



Young Women of Color Symposium
sponsored by Loyola Academy and Francis W. Parker

“Underrepresented Voices: Speak Out” Stand Out, Step Out, Speak Out

Our society has shown us that women of color are not as celebrated or respected as they should be. The Young Women of Color Symposium is a leadership conference for 7th-12th grade, self-identified young women of color. We have created this space for conversation and connection.

The day will feature workshops, affinity group sessions, and activities geared toward providing brave and necessary spaces for participants to explore and celebrate their identities, to develop skills for self-advocacy, and to form lifelong connections and community. The goal is to provide a collaborative environment and experience that promotes opportunities to learn, inspire, and empower participants. This symposium is one step on the road to changing the narrative and encouraging the resilience of our voices and actions.

Welcome



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

LORI E. LIGHTFOOT
MAYOR

March 19, 2021

Dear Friends:

On behalf of the City of Chicago, I am honored to welcome all those gathered for the Young Women of Color Symposium hosted by Loyola Academy and Francis W. Parker School.

The Young Women of Color Symposium is a leadership conference where young women of color can come together in a safe space to discuss identity, community, and the importance of having their voices heard. This event presents the opportunity to come together to network, learn, and inspire through a full day of workshops, group sessions, activities, and keynote speakers that allows young women to explore and celebrate their identities, develop self-advocacy skills, and form meaningful connections. I commend Loyola Academy and Francis W. Parker School for their efforts to empower and celebrate young women of color.

I hope your event is memorable and enjoyable. Best wishes for continued success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lori E. Lightfoot".

Mayor



Symposium Schedule

Friday, March 19	
a welcome video will be emailed to conference participants	
Saturday, March 20	
9:00 AM	Welcome & Introduction
9:15 AM	Keynote Address: Princess Sarah Culberson
10:00 AM	Question & Answer Session
10:15 AM	Break
10:30 AM	Workshop Session 1
11:15 AM	Lunch Break
12:00 PM	Keynote Address: Mary Spio
12:45 PM	Question & Answer Session
1:00 PM	Break
1:05 PM	Workshop Session 2
1:50 PM	Affinity Group Session
2:35 PM	Break
2:45 PM	Keynote Address: Ruth Jurgensen
3:30 PM	Question & Answer Session
3:45 PM	Closing
Sunday, March 21	
a closing video will be emailed to conference participants	

Registration information and links can be found at goramblers.org/ywoc.

Questions regarding the Symposium can be emailed to ywocis@gmail.com.

Keynote Speakers



Princess Sarah Culberson

As an infant, Sarah was given up to foster care and adopted by a loving white family in West Virginia. She grew up contemplating and dealing with questions about her identity and her biracial roots. After learning that her biological mother had died when she was just 11, she found out that her father lived in a village in Sierra Leone, West Africa. She learned that she was from a royal family, a Mahaloi, the granddaughter of a Paramount Chief, with the status of a princess. She also learned of the difficulties and privations of the people in Sierra Leone resulting from a brutal 11-year civil war that ended in 2002. As co-founder and president of Sierra Leone Rising (formerly known as “The Kposowa Foundation”) in Los Angeles, Sarah and many others work daily to bring sustainable opportunities for the people of Sierra Leone. Princess Sarah has built eight reliable wells to provide clean water to 12,000

people, and has been at the forefront of education initiatives including the reconstruction of Bumpe High School and the distribution of learning materials to students, specifically to orphans of the civil war and victims of Ebola. Princess Sarah has also focused the goals of Sierra Leone Rising on access to education through projects such as providing bicycles to students in need of transportation. Initially formed in 2006 to support education, and the rebuilding of Bumpe High School after the 11 year Blood Diamond war.

Princess Sarah Culberson’s story has been featured nationally and internationally on CNN, Good Morning America, BBC, Inside Edition, The Singapore News, LA Times, NY Times, Chicago Tribune, BBC radio, NPR, “Oprah and Friends” radio show, and in magazines such as Reader’s Digest, People, Newsweek, and Glamour.

Sarah was honored as one of the 28 African American “Future Makers” by AT&T’s “Dream In Black” initiative, celebrating black creators such as Queen Latifah, Zendaya, Van Jones, Nick Cannon, Angela Yee, and a slew of others. Sarah’s book, A Princess Found, was released in Barnes and Noble and other bookstores in 2009 and has been used at Pepperdine University in an ethnic identity class.



Ruth Jurgensen

A passionate teacher and education leader, Ruth has more than a decade of experience serving in senior leadership positions at independent schools in New York City and Chicago. Prior to joining Prep for Prep, Ruth was Associate Principal at Francis W. Parker School, overseeing educational programs and operations for 900+ students in Chicago. She was a key member of its senior leadership team and created new initiatives including an endowed speaker series, and brought Dwight Vidale’s Young Men of Color Symposium to the Midwest. Ruth has taught Prep for Prep students while at Little Red School House and Elisabeth Irwin High School (LREI), where she first served as an English teacher and later returned as High School Principal to oversee

the expansion of the campus and student body.

Ruth earned her BA in English Literature from Connecticut College and her MA in English and American Literature from Brown University. She founded the Administrators of Color in Independent Schools Conference and also serves on the board of The Dovetail Project, a nonprofit that helps young African-American and Hispanic men with fatherhood.

Keynote Speakers



Mary Spio

Deep Space engineer and CEEK Virtual Reality Founder and CEO Mary Spio has created technologies and content solutions for global titans such as Lucas Films, Universal Music, Miami Children's Hospital, Microsoft XBOX, Facebook, Clear Channel and Boeing. Mary is on the Board of Facebook's Oculus VR for Good and Amazon's Launchpad. A U.S. Air Force Veteran, Spio is also a scientific reviewer for the United States Department of Defense (DOD).

CEEK is a streaming service for virtual events and experiences that enables live events and content creators to generate revenue by extending their reach across multiple devices including virtual reality headsets, gaming consoles, mobile, desktop, tablet and Smart TVs. The CEEK VR App and www.ceek.com feature the biggest names in music, sports and entertainment including Lady Gaga, Dwyane Wade, Bon Jovi, Ringo Starr, Sarkodie, Demi Lovato, DL Hughley, Ziggy Marley and more.

Mary Spio executive produced the Bob Marley 75th Anniversary Celebration Virtual Reality Experience and Livestream which is currently the #1 Livestream on Facebook. Spio holds several patents in real-time streaming and virtual reality technologies. Mary Spio is an accomplished novelist (*A Song for Carmine*) and bestselling author of *It's Not Rocket Science: 7 Game-Changing Traits for Achieving Uncommon Success* (Penguin Books), in which she shares inspirational stories to spur readers to move beyond their comfort zones into creating impact and significance through technology ventures. Spio has been featured in *Fortune*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Forbes*, *Rolling Stone*, *Billboard* and named history maker by NBC News alongside Oprah and LeBron James and *Entrepreneur Magazine's* Power Women 100.

Middle School Session 1

Session: **Interracial Prejudice and Girl on Girl Hate**

Presenter: Gabrielle Cannon

Beginning with the history and origins of light-skinned privilege in America, this workshop will explore places in the media where that history remains present. We will discuss ways this messaging, sometimes subliminal and subconscious, is destructive towards the self-image of young women of color. We will then provide strategies to recognize and handle this messaging.

#BeautyStandards #MentalHealth #Colorism #RaceRelations:PastPresentFuture

Session: **Social Identity x Privilege**

Presenter: Stacey Huynh

Your identities impact your everyday experience. This workshop provides an opportunity to reflect on your identities: the ones you identify with socially, how these identities become more visible at different times, how these identities influence how you perceive yourself, and how these identities may affect the way others treat you. Learn how your identities may give you power and privilege or make you a target in our society.

#Intersectionality/QueerWomenofColor #RaceRelations:PastPresentFuture

#Representation:AttendingAPredominatelyWhiteInstitution #Representation:MediaPortrayalIdentitySaliency

Session: **Town Hall**

Presenter: Ashley Thomas

Description: The youth will work through a civic engagement simulation, discussing issues in their community and then come up with real life solutions on ways to combat these issues.

#Activism #ServiceAndCommunity/CivicEngagement

Middle School Session 2

Session: **Claim your Racial Identity | From Trauma to Wholeness**

Presenter: Rosanna Suh

Take back your identity and your life. Racial identity development of nondominant groups begins by questioning blind acceptance of White cultural values including the stereotypes of nondominant groups (Jun, H. 2010). In this workshop, we'll explore 5 stages of racial identity development and the detrimental effects of racial trauma for students of color such as anxiety, depression, and isolation. Students will learn new skills to counter the traumatic effects of racism and microaggressions utilizing mindfulness and other techniques to combat negative, self-deprecating thoughts. The goal is to rediscover yourself and embrace who you were born to be.

#BeautyStandards #MentalHealth #Colorism #RaceRelations:PastPresentFuture

Session: **Who I Am vs Who I Am “Supposed” to Be**

Presenter: Lisa Pryor

Let's explore the intersectionality of our identities in all facets of our lives.

#MentalHealth #Activism #Intersectionality/QueerWomenofColor #Education/Careers #Adultification #RacismAndCovid-19

Session: **You Reap What You Sow: Blooming into your Best Self**

Presenters: Lisa Alvarado & Jorian Seay

From a young age we are groomed to set goals and aim for success as it pertains to our education and future career. But, no one provides us with a map. How do we move beyond pasting our goals on a vision board and actually step into our power to take control of our lives? After all, luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity.

#Education/Careers

High School Session 1

Session: Ain't Nothin' Wrong with Anger: How Understanding Our Emotions Can Help Us Care for Ourselves and Others

Presenter: Jessica Harding

Description: In this session, we will examine basic tenets of emotional literacy so that you can be more in-tune with your emotions and the emotions of others around them. This can help you to respond to injustice and microaggressions in a way that prioritizes individual and collective well-being.

#MentalHealth #Activism #Representation:AttendingAPredominatelyWhiteInstitution

Session: Claim your Racial Identity | From Trauma to Wholeness

Presenter: Rosanna Suh

Take back your identity and your life. Racial identity development of nondominant groups begins by questioning blind acceptance of White cultural values including the stereotypes of nondominant groups (Jun, H. 2010). In this workshop, we'll explore 5 stages of racial identity development and the detrimental effects of racial trauma for students of color such as anxiety, depression, and isolation. Students will learn new skills to counter the traumatic effects of racism and microaggressions utilizing mindfulness and other techniques to combat negative, self-deprecating thoughts. The goal is to rediscover yourself and embrace who you were born to be.

#BeautyStandards #MentalHealth #Colorism #RaceRelations:PastPresentFuture

Session: Combating Anti-Blackness and Colorism: Finding and Using Your Voice for Change

Presenters: Lily Medina & Ashley Vazquez

Description: Students will discuss the impacts of colorism and anti-Blackness within communities of color by understanding their own identity development and how it shapes their every day lives. At the end of this workshop, students will begin to craft the skills needed to address colorism and resist internalized bias.

#Colorism #Representation:AttendingAPredominatelyWhiteInstitution #Representation:MediaPortrayal

Session: Human Trafficking Prevention

Presenters: Stephanie Daniels Wilson & Brenda Myers-Powell

Description: We will discuss several useful methods to prevent human trafficking. We will also discuss some of the challenges that we face dealing with this population, ways to identify predators, and how to avoid human trafficking situations.

#HumanTraffickingPrevention #ViolenceAgainstWomen&Girls

Session: Paving the Path for Future Women in Engineering and Entrepreneurship

Presenter: Kimberly D. Moore

Description: When Kimberly Moore was studying for her Bachelor's in Electrical Engineering at Northern Illinois University, she never really noticed that she was the only one who looked and talked like her because there was such an international presence among her peers. But in her first job out of college at a nuclear power plant, it was impossible not to notice that she was the only one who looked like her. Having that experience led Kimberly to establish Calculated Genius, a nonprofit in Chicago dedicated to increasing awareness in engineering and other STEM fields for underrepresented youth. In this workshop, Kimberly will share her own experiences as a woman of color in an industry where women and minorities only make up about 25% of the workforce. She will discuss her mission to pave the way in engineering and entrepreneurship for the next generation in the hopes they won't ever have to experience the representation struggles she has dealt with. Kimberly will also share some positive moments that have left her feeling hopeful for the future.

#Education #Careers

Session: Who I Am vs Who I Am "Supposed" to Be

Presenter: Lisa Pryor

Let's explore the intersectionality of our identities in all facets of our lives.

#MentalHealth #Activism #Intersectionality/QueerWomenofColor #Education/Careers #Adultification #RacismAndCovid-19

High School Session 2

Session: Adolescent Health

Presenters: Melissa Gilliam, MD & Ailea Stites

Description: This workshop will address issues of adolescent health with a particular focus on COVID and racial-health disparities. Ci3 is a center at the University of Chicago that uses design with young people to develop interventions. We will talk about our projects with young people during the pandemic showing examples of how young people are engaging around health and racism.

#Racism #Covid-19

Session: Developing Your Brand

Presenter: Karla Davis

Description: In both our look-at-me cultural shift and evolving job market, it's both helpful and necessary to stand out when applying for a job, for college or starting your own thing. But what does it look like to do that successfully - in a way that is both authentic, insightful and compelling to your targeted audience? This workshop will translate all the important principles of marketing into helping you market your most important product - you! You will learn about the realities of perception (especially as women of color), what it means to have a personal brand, how to build a personal brand statement, and (most importantly) how to stay true to that brand.

#BeautyStandards #Education #Careers

Session: How Diversity in American Newsrooms Impacts Our Democracy

Presenter: Tarrah Cooper Wright

Description: From the COVID-19 pandemic that has claimed more than 300,000 lives to racial tensions following the killing of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and countless others to a presidential election where a record number of Americans voted to change the course of our country, we'll analyze and discuss how diversity, and often the lack thereof, of journalists in newsrooms across the country continues to impact America's democracy and the way we live our everyday lives.

#Representation #MediaPortrayal

Session: Reflections on Leadership

Presenter: Stacey Huynh

Description: What is leadership? How do you define it? How is it typically defined? And what are the challenges with this definition? Get the opportunity to explore your views and behaviors on leadership and examine how your social identity, especially as a woman of color, may impact what leadership looks like. Gain a better understanding of yourself as a leader.

#Intersectionality/QueerWomenOfColor #Education #Careers #Representation:MediaPortrayal #WOCLeadership

Session: Town Hall

Presenter: Ashley Thomas

Description: In this session, you will work through a civic engagement simulation, discuss issues in your community and then come up with real life solutions on ways to combat these issues.

#Activism #ServiceAndCommunity/CivicEngagement

Session: We Wear the Mask: Self-Love & Sisterhood 101

Presenter: April Greer

Description: This workshop will focus on the importance of self-love & sisterhood as a source of resistance and empowerment given the mask we wear and the colorism, intra-racial discrimination, sexualization, body-shaming young women of color face at Predominately White Institutions.

#BeautyStandards #Colorism #RaceRelations:PastPresent&Future #Representation:AttendingAPredominatelyWhiteInstitution #Representation:MediaPortrayal

Presenters

Lisa Alvarado | she/her

Lisa is a DEI practitioner and educator who loves guiding people through tough conversations to show up and excel as their most authentic selves. Her graduate studies on race, ethnicity and gender inform her depth of knowledge in the DEI space and how the “hot topics” of today have historical roots in the past. As the Director of Facilitation at Holistic, Lisa leads executives and their organizations in training on everything from Unconscious Bias to the Experiences of Women in the Workplace.

Gabrielle Cannon | she/hers

Gabrielle Cannon is an Afro-Latina junior in high school, studying theater, at the Chicago Academy for the Arts. She started her activist work in the summer of 2019 with an organization called A Long Walk Home, a group meant to empower young women of color to use their art to fight violence against women and girls. She continues this work with a Long Walk Home, and has also joined recent protests and works to educate her peers. At school Gabrielle is a member of the BSU (Black Student Union) and a board member of the LSU (Latinx Student Union) - just a couple of the places where she fights for change in her own school. Gabrielle hopes to study abroad in technical theater and psychology, with a dream of achieving her PHD.

Tarrah Cooper Wright |

Tarrah Cooper Wright is a communications and media relations strategist. She works with clients to harness the potential of social and digital media for business. Prior to joining Mercury, Tarrah was the press secretary for Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel. Tarrah, a Chicago native, began working with Emanuel in 2010 as the deputy press secretary of his mayoral campaign, where she served as a primary spokesperson and assisted with crafting, managing and communicating his strategic vision and priorities for Chicago. As press secretary, Tarrah served as the mayor’s day-to-day spokesperson. She was also responsible for the message development of major Chicago events such as the 2012 NATO Summit, the 2015 National Football League (NFL) Draft, Chicago Gourmet Food and Wine Festival and the 2015 James Beard Awards. Prior to her time as press secretary, Tarrah worked in the Obama Administration at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in Washington, D.C., where she helped to manage the Department’s messaging, priorities and actions for numerous national incidents including the H1N1 epidemic, the December 25th and Times Square attempted bombings, the Haitian earthquake and the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill. In 2008, Tarrah worked on the Obama-Biden Presidential Campaign in the pivotal state of Florida. She recruited, trained and managed community leaders and volunteers who actively worked to mobilize the community and increase voter contact. Tarrah began her career as a general assignment reporter at KOMU-NBC 8 in Columbia, Missouri. She is committed to a number of community organizations including Breakthrough Urban Ministries and the Primo Center for Women and Children where she serves on the board. Tarrah graduated cum laude from the University of Missouri-Columbia with a degree in journalism.

Stephanie Daniels Wilson | she/her/hers

Stephanie Daniels Wilson is the founder and CEO of the Dreamcatcher Foundation. he has a series of short clips and a documentary on YouTube.

Presenters

Karla Davis | she/her

Karla Davis is a high performing leader whose innovative spirit, influence and partnership is helping to change the face of beauty. Karla leads the Integrated Marketing Communications and Media Team for Ulta Beauty, and in her 5 years tenure, she has built the Integrated Marketing Communications function for the company, overseeing Category Marketing, Equity Communications, Media Strategy, Brand Partnership Development, Grand Openings and Local Marketing. Karla's passion for the diverse and inclusive beauty space has led her to continually advocate for research development, cross functional initiatives, and communications strategies that ensure all beauty lovers can feel seen, heard and valued at Ulta Beauty. Her efforts helped determine a new value for the organization Champion Diversity. More recently, Karla was named to Essence Magazine's Pretty Powerful List of Influential Black Beauty Executives and became an inaugural member of 25 Black Women in Beauty. From a broader industry perspective, she has been featured in Adweek's Innovators Series for Inventive Marketing, on the mainstage for the ANA's Multicultural Summit, and in AdAge's Retail Summit. In response to her career-long impact on the marketing industry, Karla will be inducted into the prestigious American Advertising Federation's Hall of Achievement, as part of the Class of 2020. Prior to Ulta Beauty, Karla has held various roles in marketing at Fortune 100 companies, such as PepsiCo, Johnson & Johnson and Kraft Foods.

Melissa Gilliam | she/her

Melissa Gilliam MD, MPH is a doctor, researcher, and the founder and director of Ci3, an interdisciplinary research center at the University of Chicago using games, narrative, and design to promote adolescent sexual and reproductive health. She is also Vice Provost at the University of Chicago.

April Greer | she/her/hers

April Greer is a mother of four -two teens and two young adults who all attended predominantly white institutions for elementary school and high school. A freshman/sophomore Dean of Students at DePaul College Prep and an educator for 29 years, she is passionate about student voice and self-advocacy. April Greer is a student of life who is learning to disrupt the inequities around her but also a student at DePaul University pursuing doctoral studies in educational leadership.

Jessica Harding | she/her/hers

Jessica Harding (she, her) is the Inaugural Director of Diversity and Intercultural Life at Culver Academies in Culver, Indiana, where she also co-chairs the Cultural Competency and Equity Committee and taught Chinese for five years. She co-founded Black Lives Matter in Culver: Focus on Education, an organization to bring awareness of systemic racism and anti-blackness to the rural community of Culver, Indiana. Jessica's major interests include intercultural communication and enhancing individual and community well-being by promoting emotional literacy.

Presenters

Stacey Huynh | she/her/hers

Stacey Huynh is the Assistant Director of Admission for Outreach and Recruitment at Francis W. Parker School. She has served in numerous affinity group leadership positions, including at Parker. She received her undergraduate degree in Education and Social Policy and her Master of Science degree in Higher Education Administration and Policy, both from Northwestern University. Her Master's Thesis was entitled "Asian American Identity Development through Involvement and Information Received in Cultural Organizations." Her background also includes experience as an Admission Counselor in the Office of Undergraduate Admission at Northwestern University. Stacey is well trained and deeply committed to promoting diversity, equity and inclusion in both her personal and professional realms.

Lily Medina | she/hers/ella

Lily Medina is currently the Director of Diversity and Inclusion at Village Community School (VCS), a K-8 independent school in New York City where she implements Antiracist and anti-bias programming for faculty/staff, parents, and students. She is a graduate of the University of Illinois with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology and Spanish, recipient of a Master of Education in Counseling Psychology and secondary education from Loyola University of Chicago, and she also has a Specialist degree in Educational Leadership from Florida International University. Prior to joining VCS, she was the Director of Counseling at St. Thomas Episcopal School in Miami, Florida and has several years of international school experience as a counselor at the International School of Amsterdam and Atlanta International School. Her background in counseling directly impacts her approach to antiracist education and leadership. In addition to work in schools, Lily was the Florida Education Director for the Anti-Defamation League, specifically overseeing the implementation of the No Place for Hate Initiative in over 50 schools throughout Florida.

Kimberly D. Moore | she/her

Kimberly Moore is the President and Founder of KDM Engineering, a leading power distribution design, gas distribution, and telecommunications design professional engineering firm headquartered in Chicago, with offices on the east coast. Ms. Moore has a Bachelor's in Electrical Engineering and Master's in Sound Engineering, both from Northern Illinois University where she is currently pursuing her Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering as well. After spending several years in various engineering positions, Ms. Moore's entrepreneurial spirit drove her to pursue her ultimate dream of starting her own company in 2008.

Well-known as a fierce supporter of women and minorities in STEM, Ms. Moore has assembled a uniquely diverse team at KDM and founded Calculated Genius, a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping underrepresented youth explore and connect to engineering.

Ms. Moore sits on the NIU Alumni Association Board and the City of Chicago Affirmative Action Advisory Board. She has received numerous awards recognizing her success in building KDM Engineering into the thriving company it is today, including Crain's Chicago Business 40 Under 40, as well as Crain's Notable Women in STEM, and she was named an EY Entrepreneur of the Year Midwest 2020 winner.

Brenda Myers-Powell |

Brenda Myers-Powell is the co founder and executive director of the Dreamcatcher Foundation. She has serviced human trafficking victims for 15 years with over 30 years experience working with high-risk women. She has a series of short clips and a documentary on YouTube. Also there's a clip from Chicago's very own titled dreamcatcher Brenda Myers-Powell.

Presenters

Lisa Pryor | she/her/hers

In her role as the Dean of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at The Orchard School, Lisa Pryor's focus is centered on coaching students, faculty and staff, and families through the complexities of DEI work to create the most welcoming and inclusive environment possible for the school community. Within this charge, Lisa's favorite piece is, and has always been, connecting with students on becoming the best version of themselves that they want to be and encouraging them to create the life of their dreams.

Jorian Seay |

Jorian Seay is a writer, speaker and entrepreneur whose passion lies in helping others achieve their wildest dreams. Her work has appeared in EBONY, Essence, theGrio, the American Medical Association, Procter & Gamble, Chicago Parent and more. Currently, Jorian manages Jorian Seay LLC, under which she oversees jorianseay.com, an online destination for personal development and improvement. In addition, she delivers impactful keynote and panel speeches at schools, conferences and cultural events across the nation.

Ailea Stites |

Ailea Stites is director youth engagement at Ci3 at the University of Chicago.

Rosanna Suh | she/hers

Rosanna Suh is a school counselor at Loyola Academy and a licensed professional counselor. She received her MEd in counseling from DePaul University, M.Div from Princeton Theological Seminary, and BA in Communication from Rutgers University. Rosanna's world dramatically changed when her family moved from a diverse urban neighborhood in Brooklyn, NY to a predominantly all-white suburban neighborhood in NJ when she was 10 years old. It has taken her decades to accept her racial identity and is now committed to helping students claim their intersectional identities with pride and self-acceptance. During her free time, Rosanna enjoys taking her 12-year old shiba inu on long walks around Chicago and cooking Korean food during the pandemic.

Ashley Thomas | she/her

Ashley Thomas is newly elected board member for the Garfield Heights City School District. She happens to be the First African American elected to the Board of Education for a full term. Ashley worked in the classroom for two years as a teacher and intervention manager in the Garfield Heights City School District while advising dance line & flag line and coaching cheerleading. During this time, Ashley pursued her Masters Degree in Education at Cleveland State University where she recently graduated. In her spare time, Ashley is very involved in her community. She currently is employed by Catholic Charities where she is a wraparound case manager. Ashley really enjoys her field of work and working to better our families of today. She has been a part of numerous community initiatives to further urban education and other community needs. Ashley's leadership is rooted in the core values of faith, community, excellence, social justice and sharing knowledge. As a dedicated member of a diverse and changing community where she believes relationships between the school district and community are a priority, Ashley is dedicated to contributing a progressive voice to the Garfield Heights School Board.

Presenters

Diana Vasquez |

Growing up in the urban community of Lynn, MA, Diana believes in equal access and opportunity for all regardless of economic or educational status. A proud Afrolatinx Dominican, she carries her intersecting identities proudly and enjoys learning from other cultures and life experiences. After graduating with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration, Diana chose to serve with AmeriCorps. She knew she was not in a position to give back financially to her community being a recent college graduate, but she had the time and a desire for direct impact. Once her AmeriCorps experience came to an end, Diana was the Program Coordinator and lead facilitator at Chica Project, a nonprofit organization focused on developing young women of color personally and professionally. She brings experience working with a diverse array of populations and understands the importance of meeting people where they are at in order to make them feel heard and understood and to elevate the voices of those most overlooked.

Thanks To . . .



Magnolia Screen Printing is a social enterprise on a mission to teach and hire young people the art and business of screen printing. We're a local business rooted in Chicago Lawn neighborhood on the South Side Chicago.

We're on a mission to create quality jobs for young people, print amazing custom shirts and products for our customers and be the best screen printing shop in Chicago.

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Spikeball

Spikeball's mission is to bring people together through competition and fun. Combining that along with our corporate value of, "Be intentionally inclusive" makes us proud sponsors of the YWOC.

www.spikeball.com

Student Planning Committee

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Ines Galiano, Loyola Academy
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Lelia Griffin, Francis Parker
Olivia Hanley, Francis Parker
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Monique Robinson, Loyola Academy
Blessed Stephen, Loyola Academy
Asha Wright, Francis Parker

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Alexis Pantoja, Francis Parker
Chris Penna, Loyola Academy
Rolanda Shepard, Francis Parker
Rosanna Suh, Loyola Academy

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