

## Health Leadership Fellows, Class of 2024 - 2025

### **Tania Anderson**

**Chief Executive Officer – ARISE, Inc.**



Tania Anderson has been CEO of ARISE since April 2016. ARISE is an Independent Living Center serving people of all ages and with all kinds of disabilities throughout central New York.

Tania previously served on the ARISE Board of Directors for 17 years, including eight years as president. Tania is a lawyer, having spent most of her career as a law clerk for judges in the state and federal courts, including the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit.

Tania graduated from Syracuse University College of Law with her JD and Master of Professional Studies. She is the mother of a 19-year-old daughter with a disability.

### **Melissa Archer, PMHNP-BC, MSN, BSN**

**Chief Operating Officer – Buffalo Urban League**



Melissa Archer is CEO of the Buffalo Urban League, which she joined in February 2021 as a program coordinator of a Crisis Counseling Program for Erie County community members experiencing mental and emotional distress due to Covid and the Tops massacre on May 14, 2022.

Melissa is also a practicing, board-certified, licensed psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner with SENSES Medical Wellness, PLLC. She co-founded Black Women’s Wellness Village (BWWV) and is deeply committed to the health and wellness of individuals, families, and communities.

She earned a Master of Science in Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner from D’Youville University, a bachelor’s in nursing from Daemen University, and an associate’s in nursing from Trocaire College. A 2023 Black Achievers Award winner, she was recently awarded the Distinguished Trocaire Alumni Award and the NAACP Presidential Award. She is the governance chair of Sigma Theta Tau, an international honor nursing society, and a member of the Mental Health Advocates of WNY Board of Directors. Melissa is also an Open Buffalo Emerging Leader Graduate.

**Michael Austin**  
**Chief Operating Officer – Universal Primary Care**



Michael Austin, MBA., is the chief operating officer of Universal Primary Care, located in Olean, New York. His professional career over the last 15 years in health care extends from management in Home Health Care, Rural Health Care Centers, Dialysis, and Federally Qualified Health Centers.

Michael received his Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Mathematics from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, followed by his Master of Business in Healthcare Administration from American InterContinental University. When Michael is not at work, he enjoys spending time with his wife, Monica, and their children, Evelyn, Maelynn, and Eli. Michael enjoys golf and cheering on his sports teams.

**Larissa Bachman, MSW**  
**Chief Operating Officer – Pinnacle Community Services**



Larissa Bachman, MSW, is currently the chief operating officer with Pinnacle Community Services, located in Niagara Falls, New York. She received her master's degree in social work from the University at Buffalo in 2015 and has been with Pinnacle for the last nine years. Larissa began as the Domestic Violence Advocacy Coordinator, later becoming program director in 2017. In late 2021, Larissa moved into her current role of chief operating officer. These roles have given Larissa the ability to advance program reach in the community, help raise awareness, as well as work to support those within the agency and beyond.

**Ian C. Barrett, MD**  
**Executive Vice President & Chief Human Resources Officer – Kaleida Health**



Dr. Ian C. Barrett is executive vice president and chief human resources officer at Kaleida Health. He leads a human resources team that champions culture, partners with operations on evidence-based solutions, and delivers excellent service at an institution with 165 years of providing high-quality and safe health care to the people of Western New York.

With 11,000 employees and 1,600 providers, Kaleida Health is the largest health care provider, the largest private employer, a major teaching affiliate of the University at Buffalo Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, operates 1,227 acute beds and 475 subacute/long-term beds, and provides homecare.

**Andrea Blowers**  
**Population Health Specialist – Herkimer County Public Health**



As a population health specialist at Herkimer County Public Health, Andrea Blowers plays a key role in assessing and addressing the health needs of underserved rural populations. She integrates equity into strategic planning, analyzes data to identify disparities, and ensures services effectively target vulnerable populations. Collaborating with diverse organizations, Andrea advocates for public health initiatives, driving strategies to enhance overall health outcomes in Herkimer County.

With a bachelor's degree in biology from Utica College and a master's degree in public health from Southern New Hampshire University, Andrea demonstrates a commitment to continuous learning and professional growth.

## **Lisa Booz**

### **Executive Director – Ronald McDonald House Charities of WNY**



In 2024, Lisa was named executive director of the Ronald McDonald House Charities of WNY. The mission of RMHC of WNY is to create and support programs that directly improve the health and well-being of children and their families. The programs and services keep families with sick or injured children together and near the care and resources they need.

Prior to this position, Lisa Booz provided strategic vision and leadership for Camp Good Days and Special Times as the WNY regional director beginning in 2005. Additionally, she served as the organization’s COO, overseeing branch offices in Rochester and Syracuse. Founded in 1979, Camp Good Days offers year-round programs and support for children affected by cancer. Lisa’s leadership led to a significant increase in programming, participation and revenue, more than doubling each since she took the helm.

Lisa is also active in her community, holding positions on the Executive Committee of the Fifty Fabulous Women Giving Circle and contributing as a head coach for Girls on the Run. She resides in Kenmore with her husband and their two daughters.

## **Quonitra Bullock, MSN, RN, NEA-BC**

### **Director of the Transitional Care Unit for Nursing – Upstate University Hospital**



Quonitra Bullock, MSN, RN, NEA-BC is the director of the Transitional Care Unit for Nursing at Upstate Medical Center in Syracuse, New York. She is a compassionate leader with a thirst for expanding her knowledge.

In 2017, Quonitra graduated from Roberts Wesleyan College in Rochester, New York, where she received a master’s degree in administration and leadership. In 2000, she earned a bachelor’s degree in nursing science with a minor in child and family development from Syracuse University. In 2021, she gained Advanced Nurse Executive Board Certification.

Quonitra is an active member of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Inc. She enjoys giving back to the community and spending time with her husband and children.

## **Jessie Butts**

### **Program Officer of Shelter and Emergency Services - Catholic Charities of Onondaga County**



Jessie Butts began her career as a volunteer at a local homeless shelter in 2012. She has since worked in a variety of programs while enrolled full-time at SUNY Empire and simultaneously raising her daughter.

As the program officer of Shelter and Emergency Services, Jessie now oversees 13 diverse programs. Career highlights include providing leadership to a 99-bed shelter during the Covid-19 pandemic and presenting at the National Alliance to End Homelessness on the implementation of low-barrier shelters.

Jessie recently served as the chair for the Chronic Task Force and is currently a board member of a Tiny Home for Good.

## **Molly S. Carr, Ph.D.**

### **Chief Executive Officer – Jewish Family Services of Western New York**



Dr. Molly Carr has been CEO of Jewish Family Services of Western New York since 2019. She holds a doctorate in leadership and policy from Niagara University and a master's in organizational leadership with a focus on organizational behavior.

Molly's career spans a period of more than 25 years leading social service agencies in the U.S. and abroad. She has held the positions of director for the International Institute of New England in New Hampshire; executive director of the International Rescue Committee in Missoula, Montana; deputy director of Church World Service in Nairobi, Kenya; and executive director of Journey's End Refugee Services in Buffalo, New York.

**Ashley Conti**  
**Director of Programs – Healthy Community Alliance**



Ashley has been with Healthy Community Alliance for eight years working with rural communities to improve access to critical services. She holds a master's degree in public administration and nonprofit management from Buffalo State University and is a member of the inaugural class of the Institute for Nonprofit Practice WNY.

She serves as director of programs at Healthy Community Alliance, where she develops and oversees the programs and services that support children, families, older adults, and caregivers. Her passion is creating and implementing programs and services *with* people instead of *for* people, using creative problem solving and human-centered design techniques.

**Noel De La Rosa**  
**Chief Program Officer – Journey's End Refugee Services**



Noel De La Rosa is the chief program officer for Journey's End Refugee Services, an organization that enables refugees to become contributing members of Western New York.

Noel is responsible for all major client-facing program areas, including case management services, employment services, immigration and legal services, and ESOL (English-for-Speakers-of-Other-Languages) classes. He is responsible for program oversight and fidelity, accountability, and ongoing support to implementation of all major programs.

Noel has over 15 years in program management, high-leverage communication and community engagement efforts, contract management, school and program fidelity, adult professional learning, and publicly funded structures designed to address underserved populations.

## **Rahsaan DeLain**

### **Executive Director – Collaborating on Poverty Elimination WNY**



Rahsaan is the executive director of Collaborating on Poverty Elimination (COPE) WNY Inc. Collaborating on Poverty Elimination (COPE) WNY Inc., is a non-for-profit organization that is supported by the partner organizations of Community Health Center of Buffalo, Community Action Organization of WNY, and Buffalo Federation of Neighborhood Centers.

COPE's mission is to eliminate poverty through the collective impact of the three partner organizations while taking action to improve the health and well-being of communities of color and other historically marginalized populations in Erie and Niagara counties.

## **Jessica DesRosiers**

### **Senior Director of Programs and Services – Alzheimer's Association of CNY**



Jessica is the senior director of programs and services at the Alzheimer's Association of Central New York. She oversees the organization's community programming services for family caregivers, professional caregivers, and the overall community. Prior to that, she was with the YMCA of Central New York as the association director of health strategies. She brings more than 17 years of experience in the non-profit sector working with the CNY community on health disparities, access to care, and social determinants of health focusing on chronic diseases.

She has always been passionate about helping her community and being part of change in the health and wellness of the people. Her passion for health and wellness provides a space for those who have limited access to care and resources to make a difference in their quality of life. Her aspirations are to develop a network of other like-minded leaders to collaborate with on health issues that affect the youth and aging adults within the community.

Jessica lives in Syracuse, New York, with her husband and two dogs. She earned a bachelor's in biology from Hartwick College and a master's in exercise physiology from Syracuse University. She is an avid runner and triathlete who loves to compete in Ironman Triathlons. She enjoys anything that is outdoors, requires movement, and involves sunshine.

## **Aly Evans**

### **Executive Director – Foodnet Meals on Wheels**



Aly Evans, a longtime nonprofit leader, is currently the executive director of Foodnet Meals on Wheels in Tompkins County, a position she stepped into in 2021 after serving on the Foodnet board.

Aly is active in the local community and holds various roles: board member of the Rotary Club of Ithaca, chair-elect of the Tompkins Chamber, vice-chair of the Executive Exchange, member of the Women’s Fund Advisory Committee-Community Foundation of Tompkins County. She is also active with the United Way of Tompkins County.

Aly lives in Richford, New York, with her husband of 33 years. She is the mother of two adult children and a proud grandmother.

## **Amanda Gesing**

### **Executive Director – YWCA Jamestown**



As the executive director of YWCA Jamestown, Amanda Gesing works to ensure the organization is committed internally and externally to the mission. Responsible for overseeing all facets of the organization, Amanda drives the mission, fundraising, operations, and board and community engagement.

Exuding a leadership style that motivates, Amanda has led the implementation of practices that create a working environment that is inclusive for everyone. She is a proud graduate of Northern Kentucky University and proud to call Chautauqua County home. When she is not working, she enjoys snowboarding and playing pickleball with her husband, Josh, and their three sons.



## **Merlyn Hammer**

### **Senior Director of Public Health – Neighborhood Health Center of WNY**



Merlyn Hammer is the senior director of public health at Neighborhood Health Center, a community health center providing compassionate quality health care to more than 29,000 patients. In this role, she oversees the evolution of a Community Health Worker program and collaborates across the health center to address the social drivers of health through population-specific initiatives.

Merlyn brings a diverse background in science, technology, design, and public health to her service. She recently became a registered nurse to expand the impact of her operational and administrative expertise. She is a lifelong learner, committed to helping others achieve their best health.

## **Brandi Haynes**

### **Chief Programming Officer – Community Action Organization of WNY**



Brandi, an alumna of Hutchinson Central Technical High School and Alabama State University, is the chief programming officer at the Community Action Organization of WNY. Additionally, she serves as vice-chair for the Board of Trustees at Persistence Preparatory Charter School and is on the Board of Directors for the Resource Council of WNY and Prevention Council of Erie County.

Currently pursuing a degree in community and human services at Empire State University, Brandi is a content creator featured in campaigns for Dick's, Old Navy, Express, and Pepsi. She holds various certifications, including Results Oriented Measurements and Accountability Implementer, and is recognized as a Business First 40 Under 40 awardee and Leadership Buffalo alumna.

**Lindsay Herndon, LMHC**  
**Chief Executive Officer – Cazenovia Recovery Systems**



Lindsay Herndon is a licensed mental health counselor, currently serving as Caz Recovery’s CEO. She has led multifaceted, diverse, and talented teams throughout behavioral health care organizations, bringing an emphasis on trauma-informed care and creating progressive, evidence-based programs.

Since starting with Caz in 2023, Lindsay has guided the organization through a successful staffing restructuring and the completion of multiple capital projects. She is passionate about strengthening the behavioral health workforce by supporting staff in their life-saving work. Lindsay has a master’s degree in forensic psychology from The Chicago School of Professional Psychology and a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice from Virginia Commonwealth University.

**Raziya Hill**  
**Executive Director – Every Bottom Covered**



Raziya Hill is a committed community leader who established Every Bottom Covered (EBC), the first and only diaper bank that serves Western New York. Raziya personally experienced the financial difficulties of providing diapers and wipes for her child. Through her advocacy work with the National Diaper Bank Network, she has helped increase awareness and support for diaper banks across the state. She successfully lobbied for the removal of local sales tax and the inclusion of diaper banks in the New York State budget.

Raziya is the mother of a college-aged son and a graduate of Nardin Academy and Villa Maria College.

**Marianne Hoover**  
**Executive Director – Ovarian Cancer Project**



Marianne Hoover is the executive director for the Ovarian Cancer Project (OCP), whose mission is to provide education and support to women with gynecologic cancers.

An experienced health care leader, she joined OCP after seven years at Ronald McDonald House Charities of Western New York, where she introduced new programs at area hospitals as well as led the expansion of programs at the Buffalo Ronald McDonald House. She previously worked for Kaleida Health as a patient experience manager.

Marianne holds a bachelor’s degree from Villanova University. She has six children and four grandchildren. She resides in East Aurora with her husband and two golden

retrievers.

**Heather Hudson**  
**Director of Strategy – Foodbank of CNY**



Heather is the director of strategy at Food Bank of Central New York, operating out of Syracuse to serve 11 counties in central and northern New York. She supports, evaluates, and communicates advancement towards the agency’s strategic goals, and leads cross-functional teams to implement organizational initiatives.

Heather’s education as a registered dietitian and 18 years of experience at the Food Bank has cultivated her passion for collaborating with others to ensure families have access to nutritious food and are connected to vital resources to live healthfully. Heather resides in Baldwinsville with her husband and three sons.

## **Renee Hungerford**

### **Chief Executive Officer – Community Action Organization of Orleans and Genesee Counties**



Renee Hungerford is the executive director/CEO/CIO of Community Action of Orleans and Genesee. A native of Buffalo, she has been a resident of Orleans County since the early nineties and has raised three daughters in that community. She has strong ties and a deep understanding of the communities served by Community Action of Orleans and Genesee.

Prior to her current role, she was director of Clinical Informatics, Quality, and Population Health at Oak Orchard Health. She also served in various leadership and analytics roles throughout a 30-year career in banking. She serves on the Board of Directors and Executive Committee of the New York State Community Action Association (NYSCAA) and is a board member of the Finger Lakes Performing Provider System (FLPPS). She also serves as a member of the Lyndonville Lion's Club.

Renee holds a master's degree in health informatics and a bachelor's in information systems. She is committed to using data to improve health outcomes in her community and to fix our broken health care system.

## **Minnie James**

### **Chief Social Welfare Examiner – Erie County Dept. of Social Services**



Minnie James is the chief welfare examiner in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program of the Erie County Department of Social Services (ECDSS). She advocates for and supports a more equitable and inclusive work environment for all employees and is responsible for implementing and helping to develop the ECDSS Anti-Racism Taskforce.

Advancing staff engagement as a trained Solution-Focused Principles and Trauma-Informed Care Champion, she is driven to manifest its impact in all her connections. Strengthened by her own resilience, Minnie envisions a work community committed to providing services in a valued and welcoming environment.

**Ann-Marie John, PhD, MSN, BSN, RN**  
**Director of Prevention and Wellness – Community Health Center of Buffalo**



Dr. Ann-Marie John oversees prevention and wellness programs for the Community Health Center of Buffalo. She also assists with clinical leadership and day-to-day clinical operations. She helps develop clinical programs and provide services to high-risk patients. She also coordinates clinical rotations and training for students enrolled in Health Sciences programs.

Anne-Marie’s educational background includes a Doctor of Philosophy, Medical University of South Carolina, 2017; Master of Science in Nursing, University of Rochester, 1995; Bachelor of Science in Nursing, *magna cum laude*, SUNY Health Science Center at Brooklyn, 1990; and Associate of Applied Science in Nursing, *magna cum laude*, New York City Technical College, 1985. She is a member of the American

Diabetes Association; American Nurses Association; Age Friendly Health Systems; Eta Alpha Honor Society of Nursing; National League for Nursing; and Sigma Theta Tau International.

**Lisa Johnson**  
**Chief Strategy Officer – Compeer of Greater Buffalo**



Lisa Johnson currently serves as chief strategy officer for Compeer Buffalo. In this role, Lisa focuses on relationship building with responsibilities in fundraising, volunteer recruitment, and mental health education. She is also a certified Mental Health First Aid instructor and supports other mental health education training.

Lisa has a background in nonprofit management, volunteer recruitment, fundraising, training facilitation, and higher education administration. She has a bachelor’s degree in psychology from Elmira College and master’s degree in Student Affairs in Higher Education from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, which has led to a 19-year career history in both nonprofit and higher education settings.

**Rachel Johnson**  
**Program Manager – Black Health, Inc.**



Program manager of Black Health, Inc., and founder of Half Hood Half Holistic, Rachel Johnson is a licensed mental health therapist, doula, speaker, professor, wellness and leadership coach, and organizational consultant. The author of *Self-Love Workbook for Black Women* grounds her services and practices in creating accessible and culturally relevant spaces for Black individuals, couples, and families. With the slogan “come for the vibes, stay for the healing,” one of Rachel’s most notable achievements is the creation of the Come Get This Healing Therapy Fund, which covers therapy costs for priority populations.

Rachel received all her academic degrees from Syracuse University—receiving a dual bachelor’s in child and family studies as well as social work. and dual master’s degrees in both Social Work and Marriage and Family Therapy and a Certificate of Advanced Study in Trauma-Informed Practices. Rachel has dedicated her life to create space for the underserved and underrepresented and prides herself on an innovative, holistic, and nontraditional approach. When Rachel is not trying to save the world, you can find her at a roller-skating rink, by a firepit or cozied up on the couch with her favorite tea.

**Sunny Jones**  
**Program Coordinator – Syracuse Healthy Start at the Onondaga County Health Department**



Sunny Jones is a professional in the field of maternal and infant health. She is the program coordinator for Syracuse Healthy Start at the Onondaga County Health Department. Sunny spearheads initiatives aimed at improving health outcomes before, during, and after pregnancy. Her background in health education and personal experience as a mother of two drive her desire to ensure the well-being of families, and the importance of providing support and resources.

Currently pursuing her master’s in public health, Sunny is driven to expanding her knowledge and skills to better serve her community in pursuit of creating a more equitable and inclusive health care system.

## **Nekia Kemp**

### **Executive Director – Police Athletic League of Buffalo**



Nekia Kemp is a native of Buffalo, New York. After earning a bachelor's from the University at Buffalo, she went on to earn her Master of Science in Executive Leadership and Change from Daemen University. She currently serves as the executive director of the Police Athletic League of Buffalo, whose mission is to improve the immediate and future quality of life for the youth through enrichment and recreational programming in collaboration with law enforcement.

Nekia serves on the New York State Network for Youth Success and the Johnny B. Wiley Board of Directors. She is also an advisory member for Project Play Western New York and the Karen Lee Spaulding Oishei Fellowship for Leaders of Color.

Over the years, she has received numerous awards for her outstanding work supporting youth development in the City of Buffalo.

## **Karen Kinter**

### **Chief Executive Officer – Oak Orchard Health**



Karen Kinter is the CEO of Oak Orchard Health, a Federally Qualified Health Center, serving five rural counties in western New York. Over her 20-plus-year career in healthcare, she has strategically achieved growth and sustainability of programs across multiple healthcare systems.

Karen is committed to her community and serves on several local boards, including the Genesee-Orleans Ministry of Concern, Regional Healthreach, and Partners Ending Homelessness.

Karen earned her bachelor's degree in business management from Medaille College and her MBA from the Simon School of Business at the University of Rochester.

**Jackie Leaf**  
**Executive Director – Seven Valleys Health Coalition**



Jackie Leaf is the executive director of Seven Valleys Health Coalition (SVHC), the rural health network serving Cortland County. After earning a Bachelor of Science in Health Services Administration from Ithaca College, she began her tenure as executive director in 1999, guiding SVHC through its incorporation in 2001 as a private, nonprofit 501c3 corporation. She has since expanded the organization to eight full-time staff, with an annual budget of nearly \$900,000.

Jackie has considerable experience in grant writing, organizational development, program development, and coalition building. She is an active board member for both HealthConnections and Cortland County Community Services. She is also chair of the board for Catholic Charities of Cortland.

**Jill Mattson**  
**Chief Operating Officer – Gerard Place**



With a career spanning over 20 years, Jill Mattson is a strong advocate for social good, notably through her leadership at Gerard Place. Currently serving as chief operating officer, Jill spearheads initiatives in finance, administration, and program management, helping to shape the organization's vision and strategy.

A proud AmeriCorps NCCC alumna, Jill's commitment to service is unwavering. She champions vital programs such as housing, education, and job training, demonstrating her deep dedication to community well-being.

Jill holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University at Buffalo. She resides in Amherst with her husband, Jesse, and is the proud mom of Noah, Lily, and Leif, and rescue dog, Remy.



**Summer Merrick**  
**Director – Help Me Grow Onondaga**



Summer Merrick is a devoted professional in childhood development, currently serving as the director of Help Me Grow Onondaga.

With an educational background in special education and literacy, she brings a deep understanding of educational foundations to her work. As a mother of two, Summer is deeply committed to bridging gaps to access resources and ensuring families are connected to essential services. Recognizing the crucial role of parents in a child's development, she advocates for initiatives that empower and educate caregivers. Summer's personal experiences and professional drive make her an advocate for the well-being and development of young children.

**C. Michael Osborne**  
**Vice President of Strategic Growth and Portfolio Development – Catholic Health**



C. Michael Osborne is the vice president of strategic growth and portfolio management for Catholic Health. The organization provides healthcare services across the continuum and is one of the largest employers in the region with revenues of over \$1.3 billion. He has overseen numerous departments and initiatives for the system and has previous experience working for large health systems, CMS, and consulting.

Michael graduated from Hampton University and completed his graduate degree at Rochester Institute of Technology. He also received a Certificate for Managing Healthcare Delivery from Harvard University. Michael is married to Rhona and has two children, Clayton and Cameron.

## **Christine Paul**

### **Executive Director – Madison County Rural Health Council**



Christine Paul has been the executive director for Madison County Rural Health Council, Inc. since 2021.

Christine has over 30 years of experience in the health and human service field, with 15 years working in the nonprofit setting. She is a trained mental health first aid instructor for multiple curriculums through The National Council for Mental Wellbeing since 2018. She consistently demonstrates leadership, critical thinking, and the ability to develop significant relationships with community partners.

Christine serves a variety of roles, including representing Cazenovia Chamber of Commerce and Care Compass Network Regional Trauma Informed Care (RTIC) Team.

## **Sarahmona Przybyla, PhD, MPH**

### **Director of Undergraduate Public Health Programs – UB School of Public Health and Health Professions**



Sarahmona Przybyla, PhD, MPH is assistant dean, director of Undergraduate Public Health Programs at the University at Buffalo School of Public Health and Health Professions, and clinical associate professor in the Department of Community Health and Health Behavior. She is a public health interventionist with training in HIV/STI prevention, substance use, and mixed methods research. Her methodological focus is on the use of quantitative and qualitative studies to support the development, implementation, and evaluation of health behavior interventions. She serves on the Advisory Council of the Undergraduate Public Health Network at the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health.

**Daphne Ross**  
**Chief Impact Officer – Say Yes Buffalo**



Daphne Ross is the chief impact officer for Say Yes Buffalo, with oversight of the organization’s fundraising and development strategy, marketing communications, scholarship administration, and management of external partnerships.

Daphne was educated through Buffalo’s public school system, graduating from City Honors School. After high school, she earned a bachelor’s degree in communications from Canisius University and a master’s degree in integrated marketing communications from St. Bonaventure University.

Actively involved in the Buffalo Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority and the Junior League of Buffalo, she also serves on the boards of Villa Maria College and Leadership Buffalo.

**Kate Shanks-Booth**  
**Director – Tompkins County Youth Services Department**



Kate Shanks Booth is the director of the Tompkins County Youth Services Department, located in Ithaca, New York, a position she has held since 2019. She was previously the executive director for the Women’s Opportunity Centers, located in Ithaca and Syracuse, New York.

Kate holds a Master of Business Administration and an advanced certificate in nonprofit management from the State University of New York Empire State College, and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration/Economics from Missouri Western State University, St. Joseph, Missouri.

**Jose Soto**  
**Systems Transformation Manager – Ardent Solutions**



Jose Soto is the system transformation manager for Ardent Solutions, with eight years of experience building trust among community members and maintaining relationships with partner agencies. Jose is a change agent in the workplace. He possesses excellent interpersonal communication, facilitator, and teamwork skills.

Jose was born and raised in New York City before moving to western New York to pursue a bachelor's degree in clinical psychology and gerontology from Alfred University. Jose is driven by his wife and their daughter. In his free time, he roots for the Yankees, Knicks, and Jets, and enjoys video games and bonding with his daughter.

**DeWan Stroud**  
**Chief People Officer – BestSelf Behavioral Health**



DeWan Stroud is a seasoned Human Resources Leader with over a decade of experience, including six years of leadership in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). He currently serves as the chief people officer at BestSelf Behavioral Health in Western New York, where he drives the development and implementation of strategic human resource and talent management initiatives to enrich the employee experience. As a co-chair of the Racial Equity and Inclusion initiatives, DeWan is dedicated to fostering an inclusive environment that values and celebrates all.

DeWan holds a bachelor's in business administration with a specialization in human resource management from Daemen University, and he has also earned a DEI Practitioner certification from Cornell University. Furthermore, he is a certified Lean Professional and Black Belt in Lean Six Sigma.

Outside of work, DeWan cherishes spending quality time with his wife, Jalila, and their three daughters, Amia, Liana, and Brielle. Additionally, he enjoys coaching young athletes in football and basketball.

## **Brittany Tranello, MSW**

### **Executive Director – Erie Niagara Area Health Education Center**



Brittany Tranello is the executive director of Erie Niagara Area Health Education Center, in Buffalo, New York. With over 10 years of experience in human services, she champions community health equity and health care workforce development. Her leadership fosters empowerment and community strength, embodying a dedication to improving lives and fostering healthy communities.

Brittany graduated in 2016 with her master's in social work from the University at Buffalo, where she also earned her bachelor's degree in 2013. Brittany was a fellow in the inaugural Buffalo and Niagara Falls Workforce Leadership Academy, led by NYATEP and the Aspen Institute.

## **Kelly Marie Wofford**

### **Director of Health Equity – Erie County Office of Health Equity**



With a career centered in health engagement and advocacy, Kelly Marie Wofford began her role as the inaugural director of the Erie County Department of Health's Office of Health Equity in late 2021. The Office of Health Equity is a new initiative that focuses on evaluating health disparities, improving health outcomes in Erie County, and building partnerships for programs that help marginalized and diverse populations in Erie County achieve maximum health and wellness.

Previously, Kelly Marie led community relations at Erie County Medical Center as well as communications efforts and mental health advocacy for the Buffalo Center for Health Equity. Her leadership was also pivotal in the creation of the University at Buffalo's Community Health Equity Research Institute.

Kelly Marie volunteers throughout her community and serves on the board of directors of several organizations dedicated to community health. For her dedication to mental health and racial equity, Kelly was named a national 2021 LISC Rubinger Fellow. In her many leadership roles in Western New York, Kelly elevates the importance of mental health care access and reducing the stigmas related to seeking support, especially in BIPOC communities.

**Amanda Zwirecki**  
**Director of Evaluation – Endeavor Health Services**



Amanda Zwirecki, MSED, is the director of evaluation at Endeavor Health Services and is responsible for overseeing the Evaluation, Quality Improvement, and Population Health departments.

Amanda has been working with clinical and non-clinical staff to improve workflows and processes for the betterment of client care and overall population health for over 10 years. Her unique combination of experience and education positions her to promote quality training, evaluation, and its application in the workforce.

She believes that the key to quality care lies in the education and professional development of the workforce paired with accurate, consistent data to make quality decisions.

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