



children
atRisk

Equity Summit

February 22nd, 2024 | 10:00AM CT

Speaker Bios

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Viridiana Carrizales, Co-Founder & CEO, ImmSchools

Viridiana Carrizales is the co-founder and chief executive officer of ImmSchools. ImmSchools is an immigrant-led nonprofit organization that seeks to close the gap between immigration and education by working with schools to create safe and welcoming classrooms for immigrant and undocumented students. Prior to launching ImmSchools, Viridiana worked as the national managing director for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) at Teach For America where she led the organizations efforts to recruit and place teachers with DACA in classrooms throughout the country. She began her journey as an immigrant activist in 2004 by co-founding a grassroots organization dedicated to organizing and informing undocumented students of their rights and access to higher education. Viridiana was born in Michoacán, Mexico and immigrated with her family to the United States when she was 11 years old. As a former undocumented immigrant, Viridiana is passionate about advocating and supporting undocumented students and their families. She has been recognized by the League of United Latin American Citizens and the Austin Chamber of Commerce for her leadership and dedication to the immigrant community. Viridiana holds a bachelor's degree in Spanish literature and communications from the University of Texas at Austin. After 14 years, she became a United States citizen in 2016 and currently resides in San Antonio, Texas.



Yvette Leno, Founder & Director, Beauty's Community Garden

Yvette Leno is a native Houstonian and the founder and director of Beauty's Community Garden. Twelve years ago, in 2012, Yvette founded the garden on land where her family homestead formerly stood. The garden is named after her grandmother "Beauty" and has become a place where Yvette dreamed of providing access to fresh produce in Independence Heights and surrounding food desert/food apartheid communities.



Jerry L. Hawkins, Executive Director, Dallas Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation (TRHT)

Jerry Hawkins is the Executive Director of Dallas Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation (DTRHT), part of a national 14-place initiative by The W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Dallas TRHT's mission is to create a radically inclusive city by addressing race and racism through narrative change, relationship building, and equitable policies and practices. Jerry is also a co-founder of The Imagining Freedom Institute (The IF Institute), a national research-based leadership group that helps organizations and institutions understand the historical context to contemporary issues of place, race, and space. Jerry was formerly the Project Director of Bachman Lake Together for The Dallas Foundation and Zero to Five Funders Collaborative, an early childhood collective impact initiative in Dallas, and Director of Children's Services at the Wilkinson Center in East Dallas/Southeast Dallas.

Jerry is currently an Adjunct Professor at Texas Christian University, a 2024-2025 Institute For Nonprofit Practice's Black Leadership Institute Fellow, a 2022-2023 Independent Sector Bridging Fellow, a 2020-21 Presidential Leadership Scholar, a 2019 Leadership Arts Institute Fellow with the Business Council for the Arts, a Dallas County Historical Commission Member, a City of Dallas' City Plan Commission (CPC) Comprehensive Land Use Committee Appointee, served on Dallas ISD's Trustee-appointed Racial Equity Advisory Council and The Education Trust/ERS Resource Equity Working Group, and the United Way of Metropolitan Dallas/PolicyLink/National Fund for Workforce Solutions 'Pathways to Work' Workforce Equity Advisory Council. Jerry also serves on the boards of Leadership ISD, Deep Vellum Books, AccessH2O and Young Leaders, Strong City. Jerry has been awarded PBS/KERA's American Graduate Champion in 2017, was a 2022 nominee for "Best Community Leader" by The Dallas Weekly and was selected as one of the "Dallas 500 Most Powerful Business Leaders in North Texas" in 2021 and 2022 by D CEO/D Magazine. Jerry's first editorial offering, A People's History of Dallas, will be published in late 2024 by Deep Vellum Books. Jerry received his undergraduate degree in Early Childhood Education and Child & Family Services from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, and his master's degree in education from Northeastern Illinois University's Jacob H. Carruthers Center for Inner City Studies. While living in Chicago, Jerry worked for Chicago Urban League and Chicago Public Schools.



Asha George, Chief Diversity Officer, Electronic Arts

Asha George is the Chief Diversity Officer at Electronic Arts. In this role, she drives integrated enterprise strategy for DEI across the organization. She is an experienced HR leader with over 20 years of experience in not only DEI, but also compensation, business partnership and talent management. Asha has an impressive track record of accelerating business performance with leading edge strategy, innovation and signature practices across the talent and culture ecosystem. Her experience ranges from acquiring and integrating new businesses to leading business transformations. She is a passionate advocate for women in technology and a proponent of driving businesses to reach their full potential through DEI. Asha, her husband Joseph and two teenage

children are based in Austin, TX, where she loves to cook, read, explore new cultures, and host a weekly poker night with family and friends.



Kevin A. Hall, Community Innovation And Outreach Partnership Program Director, WIC Greater Dallas Program

Kevin A. Hall (he/him/his) manages the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Community Innovation and Outreach Partnership Program at the City of Dallas. He develops and implements data-driven outreach initiatives that address the unique needs of Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) population. His team works to forge strategic, collaborative partnerships to optimize health equity in community initiatives. Additionally, Mr. Hall chairs Strategic Planning for the National Association of Health Services Executives Dallas-Fort Worth organization, which facilitates and promotes the advancement and development of Black health care leaders—a mission that seeks to diversify representation and experienced leadership in minority and underserved communities. Mr. Hall is an experienced specialist with 12+ years of experience in project management, continuous improvement, community health engagement.



Meghan Green- E.D., Assistant Professor of Raciolinguistic Justice in Early Childhood Teacher Education, Erikson Institute

Meghan L. Green, EdD is an Assistant Professor of Raciolinguistic Justice in Early Childhood Teacher Education at Erikson Institute. Over the past 17 years, she has served in the field of early childhood education as a researcher, an adjunct professor, a pre-kindergarten to 4th-grade teacher, a university field-based liaison, and an anti-bias and anti-racist training facilitator. Meghan has presented sessions at the Reconceptualizing Early Childhood Education Conference, the NAEYC Annual Conference, the NAEYC Professional Learning Institute, and the National Association for Family Child Care Conference. In her forthcoming edited volume, "Daughters of (Re)imagined Early Childhood Education: Reflective Narratives of Black Women Educators in Texas During Covid-19", Meghan uses endarkened narrative inquiry to examine the lived experiences and pedagogical development of Black women early childhood educators



Michele D. Harper- Chief Equity Officer, Evident Change

Michele D. Harper, is the Chief Equity Officer with Evident Change, a national nonprofit that partners with organizations to provide tools and resources to create just social systems—ones that help people reach their greatest potential, not create barriers to their success.

Michele works with organizations to develop strategies to become more diverse, equitable, and inclusive in how they offer/deliver services. She coaches leaders to foster reflective and candid conversations with other leaders and staff to develop their collective capacity to do racial equity work. She is committed to challenging organizations to consider relationships, decision making, policy, and practice through an equity lens. She has years of experience in facilitating and coaching leadership development practices for executives, with a primary focus on leading with equity. Michele has been recognized with the Good Government Symbol of Leadership and Teamwork as well as the Great Lakes Leadership, Diversity, and Inclusion Coin from the United States Coast Guard.

She works diligently to educate and agitate those in positions of power, to invite marginalized groups and those with lived experiences to the table, to ensure their voices are both heard and included in decision making. She is accountable to the words of Glenn Harris of The Government Alliance on Race and Equity: Never in our lifetime has it felt more pressing to do the work of racial equity and social justice.

In addition to her anti-racism work, you will find Michele investing time in family, fitness, and her faith.



Elvira Salazar, Director, Online Learning & Technology, Latinos for Education

Elvira Salazar is the Director of Online Learning & Technology at Latinos for Education, where she leads the strategy, design, and implementation of EdCentro and alumni engagement.

She is the proud daughter of Mexican immigrant parents and has dedicated her career to education. Prior to joining Latinos for Education, Elvira was the Program Director for Secondary Science & Health in Galena Park ISD. She has served in various roles in public school districts in the Houston area, including Senior Manager of Design, Media, & Online Learning, Senior Education Technologist, Instructional Specialist, & Science Teacher. Elvira has a passion for developing people and designing systems that foster equitable education pathways for all children.

Elvira earned her B.S. in Biology and M.S.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Houston. Moreover, she holds a Certificate in School Management and Leadership from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and Harvard Business School. Currently she is a doctoral student at Baylor University where her focus is on learning design and organizational change.



Bethany Edwards- Ph.D., Southern Methodist University

Dr. Bethany Edwards graduated from Southern Methodist University with a doctoral degree in education policy and leadership. Her research focuses on the disparate experiences of students in the Texas special education system, with a focus on the relation between student race/ethnicity and special education referral and designation. She currently serves as the Director of the Early Learning Alliance (ELA), a cross-sector coalition in Tarrant County that leverages data and community connections to advocate for more equitable early education systems. She previously worked at the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (CSCCE) at the University of California, Berkeley conducting policy research on the preparation and support of the early care and education workforce.

Bethany also holds a master's degree in education policy from Columbia University and bachelor's degree in political science from Texas A&M University (Whoop!). She lives in Arlington with her husband, Ryan; two children, Jayden and Eleanor; and two dogs, Romo and Emmitt (Go Cowboys!).



Peter Libreros, Bilingual Interventionist in a Title I campus in Cypress-Fairbanks ISD

Peter Libreros, III is a second generation Hispanic-American immigrant, born and raised in Houston, Texas. He is a bilingual interventionist in a Title I campus in Cypress-Fairbanks ISD. Previously he taught 2nd, 4th, and 5th grade bilingual language arts. He completed his undergraduate work at the College of Biblical Studies-Houston, obtaining a Bachelor of Science in Organizational Leadership. He holds two masters, a Master of Arts in Teaching from Relay Graduate School of Education and a Master of Education in Administration and Supervision from the University of Houston. Peter was named Teacher of the Year for his campus in 2017 and in 2018 was selected as an Emerging Leader by the Houston Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. He is currently finalizing his doctoral coursework at the University of St. Thomas-Houston and is expected to graduate May 2024 with a doctoral degree in Ethical Leadership. His first-hand experience as a child of immigrants and, currently, a bilingual public-school teacher that serves the Hispanic-American community, led him to conduct a study that focused on the role elementary public schools have when providing equitable access to Hispanic-American immigrant parents for parental engagement.



Veronica Alvarez, Director of Transformation, Dallas Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation (TRHT)

Veronica Alvarez Vega is the Director of Transformation at Dallas TRHT. Veronica is a native of Guanajuato, Mexico and originates from a small ranch and farming town known as Apaseo el Alto. Veronica has provided leadership in community engagement and relationship building for over a decade within the nonprofit sector. Veronica holds a bachelor's in psychology and a Master of Education in Student Development and Leadership in Higher Education. She has worked alongside local and statewide organizations to bring about transformative policies for city of Dallas residents through political activism and education. Prior to joining Dallas TRHT, Veronica served as the Family and Community Partnerships Coordinator for Lumin Bachman Lake Community School. Here she was able to utilize her strengths and leadership to grow and foster long-standing community partnerships as well as connections with valuable stakeholders. As Director of Transformation, Veronica aims to solidify and amplify relationships with current and future partners and organizations as well as enact transformative change through equitable policy building to ultimately create a radically inclusive Dallas.

Thank you to our partners!



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