

2013

Class of Casey

Children and Family Fellows



THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION



The 2013–2014 Annie E. Casey Foundation
Children and Family Fellows

A LIFE-CHANGING PROGRAM,

AN INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE

Helping low-income communities become places that support and strengthen families is a complex challenge that requires bold, imaginative and catalytic action, and leaders who step up to drive and sustain change.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation recognized that without results-driven leadership, investments in programs and system reform initiatives alone were insufficient to accelerate measurable and lasting improvements in child and family well-being. Acting on this conviction, the Foundation developed the Children and Family Fellowship, a 20-month executive leadership program for accomplished professionals. The Fellowship explicitly strives to increase the pool of diverse, visionary leaders with the confidence and competence to lead and sustain major system reforms and community change initiatives that benefit large numbers of children and families.

The Fellowship serves as a complement to the Foundation's existing programs and funding strategies. As such, it represents an important investment in the human services field, in the future of communities and in the futures of our most vulnerable children.

A UNIQUE GROUP OF TALENTED, ASPIRING LEADERS

It is our pleasure to introduce the 2013–14 Children and Family Fellows of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. These 16 women and men, like the 93 Fellows who have preceded them since 1993, are talented, accomplished professionals from across the country and throughout the children and family services field and related disciplines.

They are a diverse group of individuals who want to accelerate their professional and personal development to help ensure that children, families and communities are strong. They want all young people to have a permanent connection to a family, all families to be economically self-sufficient and all systems that support children and families to work well for them.

As you will read in the following pages, this group of leaders is working across traditional cultural, disciplinary and systemic boundaries. They strive to impact results across many sectors, working in public systems, nonprofits and academia. They mediate differences between policymakers and community leaders, or negotiate between federal, state and local governments.

Although these characteristics are not formally elicited through the Fellowship's application process, we think they reflect some of the changing and complex skills needed from our leaders today.

Leading significant change, whether in systems or communities, increasingly requires this kind of professional agility or fluency in diverse, multi-stakeholder environments. Casey has much to learn from this talented group of Fellows, and looks forward to facilitating their learning and development during the Fellowship.

*Donna Stark, Vice President
Talent and Leadership Development
The Annie E. Casey Foundation*

*Barbara Squires, Director
Leadership Development
The Annie E. Casey Foundation*



SHANA BRODNAX

PAUL BUDDENHAGEN



With a mother who was an educator and a father who was an Indiana Civil Rights Commission investigator, “my parents always asked us how we were going to make the world a better place and what role we were going to play,” recalls **SHANA BRODNAX**.

As senior manager of K–12 programs for the Harlem Children’s Zone, Brodnax is doing her part for an enterprise renowned for helping kids and families in high-poverty communities of color to thrive. For Brodnax, that is not just about numbers. It is about the little West African boy who did not speak English and had serious learning issues blossoming in elementary school after getting services the city would not have been able to provide. Or the teenager involved with gangs who was tapped as assistant manager of the program’s music studio and turned away from the streets and toward better grades and healthier friendships.

“As we take our model nationwide, the stakes are high for all the decisions we make. I’m really excited to get help in reaching the next level of leadership,” reflects Brodnax.

PAUL BUDDENHAGEN has devoted his career to reducing poverty among children and families. His focus is “figuring out how to get large public sector agencies to partner really well with all of the best-in-class nonprofits, faith organizations, businesses and foundations that have the same goal of having a community that thrives.”

At the Contra Costa County Employment and Human Services Department, Buddenhagen directs six centers that help unemployed people with job training and placement, debt and credit issues, and accessing benefits and services for their families.

Buddenhagen’s skill in building partnerships has reaped results in areas from student achievement and parental involvement to child welfare and fatherhood programs. He is proud of his leadership in SparkPoint, a collaborative effort involving the United Way of the Bay Area and many other partners, which provides comprehensive help to break the cycle of poverty.

Buddenhagen is eager to learn more about Results-Based Accountability and “get plugged into a bigger network of people doing best practice work” nationwide. “We have to engage different partners to get different results.”



HASAN DAVIS

DONOVAN DUNCAN



HASAN DAVIS went to five elementary schools and got expelled from an alternative school and college, but always bounced back. “I refused to lie down and accept that somebody else decides when I’m done,” says Davis, now commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice.

Growing up poor and struggling with behavioral and learning issues, Davis was inspired by his mother and a caring school administrator. He graduated with honors from the college that had expelled him and completed law school, then gravitated toward jobs helping troubled youth find their way.

Davis is implementing Casey’s Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative in Kentucky and seeks to hone his skills in using data and “developing a system prepared to care for and transform the family and not just the child.”

He acts in one-man performances depicting African-American historical figures and counsels youth through inspirational speaking. “The world will try to put you in your place, but don’t do it to yourself,” he says. “If you haven’t got what you came to get, you haven’t done what you came to do.”

When **DONOVAN DUNCAN** was 14 and living in public housing in Cleveland, he entered a program offered by the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) that changed his life. “They took children who excelled in high school and gave them leadership training and internship opportunities,” recalls Duncan. “We had great mentors who constantly reinforced that you can be whatever you want to be, and that your environment is not your conclusion.”

Duncan grew up with a “phenomenal grandmother who stressed the importance of college,” but he knows accomplishing his goals would have been much harder in his neighborhood without CMHA’s support. “I truly had a village raising me,” he says.

After graduating and working in accounting, Duncan spotted an ad for a job with CMHA and realized how much he wanted to give back to his community. As director of development, his proudest accomplishments include seeing how CMHA programs help students make huge strides in academics and families thrive in safe, mixed-income communities. Duncan hopes the Fellowship will “catapult me to the next level in serving my community.”



CATHERINE LESTER

BOBBI MACDONALD



From Cleveland to Charlotte to Seattle, **CATHERINE LESTER** has worked to alter how human services systems operate so kids and families can reap the benefits. Growing up in Canada, where her parents were educators, “The value of a community safety net, equity and publicly funded human services were very much part of our culture,” she recalls. “I knew very early that I was committed to working on behalf of others.”

As deputy director of the Seattle Human Services Department, Lester is proud of working toward seamless services driven by data and results. Throughout her career, “I’ve worked to be a gatekeeper for access to resources and information, building on what works and creating something new.”

Whether addressing child welfare, juvenile justice, workforce development or community leadership, Lester’s focus is “building the infrastructure that allows good services to happen.”

“It can be really lonely doing this work, and it takes time and space to stay sharp and focused,” she says. “I’m excited about the Fellowship as a way to connect with peers committed to making a difference for families and communities.”

The foundation **BOBBI MACDONALD** heads, which operates three diverse, high-performing charter schools in Baltimore, started around her kitchen table.

“When my kids were starting school and I visited the school down the block, I saw that because of the way children, teachers, principals and parents were being treated, no one could do their best work.” Sitting alongside friends, neighbors and community leaders, “we envisioned a thriving integrated public school” with a homelike environment, teachers trained in innovative techniques and the community integrally involved in governance. Maryland’s new law authorizing independent charter schools as part of the public system eased the way.

The first City Neighbors Charter School began outperforming neighboring schools in academics and attendance. Macdonald’s team launched the City Neighbors Foundation in 2008 and established two more schools, including a high school.

“To feel known and loved and inspired academically is at the heart of what great public education is supposed to do. We are accomplishing that,” says Macdonald. “I’m inspired by the other Fellows and the partnerships we can forge for a united vision on behalf of children and families.”



JOE MILLER

DAVID NEWELL



JOE MILLER's job is to help more youth benefit from a St. Louis-based program that improves the odds of success for vulnerable youth. He has created a network of 57 partner organizations in 32 states now serving more than 30,000 teens. The evidence-based program boosts academic success, community engagement, life skills and economic self-sufficiency.

As senior vice president of the Wyman Center's national network, Miller also has doubled the number of teens served in St. Louis. His next goal is reaching young people in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. "These are some of the teens most at risk, and we are working to adapt the model to serve them," he says.

Miller, whose career has taken him from business development to environmental management to social services, wants to strengthen his leadership, deepen national collaboration and "further our work moving from program- to population-level outcomes."

A prolific community volunteer and youth sports coach, Miller says his mother, a social worker, and father, a high school teacher, instilled that "with privilege comes responsibility."

DAVID NEWELL has a knack for stabilizing struggling child welfare agencies while expanding services and improving outcomes. He has done it in California and Alaska and is doing it again as president and CEO of the Nebraska Families Collaborative.

Newell is committed to surrounding families with supportive services so that fewer children need to be removed from their homes, a goal he is looking for insight on in the Fellowship.

"Since our removal rate is twice the national average, I'm hoping I can get a new perspective on how to engage with stakeholders in Omaha to bring those numbers down," says Newell. He wants to work more closely with schools "so they can help us flag families needing help and we can better target family preservation services."

With parents who were passionate about civil rights issues, Newell "grew up with a sense of social justice and why it is so important." Besides their two biological children, Newell and his wife fostered two children and adopted two others. "It just kind of happened, and then it became a lifetime commitment."



KIM PATTILLO BROWNSON

ARVA RICE



A Magna Cum Laude Harvard graduate and Yale Law School J.D., **KIM PATTILLO BROWNSON** spent the first chapter of her career in a world she needed to understand to pursue her dream of “bringing the right types of resources and coalitions together to address social justice.”

Working with Fortune 500 companies as a management consultant and litigating for a large corporate firm, Pattillo Brownson took her financial fluency with her to the nonprofit sector. She now works to expand access to quality education programs and facilities as director of educational equity for the Advancement Project in Los Angeles.

“I was raised with a keen awareness that being able to follow the money in the private or public sector would be a powerful tool for making the world more equitable,” Pattillo Brownson explains. “You must be able to track budgets, decipher where the money is and repurpose it.”

Pattillo Brownson is excited about “having a cohort of like-minded people from different sectors to compare what’s working and what paths people have forged so we can have more impact and reach more children.”

ARVA RICE once wrote in her “dream book” that she would love to lead the New York Urban League. “I wanted to be part of the next generation of leaders working for equality for people of color,” notes Rice, who is now its president and CEO.

Making dreams come true is nothing new for Rice, who was in the first generation of her family to go to college. “My parents created a small business with the expressed goal to send us to college and made it clear that once you got there, you had to give back,” notes Rice, who wishes her grandmother, an Arkansas sharecropper, could see her now.

At 13, Rice began teaching Sunday school kindergarten and has been “hooked since” on helping kids thrive. She has bolstered programs and outcomes at numerous nonprofits and seen many former program participants assume leadership positions. “I am awed and impressed by the individual people we’ve affected,” says Rice, who is “excited about being in a peer group where we can have authentic conversations about the challenges we face.”



ANGELA ROMANS

ANTHONY SANTIAGO



ANGELA ROMANS majored in biomedical engineering at Harvard University, but ended up applying for the Mississippi Teacher Corps after graduation. That experience “crystallized that everything I was most passionate about involved education,” says Romans, who got a master’s in education, taught school and has worked on educational equity issues ever since.

Fresh off a two-year stint as senior advisor to Providence’s first Latino mayor, Romans recently started heading up college readiness efforts at the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University. Before working for Mayor Angel Taveras, she worked in the Brown admissions office on strategies to attract students of color and managed a nonprofit network of schools for high school students at risk of dropping out.

A proud accomplishment with the mayor has been coordinating Providence Reads, an initiative focused on ensuring that children read on grade level by third grade as part of the national Campaign for Grade-Level Reading.

Romans is interested in “aspects of leadership important to moving an organization toward results and how leaders can work to make the most impact for kids and families.”

ANTHONY SANTIAGO, deputy chief of staff to the mayor of Newark, New Jersey, excels at helping people and agencies get the biggest bang for their buck while achieving life-changing results.

Santiago, a self-described “guy from Newark,” started the state’s largest Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program and first Financial Empowerment Center while working for the nonprofit Newark Now. These efforts have yielded \$33 million in refunds to low-income families and nearly \$7 million in savings by serving 4,000 families a year with free benefit screening, financial and legal counseling, and case management.

In Mayor Cory Booker’s office, Santiago established a data-driven performance management system that has improved services while saving over \$2 million across three departments. In the Fellowship, he seeks to learn “strategies to institutionalize this work so it can continue to flourish under new leadership” and spread beyond Newark.

“I’ve found that if you are genuine and approach people the right way, you can get good results,” says Santiago. “You are never going to make things perfect, but you can always make things better. That’s what drives me.”



KAMMI SIEMENS

RYAN SMITH



KAMMI SIEMENS studied biology in college and planned to go to medical school. But everything changed when she worked at a small nonprofit health clinic. “I saw how poverty affected people’s health choices, and that was a trajectory I couldn’t walk away from,” she recalls.

Raised by a single mother who taught her perseverance, Siemens says “helping families achieve financial stability has always been a driver for me.” As family financial stability director for Goodwill Industries International, Siemens oversees programs that do not just put people to work but provide services to help their families get on secure footing and build for the future. She has championed this goal in leadership roles at the community, state and federal levels, addressing issues from women’s health to child support enforcement to fatherhood initiatives.

Siemens is excited that the Fellowship will provide “a mini think tank to bounce ideas off of one another and challenge each other’s growth.” As a kiln-formed glass artist, thinking creatively comes naturally. “That creative energy is part of how I approach problem solving. It’s my touchstone,” she says.

“Tomorrow’s most powerful political voice won’t be yammering on CNN. Tune in to your iPod.”

So begins a 2005 op-ed piece RYAN SMITH penned with a colleague at the *Los Angeles Times*, highlighting the power of hip hop music to reach global audiences. The former *Times* editorial researcher now makes headlines as director of education programs and policy for the United Way of Greater Los Angeles, coordinating a broad-based coalition of education and civil rights organizations working to increase access to quality education.

A recent *Times* article hailed the Parent College Smith launched while working for Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, which helps thousands of low-income and immigrant parents prepare their children for college. Smith owes his passion for this work to his mother, who spent her savings moving the family to a better school system.

Smith was one of only 27 African-American UCLA freshman males admitted based solely on academics. “We have to strengthen the K–12 pipeline for students of color to succeed. The only way we can strengthen communities is for people in the field to work together.”



ERIN STUCKY

MARIA SU



“I found my passion early,” says **ERIN STUCKY**, who became a caseworker after college and has drawn on her experience “in the trenches” as she worked her way up to executive vice president for KVC Health Systems. KVC is a nonprofit social services provider serving five states.

Stucky landed her first job with KVC when Kansas was becoming the first state to privatize child welfare services in 1997. The caseload transferred to her from the state child welfare agency “was full of kids in long-term foster care,” she explains. Concerned that too many children were not moving toward forever homes and families, “I became really involved in permanency planning and shifting our focus to serving families comprehensively.”

Reducing the number of children who experience failed family reunifications and providing more support to address childhood trauma count among Stucky’s accomplishments. But she is most proud of “KVC’s work in homes and communities with families and children.”

“I’m eager to learn from the Fellows’ expertise in many areas and apply that to change the face of child welfare,” she says.

As the director of the City and County of San Francisco’s Department of Children, Youth and Their Families, **MARIA SU** is determined to “make sure every door is the right door for parents and children.”

Su emigrated from Vietnam in 1978. Teachers, counselors and friends steered her family toward support programs and services that helped her succeed, but her best friend’s experience was different. “She was removed from her home, placed in foster care and wound up on the streets,” notes Su, who seeks to make services accessible and seamless.

She worked with the school district and community agencies to create a comprehensive publicly funded Out of School Time strategy and helped establish a citywide network of family resource centers that offer vulnerable parents — including those in the child welfare system — support to keep families together.

Su wants to “build a team of like-minded leaders on a national level” and bolster her agency’s successes. “We are doing cutting-edge work with partnerships and yielding tremendous outcomes, but we need to share that secret sauce and improve on it.”



“The Fellowship is about investing in people who are doing heroic work at the community, city, state and national levels. It’s about helping them accelerate their impact as they tackle some of the most difficult problems facing children and families today.”

BARBARA SQUIRES

FELLOWSHIP FACULTY/STAFF

back row:

Tom Gilmore, *Faculty*

Barbara Squires, *Director, Leadership Development*

Katie Norris, *Program Assistant*

Raj Chawla, *Faculty*

front row:

Angela Hendrix Terry, *Faculty*

Jolie Bain Pillsbury, *Faculty*

Kathy White, *Faculty*

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private philanthropy that creates a brighter future for the nation's children by developing solutions to strengthen families, build paths to economic opportunity and transform struggling communities into safer and healthier places to live, work and grow. For more information, visit www.aecf.org.

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