

Workplace Equity: Creating a Culture of Belonging

For organizations committed to opening their eyes, ears, and hearts

Series begins January 12, 2021

About our Presenters:

***Ashley Coleman** is a Program Manager on the Community Investment Team with the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. Her primary focus is driving home the Greater Together Community Funds program, which set out to build cohesiveness and unity in communities in a way that envelopes inclusivity and diversity, allow a platform for the people within communities to engage in decision-making processes who are all too often absent from the discussions and to ensure the funds invested, totaling 100K, are granted to organizations that are pillars in the community and seek to meet needs in ways that are both meaningful and impactful. Ashley is an avid lover and promoter of education, calling education her “chocolate.” Every position she’s held, has been about informing folks, facilitating conversations and providing access to resources that make the aforementioned possible. Prior to her role at HFPG, she lead anti-bias trainings and facilitated conversations around identity exploration and acceptance across CT and MA. In recent years, she has supported first-generation students in navigating secondary education processes as well as exploration of workforce trends. Ashley and her family (fiance, Joseph and sons Jayce (2) and Aiden (1) have lived in Windsor for nearly a year. They have come to love the quaint and family-oriented town and hope to reside here for many years to come. Outside of professional and academics, Ashley is an avid collector of elephants, enjoys writing and performing poetry, binge watching Golden Girls, and re-purposing furniture (HGTV is a fave!) Ashley earned a BA in Sociology and English from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, an MS in Adult Education and English from North Carolina A&T State University and is ABD in her Ed.D in Educational Leadership and Management from Drexel University.

***Christina Gray** is currently the Programs Manager at the National Conference for Community Justice. Her work making positive social change started early; she began protesting at age eight by climbing into a tree to prevent bulldozers from using her public park as building ground. At ten, she facilitated a casual campfire conversation among her bunkmates about their shared experiences of growing up without a father. She turned this early chutzpah into a 15 year long career in social justice education—still taking action and facilitating difficult conversations. She focuses on interactive workshop-based learning and helping participants develop a deeper understanding of themselves, the role they play in society, and pathways to achieve positive social change. She had been (formally) facilitating for 15 years—with a style that is affirming, direct, and grounded with a healthy dose of humor. She has facilitated workshops on racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, ableism, ageism, anti-Semitism/ Islamophobia, and gender oppression. Over the years, Christina has worked with middle school students, high school students, entry to mid-level professionals, and executives. Christina holds a BA in Sociology with a concentration in Diversity and Inequality—and is working toward a M.Ed. in Social Justice Education from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. She is a 2011 AmeriCorps alumna, Starting Bloc Social Innovation fellow. She hails from Malden, MA but currently lives in West Hartford, CT with her husband and child. She can usually be found re-reading the Harry Potter series or watching superhero shows on Netflix.

**Presenting from the National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ): <https://www.nccj.org/>*



Janine Fondon enjoys creating inclusive environments that explore communication technologies, human perception, equity, diversity and shared value. She is a professor, diversity enthusiast, workforce trainer, speaker and journalist who focuses on inclusive leadership, diversity and equity focused projects. With corporate management experiences at Digital Equipment Corporation, BankBoston, ABC-TV (New York and Washington, D.C) and CBS-TV (New York), she brings the realities of the real world into the classroom. Born and raised in New York City, Janine earned her undergraduate

degree in Sociology and Anthropology at Colgate University (with study groups in Barbados and London) and received her master's degree in Communications and Business/Media Ecology from New York University. Also, over the past 15+ years, she has directed her own social network enterprise (UnityFirst.com), managed a successful urban communications consulting group and inspired hundreds of people via diversity and inclusion workshop. Over the years, she has received numerous awards as well as has been noted in major regional and national publications including FORTUNE, ENTREPRENEUR, Forbes, Black Enterprise, BuinessWest, The Republican, Upscale, and The Boston Globe.

Leadership in Diversity, Equity Inclusion

- Worked as part of a diversity team that served the Boston medical community from major hospitals to prominent cancer care centers. Completed detailed diversity audits and annual reports as well as training and internal communications.
- Completed diversity related training programs at a range of area non-profits and companies.
- Consulting with organizations focus on multicultural communications and external communication programs.
- In 2009, she received the President's Award from Springfield Technical Community College for inspirational leadership.
- Human Relations Commission (Massachusetts) recognition for leadership by the Commission for Equal Opportunity and Human Rights.
- Massachusetts Women's Political Caucus Abigail Adams Leadership Award and others.
- 2017 Received the inaugural African American Professors Award
- Launched a successful micro-business in a non- traditional industry that changed every 3 years.
- Created a reputation for front page public relations and concepts that build business and awareness.
- Nationally, Janine Fondon has been Champion for diversity inclusion for companies and organizations. Helped over 30 companies create more effective diversity leadership covered and referenced in top national business publications such as FORBES, FORTUNE, Black Enterprise, and ENTREPRENEUR Magazine as well as XM radio and Upscale magazine.
- She received the "Spirit of the Entrepreneur" Award at Boston's John F. Kennedy Library from the prestigious Black & White Boston organization of top business leaders.
- She has received over 25 regional and national recognition awards including FraserNet's PowerNetworking National Entrepreneurial Excellence Award, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Regional Entrepreneurial Award, National Council of Negro Women's Regional Women of Conviction Award and the Madam C.J. Walker Award (New England Black Chamber), New England Black Chamber Leadership Award. She was also named one of the 25 Influential Black Women in Business by a well-respected New York-based business magazine, The Network Journal.



Lucie Lewis is an experienced business consultant specializing in supporting nonprofits organizations with a focus on the many applications of planning and assessment from organizational change to grant development. As a freelance technical and creative writer, she is passionate about writing and its value in building understanding among decision-makers. She is a storyteller and an educator at heart. She believes that writing is an incredibly powerful tool through which organizational leaders can craft important organizational insights in order to inform strategy development. She is the owner of Creative Futures, LLC providing diverse services to her clients and is the author of *I AM: Renewal From Within the Garden*. Through her background as a commercial lender, a small business financial analyst, an economic development specialist and an institutional researcher in higher education and instructor, she honed her strong analytical and research skills and

enjoys using them to explore challenging topics and forging new understanding. In every experience, she specialized in planning and assessment in one way or another. These experiences have shaped a unique perspective of the business process. Through Creative Futures, LLC, Dr. Lewis works with business leaders to capture, document and interpret critical planning and operational information in meaningful ways that allow them to improve their organizational operations. She is passionate about helping these decision-makers make better decisions about how effectively their business are operating through the use of quality information. She specializes in organizational and strategic planning, evaluation, creating case statements to support organizational advocacy and grant writing to support organizational sustainability. “Helping decision-makers to understand the relationship between performance and finances is central to my consulting role.” She holds a Masters in Human Services Administration and an Ed. D. in Educational Leadership. Dr. Lewis is an adjunct faculty at Springfield College in the Organizational Leadership Graduate Program and at BayPath University in the School of Science and Management Business Department.



Jynai McDonald is the Family Child Care Coordinator for SEIU Local 509 where she leads the department in providing representation, training, and services for approximately 2,500 Family Child Care providers throughout Massachusetts. McDonald is a life-long resident of Springfield and graduate of Bay Path University. She served on the City of Springfield’s community-police relations steering committee and MGM Springfield’s Diversity Task Force. She currently serves as Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees at Springfield Technical Community College, the Board of Directors for Valley Eye Radio, Pioneer Valley Project, is a member of the Western Mass chapter of Neighbor to Neighbor (an organization that mobilizes people in their community to confront local, state, and national crisis), Community Calendar Editor for the African-American Point of View News Magazine, and is a Business West 40

Under 40 Honoree for Class of 2019. Jynai has been a political activist for over 5 years and has over 10 years of experience working with at-risk populations.

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