

# MCGW ENGAGE

**Showcasing Community Engagement in All Spaces**

7th Annual Community Engagement Spring Conference

May 2, 2024

War Memorial Center, Milwaukee



**Community Engagement**

## Welcome to MCW Engage 2024!

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to our 7th annual community engagement conference, "Showcasing Community Engagement in all Spaces." As we gather together, we will highlight and uplift the ways in which community engagement exists at all levels, from service and outreach to collaboration and shared leadership.



The presence of community engagement across education, research, and health care allows us to think and move intentionally as we re-imagine the ways in which we can improve health. This conference will provide a platform for us to share our experiences, best practices, and lessons learned. We are thrilled to have a diverse group of speakers and participants from various sectors, community-based organizations, and institutions who will share their experiences and insights on innovative community engagement strategies.


We hope these sessions provide a valuable learning experience that will empower all of us to continue building and growing vibrant communities. Thank you for contributing to community engagement in all spaces!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Staci Young". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and legible.

Staci Young, PhD

Senior Associate Dean for Community Engagement  
Professor, Department of Family and Community Medicine  
Director, Office of Community Engagement  
Director, Center for Healthy Communities and Research  
Inaugural Faculty Director, ThriveOn Collaboration  
Associate Director, Cancer Center Community Outreach and Engagement



**8:30am - 9:00am**

**Registration and Light Breakfast by Brim Café**

Enjoy a light complimentary breakfast, meet other attendees, and set your intentions for the day.

**9:00am - 9:05am**

**General Welcome**

**Yesica Desarden, Program Coordinator**  
Office of Community Engagement, MCW

**9:05am - 9:10am**

**Welcome to The War Memorial Center**

**Daniel Buttery**  
President & CEO, War Memorial Center

**9:10am - 9:25am**

**Community Engagement: Setting the Context**

**Staci Young, PhD, Senior Associate Dean for Community Engagement;**  
Professor, Family and Community Medicine, MCW

**9:25am - 9:30am**

**Keynote Introduction**

**David Nelson, PhD, MS, Professor, Family and Community Medicine, MCW**

**9:30am - 10:15am**

**Morning Keynote**

**Rayna Andrews, MUP**  
CEO of the Healthy Food Movement; Executive Director, Advancement & Engagement, Food For Health

**10:15am - 10:35am**

### **Structured Break**

Please select between a guided tour of the War Memorial with Daniel Buttery, self-guided tour of the War Memorial, or networking in the main hall.

**10:35am - 10:40am**

### **Transition Time**

**10:40am - 11:40am**

### **Concurrent Breakout Sessions**

*Select one session to attend. Note that some sessions have limited room capacities.*

#### **SESSION 1: Community-Academic Partnerships: Using a Community Engagement Framework (Memorial Hall)**

Moderator: Christopher Simenz PhD, Associate Professor, Institute for Health & Equity, MCW

- Yvonne Greer, DrPH, RD, CD, Nutritional Consultant & Healthy Living Coach, Y-EAT Right
- Viola Rembert, Executive Director, HeartLove Place
- Vera Roddy, Veteran Advocate, Artful Warriors
- Leslie Ruffalo, PhD, MS, Associate Professor, Family and Community Medicine, MCW

#### **SESSION 2: Building Respect and Equity in Community-Academic Collaborations (Room 411)**

Moderator: Jessica Olson, PhD, MPH, Assistant Professor, Institute for Health & Equity, MCW

- Ann Christiansen, MPH, Executive Director, Milwaukee Health Care Partnership

- Jacqueline Schram, PhD, Director of Public Affairs & Special Assistant for Native American Affairs, Marquette University
- Annika Swenson, MPH, Doctorate of Public Health (DrPH) student, MCW

### **SESSION 3: Strategies for Capacity Building and Sustainability for Coalitions and Other Partnerships (Room 415)**

**Moderator:** Laila Azam, PhD, MBA, Research Scientist, Emergency Medicine, MCW

- Al Castro, MS, BSW, Community Health & Research Program Director, United Community Center
- Vanessa Johnson, RN, CLS, Doula, Birthworkers United, Inc.
- John Meurer, MD, MBA, Professor & Director of the Institute for Health & Equity, MCW

### **SESSION 4: Involving Students in Community-Academic Collaboration (Room 413)**

**Moderator:** Bryan Johnston, MD, Assistant Professor, Family and Community Medicine, MCW

- Rebecca Bernstein, MD, MS, FAAFP, Associate Professor, Family and Community Medicine, MCW
- David Nelson, PhD, MS, Professor, Family and Community Medicine, MCW
- Jackie Ramsey, MA, Government Grants and Contracts Manager, The Salvation Army Milwaukee County Social Services; Volunteer, StreetLife Communities
- Alexa Weber, medical student, MCW

**11:40am-11:45am**

**Transition Time**

**11:45am-12:45pm**

**Lunch by Brim Café**

**12:30pm - 12:40pm**

**Introduction of Dryhootch, Featured Partner of OCE's May Supply Drive**

- Sarah O'Connor, MS, Program Director, Office of Community Engagement, MCW
- Otis Winstead, Executive Director, Great Lakes Dryhootch

**12:40pm - 12:45pm**

**Keynote Introduction**

Staci Young, PhD, Senior Associate Dean for Community Engagement;  
Professor, Family and Community Medicine, MCW

**12:45pm - 1:30pm**

**Afternoon Keynote**

Jesse M. Ehrenfeld, MD, MPH, FAMIA, FASA  
Senior Associate Dean and Director, Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin  
Endowment; Professor, Anesthesiology, MCW

**1:30pm - 2:15pm**

**Navigating the Complexities of Community Engagement in All Spaces**

**Facilitators:**

- David Nelson, PhD, MS, Professor, Family and Community Medicine, MCW
- Toni Whitaker, Program Manager, Radiology, MCW

**Panelists:**

- Jennifer Harris, MEd, Harris Research Consultancy
- Cydney Key, Senior Director, ThriveOn Guest Experience and Strategic Partnerships, ThriveOn Collaboration
- Kajua Lor, PharmD, BCACP, Founding Chair and Associate Professor, Clinical Sciences Department, MCW School of Pharmacy
- Anna Palatnik, MD, Patrick J. and Margaret G. McMahan Endowed Chair and Associate Professor, Obstetrics and Gynecology, MCW

**2:15pm - 2:20pm**

**Transition Time**

**2:20pm - 3:20pm**

**World Café Activity**

Community health needs:

1. Mental health & Access to Mental Health Services
2. Drug Use, Alcohol Use, & Overdose Death
3. Chronic Disease
4. Infectious Disease (COVID-19)
5. Public Safety & Crime (Violence)
6. Equitable Access to Health Services
7. Maternal, Fetal & Infant Health
8. Health across the age span (including youth, adolescents, older adults)
9. Housing

**3:20pm - 3:30pm**

**Closing Remarks**

Zeno Franco, PhD, Associate Professor, Family and Community Medicine,  
MCW; Staff Psychologist, Milwaukee VA



# Keynote Speaker

## Rayna Andrews, MUP



Rayna Andrews is a multifaceted leader and TEDx speaker at the intersection of food systems, public health advocacy, urban planning, and children's literature.

Rayna's dedication to sovereign food systems spans continents, with a focus on promoting bio-agricultural diversity, solar energy integration, and agricultural independence in developing nations. Her commitment to nutrition security as a public health imperative is evident in her initiatives promoting food is medicine concepts and sustainable short food systems.

Currently, Rayna serves as the CEO of the Healthy Food Movement, a wellness organization dedicated to enhancing food literacy and security in marginalized communities. Additionally, she serves as the Executive Director of Advancement and Engagement at Food for Health, spearheading innovative medically tailored meal programs aimed at combating diet-related diseases and fostering self-reliance.



# Keynote Speaker

**Jesse M. Ehrenfeld, MD, MPH, FAMIA, FASA**



Jesse M. Ehrenfeld, MD, MPH, FAMIA, FASA, serves as Director of the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment (AHW) and Senior Associate Dean and Professor at the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) School of Medicine. He divides his time among clinical practice, research, and directing the strategic and operational advancement of AHW, a statewide philanthropy established by MCW to serve as a resource to health research, education, and community initiatives across Wisconsin.

Under Dr. Ehrenfeld's leadership, AHW has awarded an average of \$16 million in grant awards annually into community and research initiatives aimed at improving health and advancing health equity in Wisconsin. In 2020, he led the coordination of AHW's rapid response to the COVID-19 pandemic, deploying more than \$4.8 million in grants to partners across the state. He was named by Managed Healthcare Executive Magazine as one of its 10 Emerging Industry Leaders.

**Laila Azam, PhD, MBA, Research Scientist, Department of Emergency Medicine, Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW)**

Dr. Azam is a public health researcher and educator at MCW. She leads strategic projects aimed at addressing diversity, justice, and health equity. Her focus on advancing health equity involves accommodating religious and cultural values in healthcare. In her roles at MCW, Dr. Azam is a researcher in the Department of Emergency Medicine, teaches in the Master of Public Health (MPH) Program,



and is a community-engaged specialist for the Office of Community Engagement. Beyond academia, Dr. Azam actively contributes to the non-profit sector, partnering with Striving to Improve Health for All (SIHA) to enhance the well-being of children in the Milwaukee Muslim community. Her career spans community engagement, research, and education, making significant contributions to both the academic and practical aspects of public health.

***Session: Moderator, Breakout 3–Strategies for Capacity Building and Sustainability for Coalitions and Other Partnerships***

**Rebecca Bernstein, MD, MS, Associate Professor, Department of Family and Community Medicine, Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW)**

Dr. Bernstein enjoys clinical practice, teaching residents and students, and doing primary care research. She has special clinical interests in vulnerable populations and primary care of complex patients, and has experience working in safety-net clinics. Dr. Bernstein teaches community medicine in the M3 family medicine clerkship and serves as co-director of the Urban and Community Health Pathway, a longitudinal scholarly



concentration focused on community engagement and health equity. She sees patients and precepts residents at the Ascension All Saints Family Medicine Residency and Froedtert & MCW South Side Family Medicine Residency program. Her special interests include health disparities, preventive health, oral health, and refugee health.

***Session: Panelist, Breakout 4–Involving Students in Community-Academic Collaboration***

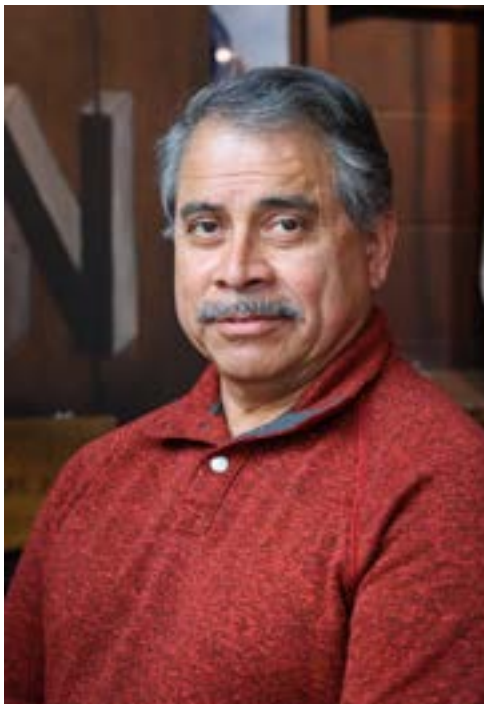


**Daniel W. Buttery, Executive Director, War Memorial Center, Milwaukee, WI**

Mr. Buttery is a Wisconsin native who graduated from the University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point in 1994 with honors. Commissioned as a US Army Engineer Officer in 1998, Dan went on to become Company Commander of C-Company 724 Engineer Battalion in 2001. His deployments included German (Overseas Deployment for Training) 1998, Chontales, Nicaragua (Peace Keeping for Southern Command, USSOUTHCOM) 2001-2002, and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) 2003-2004. As a company commander, Mr. Buttery was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for missions conducted in Iraq. Injuries sustained in country eventually ended his military service. While in military service, he also managed his civilian career, which took him in the direction of owning and operating his own company. From 2015-2017, Mr. Buttery served as the Assistant Deputy Secretary for the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs in Madison, WI, where he was responsible for advancing pro-Veteran legislation in the State of Wisconsin. In January 2020, he took the position of President / CEO of the War Memorial Center in Milwaukee. Mr. Buttery was the founder and now past President of the Board of Directors for Fisher House Wisconsin, Inc. The Milwaukee Armed Services Committee recognized his volunteerism and support of the Veteran community by presenting him with the Citizen Support of Our Armed Services Award during

Armed Forces Week, 2015. His work to help build Wisconsin's first Fisher House was also recognized by the Milwaukee Brewers organization by naming him Veteran of the Month in May 2013.

***Session: Speaker, Welcome to the War Memorial Center***



**Al Castro, MS, BSW, Program Director,  
Community Health & Research Department,  
United Community Center, Milwaukee, WI**

Mr. Castro has served in several leadership roles at the United Community Center since 1994. He has a master's degree in business management from Cardinal Stritch University, Milwaukee, and a bachelor's degree in social work from Carroll University in Waukesha, Wisconsin. Mr. Castro has over 45 years of experience in direct social work and management in various human services programs. The United Community Center is a large, multi-service Latino non-profit community organization, established in 1970, serving over 16,000 individuals per year, from infants to older

adults. In his role, Mr. Castro manages community-engaged health research projects and serves as the primary liaison or co-principal investigator in community health and research projects within the Latino population of greater Milwaukee in collaboration with local research universities and other organizations. Mr. Castro is a co-author in various published health research articles related to these community health research projects. In recognition of Mr. Castro's efforts in promoting academic-community engagement and research with the Latino community, he received the 2019 Medical College of Wisconsin President's Award for Community Engagement, as well as the UW-Madison's Chancellor Community Partnership award the same year.

***Session: Panelist, Breakout 3—Strategies for Capacity Building and Sustainability for Coalitions and Other Partnerships***



***Ann Christiansen, MPH, Executive Director, Milwaukee Health Care Partnership***

Ms. Christiansen has over 20 years of experience working in various public health and community health sectors to advance health equity and improve the health of Wisconsin residents. She assumed the role of Executive Director for the Milwaukee Health Care



Partnership in September 2023. Previously, Ms. Christiansen held roles of Vice President, Community Health – Wisconsin at Advocate Health, Director/Health Office for the North Shore Health Department in Milwaukee County, and Assistant Director at the Comprehensive Injury Center at the Medical College of Wisconsin (previously the Injury Research Center). Ms. Christiansen has served on numerous state and local board and committees throughout her 20-year public health career and has published numerous articles on topics such as injury prevention, suicide prevention, tobacco control, and fall prevention.

***Session: Panelist, Breakout 2–Building Respect and Equity in Community-Academic Collaborations***



**Yesica Desarden, *Program Coordinator, Office of Community Engagement, Medical College Wisconsin***

Ms. Desarden has been with the MCW Office of Community Engagement (OCE) for almost 2 years. In her role, she gives voice to OCE's efforts through communications via annual reports and newsletters. She is also part of others' community engagement journeys by planning various programs available to staff, students, faculty, and community members, including the annual conference and monthly CE Spotlight series. Ms. Desarden graduated from Alverno College with a Bachelor of Arts in Communications and is fluent in Spanish.

***Session: General Welcome***



**Zeno Franco, PhD, *Associate Professor, Department of Family and Community Medicine, Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW); Staff Psychologist, Milwaukee VA***

Dr. Franco has led many community/academic partnerships, particularly on veteran and Latino mental health over the last 16 years with MCW. He is currently the site Co-PI of the All of Us Research Program, and his research focuses on using technology to improve the accessibility of care, including mobile mental health applications and database-driven systems for monitoring, and optimizing community-based interventions.

***Session: Speaker, Closing Remarks***

**Yvonne D. Greer, DrPH, RD, CD, Owner of Y-EAT Right, Nutritional Consultant for Healthy Living, Milwaukee, WI**

Dr. Greer conducts special workshops to promote healthy nutritional and living behaviors. She's been featured on talk radio, TV, podcast, and print media including in the TV documentary entitled *A Silent Threat – Heart Disease in African American Women* (2003). She authored the nationally recognized curriculum guide for community youth and family agencies entitled, *Back to the Kitchen: Healthy Cooking Series* (2013) as well as the book chapter *Diabetes and Obesity* in the TOPS Publication *Real Life: the Hands-on, Pounds-off Guide* (2013). From 2021-2023, she cohosted a 6-part YouTube & Facebook Live series entitled *Days of Learning: Back to the Kitchen* that featured a healthy recipe demonstration and a discussion segment with key invited Community Champions. She was selected to present at the 2021 American Public Health Association (APHA) Conference to showcase the series' outcomes. In 2022, she provided leadership to two grant initiatives that seek to create positive social change in Milwaukee's social determinants of health and child health equity through community engagement, restorative justice, and collective action initiatives: the CDC Closing the Gap Social Determinants of Health Accelerator Grant and the Milwaukee Healthy & Fit MCOPP Project, part of a 9 city Learning Collaborative within the Catalyzing Communities Grant Initiative through Tufts University's Friedmans School of Nutritional Science and Public Policy, Boston, MA. Her work with the Milwaukee Healthy & Fit MCOPP Project was selected for presentation at the 2022 APHA Conference. In October 2023 it was announced that Y-EAT Right/MCOPP, in partnership with the State CDDP, were awarded two CDC grants (the MKE Heart Health Collaborative and the ACTION (SDOH Implementation) Grant), to continue their community work for 5 more years. Dr. Greer was selected to receive the "2023 Excellence in Community and Public Health Practice Award" at the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Food and Nutrition Conference on October 9, 2023! Dr. Greer's education includes graduating from the Milwaukee Public School system, a Bachelor of Science degree in Dietetics and Experimental Foods from the University of Wisconsin- Stevens Point, a Master of Public Health degree in





Public Health Nutrition from the University of Minnesota, School of Public Health, and a Doctor of Public Health degree through Walden University.

***Session: Panelist, Breakout 1–Community-Academic Partnerships: Using a Community Engagement Framework***



**Jennifer Harris, MEd, *Harris Research Consultancy***

Ms. Harris is a devoted practitioner and racial equity advocate whose career spans academia, local government, and research. Throughout her career, she has served as a steward of multi-million dollar local/federal funding and resources intended to provide respite and programmatic impact for marginalized communities. Formal training in qualitative research grounds her expertise in community engagement, organizational and systems analysis, and programmatic evaluation. Most recently, Ms. Harris’s work at the Institute on Poverty and Systemic Racism (IPSR) at the Social Development Commission (SDC) propelled SDC’s efforts to impact and empower Milwaukee County residents via actionable research and policy analysis. Previously, Ms. Harris served as a member of Milwaukee County’s inaugural Office on African American Affairs, leading the operationalization of Milwaukee County’s groundbreaking “Declaration of Racism as a Public Health Crisis.” During her tenure at Milwaukee County, she consulted for municipalities throughout the nation, shaped legislation, and designed and led racial equity trainings for all county employees. She also spearheaded many enterprise-wide initiatives institutionalizing health equity including supporting the implementation of the Racial Equity Budget Scorecard, Health and Racial Equity Census development, and leadership of Milwaukee County’s Strategic Planning Focus Area: Applying a Racial Equity Lens. An alumna of Carroll University, Ms. Harris earned a Master of Education and Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (Management/Marketing and Political Science) from Carroll. She received additional training from UW-Madison (Grainger School of Business) and UCLA (HERI Institute) and has presented at regional, national, and international conferences.

***Session: Panelist, Navigating the Complexities of Community Engagement in All Spaces***

**Vanessa D. Johnson, RN, CLS, Reproductive Health RN, Lactation Specialist, Doula, Founding Executive Director, Birthworkers United, Inc., Milwaukee, WI**

Ms. Johnson has been a Registered Nurse for over 15 years, with an emphasis on Reproductive Health & Wellness. She is currently a Lactation Consultant at a local hospital, as well as a Doula Birthworker and Complementary Health and Wellness Practitioner. Ms. Johnson is the owner of A Miracle Happened Wellness & Birth Services, a full spectrum birth and wellness organization that provides doula support, perinatal education, and doula training and mentoring. She is also the founding



Executive Director of Birthworkers United, Inc, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, that strives to close the gaps between the emotional and medical models of perinatal care through a multi-disciplinary practitioner approach and community outreach. In 2023, Birthworkers United launched a new initiative called The Nurturing Collaborative. In less than a year, The Nurturing Collaborative reached over 200 pregnant families, facilitated over 15 wellness workshops to help increase social connectedness and promote positive perinatal health outcomes, delivered over 1,492 nourishing food and self-care boxes, over 13,420 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables, over 3,211 pounds of lean meat, fish, and poultry, and partnered with over 20 community organizations, including Y-Eat Right, Nutritional Consultant for Healthy Living and Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin. Ms. Johnson is honored to be the mother to three amazing persons; ages 26, 16, and 14. Her passions include building community connections, instilling a sense of pride and purpose into her children, giving back, and helping expecting families prepare for the arrival of their new additions.

***Session: Panelist, Breakout 3–Strategies for Capacity Building and Sustainability for Coalitions and Other Partnerships***



**Bryan Johnston, MD, Assistant Professor, Department of Family and Community Medicine, Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW)**

Dr. Johnston is a Family and Addiction Medicine Physician who cares for patients and teaches residents and medical students at Northside Milwaukee Community Health Centers Family Medicine Residency Program. He focuses his clinical and research efforts on health equity and wellness for individuals and communities experiencing health disparities, with a special focus on people who use drugs, people experiencing food and housing insecurity,

and refugee populations. Originally from Olympia, Washington, he completed all of his medical training in Milwaukee.

***Session: Moderator, Breakout 4–Involving Students in Community-Academic Collaboration***

**Cydney Key, Senior Director, ThriveOn Guest Experience and Strategic Partnerships, ThriveOn Collaboration**

Ms. Key is an experienced real estate management professional and non-profit leader who specializes in supporting non-profits in building and executing operational plans and community partnership/engagement strategies. Her professional experience and education offer more than 10 years of practical and applied knowledge in community building, property management in commercial and residential settings, organizational capacity development and community-based programming. Before serving as Senior Director for ThriveOn Guest Experience and Strategic Partnerships for the ThriveOn Collaboration, Ms. Key served as the Director of Operations at America's Black Holocaust Museum during its historic reemergence after a 14-year closure.





She is a proud alumna of the University of Florida and regularly continues professional training--most recently as an inaugural member of Advance Executive Leader Certificate Training Program through a collaboration with Howard University School of Business and the Association of African American Museums. She has a deep passion for history and uses that knowledge to inform creative and inclusive place-making. Ms. Key is happy to call Milwaukee home where she resides with her husband, three daughters, and their dog. She can frequently be found crafting and creating collage with repurposed materials. She is house Gryffindor and enjoys fantasy, sci-fi, Afrofuturism, and comic cons. Her pandemic hobbies are still going strong including hooping (hula) and recreating vintage recipes from many collected cookbooks. She loves to travel and will go anywhere for a good vintage sale or authentic empanadas.

***Session: Panelist, Navigating the Complexities of Community Engagement in All Spaces***



**Kajua Lor, PharmD, BCACP, *Founding Chair and Associate Professor, Clinical Sciences Department, Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) School of Pharmacy***

Dr. Lor earned her Doctorate of Pharmacy from the University of Wisconsin–Madison in 2009, after which she completed an ambulatory care residency at the University of Minnesota. She is a board-certified ambulatory care pharmacist. Dr. Lor was the first Hmong pharmacist to obtain a pharmacy academia position in the nation.

Dr. Lor has over 15+ years of experience as a clinical pharmacist with Spanish-speaking patients and currently is a clinical pharmacist one day per week at Sixteenth Street Clinic, a federally qualified health care center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She has several peer-reviewed publications and is co-author of *Getting in: a practical guide to pharmacy admission*. Dr. Lor’s research interests involve the intersections of social determinants of health with chronic care management and herbal medicine use. She is a community-engaged health disparities researcher.

Dr. Lor was selected and graduated as a fellow of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Clinical Scholars Program and is collaborating with leaders across various sectors, disciplines, and lived experiences to create healthier, more equitable communities.

***Session: Panelist, Navigating the Complexities of Community Engagement in All Spaces***

***John Meurer, MD, MBA, Professor and Director of the Institute for Health & Equity, Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW)***

Dr. Meurer is a Professor of Community Health, General Pediatrician, and Director of the MCW Institute for Health & Equity at the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW). The Institute for Health & Equity has 150 employees and 9 graduate education programs. John enjoys community-engaged research, currently leading an evaluation of STRYV365 coaching and video games to improve student social-emotional skills and resiliency. He leads the MCW precision medicine education program and Master of Public Health (MPH) courses in population health management and policy. He teaches pediatric residents at Children's Midtown and leads research in health navigation at metro clinics. Dr Meurer has received the MCW Distinguished Service Award, President's Community Engagement Award, and 10 outstanding educator awards. He is a member of the AOA Medical Honor Society and has been a Best Doctor in America for a dozen years. His wife Linda is Vice Chair of Family and Community Medicine at MCW. They are proud parents of 3 adult children.



***Session: Panelist, Breakout 3–Strategies for Capacity Building and Sustainability for Coalitions and Other Partnerships***



**David Nelson, PhD, MS, Professor, Department of Family and Community Medicine, Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW)**

Dr. Nelson has expertise working in partnership with diverse communities around issues of health. As a community-engaged researcher, he has worked extensively with communities throughout Wisconsin on projects around childhood obesity, promotion of health and wellness, supporting senior caregivers, homelessness and housing instability, and food security. His post-doctoral training in community-based participatory

research (CBPR) instilled in him the importance of engaging communities throughout the research process as equal partners. Dr. Nelson's approach is to be culturally humble and to support the health needs of the community as they define those needs.

***Session: Speaker, Introduction of Morning Keynote; Panelist, Breakout 4– Involving Students in Community-Academic Collaboration; Co-facilitator, Navigating the Complexities of Community Engagement in All Spaces***



**Sarah O'Connor, MS, Program Director, Office of Community Engagement, Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW)**

Ms. O'Connor joined MCW in 2016 and serves as Program Director for an office comprised of 14 committed and community-engaged staff and faculty. Her efforts focus on increasing community engagement and community-engaged research capacity within MCW and facilitating mutually beneficial partnerships

that address issues affecting the health and well-being of Wisconsin communities. She has worked with geographically, racially, ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse communities around issues of health for her entire career and the past 18 years in Milwaukee. Most recently she has

collaborated on research projects focused on peer mentorship for veterans struggling with opioid misuse, clinical and community solutions for lead poisoning, and engaging MCW learners. She volunteers with Friedens Food Pantries where she is the vice chair of the board of directors.

***Session: Speaker, Introduction of Dryhootch***

***Jessica Olson, PhD, MPH, Assistant Professor, Institute for Health & Equity; Director, Evaluation and Innovation, Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW)***

Dr. Olson is a health disparities researcher with a focus on breast and lung cancer and maternal health. In all of her initiatives, she works to build equitable partnerships between academic, clinical, and community experts, in order to build collective efforts that address the root cause of disparities in Wisconsin.

***Session: Moderator, Breakout 2–Building Respect and Equity in Community-Academic Collaborations***



***Anna Palatnik, MD, Patrick J. and Margaret G. McMahon Endowed Chair and Associate Professor, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW)***

Dr. Palatnik is a clinician-scientist and Board Certified in Obstetrics and Gynecology and Maternal-Fetal Medicine. She received her Doctor of Medicine degree from Sackler School of Medicine, Tel Aviv University, Israel. She completed residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Medical College of Wisconsin and a fellowship in Maternal-Fetal





Medicine at Northwestern University. Dr. Palatnik's research focuses on optimizing management of gestational diabetes and hypertensive disorders of pregnancy, reducing maternal health disparities, and improving health outcomes for birthing people during and after pregnancy. Dr. Palatnik runs a large clinical research division in the MCW Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology and is the primary investigator for several NIH and industry-funded clinical trials involving birthing people. Dr. Palatnik published over 90 peer-reviewed publications in clinical obstetrics and patient-centered outcomes research. She is passionate about mentoring and training the next generation of clinicians-researchers and close to half of her publications have a mentee or trainee as a first author.

***Session: Panelist, Navigating the Complexities of Community Engagement in All Spaces***



***Jackie Ramsey, MA, Government Grants and Contracts Manager, The Salvation Army Milwaukee County Social Services; Volunteer, StreetLife Communities***

Jackie Ramsey earned a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Richmond with a double major in Spanish and what was then called Third World Studies and a Master of Arts in Spanish from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Over the next 30 years, she taught Spanish at four different universities. Since 2019, Ms. Ramsey has worked for The Salvation Army Milwaukee County Social Services, first in Emergency Services and currently as

Government Grants and Contracts Manager. Jackie began volunteering with her husband Max Ramsey in 2000, when he started a homeless outreach program in Milwaukee that has since been called StreetLife Communities. Over the years, she has been involved in brainstorming, operations, logistics, planning, development, and street outreach. They have enjoyed working closely together in community building through outreach and a variety of ministries.

***Session: Panelist, Breakout 4–Involving Students in Community-Academic Collaboration***



**Viola Rembert, Executive Director, HeartLove Place, Milwaukee, WI**

Ms. Rembert is a native of New York City and moved to Milwaukee in 1991. She has worked for more than 30 years in the non-profit field serving youth and families in NYC, Cleveland and Milwaukee. Ms. Rembert has served for the past 14 years as the Executive Director of HeartLove Place in Milwaukee. She enjoys traveling, exercise, music, and enjoying life! Her philosophy for life is to live in your purpose, show love to self and others, and be God's light in this world!

**Session: Panelist, Breakout 1-Community-Academic Partnerships: Using a Community Engagement Framework**

**Vera Roddy, Veteran Advocate, Artful Warriors**

Ms. Roddy served in the US Air Force/Air Force Reserves from 1977-1992. Her first tour of duty was as an Aircraft Sub-Systems Mechanic in the Eifel Mountains of Germany. As an activated Reservist for the 1991 Gulf War she served as a Mental Health Technician for an Aeromedical Evacuation Unit on the boarder of Iraq and Saudi Arabia. Her civilian career included nine years as a Psychometrician in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and two years as a Case Manager in the Veterans Assistance Program specializing in Women Veterans, Disabled Veterans, and Families of Veterans experiencing homelessness. Since retiring in 2002 she has volunteered countless hours in the veterans' community providing a hand up, not a hand out, to her fellow veterans. n 2010 she started the Artful Warriors, a grass-roots peer-lead group, for veterans and community partners to connect in creative endeavors.



Vera continues to participate in reaching out to the Veterans community through the MCW Warrior Partnership Program, Warriors Path Program researching Moral Injury with MCW Assistant Professor Katinka Hooyer, PhD, serves as a board member on the Orban Foundation founded by Dr (Honorary-MCW) Michael Orban, and as a board member for Warrior Songs a veterans story-to-music program. In 2023, she was awarded the MCW President's Community Engagement Award. Her most critical role to date is serving as a Consumer Reviewer for the Department of Defense, Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program, where her expertise is toxic exposure of military personnel, veterans, and family members. Ms. Roddy holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology and a Certificate in Trauma Counseling from the University of Wisconsin- Milwaukee.

***Session: Panelist, Breakout 1–Community-Academic Partnerships: Using a Community Engagement Framework***



***Leslie Ruffalo, PhD, MS, Associate Professor and Co-Director of Medical Student Education, Department of Family and Community Medicine, Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW)***

Dr. Ruffalo is a community-engaged health researcher and educator, with appointments in several departments. Her research focuses on using community-engaged research principles to address health issues, such as veteran health, food security, school-based health, and rural health. She also serves as the course director for several courses in the medical school and graduate school.

***Session: Panelist, Breakout 1–Community-Academic Partnerships: Using a Community Engagement Framework***



**Jacqueline Schram, PhD, *Director of Public Affairs and Special Assistant for Native American Affairs, Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion, Marquette University***

Dr. Schram has made it her life's mission to open the door of higher education to Native communities. She is passionate about building rich collaborations between Marquette University and Indigenous communities both locally and beyond. "Supporting a latticework of curricula, programs, celebrations and initiatives that

respectfully enriches cross-cultural understanding is at the core of my creation story. This story has many eddies, but I am always encouraged by the Native American students who step through Marquette's doors. Their path to this special higher education environment is not as well worn as those of their peers and it is what inspires me to press down the edges that might otherwise serve as obstacles."

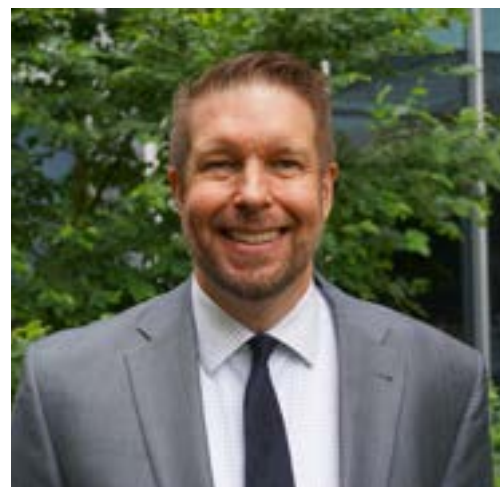
**Session: Panelist, Breakout 2–Building Respect and Equity in Community-Academic Collaborations**

**Christopher Simenz, PhD, MS, *Associate Professor and Associate Director for the MPH and DrPH Programs in Public Health, Institute for Health & Equity, Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW)***

Dr. Simenz has spent the past 20 years working in collaboration with numerous partners in community-engaged research, policy, and systems change focused on the social determinants of health (SDOH), public and community health, and wellness.

Dr. Simenz and colleagues have created and operationalized policy and systems changes focused on equitable health improvement via physical activity for a broad range of people, from children to senior refugees.

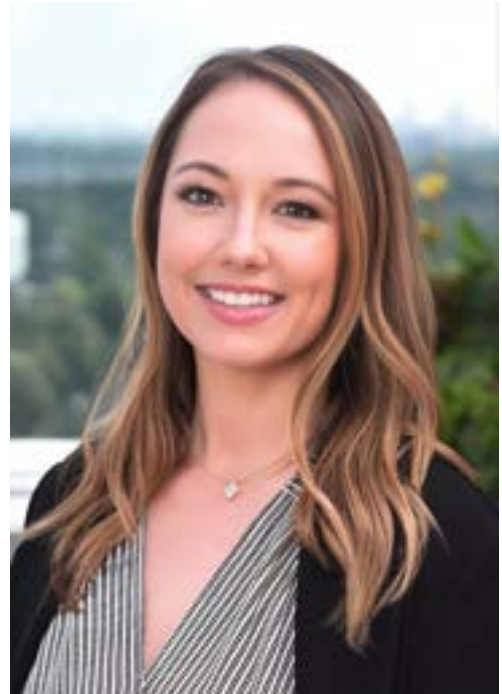
**Session: Moderator, Breakout 1–Community-Academic Partnerships: Using a Community Engagement Framework**





**Annika Swenson, MPH, *Doctorate of Public Health (DrPH) student Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW)***

Ms. Swenson is currently pursuing a DrPH at MCW. Her dissertation will focus on "Living with Cancer in Rural America: A Phenomenological Study in Iowa County, Wisconsin," underscoring her commitment to enhancing cancer care in rural areas. Her clinical research career began in 2005 at MCW with Bone Marrow Transplant clinical trials. She has spent the last 17 years at a large pharmaceutical company, now leading the U.S. field medical team as National Director for Solid Tumor Field Medical, where she plays a crucial role in oncology drug development and medical affairs. Ms. Swenson also holds a Master of Public Health (MPH) from MCW and serves on the Steering Committee for the Wisconsin Cancer Collaborative, advocating for equitable access to cancer care. Originally from rural Northern Wisconsin, she now lives in rural Southwest Wisconsin with her husband and three young children, maintaining a strong connection to her roots while actively contributing to her community and the field of cancer research.



***Session: Panelist, Breakout 2–Building Respect and Equity in Community-Academic Collaborations***



**Alexa Weber, medical student, Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW)**

Ms. Weber is a second-year medical student at MCW-Milwaukee studying to become a Family Medicine physician. Prior to entering medical school, she worked for Madison Street Medicine, an organization providing healthcare and social support to individuals experiencing homelessness. Since moving to Milwaukee in 2022, Ms. Weber has been regularly involved with StreetLife Communities outreaching and providing food, clothing, and harm reduction supplies to unhoused people. She has also been an active

leader with MCW's Street Medicine Outreach Group, Addiction Medicine and Harm Reduction Organization, and Family Medicine Student Association. Ms. Weber was selected as this year's Community Outreach and Engagement award winner through MCW's Student Assembly, and hopes to continue improving the health of her community through service and partnership, and inspiring her fellow students and future colleagues to do the same.

**Session: Panelist, Breakout 4–Involving Students in Community-Academic Collaboration**



**Toni Whitaker, Program Manager, Department of Radiology, Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW)**

Ms. Whitaker is a thought-leader and in her role at MCW supports collaborative efforts around Faculty and Staff Promotion, Mentorship, Staff Wellness, Resident Lunch and Learn Experiences, and Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging impact initiatives. She creates and leads interactive learning and growth experiences that have been attended by over 7,000 persons. Her

fervent and determined service-driven spirit to impact and empower lives led her to become a certified community-based doula, providing personalized and caring doula services to birthing persons and their family community while forging relationships with healthcare partners. She is also grateful to serve as a Mental Health First Aid Instructor, helping to provide practical skillsets to participants in aiding loved ones to cope successfully when mental health challenges arise. But, her most important role is that of a mother of two fearless and compassionate daughters.

***Co-facilitator, Navigating the Complexities of Community Engagement in All Spaces***

***Otis Winstead, Executive Director,  
Great Lakes Dryhootch, Milwaukee, WI***

Mr. Winstead leads Dryhootch, a Veteran non-profit organization based in Milwaukee. He is a Vietnam-era Veteran who has dedicated his life to serving the community. His heart can be found walking alongside other Veterans and providing peer support. Over the past several years, he has served in multiple leadership roles in the community and has worked on multiple research projects in collaboration with MCW to improve



Veteran re-integration into civilian life and recovery from trauma and substance abuse. In 2021, Mr. Winstead was part of a team of community health workers who were awarded the MCW President's Community Engagement Award for their efforts during the COVID pandemic. He was instrumental in organizing the African American Veterans Memorial wall at the Milwaukee War Memorial building. The effort was decades in the making, and he catalyzed the work and aspirations of many organizations including the Milwaukee NAACP, the Wisconsin Black Historical Society, and the National Association for Black Veterans to make this memorial a reality.

***Session: Speaker, Introduction of Dryhootch***





**Staci Young, PhD, Senior Associate Dean for Community Engagement; Professor, Department of Family and Community Medicine, Director, Office of Community Engagement; Director of the Center for Healthy Communities and Research; Inaugural Faculty Director, ThriveOn Collaboration; Associate Director, Community Outreach and Engagement, Cancer Center, Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW)**

In addition to Dr. Young's leadership roles at MCW, she teaches graduate courses and mentors students for MCW's PhD in Public and

Community Health program, is a founding faculty member in the DrPH program, and serves as a research faculty advisor for the student-run Saturday Clinic for the Uninsured. As a medical sociologist, her work demonstrates a deep commitment to examining structural barriers and conditions that contribute to health disparities. Dr. Young has been the Principal Investigator for multiple research projects with longstanding local and statewide partners, addressing the public and community health workforce, and the role of safety net clinics in ensuring access to healthcare for the uninsured. She is a co-investigator for NIH-funded studies related to cancer prevention and disparities among racial and ethnic minority women. She works in partnership with the Benedict Center – addressing women's exposure to violence – and worked to increase access to safe shelter and housing for women in street-based sex work.

**Session: Speaker, Community Engagement: Setting the Context; Speaker, Introduction of Afternoon Keynote**



## ***2024 Conference Planning Committee***

**Ella Dunbar, MEd**

**Brian Jackson, PhD**  
Assistant Professor  
*Institute for Health and Equity*

**Shary Pérez Torres, MPH**  
Health Research Program Coordinator  
*United Community Center*

**Tanya Potter, MA**  
T-SBIRT Project Coordinator  
*Workforce Resource, Inc.*

**Azure'De (DeDe) Williams**  
Executive Director  
*Milwaukee Area Health Education Center*

**Song-Xiong-Buck**  
Director of Older Adults Center  
*Milwaukee Christian Center*

*The team of the  
Medical College of Wisconsin  
Office of Community Engagement  
thank you for joining us today!*

**Staci Young, PhD**  
Senior Associate Dean for Community  
Engagement and Professor

**Laila Azam, PhD, MBA**  
Research Scientist II

**Rebecca Bernstein, MD, MS**  
Associate Professor

**Kristine Burke, MPH, MSW**  
Program Coordinator

**Yesica Desarden**  
Program Coordinator

**Zeno Franco, PhD**  
Associate Professor

**Kelsey Heindel**  
Program Coordinator

**Ayodele Idowu, MBA**  
Business Operations Coordinator

**Jai Lor**  
Administrative Associate

**David Nelson, PhD, MS**  
Professor

**Sarah O'Connor, MS**  
Program Director

**Madhumita Ravikumar, MS, BDS**  
Data Analytics Consultant

**Leslie Ruffalo, PhD, MS**  
Associate Professor

**Christopher Simenz, PhD, MS**  
Assistant Professor



## ***2024 MCW President's Community Engagement Award***

**The President's Community Engagement Award  
annually recognizes exemplary community-  
academic partnerships, community-engaged  
research and community outreach activities of  
faculty, staff, students and community partners  
of MCW.**

**Join us in congratulating this year's winners!**

### **Community Partners**

**Yvonne D. Greer, DrPH, RD CD, Y-EAT Right  
and**

**Darlene Russell, MSM Greater Milwaukee Foundation**

### **MCW Student**

**Ana Maria Viteri, MCW-Milwaukee medical student**

### **MCW Staff**

**Tricia Monroe, MEd, MA, CHES, Comprehensive Injury Center**

### **MCW Faculty**

**Melinda Stolley, PhD, Department of Medicine**

MCW Community Engagement

# DONATION DRIVE: NON-PERISHABLE FOOD ITEMS

The Office of Community Engagement is collecting non-perishable food items for Dryhootch, a Milwaukee-based non-profit organization formed by combat veterans to help veterans in their return home.



Scan QR code to donate via Amazon Wishlist

**May 1- May 31, you can help by:**

- Dropping off your donation in bins at MCW-Milwaukee campus.
- Bring your donation to the President's Community Engagement Award Luncheon at the MCW-Milwaukee campus. Registration is required.
- Purchase items from the Amazon wishlist. Scan code above.

Questions? Contact Jai Lor in the MCW Office of Community Engagement  
jlor@mcw.edu | 414-955-4434

MCW Community Engagement

# ENGAGEMENT HUB

The Office of Community Engagement is preparing to launch a new platform for MCW faculty & staff to discover volunteer opportunities that support local community-based organizations in a meaningful and useful way.

**The Engagement Hub is a bi-directional effort for the benefit of community-based organizations & MCW:**

- Access to a free volunteer management system through GivePulse
- Engage MCW faculty & staff in volunteer opportunities to support your mission

**All in one platform with the opportunity to:**

- Share volunteer opportunities for MCW faculty & staff to get involved in
- Manage volunteers (promote events, create shifts, verify hours)
- Track impact for long-term metrics and easy reporting



Interested in learning more or creating a profile for your organization? Scan the QR code to fill out a brief form!



# MCW Community Engagement **RECOGNITION**

## **Carnegie Community Engagement Classification**

In 2015, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, which works to develop networks of ideas and institutions to advance teaching and learning, awarded the Community Engagement Classification to the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) in recognition of MCW's community engagement practices. The Carnegie Community Engagement Classification designation for MCW is an honor and a monumental achievement, as it recognizes the innumerable exemplary campus-wide programs and initiatives that are focused on excellence in community engagement and on serving the needs of our communities. MCW is now one of four medical schools nationwide that have received this honor.



## **Richard Guarasci Award for Institutional Transformation**



**Campus Compact**

The Richard Guarasci Award for Institutional Transformation recognizes institutions that have successfully implemented institution-wide efforts to address issues of public concern by aligning teaching, research, practice, and values in service of the common good. As a national leader in community engagement, the Medical College of Wisconsin was recognized for this award in 2020 for integrating engagement into research, education, and clinical care with the goal of advancing health policy and advocacy and addressing the social determinants of health. "Through initiatives like [Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin endowment] and its extended community-engaged research, the Medical College of Wisconsin demonstrates a deep strategic commitment to community, embracing its responsibility as a place-based institution to address diverse health needs throughout Wisconsin."



# Connect with us



Scan to join our mailing list, learn about our programming, common community engagement terms and principles, and explore other valuable resources:

[www.mcw.edu/departments/community-engagement](http://www.mcw.edu/departments/community-engagement) or  
email us at [communityengagement@mcw.edu](mailto:communityengagement@mcw.edu)