



2022 Fellows Biographies

The Accomplices



Manuel Acevedo is the Founder & CEO of HelpfulVillage.com, a UC-Berkeley company that helps Older Adults as they age in their own homes with a little help from their neighbors. Helpful Village is helping tens of thousands of Older Adults in 25 States and more Villages emerge across the country every month. In 2020, amid the COVID pandemic, Aging 2.0 recognized Helpful Village as a worldwide top-10 innovator against Social Isolation. Mr. Acevedo is dedicated to providing Villages around the world with the best tools for them to grow and impact their local communities in a remarkable way.

Mr. Acevedo has a master's degree in Communication Systems (Computer Science) from EPFL Lausanne, Switzerland. The QS World University Rankings ranks EPFL 14th in the world across all fields in their 2020/2021 ranking, whilst Times Higher Education World University Rankings ranks EPFL as the world's 19th best school for Engineering and Technology in 2020.

Mr. Acevedo began the HelpfulVillage.com platform to help Villages become efficient and cost-effective enabling them to support organizations that help Older Adults Age-in-Community (in their homes). The company, in 2016, was recognized as one of the most promising startups of the University of California. The company integrated the UC-Berkeley Launch Startup Accelerator that year.

In 2021, Manuel launched a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, named Healthy Aging Villages for All (www.villagesforall.org), which focuses on bringing the benefits of the Village Movement to diverse neighborhoods. Health Aging Villages for All's philosophy is, regardless of ethnic group or socio-economic condition all older adults should be able to age with dignity and have the ability to be socially active and healthy.

In 2022, Manuel received an American Society on Aging Rise Fellowship as a recognition for his contributions to the field of Aging and the promotion of Diversity and Inclusion.

Priority Area of Interest: Social Impact & Innovation

Monique Barber, MPH, MBA, has a passion for empowering others to focus on their individual health and wellness. She began her career in public health with a focus on improving individuals' health status, improving the delivery and provision of health services to vulnerable populations, and health policy.



She pursued a Master of Public Health (MPH) with a concentration in health services organization at The University of Texas Health Science Center – Houston, School of Public Health. During her time at the University of Texas, she focused her future work in the field on the collaborative relationships between stakeholders in the academic, governmental, and private sectors. Additionally, she has a Master of Business Administration from Texas Woman's University.

As a career public health professional, she focuses her work on building organizational capacity and development of teams to deliver critical services and programs to vulnerable and underserved populations. As a leader, she has held various roles in the field of aging services, including managing and leading programs that focus on the nutritional needs of the older adult population, socialization, and access to basic needs. She is an inaugural Fellow of American Society on Aging's ASA RISE.

Priority Area of Interest: Social Impact & Innovation



Liang-Lin Chao is a Georgia State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Service Coordinator/ Social Services Program Consultant. Long-Term Care Ombudsmen are advocates for residents who live in skilled nursing facilities, personal care homes also known as board and care homes, assisted living communities, community living arrangements, and intermediate care facilities for Individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Prior to taking on the role with ombudsman program, she was Case Management Coordinator with Iowa Area Agency on Aging and Aging Program Specialist with the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston to compile research, data, best practices, and potential policy solutions to challenges facing older people and persons with disabilities. Ms. Chao spent over ten years with the

Iowa Area Agency on Aging advocating on behalf of older adults and people with disabilities with agency director and state/regional/local legislative government in Iowa.

She has served on various committees' and boards including with the Houston Gerontological Society, Georgia Gerontology Society, Statewide Georgia's Aging & Disability Resource Connection Advisory Council, Atlanta Regional Commission Advisory Committee on Aging, United States Ombudsman Association Planning Committee, Georgia Association for Volunteer Administration Board, American Society on Aging (ASA) Network on Environments, Services and Technologies (NEST) and American Society on Aging's Network of Multicultural Aging (NOMA) Council. Also, she was a speaker in 2016 at The Third International Conference of Long-Term Care Director and Administrators.

Ms. Chao holds a Bachelor of Health Science Degree and master's degree in Gerontology from Wichita State University as well as a Master of Public Health/ Master of Business Administration Dual Degree from Walden University. In addition, Lin obtained a Certified Care Manager (CMC) through the National Academy of Certified Care Managers and has completed a comprehensive course through the Society of Certified Senior Advisors (SCSA) and earned the designation of Certified Senior Advisor (CSA). In addition, she is an inaugural American Society on Aging ASA RISE Fellow.

Priority Area of Interest: Ageism and Culture

Lauren Garcia is a Health Promotion Sciences Ph.D. student in the School of Community and Global Health at Claremont Graduate University. She is also the assistant clinical trial manager and a research coordinator for the Mary S. Easton Center for Alzheimer's Disease Research at UCLA. Over the last five years, Lauren has been conducting Phase II & Phase III clinical trials and NIH research studies related to Alzheimer's disease and memory loss at UCLA.



Through her encounters with Alzheimer's disease and her professional experiences conducting Alzheimer's disease research, Ms. Garcia understands the minority aging community is a vulnerable population heavily affected by disparities. Ms. Garcia is committed to navigating the complexities contributing to the inequality and assisting in resolving the challenges by finding community-based solutions while ensuring the foundation of these solutions is culturally appropriate.

She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology with an emphasis in Biomedical Sciences from Santa Clara University and a Master of Public Health degree from the Milken Institute School of Public Health at George Washington University. She is pleased to be an inaugural Fellow of American Society on Aging's ASA RISE.

Priority Area of Interest: Health & Well-being



Lyn Hakeem is Co-CEO of a nonprofit advocacy organization known as L.A.M.P.S. (Love, Attitude, Motivation, Perseverance, Service). Presently, she is self-employed and works collaboratively with Hamilton Group, a collective of community advocates who create opportunities for youth exposed to traumatizing events to build skills in self advocacy and resilience.

Ms. Hakeem holds a Master of Social Work degree from Louisiana State University, with certification in Gerontology. She is enthusiastic about advocacy work for those disenfranchised in areas of health equity and access to resources that lend to resilience and total inclusion in upward mobility. She enjoys spending time with the elders in her community, seeking their wisdom and guidance along her life's trajectory.

Presently, Ms. Hakeem is also pursuing a Public Policy Doctorate Degree at Southern University and A & ME College with a concentration in Health Policy. Her thesis focus is on health disparities and exclusion within the elderly African American population. She enjoys listening to Smooth Jazz and Gospel music, reading poetry, and attending an occasional Poetry Slam. She is excited to be an inaugural Fellow with American Society on Aging's ASA RISE.

Priority Area of Interest: Health & Well-being

Erika Jackson has over 20 years of leadership experience. She has worked within the corporate, divisional, regional and community levels of the senior living industry. She has capably supported asset management, marketing, operations and sales functions within both faith-based, non-profit and for-profit organizations.



Ms. Jackson's background includes strategic leadership positions with both national and regional providers such as Brookdale Senior Living, Holiday Retirement, Senior Lifestyle Corporation, and Bethel New Life. She is also credentialed as a Tax Credit Specialist with the National Center for Housing Management. Additionally, she is a Certified Marketing Professional through Life Services Network (now Leading Age Illinois).

She enjoys membership with the American Society on Aging, The Gerontological Society of America, the International Federation on Ageing, and the American College of Healthcare Executives. She is also a member of Sigma Phi Omega, the International Academic Honor and Professional Society in Gerontology. She is an American Society on Aging inaugural ASA RISE Fellow.

Ms. Jackson earned her Baccalaureate of Arts Degree in Marketing Communications from Purdue University and her Master's in Business Administration with a focus in Quantitative Methods and Management Sciences as well. Her person-centered leadership philosophy drives her passion and commitment to inspire and develop the next generation of servant leaders within the ageing services industry.

Ms. Jackson has been featured as an expert in the senior living industry sharing insights and helpful information regarding community engagement, lifestyle transitions, and senior housing options on TV, radio, and in print publications. Additionally, she is a thought leader within the senior living industry and has been a featured speaker in the areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion. As part of her commitment to serving older adults she provides free consultative services as an advocate and educator through The Samaritan Solution providing a community resource to older adults and their families.

Priority Area of Interest: Equity & Justice



Ocean Le is a Senior Program Coordinator with The Diverse Elders Coalition, DEC. In his position he coordinates communications between coalition members and project stakeholders, develops reports, briefs, memorandums, and other official documents for public dissemination. In addition, he monitors, creates, and publishes content for DEC's website and social media pages. He assists with project-related research interpretation for the Caregiving project and manage internal project-related communications.

He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Marketing and a Master of Science in Human Nutrition from Columbia University Medical Center – Institute of Human Nutrition. He is a first-generation United States student of two immigrant parents. Mr. Le has experienced the linguistic and cultural challenges that many diverse older adults face both in the United States and abroad. He hopes to combine his knowledge and experience to help incite change in the field of aging in both social and clinical settings. Mr. Le plans to continue his medical education to help diverse older adults across a variety of settings.

Formally, Mr. Le was a Graduate Research Assistant with Columbia University Medical Center-Department of Pathology and Research Intern with the John A Hartford Foundation. He is an inaugural Fellow of American Society on Aging's ASA RISE.

Priority Area of Interest: Ageism & Culture

Alicia Martinez is a Disability & Aging Service Coordinator with Washington County, located in the state of Oregon. She conducts assessments for Activities of Daily Living and coordinates in-home care services for older adults. Alicia graduated from the University of Oregon (Go Ducks!) and received a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology. As a college student she marched for immigrant rights, where she found a passion for promoting, as well as advancing social and racial justice. She is always looking for personal and professional development opportunities to better center and elevate the voices of marginalized communities.



Ms. Martinez focuses on serving the community with a person-centered approach and strives to meet the unique needs of every family. She has over 10 years of home-visiting experience and is committed to public service. She has also supported the planning of conferences for Family Caregivers and cultural celebrations for county staff. Being passionate about Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, she has served several years in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, EDI, committees. Currently, she is a member of the Equity workgroup within the Health & Human Services department and serves on the EDI Training Committee at the county level. She is an inaugural Fellow of American Society on Aging's ASA RISE.

Outside of work she enjoys going for a hike, trying different coffee shops and spending time along the pacific coast.

Priority Area of Interest: Equity & Justice



Aubrey Mentis has a passion for advocating for those unable to do so for themselves, primarily our older adult population. He works for Sedwick County Department on Aging, where he serves as the Program Coordinator for The Going Home Program, a federally funded program that assists persons in long term care facilities transition back into the community. He coordinates the transition process with managed care organizations (MCOs) and Social Services Coordinators. Additionally, he assists with finding housing, along with household furnishings as needed and follows up with monthly calls to ensure needs are being met.

He believes that, on many occasions older adults are removed from the decision-making process that impacts where they live and how daily activities are orchestrated. Fortunately, professionals, like himself, will intervene and provide direction. He is proud to be in the field of Aging.

Mr. Mentis holds a master's degree in the field of gerontology from Kansas State University a Bachelor of Arts and an associate degree in the field of Occupational Therapy from Newman University. He is an inaugural Fellow of American Society on Aging's ASA RISE.

When not advocating and helping persons housed in Long Term Care Facilities return to independent housing, he enjoys gardening, running and cycling. He also collects and listens to vinyl records.

Priority Area of Interest: Health & Well-being

Samantha Sousa is a Home Care Program Assistant Manager overseeing services for older adults and disabled with Old Colony Elder Services (OCES) in Brockton, MA. Ms. Sousa started her career in 2013 with OCES as a Case Manager, conducting home visits and assessing older adults with home care services. The mission of OCES is to keep older adults living at home and to help them maintain their dignity and independence by implementing services in their homes which meet their needs.



In 2016, Ms. Sousa was promoted to Home Care Program Supervisor where she supervised a team of 5 Case Managers, held bi-weekly individual supervisions, team meetings, trainings, conducted periodic performance evaluations, monitored files, assessments, and documentation to ensure compliance within the program guidelines. In 2019, she was promoted to Home Care Program Assistant Manager overseeing the daily operations of the Home Care department, tracking specific consumer data for quality assurance purposes, writing and implementing program procedures and ensuring that they are adhered to by home care staff.

Ms. Sousa supports her department by thinking outside of the box and developing creative ways to assist elders in unique situations. She supports her staff by intervening wherever needed, giving constructive feedback, and showing appreciation on a regular basis for staff's efforts and hard work. She is part of the Cultural Competency Committee at OCES and is the point person for several other programs within the agency.

Ms. Sousa has a passion for helping people, giving back to her community, and advocating for older adults. She is a single mother of two children, holds a Bachelor of Arts in psychology from Stonehill College in Easton, MA and has well over 15 years of experience with working in the field of Social Services. She is an inaugural Fellow in American Society on Aging's ASA RISE.

Priority Area of Interest: Health & Well-being



Shaunise Spivey, MHR, SHRM-SCP, is the current chief operating officer (COO) at Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA), a local and federally funded nonprofit that employs more than 400 staff and serves more than 140,000 older adults and adults with disabilities, each year. She came to PCA in 2014 as a human resources generalist and later served as the director of human resources and vice president of human resources, diversity and inclusion.

Ms. Spivey has made incredible strides during her tenure at PCA, as she has implemented, developed and played a critical role in several cross-cultural competency initiatives within the agency. She is a life-long champion for diversity and inclusion and has, most recently, led PCA in agency-wide training sessions to increase staff cultural competency. More than 74% of all PCA employees are women. PCA's workforce is also diverse in age, spanning over five generations.

Ms. Spivey is also sharply focused on overall employee development and cultural change throughout the agency. Ms. Spivey was instrumental in creating and leading a grassroots mentoring program that pairs members of PCA's leadership with staff seeking career development and helping with the rollout of an agency-wide customer experience program to all staff through her work with PCA's Culture Change Committee.

Prior to coming to PCA, Ms. Spivey worked for the national law firm Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP from 2003 to 2013. Preceding 2003, Ms. Spivey worked primarily in the for-profit and global sectors, spanning over 20 years in various concentrations and disciplines with the Human Resource specialization and varying business competencies.

She currently holds a master's degree in human resources management and a bachelor's degree in business administration from Strayer University. In 2016, she received both her HR Management Certification from Villanova University and Senior Human Resource Professional Certification with a Senior Certified Professional designation (SHRM-SCP).

A native of Queens, NY, Ms. Spivey currently resides in New Jersey with her family. She is an inaugural Fellow of American Society on Aging's ASA RISE.

Priority Area of Interest: Equity & Justice

Earnestine Thomas is a Caregiver Specialist for the Howard County Office on Aging and Independence in Columbia, Maryland. As the specialist, she delivers a range of essential services to support family caregivers as required by the Older Americans Act National Family Caregiver Support Program. In addition to providing and facilitating individual counseling, she organizes support groups, caregiver training, and creates partnerships through strategic outreach in the community.



Ms. Thomas obtained her Bachelor of Social Work degree from Bowie State University, her Master of Social Work from the University of Maryland, Baltimore. She is currently a Doctor of Social Work candidate at Capella University, School of Public Education. Upon completing her Doctor of Social Work, DSW, in 2022, she plans to incorporate her experience as a master trainer/facilitator of evidence-based self-management workshops with that of public education to develop workshops that add knowledge to the community. Her years of social work experience includes providing services to the community through the home and community-based programs/social service programs, advocating for older adults and their informal/family caregivers, liaison/coordinator of in-home supports and services, informal counseling/psychoeducation, program development, MSW field placement instructor and mentor, mental health first aid instructor.

While earning her DSW, she is also enrolled in the National Society of Leadership and Success advanced leadership certificate program and will continue to pursue the executive leadership certification. She is an inaugural Fellow of American Society on Aging's ASA RISE.

Her passions also include addressing ageism in society, particularly among social work students, and educating the community about mental health. Moreover, she desires to invest in those who want to make a difference in the lives of others.

She enjoys spending time with family and friends, serving in her church, hiking/long walks, and watching good movies.

Priority Area of Interest: Ageism & Culture



Christopher C. Turner is the Associate State Director, Community Engagement and Outreach, for AARP Florida. Mr. Turner focuses on reaching out to the 50+ population in Northwest Florida and specifically focusing on BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and Veterans populations.

A graduate of The Florida State University in Tallahassee, Mr. Turner has a wealth of experience with legislative policy, advocacy, and volunteer management. He has worked both inside the Florida Legislature as a policy analyst, and outside as a registered lobbyist, and a grassroots volunteer manager for a national non-profit. He is an inaugural Fellow of American Society on Aging's ASA RISE.

Mr. Turner resides in Tallahassee, FL with his wife, and their two children and their cat. In his limited free time, he enjoys the theater, wine tastings, competing in endurance races such as marathons and triathlons, serving on community boards, fundraising for cancer research, coaching high school cross country, and attending dance and theater performances for his children.

Priority Area of Interest: Equity & Justice

Dr. Karon Uzzell-Baggett is a certified and licensed Occupational Therapist in Nashville, Tennessee with a passion for working with older adults, women, veterans and people of color. She is also a wife, mother, stepmother, retired United States Air Force officer and former college administrator. She began her career as a military officer after graduating from the Reserve Officer Training Corps Program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She went on to serve in various postings around the United States, Germany, Italy, Afghanistan, and Uzbekistan. She held successive leadership positions and accumulated numerous awards during her career.



After retiring in 2011, she transitioned to an academic position at Tennessee State University where she helped a diverse array of college students acquire critical career development skills and cultivated successful relationships with local, regional and

national corporations. Following a mission trip to Haiti, Dr. Uzzell-Baggett realized it was time to pursue a lifelong dream of having a healthcare career. She focused on her dream, was accepted into Belmont University and graduated with her Occupational Therapy Doctorate. She has experience in pediatrics, in-patient and outpatient rehabilitation and skilled nursing rehabilitation, along with earning several special professional and healthcare certifications.

Dr. Uzzell-Baggett started her own private practice, Specialized Occupational Therapy Services (SpOTs) Limited Liability Company, in 2020 to address health disparities, change the traditional dynamics of geriatric care and create better health outcomes for her target populations. She enjoys volunteering in various charities, traveling and spending time with her husband of 32 years, her daughter and her rescue dog. She is pleased to be an inaugural Fellow of American Society on Aging's ASA RISE.

Priority Area of Interest: Health & Well-being



Keri Vogtmann is a Director for Project Management at Blink, a user experience research and design agency. She has two decades of tri-sector experience in enterprise program execution, stakeholder management, process improvement, problem-solving, cross-functional collaboration and communication skills.

Ms. Vogtmann began to explore policy through her studies at UC San Diego where she earned a Master of Pacific International Affairs degree. While living in Singapore, she managed the first Asia Pacific deployment of a procurement solution for Hewlett-Packard Company across 13 countries. Upon her stateside return, she continued to build international relationships as the Chairperson in her city's Sister City International organization. Ms. Vogtmann enjoys navigating various cultural environments to foster mutual respect and understanding.

As a Japanese-American, with parents who were interned during World War II, she finds fulfillment by giving those in marginalized communities a voice and creating a more equitable and inclusive world. As a Veteran Affairs information technology consultant, under a Presidential executive order, she successfully led a development team to enhance the VA's electronic medical records system to provide better support to high-risk for suicide veterans.

During the last decade, Ms. Vogtmann discovered gerontechnology or "agetech." Her quest involves discovering best practices and innovation worldwide, cross-pollinate

those ideas to improve the quality of life for older adults and caregivers. She strives to bridge the digital and generational divides to enhance older adults' lives. She has been a chapter Ambassador with Aging2.0 and an Adult & Aging Commissioner for Sacramento County. She led a team to win first place in a competition by developing a diabetes education and management app in an EIT Health's program, "Innovation Solutions in Aging Populations," in Denmark. As the Digital Inclusion Program Manager, she led a user research initiative to understand the impact of technology on older adults and social isolation.

While Keri straddles both the non-profit world through her commitment to the field of aging and her director position, she aims to design better solutions that produce positive experiences for older adults and unrepresented populations through their aging journey. She is pleased to be an inaugural American Society on Aging ASA Fellow.

Priority Area of Interest: Social Impact & Innovation

Jerry Zuniga is an affordable housing professional with over 15 years of experience with national nonprofit organizations such as Rebuilding Together and Habitat for Humanity. He currently serves as the Director of Housing Preservation & Aging Services with the Fresno, California chapter of Habitat for Humanity, where his programs are designed to improve safe and healthy housing outcomes for vulnerable populations. He is a subject matter expert in Housing Rehabilitation and Aging in Place interventions and serves as an advisory council member for the Fresno-Madera Area Agency on Aging.



Mr. Zuniga is a Certified Aging in Place Specialist (CAPS) and is the co-developer of "Safe Home/Healthy Home", an elective course through National Council on Aging's (NCOA) nationwide Aging Mastery Program (AMP) that is currently being delivered to community and senior centers nationwide. He is also an inaugural Fellow of American Society on Aging's ASA RISE.

Priority Area of Interest: Social Impact & Innovation

The Co-Conspirators



Dr. Poki'i Balaz is a double board-certified family nurse practitioner who aims to serve our kupuna, those with Alzheimer's, other related dementias, caregivers, and underserved populations such as Native Hawaiians. Dr. Balaz received her Doctorate in Nursing Practice from the University of Hawai'i at Hilo and Executive Master of Business Administration from Shidler College of Business with her focus on improving financial resources and advocacy for caregivers. Her focus includes Neurology, Brain Health, La'au Lapa'au, and Native Hawaiian Health.

Currently, Dr. Balaz is the Director of Nursing and Home Operations at Lunalilo Home and a geriatric nurse practitioner at Kokua Kalihi Valley in the Memory Clinic. Her professional passion stems from her personal experience as a caregiver to her father who is in the end stages of Alzheimer's disease, honoring his request to age in place. She is active in the community as co-facilitator of the Dealing with Dementia and Savvy Caregiver program which aims to empower caregivers by providing the knowledge, skills, and outlook to have a successful journey.

Dr. Balaz holds several board appointments including the Board Chair of the Alzheimer's Association Aloha Chapter, President of Sigma Theta Tau Nursing Honor Society, Treasures and Nominating Committee Chair of Hawai'i – ANA and Hawai'i Professional Nurses Association, The Hawai'i Pacific Gerontological Society, The Caregiver Foundation. She is a member of the Rotary Club, Chamber of Commerce and the Patsy T. Mink Leadership Alliance and a supporter of Special Olympics as she also cares for her autistic nephew.

In addition to advocating for various kupuna health initiatives, Dr. Balaz continues to collaborate and provide testimony on policy and advocacy issues. Also, she is an inaugural Fellow in American Society on Aging's ASA RISE. In her leisure, Dr. Balaz enjoys traveling, outdoor activities, or enjoying the view at one of our island beaches.

Priority Area of Interest: Economic Security

Deidre Daymon is the Assistant Director for the Health, Wellness and Project Enhance with Sound Generations since June of 2009. She supports national evidence-based programs that serve older adults and those with disabilities. Ms. Daymon provides training, supervision, fidelity monitoring as well as service coordination for a variety of local and national programs.



Ms. Daymon has served on the community academic partner team for two research trials focused on behavior change and recently led a national pilot for remote delivery of A Matter of Balance fall prevention program. She has extensive community and evidence-based program experience through working at her local senior center and training leaders across the country.

She is excited to create and implement more diverse aging programming to improve health outcomes across the country. Her leadership and strategic thinking skills along with her positive energy allow her to accomplish objectives, address challenges and overcome obstacles. Having a passion to support older adults on their aging journeys through community connections and accessible services, she believes older adults have a great deal of knowledge and experience to share that can assist in moving the next generation forward. She is an American Society on Aging RISE inaugural Fellow cohort.

A native of Seattle, WA, she enjoys teaching dance fitness classes in her spare time.

Priority Area of Interest: Health & Well-being



Sarah Galvan is the Directing Attorney for Justice in Aging's Elder Rights team. She has over a decade of experience in legal services delivery and advancing elder rights initiatives for older adults. In her current role, she provides project coordination for the National Center on Law and Elder Rights (NCLER). NCLER is a federal resource center funded by the Administration for Community Living that provides training and technical assistance to over 50,000 legal assistance and aging services professionals. Sarah also directs Justice in Aging's elder rights advocacy work, with a focus on policies and

approaches that are trauma-informed, equitable, and respectful of the lived experiences of a diverse population of older adults.

Sarah is a strong believer in the role of access to legal information and the civil justice system in empowering marginalized and underserved communities. To advance this work beyond her job, she serves on the board of a legal aid organization, Center for Elder Law & Justice, and is a trained tutor in adult learning and basic literacy learning strategies. She is an inaugural Fellow of ASA RISE.

Priority Area of Interest: Equity & Justice

Shani Gilmore is currently the Executive Long-Term Care Executive Administrator at The Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA). Ms. Gilmore has over twenty years of experience in the social services field and 13 years in the aging network. She currently holds a Doctor of Podiatric Medicine degree from Temple University School of Podiatric Medicine and a bachelor's degree in biology with a minor in psychology from Rowan University.



While Ms. Gilmore did complete one year of surgical residency at the Baltimore and Washington D.C Veterans Affairs Hospital, she decided to pursue her passion for social services. After applying for a job at PCA in 2008 as a Care Manager she quickly climbed up the career ladder to Supervisor, Assistant Director and then Director, until settling into her current role.

While at PCA Ms. Gilmore has always strived to professionally grow in various aspects and mentor co-workers along the way. She is the graduate of the class of 2015 Leadership Development Institute that was sponsored by P4A. While at PCA, Ms. Gilmore sat on the Executive Board for “Leading Up” which was a group developed at PCA to encourage professional growth. She co-facilitated a mentorship program that developed out of this group and was a mentor herself.

Ms. Gilmore was a founding member of PCA Toastmasters in which she served as the Treasurer for 4 years until the pandemic hit and the chapter was deactivated. Currently Gilmore sits on The Board of Directors for PCA Care Connections and serves as the Treasurer. Additionally, she is an inaugural Fellow of American Society on Aging’s ASA RISE.

Priority Area of Interest: Health & Well-being



Ryann Hill currently manages federal policy and government relations for SCAN Health Plan, a not-for-profit Medicare Advantage plan. The plan's mission is keeping older adults healthy and independent. In her role, she oversees Medicare and Medicaid policy at the federal and state level and collaborates closely with lawmakers to craft policies that improve the health of older adults.

Ms. Hill received her bachelor's degree in Health Policy from Carnegie Mellon University. She obtained her Master's in Public Health, specializing in Health Policy, from The George

Washington University. Ryann is an active member of the Junior League of Washington, Women in Government Relations, the Society of Health Policy Young Professionals, and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated. Originally from Chicago, she currently resides in Prince George's County.

She is an inaugural Fellow of American Society on Aging's ASA RISE.

Priority Area of Interest: Health & Well-being

Jennifer M. Horn, MSW, received her BS in Psychology at the Colorado State University – Pueblo and obtained a master's degree in social work from Newman University. Jennifer is a published co-author in the Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences on grit and retention at Hispanic Serving Institutions. Much of her current research focuses on older LGBT adults living in long-term care facilities and in the community, working with LGBTQIA+ caregivers, Veterans, and Intergenerational programs.



Ms. Horn has extensive background in working with older adults living in long-term care facilities and residential group homes, as well as experience working with older adults diagnosed with terminal illness, mental health diagnoses, and individuals who identify with the LGBT community. She is an active member with the following committees: Pikes Peak Elder Abuse Coalition, Pikes Peak Commission on Aging, Colorado Center on Aging, Ethics and Behavioral Health Committee, Work Culture Committee, and underrepresented and underserved communities.

She is on the 2022 NASW standards of social work services in long-term care facilities taskforce, ASA equity and justice advisory council, and a participant in the 2022 ASA Rise Fellowship Program. She is an advocate for older adults whether they reside in the state of Colorado or elsewhere. Her commitment to the aging population is shown through her continued support and passion for the older adult community.

Priority Area of Interest: Equity & Justice



Ross Howard is a Resident Social Services Coordinator employed by The Associated Management Company, TAMC. He is the shoulders of the aging community in the low-income housing communities of Detroit. He provides outside services to assist low-income, elderly residents maintain choice when seeking housing vouchers. He provides older adults with the ability to have and retain stable housing.

In his work, Mr. Howard, aims his skills and energy towards resolving and dissolving the red tape and educational fog associated with low-income housing. The drive to perform these duties came from seeing the lack of knowledge elders in his family and community had to negotiate and traverse their rights to entitlement programs.

As a result of Mr. Howard's efforts, elders in his family and the Detroit aging community have been successful at finding services for their needs. He has educated himself to be able to direct the community to avail themselves of services such as Veterans Administration spousal support, direct respite care and hospice/palliative care services.

He is seen as a leader and patriarch of his family and parts of his community as well. Taking a leadership role has granted him the opportunity to address PTAs in schools and older adults in various community gatherings. His knowledge of housing and low-income older adult housing programs has allowed him to be successful in obtaining HUD and MSHDA grants.

Mr. Howard is a graduate of Olivet College with a bachelor's degree in sociology and a master's degree in healthcare/gerontology. He is an inaugural Fellow of American Society on Aging's ASA RISE.

Priority Area of Interest: Social Impact & Innovation

Norman Jackson, Ph.D.(c), MS, is a lecturer at San Diego State University, SDSU, School of Social Work and a program director with the UCSD Center for Criminality, Addiction Research, Training & Application. He also serves as the gerontology coordinator at SDSU to increase the visibility of students to address the increasing aging society and improve the lives of vulnerable and at-risk older populations in the public and private sectors. Mr. Jackson provides training, coordination, substance abuse development, and criminal justice educational curricula.



Previously, he worked for the Information & Education Section of the California Department of Health Services Immunization Branch as an Educational Specialist II, and as Supervising Communicable Disease Investigator for the County of San Diego, Community Epidemiology Unit. He participates with local volunteer rehabilitation efforts providing expungement relief referrals to those previously incarcerated to obtain gainful employment.

Mr. Jackson was awarded an academic fellowship from the AARP Andrus Foundation and a Master of Science degree from San Diego State University in the College of Health and Human Services. He has over twenty-five years of health promotion and education work experience in the non-profit and government sectors. Currently, he is completing his health psychology dissertation on the attitudes of preconception counseling in African American males.

He is committed to decreasing the health disparities in populations of color, historically disadvantaged people, and the aged. Mr. Jackson is passionate about being an inaugural American Society on Aging ASA Rise Fellow to expand BIPOC leadership roles in the gerontological arena.

Priority Area of Interest: Equity & Justice



Kim Johnson-Prince is an Ombudsman Services Coordinator and Trainer for the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program in Atlanta, Georgia. She oversees the long-term care ombudsman certification process for new Ombudsman representatives and provides ongoing re-certification training for current Ombudsman representatives and Senior Certified Volunteers.

Ms. Johnson-Prince is also responsible for managing all training account contracts, overseeing the billing and reimbursement processes for related statewide training expenses. She serves as the liaison with the Department of Aging Services budgeting personnel, managing the initial contracts and amendments.

She is a passionate advocate who seeks to ensure that those who are otherwise unable to advocate for themselves, have their voices heard on issues that are important to them. She strives to protect and promote their rights and to have their views and wishes genuinely considered when decisions are being made about their lives.

Having over a decade of experience in the field of aging, she has focused her advocacy skills on the elderly and disabled. She served as both a Long-Term Care Ombudsman Representative and Medicaid Case Manager in West Alabama. In addition to these roles, Kim served as Privacy Officer for the local Area Agency on Aging where she was responsible for providing privacy trainings and orientation to all employees, volunteers, medical and professional staff, contractors, alliances, business associates, and other appropriate third parties on HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act), and healthcare compliance policies and issues.

Ms. Johnson-Prince is a graduate of the Birmingham School of Law where she received a Juris Doctor degree and attended the University of Alabama obtaining a Master of Social Work Degree. Her experiences and education ignited the spark within her to fight for the rights of others, particularly those who are vulnerable or are unable to speak up for themselves. Currently she is an inaugural Fellow of ASA RISE.

Priority Area of Interest: Social Impact & Innovation

Desiree Lapahie is a data analyst with the National Indian Council on Aging, NICOA with five years of experience in the aging sector. She has earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in economics, with a minor in business management at the University of New Mexico.



She is a member of the Navajo Nation. From caregiver to data analyst, she advocates on behalf of American Indian older adults for improved comprehensive health, social services and economic wellbeing. Ms. Lapahie specializes in building partnerships with American Indian communities and organizations. She is an inaugural Fellow with American Society on Aging's ASA RISE.

Priority Area of Interest: Economic Security



Kelly G. Loeb is an Older Adult Care Manager and Medicare Counselor for Jewish Family Services of Greater Kansas City, where she provides education, resources, and support for aging with dignity and the best quality of life for older adults and their families in English and Spanish.

Ms. Loeb's master's degree in social work from the University of Kansas and her bachelor's degree in English from the University of Missouri supports her love of both sides of that state line. However, she will always call Los Angeles, California home.

Since 2011, Ms. Loeb has been a SHIP (state health insurance assistance program) counselor and educator, guiding Medicare beneficiaries impartially in choosing and using health insurance options that give them the most cost-effective, comprehensive and convenient coverage. She thrives on ensuring beneficiaries' and their communities' access to and understanding of their healthcare systems.

A member of the Board of Directors for the Alzheimer's Association – Heart of America Chapter, she also facilitates a support group (which she created in 2002, focusing on Black families in Kansas City's urban core) for caregivers of people with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.

Enthusiastic, educational, and effective describe Ms. Loeb's public speaking style. She enjoys sharing her professional expertise and personal panache with audiences of any size. One favorite speaking engagement was her message to eager Kansas Citians after she was chosen as Ms. Juneteenth KC 2021 in recognition of her community service and care. She is an inaugural Fellow of American Society on Aging's ASA RISE.

Ms. Loeb works toward a world with health equity, in which we all have affordable, comprehensive, compassionate and quality health care and Alzheimer's disease is just a memory.

Priority Area of Interest: Health & Well-being

Glenda Love is an energetic advocate for older adults, racial equity, and social justice. She is a Licensed Social Worker and has a master's degree in Social Work with a specialization in gerontology. Currently, she is the Aging & Disability Rights Specialist at AgeGuide in Northeastern IL. Ms. Love's role includes being the program staff liaison for the Adult Protective Services program, the Long-term Care Ombudsman Program, legal services, and Kane County.



Ms. Love's passion for working with and advocating for older adults stemmed from working with older adults in a long-term care facility for 6 years. She has worked as a Senior Case Manager for a state waiver program as well as a Transition Engagement Specialist for a federal demonstration program. She has experience with program management and evaluation, discharge planning, mobility management, volunteerism, workforce development, senior health insurance counseling and advocacy on issues related to housing, elder abuse and fraud.

In 2020, Ms. Love won the Illinois TRIAD Kathleen Quinn Award for her demonstration of outstanding commitment to coalition building and information sharing to promote elder abuse awareness, education, policy, and practice. She can bring organizations and disciplines together to share their knowledge, resources, and expertise to offer victims the best of all services. Glenda currently sits on the Illinois TRIAD Board, participates in four local TRIAD groups and several community providers groups, sits as co-chair of a social services provider group and is a member of an African American coalition in her service area. In 2021, Glenda completed a Certification in Non-Profit Management from the University of Illinois Chicago and is an inaugural Fellow of American Society on Aging's ASA RISE.

Priority Area of Interest: Equity & Justice



Lauren Ruiz is an experienced patient advocate, navigator, and public-health professional working to improve access to and the quality of care for people impacted by complex, chronic conditions. She received a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and a Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communications with a focus on English writing from Virginia Tech. Formerly, she worked as a Certified Application Counselor under the Affordable Care Act and certified financial counselor.

Ms. Ruiz is drawn to work that allows her to impact the lives of individuals as well as improve the health and social support systems designed to serve them. She enjoys public speaking, community engagement, and legislative advocacy.

Her accomplishments include successfully managing large teams of patient navigators, securing grant funds to create innovative programs for complex, chronic care, mentoring public health students, and building coalitions of people living with complex conditions and caregivers to engage in advocacy.

Ms. Ruiz most enjoys engaging with and learning from a diverse community of people interested in advancing care for people impacted by complex, chronic conditions. She believes collaboration, passion, and empathy for others are the most effective tools to drive positive change.

She also enjoys volunteering and volunteers with Medicare education and assistance programs, caregiver groups, political advocacy organizations, and organizations supporting environmental conservatorship in her local area. She is an inaugural Fellow of American Society on Aging's ASA RISE.

Priority Area of Interest: Ageism & Culture

Zaire Sims is a Licensed Master Social Worker. She has 5 years of experience in the social work field ranging from outpatient and inpatient mental health and service to older adults. Currently she serves as a Service Coordinator for Meals on Wheel of Southwest Ohio and Northern Kentucky.

Ms. Sims has received a number of recognitions from the Council of Aging, including the Service Excellence Award. She is dedicated to serving older adults with a goal of improving their overall quality of life. She brings a positive attitude and creative ideas to the social work field.



She graduated from the University of Cincinnati in 2020 with a master's degree in Social Work and from The Ohio State University in 2017 with a Bachelor of Sciences in Social Work. While in college, she was awarded the inaugural Young Scholar Program's Outstanding Senior Award, which is named after her, for her academic performance and commitment to service to the Young Scholars Program. In addition, she was awarded the Association for Professionals in Aging Scholarship in 2019.

She is an inaugural Fellow in the American Society on Aging's ASA RISE program. In her free time, she enjoys kayaking, camping, and traveling.

Priority Area of Interest: Health & Wellbeing



Norell Wheeler, MPH/MBHS, a Consultant with Family Caregiver Alliance, draws from her dedication to the field of Public and Behavioral Health Sciences. With 25 years of experience, she has a disciplined passion for social justice which can be seen throughout her professional career.

A dual-degree graduate student and serving for three years as Vice President of the Population Health Sciences Student Association, Ms. Wheeler positioned herself amongst various social topics she believed required more awareness. She led a group of volunteers in a Habit for Humanity project, transforming an urban community park. She was invited to assist a faith-based organization to create their first health and wellness resource directory and program. Her focus on "Food as Medicine" as a project, led her to take a seat as a coalition member and reduce "food deserts" in disadvantaged communities.

As a keynote speaker for the University of San Francisco's 2018 Black History Month Celebration, she identified gaps and presented on the mental health and emotional wellbeing of Black males. Internationally, she is a recurrent volunteer, where she works to improve women and children's health through education. In Africa, she has collaborated on women empowerment projects that provided caregiver respite for mothers and educate children.

Ms. Wheeler has a passion to bring to surface underwater topics on environmental risk factors and man-made disasters that impact the overall wellbeing of our aging adult communities and families. Most recently she supports various committees that focus on aging and adult services –county specific Healthy Brain Initiative partnerships and Senior Care commissions. As a result of her multi-disciplinary calls to justice, she has recently taken an interest in establishing rural caregiver services and adult-centered programs using a multigenerational-model approach.

She is dedicated to understanding more on “creative aging” and how artistry can bridge the gap on Ageism. She is an inaugural American Society on Aging ASA RISE Fellow.

Priority Area of Interest: Ageism & Culture

Julia Yarbough is a broadcast journalist who currently serves as communications consultant/talent coach with Magid Associates. Her passion for producing stories which showcase individuals working towards a common goal to achieve positive results has driven her career. Julia is now focusing that drive to mentor the next generation of journalists and elevate awareness to the field of aging and eldercare.



She has more than 25-years' experience in the news industry, having worked in cities and newsrooms across the country, including Los Angeles and Miami. It was Julia's role as a family caregiver to her elderly mother for almost 20 years which motivated her to shift focus, with a goal of helping others navigate the world of caregiving. Julia understands the power of communicating issues through words and visual images. Ms. Yarbough's work has been recognized with numerous awards, including two Emmy's, and several awards from the Society of Professional Journalists, a fellowship with the Gerontological Society of America, and a fellowship opportunity with the Institutes of Journalism & Natural Resources.

To achieve the goal of reaching a broader audience, Julia launched Keeping it REAL Caregiving; a website, blog, podcast and public speaking platform, to produce segments highlighting challenges faced by those caring for elders. She also produces a bi-weekly newsletter of the same name, Keeping it REAL caregiving.bulletin.com offering content direct to readers. Additionally, she is an inaugural Fellow of American Society on Aging's ASA RISE.

Julia grew up in Fairfield, California, and earned her Bachelor of Science in Economics from The University of California at Santa Barbara. She currently lives in Chico, California with her significant other, and remains a caregiver to the family's elderly cat and seven chickens.

Priority Area of Interest: Social Impact & Innovation