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# PHILANTHROPY AND NONPROFIT LEADERSHIP

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SUMMER 2025



**Carleton**  
University

School of Public Policy  
and Administration



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### AMANDA AMESSE

Amanda's unwavering dedication to supporting those in need has been a cornerstone of her professional journey, spanning over 10 years in nonprofits and social service agencies.

As a 2018 graduate of St. Lawrence College's Behavioural Psychology program, Amanda's experiences working with individuals in underserved communities ignited her passion for social justice and grassroots initiatives that empower self-determination.

Amanda's intensive work with the registered charity True North Aid, which supports remote Indigenous communities, and her role as Outreach Manager for the organization, focuses on building relationships, capacity development,

project management, reconciliation and allyship within the charitable sector and charitable initiatives. She is also passionate about accessibility, equity and inclusion. She is an active member of the City of Kingston Municipal Accessibility Advisory and an Inclusion Coach at Kingston Employment and Youth Services.

She is excited about the MPNL program and hopes to further her knowledge and skills in nonprofit leadership and management, while also contributing to public policy and driving change, all while learning from individuals at various levels of experience within the philanthropic sector.

In her free time, she enjoys kayaking, nature, spending time with friends, her pets, and her husband, as well as reading and gaming.





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## **YASMINE BOURGOIN ROBERTS**

Yasmine currently works in the federal public service as a strategic policy analyst and has an academic background in international development and public policy. She completed her Bachelor's degree at McGill University with First Class Honours and went on to earn a Master's in Public Policy from the University of Montréal.

She gained valuable experience as a policy analyst at the Privy Council Office, within the Priorities and Planning Secretariat. In this role, she supported the Cabinet of Canada's meetings chaired by the Prime Minister and helped coordinate meetings involving senior public servants. She also contributed to briefing materials and developed a solid understanding of the federal decision-making process. This experience led her to reflect on how

institutions, both governmental and non-governmental, can contribute to meaningful social change.

During her studies, Yasmine also served as President of a comité d'éthique de la recherche, reflecting her ongoing interest in transparency and accountability. She was drawn to the MPNL program for its practical approach to leadership in the philanthropic sector. Through the program, she hopes to strengthen her skills in governance and fundraising, explore innovative approaches to philanthropy, and connect with a network of leaders committed to advancing the public good.

Yasmine B. Roberts is this year's recipient of the Donald K. Johnson Award in Philanthropy.



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## MATTHEW BRNJAS

With over fifteen years in the nonprofit world, Matthew Brnjas often leads organizations to innovate practical solutions which meet current needs, enhance operations, and better engage their community. An organizational cartographer, Matthew often works in uncharted spaces, addressing underlying issues and redeveloping them into thriving systems.

The majority of Matthew's career has been with Royal City Mission, an organization that specializes in building community among people experiencing disconnection, homelessness, or who have complex and compounded needs. As their Director of Finance and Operations, Matthew brings a people-

centred approach as he leads the organization into areas of greater sustainability, strength, and health, all the while keeping himself immersed in the community through frontline engagement and service.

Matthew was drawn to the MPNL program to build upon his working knowledge of nonprofit leadership with more robust academic underpinnings, learn alongside other leaders in the field, and participate in a program which carries an impact beyond the walls of its institution. Matthew hopes to challenge his assumptions, expand his knowledge, and gain tools and insights to aid both his local work and the sector at large.



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## BENSON CHULASEWOK

Benson began his career in sales and marketing, leading multicultural initiatives for major Canadian telecom companies. He built high-performing teams, engaged diverse audiences, and strengthened customer loyalty in a highly competitive market—laying the foundation for his purpose-driven transition into the nonprofit sector.

At North York General Hospital Foundation in Toronto, Benson served as Community Engagement Officer, where he built relationships and developed initiatives to strengthen community support for the hospital. He helped launch the Foundation's first Radiothon, which engaged thousands of donors and raised vital healthcare funds. He also led the Stellar Moments of Community benefit concert at the Meridian Arts Centre—an annual event that brings together local musical performers, artists, and donors through music and storytelling.

Benson previously served as Vice President of the Chinese Canadian Advertising, Marketing and Media Association (CCAMMA), a nonprofit dedicated to fostering innovation, supporting professional development, and strengthening cross-cultural collaboration within Canada's marketing and business communities.

Drawing on his experience as a vocal coach, Benson incorporates music as a tool for connection, expression, and inclusive engagement in his philanthropic work. He is pursuing the Master of Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership (MPNL) program to grow as a leader and contribute to a more harmonious and inclusive community through meaningful change.



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## LEONA CONRICK

Leona Conrick (she/her) brings over 15 years of experience in the nonprofit sector and a lifelong commitment to volunteerism. Her professional journey began as Manager of Volunteer Services at a Military Family Resource Centre (MFRC)—a role that aligned perfectly with her life as the spouse of a 35-year veteran of the Canadian Armed Forces. Having lived from coast to coast, Leona now calls Prince Edward Island home, where she serves as Executive Director of the PEI MFRC.

She holds a Bachelor of Business Administration from Memorial University and is a Certified Volunteer Administrator (CVA). Leona is thrilled (and admittedly a

little nervous) to be joining the Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership Master's program. She looks forward to deepening her knowledge and strengthening her leadership to better serve the military and veteran community.

Outside of work, Leona is an active search and rescue volunteer, contributing her time and skills to help keep her community safe. She also enjoys traveling, hiking, and geocaching—often managing to combine all three in one adventure. Her passion for service and love of the outdoors go hand in hand, reflecting her deep commitment to both people and place.



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## SHAUNA CRONIN-ALBERT

Shauna (she/her) is an accomplished leader with over 18 years of experience in nonprofit leadership, social impact, and health systems transformation. Shauna was the CEO of Frayme, a national knowledge to action organization that built networks across the country to redefine and mobilize evidence. Building collective momentum remains central to the work she does as a Federal and global advisor and a main driving force behind her commitment to co-designing systems of service.

Currently, Shauna works with Stepped Care Solutions to support transformative initiatives that enhance social health

systems nationally and globally. Her expertise in developing person-centered models of service, equity-based frameworks, purpose-driven evidence, and fostering collaboration across complex networks is situated within her passion for working together to improve health and well-being. She is deeply committed to enhancing systems through exceptional leadership and supports executives and organizations to lead in emotionally intelligent ways in times of complexity and transition.

Shauna is excited to continue her learning journey as part of the MPNL program and apply these learnings to real world efforts.



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### JESSICA GOUVEIA

Jessica Gouveia is a nonprofit professional with extensive experience in administrative leadership, frontline support, and community advocacy. She currently serves as the Manager of Administration at Green Haven Shelter for Women, where she oversees financial processes, HR, policy development, and government funding compliance. In addition to her leadership role, Jessica works part-time as a Youth Counsellor with Pine River Institute, supporting adolescents through therapeutic programming focused on mental health and addiction recovery.

Jessica has also made a strong impact as a consultant, helping small businesses and nonprofits strengthen capacity building and improve organizational

systems. Her background includes over 15 years in customer service, with several years dedicated to the mental health and violence against women (VAW) sectors.

Her passion lies in creating sustainable, trauma-informed systems that support equity and empowerment for marginalized communities. Jessica's work reflects a deep commitment to ethical leadership and organizational effectiveness.

She is currently pursuing her Master's in Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership to further develop her skills in governance, fundraising, and sector policy. She's most excited to strengthen her leadership and deepen her understanding of the nonprofit landscape to better support the people and causes she serves.





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## HUSSEIN HARJI

Hussein is a fundraising professional currently working as the Philanthropy Manager at Second Harvest, Canada's largest food rescue organization. He previously worked in fundraising at Food Banks Canada.

His passion for nonprofit work began when he learned about the critical role the sector plays in filling gaps that neither governments nor markets can address, both around the world and here at home.

Hussein holds a BA in Business and Society from York University and a postgraduate diploma in Nonprofit Management from Seneca College. Growing up in several developing countries gave him early insight into global inequities. Over time, it was his

deeper understanding of how Canada's nonprofit sector supports communities and creates meaningful change that led him to pursue this career.

He is especially interested in how strong, values-driven fundraising can support long-term systems change. Through the MPNL program, he looks forward to strengthening his leadership skills, exploring public policy from a nonprofit perspective, and learning alongside peers who share a commitment to social impact.

Outside of work, Hussein enjoys watching soccer and hockey, spending time with friends and family, and hopes to have a German Shepherd one day. He is excited to join the MPNL program and help build a better future.



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## OWEN HENDERSON

Owen Henderson (he/him) is a process-oriented problem solver and life-long learner. He cares deeply about mental health, inequality, and collective care.

In 2018, Owen graduated from Wilfrid Laurier University with an Honours Bachelor of Business Administration. At Laurier, Owen had the opportunity to contribute to a student-led charitable initiative. Inspired by the care and personal investments of his peers, he discovered a deep interest in supporting those who support others.

After graduating Owen started a career of servant leadership in the nonprofit sector. For the past six years he has supported

teams at King's Trust Canada and Tamarack Institute with project management, policy development, granting, and more.

Owen is particularly excited to expand his knowledge of the history, political-legal environment, ethics, and innovations that drive and govern philanthropy in Canada. He will apply the knowledge gained through the MPNL program to improve his support and advocacy for the needs of his colleagues in the charitable community.

Owen lives in Toronto's Taiaiaoko'n-Parkdale-High Park community, where he enjoys long runs, creative pursuits, and spending time with friends and family.





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## GODE KATEMBO

Gode Katembo is a visionary serial social entrepreneur, driven by a passion for empowering others and creating lasting social change. He currently serves as President and CEO of Canada African Cup of Nations Inc., an organization that unites 32 African communities across Manitoba and Ontario through sport and cultural celebration.

Gode is also the founder and board chair of Sports Without Boundaries, an initiative focused on making sports accessible and affordable for BIPOC and low-income youth. His entrepreneurial spirit extends to fashion through GK Couturier, where he combines style with purpose to inspire confidence and identity.

Academically, Gode holds a Diploma in Business Administration and a Bachelor of Science degree. His leadership and community impact have earned him several honors, including the Spirit of Entrepreneurship Award (2015) and the Mayor's 44th Volunteer Award (2022). He also serves on the Anti-Racism in Sports Youth Advisory Council, demonstrating his active role in tackling systemic discrimination in sports.

Through the PNL program, Gode aims to strengthen his expertise in nonprofit leadership and connect with fellow changemakers. Upon completing his master's degree, he plans to further amplify his efforts in racialized communities—using sport as a catalyst for inclusion, equity, and transformative governance.



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## LAUREN MACLEAN

Lauren MacLean is a librarian and archivist living in Montreal. Originally from northern Alberta, she holds a Master of Library and Information Studies and a Bachelor of Arts in History from the University of Alberta. She has more than 10 years of experience working in libraries and archives from coast to coast, from the Legislative Library of British Columbia in Victoria to the Sarah Lawrence College Archives in New York. Currently, she is happy to be settled in Montreal and working as the Director (Interim) of Library and Community Events for the City of Westmount.

Lauren is a big believer in public libraries and sees them as ideal case studies for examining how public institutions navigate funding challenges across government, nonprofit, and philanthropic sectors. Lauren is excited to learn from her new community of peers in the MPNL program and broaden her understanding of the nonprofit world in general.

Lauren is a ceramicist and potter who enjoys gardening, travelling, and spending time outdoors with her husband and corgi named Rhubarb.



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## LOBNA MAHDI

Lobna Mahdi holds an MA in Adult Education and Community Development, as well as a Bachelor's degree in Equity Studies and Psychology, both from the University of Toronto. She has extensive experience working and volunteering with nonprofit and charitable organizations across the arts, sports, research, and poverty reduction spaces. Most recently, she served as Head of Programs at National Zakat Foundation Canada, where she deepened her passion for poverty alleviation and the elimination of homelessness.

With a strong background in program delivery and team management, Lobna is now eager to broaden her expertise in the nonprofit sector. She is particularly interested in exploring areas such as fundraising, marketing, and financial management, and in learning from leaders in the nonprofit sector about community philanthropy and alternative philanthropic models practiced globally. She is excited to begin the MPNL program and connect with faculty and peers.



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## NIAMBI MARTIN-JOHN

Niambi is a social change champion, community mobilizer, advocate and fund development specialist who has dedicated her career to strengthening capacity for marginalized, and at-risk communities through revenue generation, program development and DEI work. For nearly 25 years, since completing post secondary education in the US, Niambi has held leadership roles in the health charity and social justice sectors.

She values the power of allies and incorporates the concept of partner led, needs based indicators to inform her unique insight to Development work. Utilizing her background in community development and storytelling, she amplifies the stories of community by weaving their narratives alongside

organizations' government and public relations, research, and program outcomes to create donor opportunities, deepen relationships and grow revenue.

Niambi strongly believes that we all have a responsibility to drive change, end stigma and eliminate barriers so that all people have equal access to power and personal agency. As such, she uses her access to mentor and guide emerging social sector professionals as a professor in the Non-Profit Leadership Management Post Graduate program at Seneca College and volunteers with several charities, groups and associations focused on female and youth empowerment, poverty alleviation and equity work.



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## DAKOTA MCGOVERN

Dakota McGovern is a nonprofit professional with nine years of experience. He is the Treasurer of an environmental charity and is a Community Outreach Specialist at an Indigenous Friendship Centre. Throughout his career, Dakota has focused on educational advocacy as the Director of Finance at his undergraduate students' society; diversity, equity, and inclusion as the Accessibility Curator for Pride Toronto; and environmentalism, completing his undergraduate degree in Environmental Studies and Political Science.

Dakota's accomplishments include co-founding and growing a student-led advocacy organization—the BC Student Alliance—province-wide in 2016; co-authoring a report on student housing in

Victoria, BC, reviewed by officials from multiple universities; and organizing two conferences on social change in 2017 and 2018, attended by stakeholders across Canada.

Dakota runs a blog and webinar series on community leadership strategy. The focus of Dakota's writing and research is on new frameworks for social change that activists can use to make an impact. While there are many strategy guides in the private sector, there is a lack of sector-specific content that helps activists execute their visions for social change. Through the MPNL, Dakota hopes to work alongside other professionals in the field to further develop systematic approaches to change-making.



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### JENNIFER MILLER

Jenn Miller is a professional with a storied history in the nonprofit sector. She spent two decades at World Vision Canada, working in the areas of public relations, fund development, donor retention, advocacy, and community engagement all while implementing and improving upon enterprise wide business processes, which resulted in lower operating costs and a higher impact for donor dollars.

Jenn's approach to leadership is strongly influenced by her educational background in social work. She strives to implement

those values and approaches in her current role as the Director of Custom Projects with Blue North Strategies, a team of experts with decades of experience supporting local and international nonprofits in strategic fundraising.

Jenn lives in Mississauga with her three teenage children, a variety of pets, and partner Brian who indulges her crazy ideas (from cross country RV trips to home renovations), probably a little too often.





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## ERIKA MUNOZ

Erika Muñoz (she/her) is an impact strategist, facilitator, and nonprofit consultant based on Tiohtià:ke/Montréal's South Shore. Born in Bogotá, Colombia, and raised in London, Ontario, she brings a cross-cultural lens to her work with grassroots organizations.

She began her career in international development after earning a Bachelor of Public Affairs and Policy Management from Carleton University (Highest Honours). She later shifted to local community work following a life-altering accident. Today, she helps nonprofits align their vision, mission, and values, unify their strategies, and evaluate their impact.

Erika's leadership blends structure and creativity, strategic reflection and grounded action—all rooted in anti-oppressive and participatory practices.

Her professional and academic journey, shaped by unexpected turns, health challenges, and resilience, has deepened her empathy for individuals and organizations navigating change.

After years of working in the nonprofit sector and learning more about the challenges organizations face, Erika is turning to the MPNL program to help her expand her knowledge and strengthen her consulting toolkit. She looks forward to learning alongside peers and faculty who share her commitment to equity and systems change.

Outside of work, she enjoys painting, listening to podcasts, reading historical fiction, traveling, and spending time with her husband.



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## TATENDA NYAMANDE

Tatenda Nyamande is an accomplished nonprofit leader with extensive experience in philanthropy and community development. Her journey began by supporting vulnerable children at a Zimbabwean orphanage, sparking her lifelong commitment to social justice. She holds a degree in Tourism and Hospitality Management and has since built a multifaceted career spanning fund development, donor relations, and organizational leadership.

As a Fund Development Manager, she designed successful fundraising campaigns for critical social services, while her donor relations expertise enabled her to build lasting partnerships with philanthropic supporters. Currently serving as Founder and CEO of the Immigrants & Refugees Support Network

Canada, she combines these skills to help newcomers access essential resources while developing sustainable funding strategies for her organization.

She was drawn to Carleton University's Master of Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership program for its innovative curriculum, flexible hybrid format, and strong emphasis on equity in the philanthropic sector. Through the program, she aims to refine her leadership approach, expand her professional network, and gain cutting-edge strategies for effective nonprofit management.

A dedicated mother of two, she balances her professional pursuits with family life while remaining actively engaged in her community.





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## MIKAYLA ODUT

Originally from northern Manitoba, Mikayla Odut has found a home in Ottawa's vibrant cultural scene. Originally interested in the performing arts, Odut's community-focused mindset drove her toward the charitable sector. Currently, she works as the administrative coordinator at St. Joseph's Parish - a diverse church and active social services centre. Her days are filled with donation record keeping and philanthropic planning, supporting the centre's various programs, and administrative assistance for the rest of the staff. For Mikayla, working towards change in a diverse, multi-generational environment is important, making her time at the parish extremely rewarding. She enjoys working with volunteers from many different

backgrounds, as well as working to modernize the church's operations and digital presence to ensure the parish continues to have a broad outreach and be seen as a leader, supporting the most marginalized. Mikayla completes all her work through an equity-focused lens as a queer woman struggling with chronic pain that affects her mobility.

Past educational pursuits include: ARCT in Flute Performance, the Royal Conservatory of Music; Bachelor of Music in voice, University of Ottawa; both an Esthetics and Fundraising Management certificate, Algonquin College; and Professional Certificate of Not-For-Profit Management, University of Western Ontario.



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## MANDY PUI

Though Mandy's academic and research experiences are diverse, they are grounded in her passion to translate knowledge to action and be of service to others. She earned her Bachelor's in Cell Biology and Genetics in 2008 and her Master's in Knowledge Translation in 2015 at the University of British Columbia. She's served in various roles in the charitable sector, from founding the nonprofit 'How to Do Some Good,' fundraising for hospital foundations and charities, to serving on her local Rotary club Board.

Since 2020, Mandy has stewarded a large charity endowment fund portfolio at Vancouver Foundation. She's seen firsthand funding and resources under

pressure, and systemic issues that disproportionately impact Black, Indigenous, and People-of-Colour (BIPOC)-led and other equity-deserving organizations. As a settler of colour, it is Mandy's personal and professional vision to do her part to uncover and address the root causes of these issues and be at the forefront of systems change by and for the BIPOC community.

Mandy's honoured to be in the 13th cohort of the MPNL and have the opportunity to learn and unlearn alongside like-minded and dedicated peers, with a continued curiosity in how she can most equitably serve and advocate for her community.



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## LINDY QUANN

Lindy Quann holds an Honours BSc in Biopharmaceutical Sciences with specialization in Genomics from the University of Ottawa. She began her career in the public sector, gaining valuable insight into public systems and governance, and has since pursued meaningful opportunities in international development. She has worked and volunteered in Canada, Uganda, Kenya and India in roles focused on program development, partnerships, and fundraising, including with WUSC, Youth Challenge International, FAWE Uganda, and CDF Canada.

Currently serving as a Resource Mobilization Advisor in rural Kenya, she brings a strong commitment to gender equality, education, and rural

development. Her work is grounded in a belief that local communities should lead the initiatives that impact them. She has also been active in promoting Women and Girls in STEM and non-traditional career pathways for youth, inspired by her own professional path.

Drawn to the Master of Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership program for its focus on leadership in the Canadian and global contexts, she hopes to deepen her understanding of strategic philanthropy and connect with peers and professionals in the sector. She hopes to contribute to more inclusive, equitable, and community-led development initiatives through effective resource mobilization and ethical leadership.



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## MARIE-FREDERIK RIOUX

Originally from Matane, Quebec, Marie-Frederik Rioux is the co-founder of *Les Chevaliers de l'Est*, a nonprofit organization promoting adaptive sports in the Bas-Saint-Laurent region. Motivated by the needs of her son Léo, who lives with cerebral palsy, she has dedicated the past year to creating inclusive athletic opportunities for individuals with physical disabilities.

With over ten years of hands-on management experience in her family's business, Marie-Frederik has developed a strong sense of leadership and dedication. Groupe Rioux, with more than 450 employees, plays a key role in the regional economy, and under her influence, philanthropy has become a core part of its annual strategy. She's proud to have helped the company

support a wide range of causes—both local initiatives and major partners like the Jumpstart Foundation and Adaptavie—ensuring that giving back is always part of the mission.

Marie-Frederik earned a Bachelor of Commerce from McGill University in 2013 and has pursued a wide range of certifications since, including wedding planning, hotel management, general contractor license, graphic design, and HR. Each reflects her curiosity and commitment to growth. Now, she will proudly add the MPNL program from Carleton University to her journey—one she sees not only as professional development but as an expression of her values. For her, philanthropy is more than a skill set; it's a way of life.



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## **BENJAMIN SHEARDOWN**

Ben is a University of Waterloo graduate, working as a professional engineer in Ontario since 2016. He is also a passionate volunteer involved in local and international initiatives focused on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), youth sports and education, refugee support and community building.

Since 2017, he has been involved with Engineers Without Borders in Uganda, as a senior fellow, trainer and mentor. In Uganda, Ben has had leading roles with several WASH sector start-ups. His time there also introduced him to a number of volunteer opportunities, including a youth soccer club he founded, which has now grown to well over 500 members. Since its inception, the club has organized

tournaments, an annual scholarship program, food bank, blood donation clinic and medical/burial expense fundraisers for members and their families.

In Canada, he has led a sponsorship group for a Congolese family, providing housing and support in getting them established in Canada. Currently, Ben is on the boards of directors for a local youth soccer club and an anti-hate community group.

Ben believes he can further develop his expertise with the knowledge taught in the MPNL program, helping him to carry out his future projects in a more efficient and impactful manner.



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### SIZWILE SIBINDI

Sizwile Sibindi is a seasoned nonprofit executive and strategic operations leader with over two decades of experience working across Africa. She has served in senior leadership roles, including as Interim CEO and Head of Operations, guiding organizations in areas such as fiscal sponsorship, grant management, and donor engagement. Sizwile holds a Master's in Accounting and is a qualified ACCA professional, with a strong focus on financial stewardship and sustainable organizational growth.

She is passionate about advancing equity and access, particularly for women and underrepresented communities, and brings a wealth of experience in building partnerships, leading cross-cultural teams, and scaling mission-driven initiatives. A proud mum of two boys, Sizwile is deeply committed to creating a more inclusive world for the next generation. She is currently pursuing the Master of Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership (MPNL) at Carleton University to deepen her impact in the sector and contribute to shaping inclusive, effective nonprofit systems globally.





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## MATTHEW SLATER

Matthew Slater is a nonprofit leader with over 25 years of experience in housing, homelessness, and veteran services. He currently serves as Director of Development at Axxess Family Services, Inc. (AFS), a \$70 million nonprofit based in Northeast Ohio. Matthew began his career as a part-time housing monitor and quickly advanced into program administration, supporting individuals and families facing eviction, utility disconnections, or homelessness.

In 2005, he helped establish *Freedom House*, a shelter for homeless veterans. Under his leadership, AFS's veterans programming expanded from an eight-bed facility to more than 130 emergency, transitional, and permanent supportive housing beds across eight counties.

He grew the veterans program budget from under \$100,000 to over \$6 million by 2025.

Since 2022, Matthew has led AFS's development, marketing, and grant writing operations while continuing to oversee its veterans' initiatives. His work reflects a commitment to integrating housing, healthcare, and social services for underserved populations.

Now pursuing a Master's degree in Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership at Carleton University, Matthew seeks to deepen his knowledge in ethical fundraising, governance, and sector innovation to further strengthen nonprofit systems and lead sustainable, community-based change.



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## MAGDALYN SPIZZIRRI

Maggie Spizzirri is a nonprofit strategist, executive director, and marketing consultant with over 15 years of experience supporting purpose-driven organizations. She is the founder of Moxie Marketing, a fractional executive director and communications firm serving nonprofits focused on environmental sustainability, brain health, and community development.

Maggie currently serves as Executive Director of the Brain Injury Alliance, managing a province-wide fund to support brain injury organizations across British Columbia and leading advocacy efforts at both provincial and national levels. She is also the Executive Director of Exposed Wildlife Conservancy, where she works to protect apex predators through public education and policy

reform, and serves as Marketing Program Director for the Environmental Sustainability Rotary Action Group, supporting global environmental communication strategies.

Previously, she led the Revelstoke Bear Aware Society for eight years, successfully advocating for local government policy changes to reduce human-wildlife conflict.

Maggie is passionate about ethical marketing, environmental advocacy, and nonprofit governance. Through the MPNL program, she aims to deepen her expertise in provincial and national policy and advocacy to better support organizations working at the intersection of public awareness and systemic change.





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## **PRIYA SREERAMAN**

Priya holds a bachelor's degree in science with specialization in Physics. She has been working in various technology leadership roles in financial firms for the last 25 years.

Parallel to her professional career, she has been deeply committed to social impact through her work with Foodsharing Ottawa. As Director and Vice Chair, she worked to enhance fiscal oversight, streamline financial reporting, and shape the organization's strategic direction. Being in that role opened her eyes to the unique challenges faced by organizations striving to address critical societal issues and that led her to seek out opportunities to learn more about dealing with the challenges. This led her to apply to the MPNL program.

Priya is honoured to be accepted into the MPNL program and excited to be a part of the 13th cohort. She is hoping, that through the program's emphasis on evidence-based leadership, governance, and social innovation, she will be able to leverage data-driven strategies to enhance organizational impact and help achieve sustainable growth. She is also eager to engage with Carleton's diverse academic community and cohort members.

Married with one son, she loves travelling with her family, baking unique vegan cakes, gardening and reading.



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## DANIELLE VAILLANCOURT

Danielle Vaillancourt has over two decades of experience in classical music and opera, now focused on arts leadership and social impact within the nonprofit sector. She is applying to the MPNL program to build on her diverse background in the arts, business, and nonprofit fields.

After earning her voice degree at the Conservatoire de Musique de Montréal, Danielle pursued cultural management at HEC Montréal to acquire the business skills necessary for a sustainable artistic career. She worked in arts administration at Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, raising \$400K for youth and education programs. Danielle also co-founded the Classiqu'Arts festival and worked at RBC Dominion Securities for six years, gaining

investment and client service experience. Currently, she serves as chief guest officer for Mécénat Musica, a program that creates permanent capital for Quebec's cultural organizations.

Drawn to the MPNL program's flexible, interdisciplinary approach, Danielle aims to deepen her nonprofit expertise, particularly in leadership, community philanthropy, and sustainable funding strategies. As a mother, the program's flexibility fits her personal and professional needs. She is committed to advocating for inclusive leadership and greater investment in the arts sector's workforce. Danielle believes the MPNL program will empower her to create meaningful change in the performing arts nonprofit field.



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## LAURA VANZANT

Laura VanZant (she/her) is the Assistant Curator at the Revelstoke Museum & Archives and sits on the Board of Directors for the Revelstoke Visual Arts Centre and the British Columbia Historical Federation.

Laura's focus is on how nonprofit museums and cultural institutions can serve their communities inclusively and effectively. She feels very strongly that museums should not shy away from controversial aspects of the past and need to engage ethically and transparently with stakeholders. A core belief that has driven her career thus far is that objects do not make a museum, stories do, and the more stories that are shared the stronger the institution.

Laura is currently training to take over the directorship of Revelstoke Museum & Archives and was drawn to the MPNL program to develop strong nonprofit management skills that will ensure the museum remains a community cornerstone far into the future. She also aims to strengthen Revelstoke's nonprofit sector as a whole.

Laura currently resides in British Columbia with her husband and cat. She is an active community member and is the founder of Revelstoke's Silent Book Club. On the weekends, you won't find her: she's north of the Dam and there's no cell service up there!



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## KIANNA VEINNEAU

Kianna Veinneau is passionate about social justice, equity, and creating lasting community impact. She holds an undergrad degree in Global Law and Social Justice with a minor in Sociology and initially intended to pursue law school. However, after the birth of her second child, she recognized that meaningful change could happen beyond legal institutions—through grassroots work, advocacy, and community-driven leadership.

Kianna has volunteered with several nonprofit organizations, gaining hands-on experience in community support, outreach, and family programming. These roles have deepened her commitment to building inclusive, responsive services that reflect the needs of those they serve. Her focus lies in supporting mothers,

families, and underrepresented communities through thoughtful, accessible initiatives that prioritize dignity, connection, and long-term wellbeing.

In addition to her academic and volunteer work, Kianna founded and hosts a podcast that creates space for real conversations around motherhood and support systems.

Through the Master of Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership (MPNL) program at Carleton, she hopes to strengthen her leadership skills, expand her knowledge of nonprofit strategy, and develop impactful programs that empower communities and contribute to a more accessible and compassionate society.



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## CLARA WENG

Clara Weng brings over a decade of experience in private wealth management, having worked with Canadian and international banks. She is currently a senior private banker at CIBC Private Wealth, specializing in highly customized strategies for personal wealth and business succession planning, as well as investment and credit solutions.

From 2017 to 2023, Clara served as President of Emerging Young Artists, a Toronto-based nonprofit supporting artists from diverse cultural backgrounds. This organization secured annual grants from the Toronto and Ontario Arts Councils and produced numerous exhibitions, concerts, and festivals.

Over seven years, it connected over 300 young artists and showcased the work of 89 artists from 26 countries.

In 2024, Clara co-founded Truth Lab, a new NGO focused on empowering underrepresented artists through residencies and community-based arts programs. She is passionate about bridging private philanthropy and the needs of underserved artist communities, with a focus on human rights, social justice, and freedom of expression.

Clara is driven by a deep belief in the social impact of arts and culture. Outside of work, she enjoys rock climbing, skiing, and traveling.



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## JOHN WESTON

John Weston, President of the Canadian Health and Fitness Institute (CHFI), aka “Let’s Move Canada”, brings extensive experience spanning law, politics, business, and diplomacy to his current focus on national wellness advocacy. As the former Member of Parliament for the riding that hosted the 2010 Olympic Games, John championed legislation including the *National Health and Fitness Day Act*, which has been proclaimed by 500 local governments across Canada.

A passionate advocate for physical activity as essential to community wellbeing, John co-created the Parliamentary Fitness Initiative. Through CHFI, he leads a growing circle of 40 Directors and Advisors toward the ambitious goal of “Making Canada the Fittest Nation on Earth by 2030”.

John’s professional background includes strategic advisory work through Pan Pacific Solutions Limited, where he consults on government relations, media, and communications. His nonprofit leadership experience includes founding the Canadian Constitution Foundation, which he led from 2002-2008.

In Carleton’s DPNL program, John is researching sustainable charitable leadership models and effective communication strategies for wellness advocacy. He lives with his wife Donna, whom he met in Taiwan. Of their three children, Shane and Meimei are working on Parliament Hill; Jake is a helicopter pilot working in Western Canada.

## NOTES

