010, KPBS recognized him as an American Indian Heritage Month honoree.

Cuero is nationally known for his mastery of a cycle of songs named for the takut. These cultural bird songs, of which there are 300 in the takut cycle, are a metaphor for life. Cuero and a group of Kumeyaay youth performed the bird songs with the San Diego Symphony Orchestra in a composition that bridged the gap between traditional indigenous and contemporary American cultures. He was also invited to sing at the White House during President Bill Clinton's tenure, at the opening of the National Museum of the American Indian and at the pre-game ceremony for the 1998 Super Bowl in San Diego.

Chairman Cuero is a leader in educating young people about bird singing and other powerful traditions of the Kumeyaay people. From an early age, he sought guidance from the elders in his pursuit of knowledge about tribal history and mythology. Now, as an elder himself, Cuero works to convey not only the tribal histories, but also the philosophy and spirituality implicit in them. He is a staunch advocate for education as a path to leadership and cultural pride for Indian youth.

In recognition of his dedication to serving and celebrating the Kumeyaay, other Tipai American-Indian cultures and indigenous communities all over the world, the Board of Trustees of the California State University and San Diego State University are honored to confer upon H. Paul Cuero, Jr. the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters.





Rosa was raised in Brawley, California. After graduating from high school, she moved to Los Angeles County and received a bachelor's degree from a four-year college in La Puente, CA. After 13 years in corrections, retired and started a social work job with Imperial County.

After “coming out” as a lesbian, Rosa found a lack of LGBT resources in the Imperial County and, in search of community, founded the Imperial Valley LGBT Resource Center in 2015.

ROSA DIAZ

CEO, The Imperial Valley LGBT
Resource Center

she/her/ella





STEPHEN MINIX
Senior Director Community
Strategy, UpMetrics

he/him/his

Stephen joined UpMetrics in 2015 for one reason: a unique opportunity to continue to uplift communities. In his role as Senior Director of Community Strategy Stephen empowers partners to utilize their data to accelerate progress toward outcomes: informing all decisions, gaining new insights and telling their story to a wider audience. Stephen is passionate about building capacity at impact organizations as he has dedicated his life's work to the advancement of youth and communities through education and development.

He began his career by serving young people and communities in Southern California as a public school and public charter school teacher, coach, athletic director, administrator, district coordinator for afterschool programs and adjunct professor. He was recognized as the CIF Los Angeles City Section Athletic Director of the Year in 2015. Today, Stephen continues to be active in the community, serving as a Green Dot Public Schools Ambassador, and an inaugural board member (board chair) for MENTOR California.

Stephen graduated from Pepperdine with a BS in Physical Education and a MA in Secondary Education. Stephen is married with three young daughters and is a #girl dad for real!!



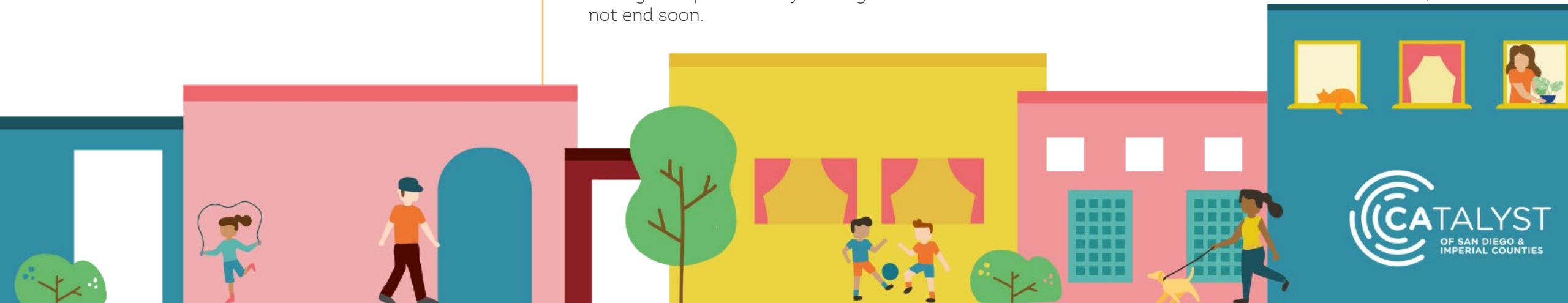


VINCE POLLIZZI
Program Manager, Imperial Valley
LGBT Resource Center

Vincent Pollizzi brings a unique combination of skills to the working environment. Early jobs showed him the value of good customer service and the importance of doing the job right. Through his time in the military, he learned a strong work ethic and dedication that serves an organization well and makes him an employee others can rely on to get the job done. Vincent can face the challenges of more extensive projects and balance the daily routine of emails, phone calls, spreadsheets, and grant reports. With several degrees in engineering, instructional design, career and technical education, and a decade in front of the classroom, his career path has seen him repair all types of equipment and manage warehouses full of goods and people. There is little he has not taken on during the work week.

Starting his volunteer work at the center shortly after moving to Imperial County, California, in 2017 by running generators for parades and hanging mirrors, the scope of work he has faced has steadily expanded. While working with the Imperial Valley LGBT Resource Center, Vincent has become a member of an organization that works to help the community in many different ways. His current responsibilities capitalize on the background of program organization, logistical support, and detail management. These efforts allow others in the organization to focus on their strengths - peer support, counseling, and behavioral and mental health. By supporting the efforts of staff and volunteers in the organization through managing the supplies, administration, and logistical challenges faced daily, Imperial Valley LGBT Resource Center can help more people and develop additional programs that benefit the county.

In summer 2021, Vincent led the Youth Cadet Academy and worked with center staff to coordinate the Summer Splash Pool Blast as one of many events to support the center's grant-funded work. The center helps individuals and families complete applications and offers peer counseling, DV and AM classes, and numerous community-centered events throughout the year. These efforts have led to the current position of Program Manager, where he is responsible for supporting the staff, volunteers, grantees, and all the activities the center provides to the community. With the center's recent acceptance of several grants targeted at supporting the community through the pandemic by sharing the latest news and information from trusted and reliable sources, the work will not end soon.





VINO PAJANOR
CEO, Catholic Charities Diocese of
San Diego

Vino Pajanor is the CEO of the Catholic Charities Diocese of San Diego. Vino's life journey has uniquely prepared him to steward this vital ministry. Born in India, he ventured towards a professional career as an attorney where he practiced law before moving in 2000 to the United States to continue his professional and personal development by attending the USD School of Law on scholarship, earning an LLM degree. Subsequently, he worked at one of San Diego's leading law firms, and then Vino discovered his heart's passion for nonprofit work when in 2006 he co-founded the Housing Opportunities Collaborative to address the growing predatory lending practices and evolving housing crisis where he created the Virtual Counselor Network to improve the delivery of counseling services to the community through technology.

In 2016, he successfully graduated from Achieving Excellence in Community Development program at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. He led an international real estate development company before the job opening at Catholic Charities inspired his return to the nonprofit sector. With "a nonprofit heart and a for-profit mind," as Vino describes it, he connects deeply to the mission of Catholic Charities by ensuring the agency has robust financial with a triple bottom line framework, SMAART goals, and organizational means to live out its Matthew:25 calling with excellence.

