

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.



JACOB ALVARADO WAIPUK

he/him

Chair of Tribal Relations, Tribal Liaison,
Division of Diversity and Innovation

Jacob Alvarado Waipuk (tribal member from San Pasqual Kumeyaay) is part of the Kumeyaay Nation that resides in San Diego, California. His village is called San Pasqual or Amulkukul in the Kumeyaay language Ipai Aa, "Language of the People." The name of his clan is called Waipuk, which means "kingsnake." The village was located originally in the San Pasqual Valley. On his father's side, he is Lipan Apache, and Sun Clan. He graduated from San Diego State University and received a Bachelor of Arts in American Indian Studies and studied abroad at The University of British Columbia where he focused on First Nations studies. During his time at SDSU, he was the president of the Native American Student Alliance.

Jacob also teaches the Kumeyaay language, songs, and traditions of the Kumeyaay Nation. He is currently in the JDP Doctor of Education, Educational Leadership at the University of California, San Diego and Cal State University, San Marcos where he focuses his research on schooling environments for indigenous youth, and the importance of indigenous teachings. He believes it's important to have a foundation of culture and traditions to help indigenous students succeed. He wants to create a school on San Pasqual Reservation that combines Kumeyaay teachings along with California state standards, so that we can keep our traditions alive. He has worked eleven years with the youth of the San Pasqual Education Department teaching them the Kumeyaay songs, language, stories, traditions, and way of life. Everything he does is for the youth of San Pasqual, and being in higher education pursuing a Doctor of Education is all for his people so that he can bring back what he learned and create educational pathways. He is here to help guide his people on and off campus to be successful and to never forget who they are and where they come from.



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.



JACQUELINE BRAVO ESTRADA-MERCADO

she/her/ella

Founder & CEO of Best S.T.E.P. Forward

Jackie is from Calipatria, CA and served as a Paramedic for 10 years in Imperial County and San Diego County. She retired in 2014 to focus on her sons special needs and his success, which was the inspiration behind the birth of Best S.T.E.P. Forward in 2018. BSF began under the umbrella of Calipatria PAL with just 14 kids in the program to now 2 locations serving Imperial County and serving up to 200 youth a year.

Jacqueline serves on the Parent School Site Council for Bill Young Middle School and Fremont Primary School in Calipatria. Community Advisory Committee for ICOE SELPA, Community Advisor Committee for Calipatria Unified School District Special Education. She is also the Vice Chair for State Council of Developmental Disability Regional Advisory Committee.



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.



JOLYANA JIRJEES

she/her

Director of the Chaldean Community Council

Jolyana Jirjees is a dedicated Social Services Academic and Career Counselor based in El Cajon, CA, with over four years of direct experience in the field. She holds a Master's Degree in Education with an emphasis in Counseling from San Diego State University and has consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to advising underserved and impacted student populations. Jolyana excels in guiding students through admissions procedures, financial aid applications, and course selection, ensuring they have the resources and support needed to succeed. She serves on the Governing Board at Cajon Valley School District.

As the Director of Social Services at the Chaldean Community Council, Jolyana's leadership is instrumental. She leads program operations and delivers critical social services to underprivileged and underrepresented refugee families. She has a proven track record in developing and leading campus-wide programs focused on career exploration and life skills training, preparing students for post-college success. Jolyana's core competencies include assessments and evaluations, support plan development, case management, academic and career counseling, and fostering community partnerships. Her extensive experience also includes roles at Public Consulting Group and Grossmont College, where she supported welfare-to-work initiatives, provided language translation and interpretation services, and developed strong relationships with local resources to enhance career readiness for students. Jolyana is passionate about empowering her community and helping individuals achieve their educational and career aspirations.



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.



JANICE LUNA REYNOSA

she/her

Co-Founder and Executive Director of Mundo
Gardens

Janice Luna Reynoso was born to Mexican Immigrant parents and raised in both National City and Southeast San Diego (Kumeyaay territory), Janice's work is heavily influenced by her family's farming heritage, her connection to Baja California, and indigenous values. Janice is the Co-founder and Executive Director of Mundo Gardens, a Resident Leadership Academy (RLA) facilitator, an advisory council member of the San Diego Food System Alliance, and an executive member of the Behavioral Health Advisory Board for the County of San Diego. Janice is also a co-founder of the National City Healthy Culturas Coalition and the founder of the first three community gardens in National City.

She continues her engagement and partnership in Southeast San Diego in co-hosting the Project New Village, People's Produce Mobile Farmers Market and teaching trauma informed environmental education in Southeast San Diego Elementary Schools with The Diamond Education Excellence Partnership program. She is a member of the AB 617 Portside Steering Committee in advocacy for clean air for coastal communities and accountability measures for corporations and government. It is part of her mission to mitigate climate change and the effects of pollution in communities of color in South San Diego. Her ongoing lifelong project is the National City & Southeast Green Corridor and Healthy Zone (Blue Zone) Initiative where the redress of harm of divisive infrastructure will lead to creating healthier communities that not only challenge health odds but defy it by increasing the length and quality of lives significantly.



LAUREN J. MAPP

she/her

Co-Founder of Daylight San Diego and
Freelance Reporter

Lauren J. Mapp is a reporter and co-founder of Daylight San Diego, a non-profit newsroom startup striving to empower San Diego's diverse communities through fair, equitable, and accurate journalism that listens to their needs.

Since 2005, she has covered a variety of topics including Indigenous communities, East County, caregiving, senior care, travel, the restaurant industry, and culinary traditions. She previously worked for The San Diego Union-Tribune, inewssource, Times of San Diego, and the North Coast Current.

Mapp is Kanien'kehá (Mohawk) and started her career as a reporter for Indian Time and The People's Voice, two newspapers on the Akwesasne reservation that straddles the border of Upstate New York and Ontario.

Since 2008, she has maintained a food, beverage, and travel blog called Off the Mapp. She previously served two terms as a board member of the San Diego Society of Professional Journalists and is a current member of SPJ, the San Diego Association of Black Journalists, the Indigenous Journalists Association, and the San Diego Press Club.



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.



JOEY WILLIAMS

he/him

Senior Program Manager at The California
Endowment: Power and Infrastructure Team –
Native Power Building

Joey Williams, a member of the Nuwa (Kawaiisu) people out of the Kern Valley Indian Community, began organizing over 15 years ago as a youth pastor working to dismantle the school to jail & prison pipeline in Bakersfield. He has been a product of the foster care, jail, and probation system since age 7. Joey committed his life to bringing people of color, young people, and disenfranchised targeted communities off the sidelines and into the big fight for good jobs, quality education, and ending mass incarceration and police brutality.

Joey is the former Co-Vice Chair of the LA County Cares First Community Investment Advisory Board-CFCI (Measure J) representing the Native American Community, which is allocating \$100 million from the LA County Sheriff's Department, and investing back in the communities they have harmed. Joey is formerly the Director of Organizing at the CA Native Vote Project, and is committed to dismantling White Supremacy, and building Native Power so that all our people can be free, self-determined, and live the full life their Creator intended.



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.