

2020 reimagine conference

Speaker Bios



Sarah Buffie

Sarah Buffie MSW, LSW, founding director of Soul Bird Consulting believes that nothing has the power to heal like supportive relationships. Specializing in trauma responsive care, she helps organizations and individuals disrupt current models of thinking by building empathy and understanding around the effects of trauma. Sarah has worked in community organizing- specifically, Asset Based Community Development, for over a decade and has a deep passion for her work. Her focus is to spread awareness about how trauma affects the brain and body, and teach effective approaches for developing resilience within the people organizations strive to serve, and the people closest to the work, caregivers and direct providers.

Sarah received her Masters in Social Work from Northern Kentucky University with a focus in trauma, positive psychology, and mindfulness. With years working closely in her Cincinnati community through her Americorps service as well as abroad with her Peace Corps service in Namibia, Africa, Sarah brings a unique community building lens to the work.



Ruben Cantu

Ruben Cantu is a program manager for community trauma, mental health, and violence prevention at Prevention Institute. He has more than 20 years of nonprofit experience in public health, equity, and mental health and wellbeing. At PI, he manages the Making Connections for Mental Health and Wellbeing Among Men and Boys initiative, working with 13 sites across the U.S. implementing upstream, community prevention strategies to build resilience among men and boys of color and military servicemembers, veterans, and their families. He is the author of California's strategic plan for reducing mental health disparities and serves on several state advisory committees.



Carol Dahlen

Carol Dahlen is the Clinical Mental Health Counselor and Behavioral Consultant for the Merrillville High School. Ms. Dahlen has been an independent educator consultant for over 20 years offering a variety of trainings. Ms. Dahlen holds certifications in Clinical Trauma, Social & Emotional Learning, Restorative Practices, and The Virtues Project™ (character development). In addition, Ms. Dahlen oversees the Merrillville In-School Suspension Program and assists with the school district's diversity and inclusion educational workshops. Ms. Dahlen currently is a doctoral candidate in psychology at California Southern University



Stacey Garcelon, M.Ed. NCC

Stacey is the Founder and Director of Anam Cara - Horses Healing the Human Soul, a not-for-profit in LaPorte, Indiana providing EAGALA Model equine-assisted psychotherapy, EMDR, and other holistic treatment modalities. She has been EAGALA certified since 2016. She serves as EAGALA's Networking Coordinator for Indiana. Stacey's passion and life's work is to help people heal from emotional wounds, cultivate resiliency and promote mental wellness. She does this through providing counseling and advocating for trauma-informed practices throughout our communities.



Ashley D. Gilmore, MS, ED, MFT, LCMHCA, NCC

Ashley hails from East Chicago, Indiana. Obtaining degrees from Purdue, Indiana, and Capella Universities, Ashley is an advocate for those who need a place to be real.



Dr. Kalyani Gopal, PhD, HSPP

International keynote speaker, clinician, and researcher on child abuse, neurodevelopmental disorders, psychopathology and forensic psychology. Author of Foster Parenting: Step by Step, The Supportive Foster Parent, Child Sexual Abuse Workbook, "In my Heart" Grief therapy workbook, developer of Human Trafficking Curriculum and Training ((iACT) which was awarded international accreditation. Recognized as Top 20 Global Women of Excellence United States Congressional Medal in 2019. Awarded Outstanding Community Service by Lake Superior Court.



Ginger Engelman-Haggerty; Senior Associate

Ginger is a Senior Associate with the Economic Mobility Exchange, EMPATH's member based learning network. In her role, she engages with members of the Exchange and provides feedback and training to support their holistic coaching programming. In addition, she supports member engagement opportunities including monthly webinars, issue based subgroups, and other member events as needed. Ginger received her Master in Public Policy from the Heller School at Brandeis University and prior to working at EMPATH she worked for The Midas Collaborative, where she focused on asset building programming and consumer protection policy.



Ronnie Matthew Harris

Based in Chicago, Ronnie is an experience speaker, counselor, and social entrepreneur. He has an uncanny knack for connecting people, places and things. As an experienced urban mission strategist, he's devoted his life to seeing people flourish within the context of global cities, advocating for equitable access to a quality life. He's the founding member of Sacred Roots, a community learning and development enterprise seeking to provide progressive alternatives of hope for those marginalized by historic, socio-economic barriers by creating innovative paths toward sustainable, equitable development through strategic partnerships.



Natalie Kirk

Natalie Kirk is an HR professional working at the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities. She seeks to expand the understanding and acceptance of people with Adverse Childhood Experiences, or ACEs, in all areas of adult life.

By helping adults with ACEs learn new strategies for success she hopes to help break the cycle of ACEs that plagues our communities.



Joanne Klevens, MD, PhD

Joanne Klevens, has worked in public health for almost 40 years, in violence prevention for 30 years, and with the CDC for almost 20 years. At the CDC, she conducted or collaborated in research on the effectiveness of interventions to prevent child maltreatment, partner violence, and youth violence. Before joining the CDC, Dr. Klevens worked as a researcher and consultant in violence prevention with the cities of Bogotá and Medellín in Colombia, South America. Her research in Colombia focused on the etiology and prevention of child maltreatment and youth violence.



Leah Kyaio

Educator and Trainer, Leah has been sharing for 20+ years, empowering learners to own their learning, grow their dreams, and achieve beyond what anyone thinks is possible, including themselves. She shares what she's learned from her own experience in trauma, poverty, and as a classroom teacher. Her work takes the form of tools and strategies that are culturally relevant and immediately applicable. She offers wisdom, engages with curiosity, and learns alongside children and adults. After all, we are all simultaneously teachers and learners. Her work develops and nurtures resilience and agency in teachers and their students.



Mark Price

Mark Price has spent 10 years in Wall Street and works as a financial advisor at Edward Jones in Hobart, Indiana. He is the Executive Director of Illiana Search and Rescue organization. Mark is on the SAFECHR Board and its treasurer.



Anna Schoon, MA, CCAP, NCRT

Anna Schoon holds a Masters Degree in Social Justice from Loyola University Chicago. She is a Certified Community Action Professional and a Certified Trainer in Results Oriented Management and Accountability through the National Peer to Peer Training Network. She was awarded a fellowship with Common Good and was a semi-finalist for the 2020 cohort of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Culture of Health Leaders program. Anna helped lead the effort to establish the reimagine conference, addressing the intersection of trauma/adverse childhood experiences and community development in Northwest Indiana.



Leslee Scott, BS, MSW '21

Leslee is a higher education professional working in career counseling and development. She is pursuing a Master of Social Work degree at Indiana University, and is currently in her final practicum with the Institute for Community and Family Resilience in Gary. Leslee's concentration area is Mental Health and Addictions in Clinical Social Work. She is passionate about working with youth and the community. Leslee is particularly focused on ACEs, the brain science behind trauma, resilience, and educating and creating awareness on these issues so we can better serve the populations we work with leading to improved wellbeing and stronger communities.



Robin Sizemore

Robin is a 21 year veteran of the Hammond Public schools with certifications in Yoga Teaching for Adults, Youth Yoga in Urban Settings, and Applied Neuroplasticity for Educators. She also holds a Business degree from the Kelley School of Business at IU Bloomington and is the founder of the nonprofit Superhero Training and Supply, Inc., formed to help adults and children learn how to regulate their emotions to help them release the superhero inside. Check out the Superheroes on Twitter @SuperHeroTS, Facebook Superhero Training and Supply, Inc., and Instagram [superherotrainingandsupply](https://www.instagram.com/superherotrainingandsupply)



Elaine Spicer, MSW, LCSW

Elaine received her Masters Degree from IUPUI and has worked in the field of Social Work for the past 35 years. She worked as a therapist in private practice for the past 10 years after working for agencies and schools, in Tippecanoe County and NW Indiana. She has worked with foster and adoptive families for many of those years. Elaine learned about trauma and its effects on the brain and behavior, 8 or so years ago. Around the same time, she learned about the ACEs study and the work of Dr. Robert Anda and Dr. Vincint Felitti. It has profoundly affected the way that Elaine sees people, in general, and views behavior of both children and adults. Elaine believes strongly that being trauma-informed is NOT enough. We must be trauma sensitive and trauma responsive if we are to truly help children, adults, and families. Elaine recently formed the Institute for Community and Family Resilience, a non-profit with the mission to provide education, training, consultation and support to the systems (e.g. education, law enforcement, juvenile justice, courts, health, and local government) that serve adults, families and children in our community.



Pastor Charles Strietelmeier

Pastor Charles Strietelmeier recently retired from the Augustana Lutheran Church after serving as Pastor since August 2002. He is also the Acting President of Northwest Indiana Federation, a faith based group of organizations. Pastor Charles is the Spiritual Director of the SAFE Village



La Shanda Sugg, LPC

LaShanda Sugg is a Certified Trauma-Responsive and Developmental and Relational Trauma Therapist, Consultant, and the Founder and CEO of Labors of Love Counseling and Consulting, LLC in Cincinnati, Ohio. With a trauma specialty and focus on multigenerational families, La Shanda helps people improve their quality of life and relationships. By exploring the historical experiences that have left wounds and imprints, La Shanda helps people gain insight into their current functioning and Move from Coping to Healing. In addition to providing therapy for families, couples, and individuals, La Shanda also conducts engaging and dynamic trauma-specific trainings and consultation for companies, community and government agencies, schools, and faith-based organizations. Her gift for making complex concepts easy to understand and relevant to everyday life is one of many reasons La Shanda is a highly sought-after therapist and trainer. For more information about Labors of Love Counseling and Consulting's service offerings visit www.thelaborsoflove.com.



Dawn Thurmond

Dawn Thurmond is President and Chief Fun Officer for The Morning Muse, dedicated to helping individuals find happy in their lives. Professionally, she has been a non-profit leader for nearly 20 years, working with a variety of at-risk populations in the area of workforce and personal development. She has been a certified laughter coach for 10 years & has helped countless individuals and organizations reduce stress. Her work has included jail staff, residential treatment staff, non-profit teams and corporate 100 teams. Dawn is energetic, engaging and inspiring and has a unique ability to connect with audiences. Dawn was inspired to become a laughter coach in an effort to combat her own stress raising a severely disabled child (now adult).

Jim Verhoye, PhD

Jim Verhoye grew up in San Diego, CA, where he received a B.A. and M.A. in Communication Studies from San Diego State University. He went on to earn a Ph.D. in Communication Studies from the University of Minnesota. Over the last 30 years Jim has been an adjunct faculty at various colleges and universities in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area, and worked in Correctional Education administration at five state prisons. In December, 2018, Jim was hired by Avivo as the Director of the Avivo Institute of Career and Technical Education, which provides short-term trainings to clients facing multiple barriers to self-sufficiency.



Jeannette Waegemakers Schiff, PhD

Dr. Waegemakers Schiff, is a Professor, University of Calgary, Faculty of Social Work, holds a PhD and M. Phil. (Columbia University); and a MSW (University of Toronto). Her research spans clinical and organizational issues, primarily focused on trauma, mental health and addictions, homelessness; program evaluation; curriculum development in working with homeless people and interprofessional practice in mental health and addictions. Her current research focuses on understanding the psychosocial stressors and needs of frontline workers and the impact of traumatic stress on staff working in homeless services. Her current book focuses on Working With Homeless and Vulnerable People (Lyceum/Oxford University Press).