



National Association of Community and Restorative Justice (NACRJ) Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) Committee



Becky Gabany
Springfield, IL



Regina Armour
Chicago, IL



Sonia Calles Mesa
Skokie, IL



Chauna Perry Finch
Milwaukee, WI



Mythri Vijendran
Toronto, CA



Amanda Ruiz
Boston, MA



Tashika McBride
Bronx, NY



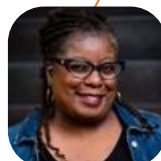
Priscilla Prutzman
Hastings on Hudson, NY



Candace Okello
Pittsburgh, PA



Tanynya Hekymara
Inglewood, CA



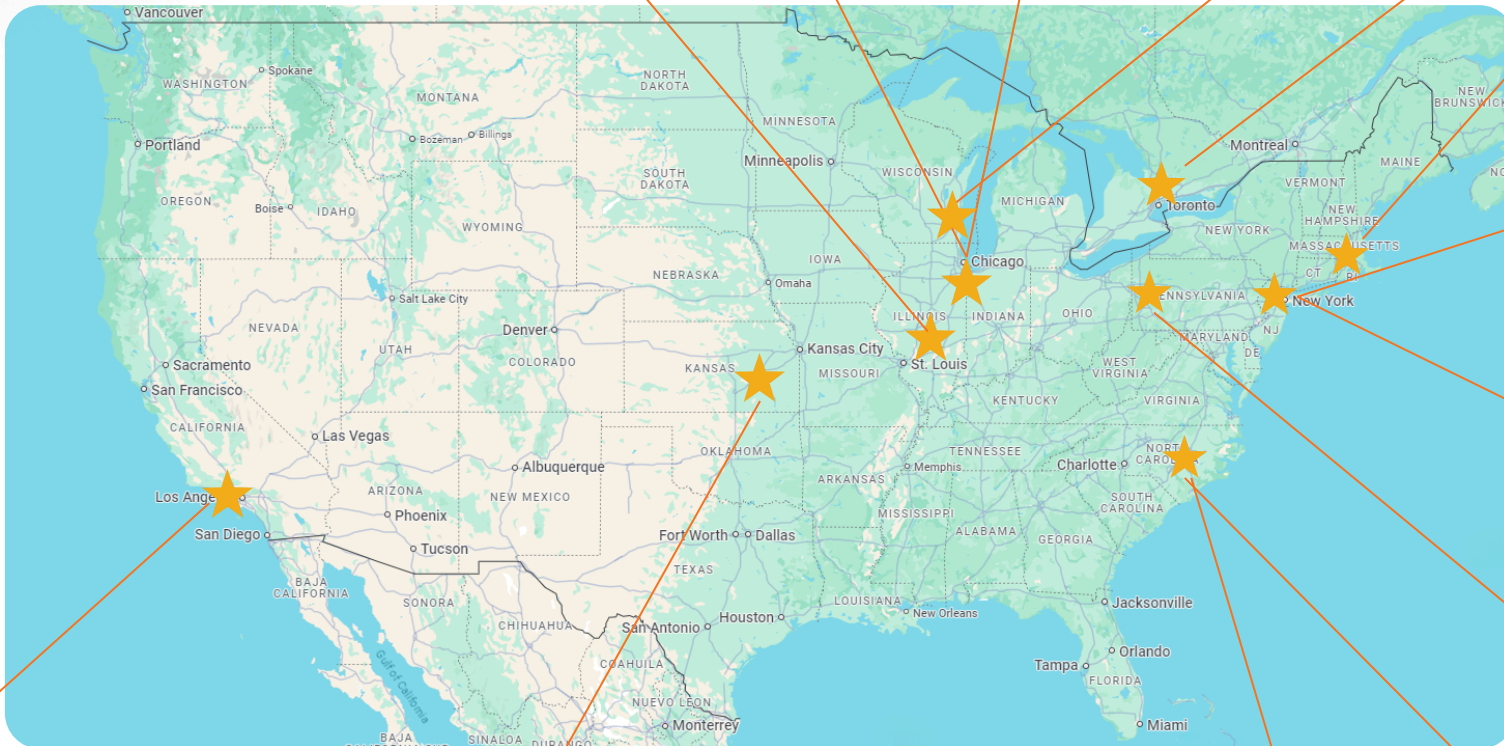
Sheryl Wilson
North Newton, KS



Poet Williams
Durham, NC



Bettie Ray Butler
Charlotte, NC





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Amanda Ruiz
Boston, MA

I serve as the Director of Operations at Communities for Restorative Justice. I am a first-generation Salvadoran-American and a lifelong resident of Lynn, MA. My life's journey shapes my passion for DEIJ initiatives, where I strive to amplify marginalized voices and nurture a culture of empathy and understanding. I believe in the transformative impact that inclusivity can have in addressing biases and dismantling systemic inequalities. Through my role and lived experience, I have witnessed firsthand how restorative practices can heal communities and empower individuals. This work addresses and prevents conflicts, laying the groundwork for more cohesive and resilient communities.



Becky Gabany
Springfield, IL

Becky Gabany has dedicated her career to advancing equity and Restorative Justice, with more than a decade of experience in community engagement promoting equitable access to resources, including for those who have been formerly incarcerated or are unhoused. She holds a certificate as a Healing Ambassador, rooted in Restorative Justice approaches, as well as being a Level 1 Trauma-Informed Practitioner. She holds both the Certified Diversity Professional and Executive designations through the Institute for Diversity Certification. Equipped with this knowledge, she established ChangeBridge Consulting, a firm focused on equitable capacity-building. Her approach integrates relationship building and continuous learning, creating positive change at the individual, community, and systemic levels.



Bettie Ray Butler
Charlotte, NC

Bettie Ray Butler, PhD is a Professor of Urban Education at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and a Restorative Consultant/Facilitator. She also serves as the Associate Editor for the Journal of African American Women and Girls in Education (JAAWGE). Her research explores the intersection of restorative approaches (spiritual lens) and education. She has published 70+ research articles, book chapters, and policy reports with her work appearing in various publication outlets including, Theory into Practice, Urban Education, Urban Review, The Journal for Multicultural Education (Emerald Literati Award recipient) and Routledge. She has authored two books Mentoring While White and Un-silencing Youth Trauma.



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Chauna Perry Finch

Milwaukee, WI

Chauna is a lifelong educator with a school social work background. Currently, Chauna is an educational consultant who supports K-12 schools and community organizations seeking to use restorative practices within their daily interactions and from an equity lens. Chauna is passionate about DEIJ work because it is foundational to the systemic change needed to co-create a socially just world.



Candace Okello

Pittsburgh, PA

Candace Okello is a higher education professional with over a decade of experience in student affairs. Currently, she serves as the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs for Civility Initiatives at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, PA. In this role, Candace leads efforts to build and strengthen community through dialogic and restorative practices. Her work has been transformative on college campuses, and she remains forever committed to creating a more just and equitable student experience.



Tashika McBride

Bronx, NY

Tashika McBride is a Professor in Middle and High School Education at Lehman College, CUNY. She coordinates the Human Rights Education and Transformative Justice advanced graduate certificate program and co-advises MHSE's undergraduate education program.

Committed to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ), Tashika's work focuses on trauma healing, human rights education, restorative justice, and youth empowerment. She incorporates art, storytelling, community building, and somatic healing practices to create equitable learning environments that address trauma and foster growth.



Mythri Vijendran

Toronto, CA

Mythri Vijendran is based in Toronto, Ontario and has over 15 years of experience in the not-for-profit sector, advancing social and public health initiatives through project management, evaluation, and equity-focused work. Passionate about DEIJ and restorative justice, she has developed strong skills in conflict resolution, mediation, facilitation, and restorative practices through anti-oppression and anti-racism principles. Her training in embodied social justice and conflict resolution integrates trauma-informed, body-centered approaches. Mythri also holds a Master of Public Health from the University of Toronto, focusing on social inequities' impact on health. Outside of work, she enjoys running, reading, and spending time with family.



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Poet Williams

Durham, NC

I am a Formerly Incarcerated/Directly Impacted Black Indigenous Man who has been a community organizer, advocate, restorative justice practitioner/facilitator, and More for the past decade. I am passionate about DEIJ work because I see it as another level of how I am able to serve the community that holds me, as well as challenging myself in a professional way that catalyzes growth in different areas. Despite the fact I've been doing community work for 10 years I always take notice of how I am often the Only and/or Youngest Black Man in spaces, and That alone is enough of a reminder as to Why my presence is important and why I accept the charge to represent for those who might go unrepresented otherwise!



Priscilla Prutzman

Hastings on Hudson, NY

Priscilla Prutzman is co-founder and Executive Director of Creative Response to Conflict. Priscilla has written many articles and books on mediation, conflict resolution, bias awareness and racial justice, bullying prevention and intervention and restorative practices. She is co-author of the Peer Mediation Standards of the Association for Conflict Resolution (ACR). She is a founding member of ACR and has received many awards including the National Peace Foundation Peacemaker Award, The Peace and Justice Studies Association Peacemaker of the Year Award, the 1st annual William Kreidler award for service to the field of Conflict Resolution and the Equity and Diversity award from ACR. She is currently working in New York City Schools developing a year long, for-credit, conflict resolution education course which includes whole school approaches to restorative practices. She has an MA from the New School for Social Research.



Regina Armour

Chicago, IL

Regina Armour is the Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion for Concept Schools, overseeing 35 campuses across seven Midwestern states. With 30+ years of experience as an educator, she began at this organization, as Director of Community Engagement & New School Development 11 years ago. Dr. Armour's research focuses on equity, belonging, restorative practices, and culture transformation. A former public school teacher of biological sciences and math, she has taught at every level from intermediate grades to doctoral students. Passionate about healing-centered practices, cultural responsiveness, and leadership development, she fosters inclusive cultures through impactful learning experiences, professional development, and data tracking. Dr. Armour believes, We need to rebuild a world where we can all thrive and flourish. Her enduring advocacy for restorative practices and justice reflects this vision.



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Sonia Calles Mesa
Skokie, IL

She/Ella pronouns. Lesbian, Latine woman in her 60s; naturalized citizen; religiously agnostic (and respectful); politically conservative, socially liberal. Hobbies include: reading, hand drumming, and engaging in great conversations. As a white-passing, non-accented immigrant to this country, I have benefited by white privilege and opportunities in ways that have been unfair ... and inevitable. DEI(J) shifts the paradigm of what is inevitable and I am honored to have a part in that conversation.



Sheryl Wilson
North Newton, KS

Sheryl has been a practitioner, trainer and educator in restorative justice for over 20 years, working with individuals, non-profits, academic institutions, and public agencies from around the world. From 2017-2022, Sheryl served as the board president of NACRJ. She is a founding team leader of the Bethel College Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation (TRHT) Campus Center, which aims to erase barriers to equal treatment and opportunity by working toward narrative change, racial healing, and relationship building on college campuses and in their surrounding communities. In July 2024, Sheryl transitioned from her role as the Executive Director at Kansas Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (KIPCOR) to become the Vice President of Culture and Belonging at Bethel College (KS/US).



Tanynya Hekymara
Inglewood, CA

Tanynya was raised in a family dedicated to access and justice. She began her career as an educator and community organizer at the University of Southern California, as an Admission Director. She focused on increasing the number of Black and Latina/o transfer students from Community Colleges. This experience revealed significant disparities in resources, counseling, and support for the students she aimed to recruit, igniting her passion for closing systemic gaps. Her work continues in Restorative Justice and fostering cultures of access and belonging. She collaborates with schools and organizations to reshape narratives and systems, facilitating Circles and professional learning experiences. Her enduring mission is to inspire change, amplify diverse voices, and encourage communities to seek connection and justice. In addition she teaches yoga in her Inglewood elementary schools.