

MCW ENGAGE

Bridging Gaps and Building Trust Through Effective Communication

8th Annual Community Engagement Spring Conference

May 8, 2025
ThriveOn King, Milwaukee



Community Engagement

Welcome to MCW Engage 2025!

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to our 8th annual community engagement conference, "Bridging Gaps and Building Trust Through Effective Communication." This year, we come together to explore how intentional, inclusive, and responsive communication can strengthen our relationships and deepen trust. Today, we will uplift the diverse ways communication shapes and supports meaningful community engagement.



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 learning, reflection, and connection. We are thrilled to have a wide array of speakers and participants from various sectors, community-based organizations, and institutions who will bring unique insights to community-engaged practices.


We hope the sessions inspire you and offer tools you can use to enhance your own work. Thank you for your commitment to building stronger, more connected communities through the power of communication!

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



Versiti Blood Center of Wisconsin is offering blood typing throughout the day!
Please see the registration table, or [page 21](#) for more information.

8:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.

Registration and Light Breakfast by Apple Spice

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

Please note, all conference sessions are in Neighborhood Hall unless otherwise noted.

9:00 a.m. - 9:05 a.m.

General Welcome

Yesica Desarden

Program Coordinator III, Office of Community Engagement, MCW

9:05 a.m. - 9:10 a.m.

Welcome to ThriveOn King

Cydney Key

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

9:10 a.m. - 9:25 a.m.

Community Engagement: Setting the Context

Staci Young, PhD

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

9:25 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.

Keynote Introduction

Rebecca Bernstein, MD, MS

Associate Professor, Family and Community Medicine, MCW

9:30 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.

Morning Keynote

“The Right Words at the Right Time: Navigating Health Communication in Uncertain Times”

Benjamin Weston, MD, MPH, FAEMS

Associate Professor, Emergency Medicine, MCW

Chief Health Policy Advisor, Milwaukee County

Chief Medical Director, Milwaukee County Office of Emergency Management

Participants will explore strategies for communicating amid uncertainty, informed by Dr. Weston’s diverse experience across clinical practice, health policy, research, and leadership.

10:15 a.m. - 10:35 a.m.

Structured Break

Option 1: Networking

Leslie Ruffalo, PhD, MS

Associate Professor, Family and Community Medicine, MCW

- Engage in intentional, meaningful conversations that spark new relationships and strengthen existing ones through a guided networking session.

Option 2: ThriveOn King Self-Guided Tour

- Participate in a self-guided tour of the first floor of the newly redeveloped ThriveOn King.

Option 3: Your Well-Being: Mental Health, Stress, and Self-Care

Teri Hecker

Wellness and Benefits Coordinator, Office of Human Resources, MCW

- Prioritize your mental health and well-being in this engaging session focused on mental health, managing stress, and building a balanced lifestyle. Participants will explore six key areas of well-being through an interactive balanced lifestyle assessment and learn simple, practical tips for self-care.



10:35 a.m. - 10:40 a.m.

Transition Time

10:40 a.m. - 11:40/11:50 a.m.

Concurrent Breakout Sessions

10:40 a.m.-11:40 a.m.

SESSION 1: Data Visualization and Sharing (Neighborhood Hall)

Rohan Katti, MPH

Program Manager for Data Systems, Data You Can Use

This session will focus on the best practices in engaging with communities using data. Topics will include incorporating various learning styles, effective communication of data, ethics around data sharing, visualization strategies, and more.

10:40-11:50 a.m.


SESSION 2: Effective Communication and Trust Building (Room 3600)

Alverno Devine, DDiv, *Program Manager I* and Kimara Ellefson, MBA, EdD,
National Director of Strategy and Partnerships - Kern National Network for Flourishing in Medicine

Participants will explore how to cultivate relationships across lines of difference through the practice of bridging as a facilitative process. With a balance of theory and skill-based practice, workshop participants will gain knowledge of foundational bridging skills and begin to apply them. Through the methods of individual reflection, partner exercises and group discussion, the workshop will invite participants' perspectives and encourage them to consider how they will create or strengthen their own ongoing practice for bridging within their environments.

11:40 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.

Transition Time



11:45 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.

Lunch by Cafe Corazon

12:30 p.m. - 12:40 p.m.

**Introduction of Missionary Currie for Women and Children Inc.,
*Featured Partner of OCE's May Supply Drive***

- Jessica Currie, *Founder, Missionary Currie for Women and Children, Inc.*
- David Nelson, PhD, MS, *Professor, Family and Community Medicine, MCW*

12:40 p.m. - 12:45 p.m.

Keynote Introduction

Staci Young, PhD

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

12:45 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Afternoon Keynote

“Authentic Engagement: YES, It Requires Being All In!”

Tammy Belton-Davis

Founder and President, Athena Communications

This keynote focuses on the fundamental belief that we have to be “all in” in our commitment and investment. Participants will learn strategies for engagement from an award-winning PR and equity strategist who is the founder and president of Athena Communications and an adjunct professor in the Diederich College of Communications at Marquette University.

1:30 p.m. - 2:20 p.m.

Community Driven Media Strategy Panel

Facilitator:

Karen Dotson, MHSA

Program Director II, All of Us Research Program, Clinical and Translational Science Institute, MCW

Panelists:

- Sandra Dempsey, *Founder, Source TEN*
- Kristyn Ertl, MPH, *Program Manager I, Cancer Center, MCW (formerly with All of Us Research Program)*
- Nancy Hernandez, *President and Founder, ABRAZO Marketing*
- Linda Jackson-Cocroft, *Founder and Publisher, Black Women 50+ Health & Lifestyles Magazine*
- Douglas Kelly, *Vice President of Sales, WNOV Radio*

Attendees will meet the community partners and MCW team who tackled the outreach and engagement challenges inherent in the implementation of the *All of Us* Research Program within a culturally complex environment. Participants will learn about the creative, unconventional, and deeply collaborative approach panelists took to engaging Milwaukee's Latino and African American communities in the program, and the importance of sustained multi-level investment in community partners.

2:20 p.m. - 3:20 p.m.

From Insight to Impact: My Next Step in Building Trust

Laila Azam, PhD, MBA, *Research Scientist II, Emergency Medicine and*

Debra Nevels, MSHCM, Program Manager II, Community Outreach and Engagement, Cancer Center, MCW

This interactive session will guide participants in turning the day's insights into practical actions. Through personal reflection and small group discussions, they will identify concrete steps to strengthen communication and build trust in their daily work. The session will conclude with an optional pledge card to promote accountability and inspire lasting change.

3:20 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Closing Remarks

David Nelson, PhD, MS

Professor, Family and Community Medicine, MCW

Raffle winners
announced!
(must be
present to win)

WELCOME TO THRIVEON KING: PLACES AND SPACES

Please connect with conference staff for help with wayfinding.



Lactation Room - lactation rooms can be found on each floor of ThriveOn King. The first floor lactation room can be found by turning right at the end of the south corridor (behind the stage).



Reflection and Prayer Room - this room can be used as a quiet place to reflect or pray. This room (Wellness Lab, room 1033) is located on the first floor of ThriveOn King behind Kinship Cafe.



Meeting Space - should you need a private space to attend to meetings, calls, or other needs, Community Room C1036 is available. This can be found in the hallway, north of Kinship Cafe.

Elevators and stairwells require badge access. Please note: without a badge, you may become locked in the stairwell and will only be able to exit to the outside. If you need assistance, please find OCE staff.



Network: ThriveOn King-Public
Password: TO-MCW-Guest



KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Benjamin Weston, MD, MPH, FAEMS

*Associate Professor, Emergency Medicine, MCW
Chief Health Policy Advisor, Milwaukee County*

Dr. Weston is an Associate Professor in the Department of Emergency Medicine at the Medical College of Wisconsin. He also serves as Chief Health Policy Advisor for Milwaukee County, advancing initiatives to improve the health and well-being of over one million residents. In his role as Chief Medical Director for the Milwaukee County Office of Emergency Management, he oversees medical services for 15 fire departments, managing more than 120,000 patient encounters annually.

A nationally recognized leader, Dr. Weston was recently named one of seven fellows to the prestigious National Academy of Medicine. His expertise has been featured by MSNBC, CNN, BBC, and *The New York Times*, and he has provided medical oversight for organizations including the NFL, NBA, MLB, IndyCar, and USA Triathlon.

Clinically, Dr. Weston practices emergency medicine at Froedtert Hospital, a level 1 trauma center. He is also an NIH-funded researcher with scholarly interests in prehospital care, resuscitation, health equity, and public health surveillance.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Tammy Belton-Davis

Founder and President, Athena Communications



Tammy Belton-Davis is the founder and president of Athena Communications, a brand management and government affairs firm specializing in strategic communications, equity and inclusion practices, and media engagement. Named a Women of Influence by the *Milwaukee Business Journal*, Tammy is an award-winning PR and equity strategist.

Her work has earned her numerous honors, including being named a 2023 Notable BIPOC Executive honoree and a 2021 Notable Alumni honoree by the *Biz Times*. She also received the inaugural Governor's Tourism Award for Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion for her leadership in building a more welcoming Wisconsin.

Prior to launching Athena in 2009, Tammy held leadership roles in city government and community-based organizations. Tammy is an active member of the Greater Milwaukee community, serving on several boards, including Alverno College and Milwaukee Rep, and is active in organizations such as TEMPO Milwaukee, Institute for Women's Leadership at Marquette University, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., among others.

She is a proud Alverno College alumna and enjoys reading, national politics, and being a wife and mother.

**Laila Azam, PhD, MBA, Research Scientist II,
Emergency Medicine, MCW**

Dr. Azam is a public health researcher and educator at MCW. 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 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 youth 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: From Insight to Impact: My Next Step in Building Trust



**Rebecca Bernstein, MD, MS, Associate Professor,
Family and Community Medicine, 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 Scholarly Concentration, a longitudinal course focused on community

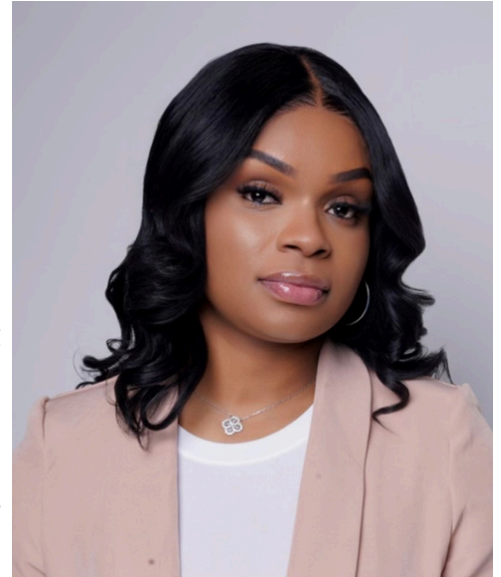
engagement and health equity. She sees patients and precept residents at the Ascension All Saints Family Medicine Residency and Froedtert & MCW South Side Family Medicine Residency program. Her special interests include health disparities, preventive health, oral health, and refugee health.

Session: Keynote Introduction, Dr. Weston

**Jessica Currie, Founder and Executive Director,
Missionary Currie Inc.**

Jessica is the Founder and Executive Director of Missionary Currie for Women and Children Inc., a nonprofit dedicated to supporting underserved families in Southeast Wisconsin. Through transitional housing, financial literacy workshops, free clothing, and other essential resources, her organization offers vital support to those in need. Jessica's passion for service was shaped by her own experiences with homelessness and teenage motherhood. In 2019, she hosted her first community baby shower to support others facing similar challenges—an event that sparked a growing movement. A licensed missionary, evangelist, community health worker, and realtor, Jessica is committed to guiding families toward homeownership while ministering to their emotional and spiritual well-being. Her work has received national recognition, including features in magazines and an appearance on the Jennifer Hudson Show.

Session: Donation Drive Community Partner Representative



Sandra Dempsey, Founder, Source TEN Creative

Sandra is a sought-after producer, influencer, and marketing advisor. Her passion and creativity, paired with powerful business acumen, have solidified Sandra as a trusted community leader. A native of Mexico who has lived and worked in the U.S. for over 20 years, Sandra's career has included working for major media organizations like ESPN and Telemundo before launching her own successful business, Source TEN, which specializes in communications, Hispanic marketing consulting, storytelling, and video production. She also proudly co-founded Estamos Unidos US, a bilingual, multi-platform brand created to showcase Milwaukee experiences with high energy and cultural authenticity, adding health and wellness content to make it an even more wholesome brand. Among other recognitions, Sandra's latest "Connecting Community" award by Milwaukee Downtown Bid #21 recognizes her ability to create and engage the Latino Community in Milwaukee. Her content agency has been recognized on the top 10 video production agencies in Milwaukee by national organizations. On the weekends, Sandra can be found hiking and boating throughout Wisconsin with her husband, three kids, and their two German Shorthair Pointers, named Archie and Arlo.

Session: Community Driven Media Panel (Panelist)



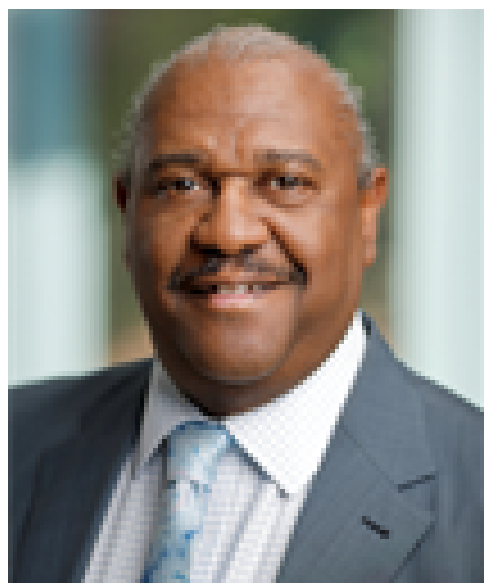
Yesica Desarden, Program Coordinator III, Office of Community Engagement, MCW

Yesica has been with the MCW Office of Community Engagement (OCE) for over 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. Yesica graduated from Alverno College with a Bachelor of Arts in Communications.

Session: General Welcome

Alverno Devine, DDiv, Program Manager I, Kern National Network for Flourishing in Medicine, MCW

Guided by the values of integrity, respect, and innovation, Dr. Devine currently serves as a Program Manager and seasoned Bridging Differences Facilitator for the Kern National Network for Flourishing in Medicine (KNN). Each day presents a distinct opportunity to advance the KNN movement, fostering cultures of flourishing and bridging in academic medicine. In a multifaceted career, Dr. Devine brings a unique blend of skills and experiences dedicated to cultural reconciliation, brave space creation for effective dialogue and depolarization within academic communities.



Session: Bridging Toward Flourishing: Forming Stronger Communities



Karen Dotson, MHSA, Program Director II, Clinical and Translational Science Institute, MCW

Karen Dotson, a Milwaukee native, has a passion for engaging with local, diverse communities, and has an extensive history of community service both locally and nationally. Since 2020, Karen has served as Program Director for the All of Us Research Program (AoU) at MCW. In this role, she has guided AoU's outreach and engagement efforts, in addition to overseeing day-to-day operations for the program. Her responsibilities for the AoU include recruiting thousands of ethnically and racially diverse individuals from across the Greater Milwaukee Metro Region, to ensure the evolution of precision medicine encompasses the needs of all people. She currently hosts a WNOV radio show with Dr. Kevin Izard, "At the Table," and partners with the MCW Cancer Center. In 2023 she received the MCW President's Community Engagement Award, recognizing her bidirectional communication, commitment to equity, and the balancing of power between small community organizations and institutions such as MCW.

Session: Community Driven Media Panel (Moderator)

Kimara Ellefson, MBA, EdD, National Director of Strategy and Partnerships, Kern National Network for Flourishing in Medicine

Dr. Ellefson is a visionary leader, culture strategist and consultant, and frequent keynote speaker on leadership, organizational development, and systems change. As the national director of strategy and partnerships for the Kern National Network for Flourishing in Medicine (KNN), she partners with medical schools and healthcare organizations across the country to identify opportunities to shape organizational cultures of human flourishing and inspire action at multiple institutional levels. She also provides leadership for the KNN program office, developing strategic plans that have enabled the KNN to grow from a network of seven founding medical schools to a vibrant movement of healthcare organizations engaged in various ways. Dr. Ellefson's research interests include leadership development for flourishing grounded in Feminist Relational Theory (FRT), praxis and community. Her work aims to explore whether a new paradigm for leadership and followership could support Ecosystem-Wide Flourishing (EWF) in medicine.



Session: Bridging Toward Flourishing: Forming Stronger Communities

**Kristyn Ertl, MPH, Program Manager I,
Cancer Center, MCW**

Kristyn has a background in health research with an emphasis on chronic disease prevention and health promotion. She has worked at MCW for nearly 20 years, starting as a research assistant at the VA Medical Center in Milwaukee and advancing to her current position as program manager for the Cancer Center's Geospatial, Epidemiology and Outcomes Shared Resource. She has co-authored numerous publications covering community based participatory research involving military veterans and addressing such topics as the role of peer support in blood pressure reduction, weight management, diabetes prevention, and mental health. Prior to her current position, Kristyn was one of three program managers for the All of Us Research Program at MCW. Her role with All of Us involved communications, marketing, media, and administration.



Session: Community Driven Media Panel (Panelist)



**Teri Hecker, Wellness and Benefits Consultant,
Office of Human Resources, MCW**

Teri joined MCW in 2012 and currently serves as MCW's Wellness and Benefits Consultant with the responsibility of administering MCWell360, MCW's Wellness Program for all faculty and staff. She has over 20 years of benefits experience and 10+ years in managing wellness programs. Teri serves on several committees including MCW's Wellness Collaborative Committee and the Suicide Prevention Council. Teri has completed QPR, Peer Supporter and Mental Health First Aid Training.

She has also completed the Wellness Council's Well Workplace University Program – Linking Wellness Initiatives to Employee Well-Being and Employee Benefit Design as well as MCW's Leadership Academy (May 2024). She recently completed Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) facilitator training to teach MHFA. Teri holds an Associate Degree in Business Mid-Management.

Session: Wellness and Reflection Structured Break

***Nancy Hernandez, President and Founder,
ABRAZO Marketing & Communication***

Nancy is the president and founder of ABRAZO Marketing & Communication, a full-service agency dedicated to connecting organizations with diverse audiences for over 20 years. She also leads the Hispanic Collaborative, a regional initiative involving 500+ partners working to improve Latino economic opportunity and move Milwaukee into the Top 10 on the Hispanic Well-Being Index. Nancy serves on the boards of Society Insurance, Marquette University, the Medical College of Wisconsin, and United Way. She is a past president of TEMPO Milwaukee and a founder of Hispanic Professionals of Greater Milwaukee. She is the recipient of the Business Journal's Driver of Diversity Award and Entrepreneur of the Year for Marquette University College of Business.

Session: Community Driven Media Panel (Panelist)



***Linda Jackson-Cocroft, Founder and Publisher,
Black Women 50+ Health & Lifestyles Magazine***

For over 22 years, Linda has focused on empowering Black women by exploring their challenges, hopes, fears, and triumphs. Drawing on a background in nonprofits and social services, she has shared the stories of hundreds of women—from celebrities to HIV/AIDS patients, incarcerated women, professionals, entrepreneurs, and the terminally ill—through her writing and media work. Her career includes roles as a stenographer, voice-over talent, radio host, and Director of Public Information at the Social Development Commission. Linda is a member of the International Association of Sickle Cell Disease, National Association of Black Journalists-WI Chapter, and the Wisconsin Alzheimer's Institute Community Advisory Board, among others.

Session: Community Driven Media Panel (Panelist)

Rohan Katti, MPH, Program Manager, Data Systems, Data You Can Use

Rohan is a longtime resident of Milwaukee and strives to advance equity in the community. He provides the ability to create and maintain data systems and the skills to engage with various community stakeholders. Rohan works closely with various organizations to develop, analyze, visualize, and interpret numerous types of data through his role as Program Manager for Data Systems at Data You Can Use. Data You Can Use is a diverse group of local professionals who help people access data and make it useful in improving community conditions in Milwaukee neighborhoods and across Wisconsin by providing data tools, technical assistance, and strategic partnership. Data You Can Use helps connect people who need data to people who have data and assist in accessing, analyzing, translating, interpreting, and presenting data.

Session: Data Visualization and Sharing



Douglas Kelley, VP Sales, WNOV 106.5fm/860am

Douglas, a proud Milwaukee native, is a committed leader with a strong foundation in communication, education, and community service. As a Marquette University graduate, with a degree in Business Administration and a minor in Interpersonal Communication, he combines financial expertise with a passion for human connection. He served as the first Black President of Marquette's National Alumni Board of Directors and has been an active member of the Greater Galilee Missionary Baptist Church for many years. A devoted father of two

sons, Douglas emphasizes integrity, service, and faith, encouraging his children to value family, community, and giving back through church and local involvement.

Session: Community Driven Media Panel (Panelist)



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

Cydney 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, Cydney served as the Director of Operations at America's Black Holocaust Museum during its historic reemergence after a 14-year closure.

Session: Welcome to ThriveOn King

Debra R. Nevels, MSHCM, Program Manager II, Cancer Center, MCW

Debra currently works as the Program Manager for Community Outreach and Engagement for the MCW Cancer Center. Prior to coming to MCW, Debra worked as a Manager for Health Systems - Hospitals Wisconsin for the American Cancer Society (7 years). She is also currently Adjunct Faculty at Concordia University in the College of the Health Services Administration program. Her experience is extensively rooted in health care; however, it all culminates with the interest in educating others.

She has worked with under-resourced populations in Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, and Texas. Her innovative initiatives for community outreach and community building have impacted populations throughout the country; however, her passion remains with promoting health education for those impacted negatively by injustices in all forms.

Session: From Insight to Impact: My Next Step in Building Trust





**David Nelson, PhD, MS, Professor,
Family and Community Medicine, 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: Introduction of Missionary Currie for Women and Children, Inc.

**Leslie Ruffalo, PhD, MS, Associate Professor,
Family and Community Medicine, 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: Speed Networking Structured Break





Staci Young, PhD, Senior Associate Dean for Community Engagement; Professor, Family and Community Medicine; Director, Office of Community Engagement; Director, Center for Healthy Communities and Research; Inaugural Faculty Director, ThriveOn Collaboration; Associate Director, Community Outreach and Engagement, Cancer Center, 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: Community Engagement: Setting the Context

Thanks to **Versiti Blood Center of Wisconsin**
for offering blood typing throughout the day!

*To have your blood typed today during the conference,
sign up by scanning or tapping the QR code below:*

Do You Know Your Blood Type?

*Find out your blood type today — because
knowledge is power, and power can save lives.*

- 💧 Knowing your blood type is key
- 💧 It's quick. It's simple. It's smart.
- 💧 It opens the door to life-saving opportunities — like becoming a blood donor



*Versiti Blood Center of Wisconsin is onsite today at
ThriveOn King! If you sign up to donate blood, you are
entered to win a giveaway!*



To learn more about
Versiti, tap on the image

MCW's journey to apply for

2026 CARNEGIE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RE-CLASSIFICATION

The Carnegie Community Engagement Classification is an elective classification for academic institutions that demonstrate a deep commitment to community engagement. The classification acknowledges universities that excel in fostering meaningful, sustained partnerships with communities, emphasizing mutual benefit and reciprocity. MCW first earned this classification in 2015.



Since July 2024, the Office of Community Engagement (OCE) has led the institution-wide reclassification effort. The self-study process has been a powerful reminder of the depth and breadth of community engagement taking place across the institution—through departments, institutes, centers, offices, schools, and campuses. It also highlighted valuable opportunities for continued growth and improvement. OCE's effort culminated in the submission of MCW's application for Carnegie Community Engagement Re-Classification in April 2025. A decision on re-classification is expected in early 2026.

This achievement reflects the contributions of many staff, faculty, and students across MCW, as well as community partners. OCE extends its sincere gratitude to the following individuals for their vital contributions.

Janet Anderson; MCW-Green Bay
Jennifer Apps, PhD; MCW
Erica Arrington, MD; MCW
Laila Azam, PhD, MBA; MCW
Courtney Barry, PsyD, MS; MCW
Nathan Berken; MCW
Cassidy Berns, MSE; MCW
Joanne Bernstein, MD; MCW
Rebecca Bernstein, PhD, MS; MCW

Kirsten Beyer, PhD, MPH, MS; MCW
Kevin Boggs, MBA, PhD; MCW
Holly Botsford; MCW
Michelle Broaddus, PhD; MCW
Kelli Brown, DrPH, MPH; MCW
Jenny Bultman, PMP; MCW
Kristine Burke, MPH, MSW; MCW
Danielle Burton; MCW-Green Bay
Annette Caraulia, MS; MCW

Laura Cassidy, PhD, MS; MCW
Al Castro, MS, CSW; United Community Center
Tobi Cawthra, MPH; MCW
Benjamin Close; MCW-Milwaukee
Venus Coates, MBA; MCW
Kim Contardi, MPH; MCW
Christopher Davis, MD, MPH; MCW
Jessica De Santis, PhD; MCW
Michael DeBisschop, PharmD; MCW
Matthew Dellinger, PhD; MCW
Terri deRoon-Cassini, PhD, MS; MCW
Allison DeVan, PhD, MA; MCW
Julia Dickson-Gomez, PhD; MCW
Lisa Dodson, MD; MCW-Central WI
Karen Dotson, MHSA; MCW
Jacob Dyer, PharmD; MCW
Joseph E. Kerschner, MD; MCW
Jesse Ehrenfeld, MD, MPH; MCW
Kevin Eide; MCW
Christina Ellis, MS; MCW
Jordan Eng; MCW-Milwaukee
David Ferguson, MD; MCW-Green Bay
Nate Filzen; MCW
Mark Flower; MCW
Jennifer Foley; MCW
Jessica Francis, MD; MCW
Zeno Franco, PhD; MCW
Tiffany Frazer, MPH; MCW
Jennifer Freiheit, PhD; MCW
Tony Garcia, MS; MCW
Camile Garrison, MD; MCW
Angela Gord Backus, MS; MCW
Erin Green, MD, MHPE; MCW-Green Bay
Connie Gundacker, MD, MPH; MCW
Abby Haak, MA; MCW
Michelle Harrell, MLIS; MCW
Rachele Harrison, PharmD; MCW
Lisa Henk, MS; MCW
Jennifer Hernandez-Meier, PhD, MSW; MCW
Brittany Hoegh; Special Olympics Wisconsin

Neil Hogg, PhD; MCW
Alex Holle; MCW
Trevor Holwell, PharmD; Bread of
Healing Clinic
Katinka Hooyer, PhD, MS; MCW
Christina Hoppe; MCW
David Hotchkiss; MCW
Zach Hovis, PharmD; MCW
Matthew Hunsaker, MD, FAAFP;
MCW-Green Bay
Darcey Ipock, MBA; MCW
Tarakee Jackson, DrPH, MPH; MCW
Laura Johnson; MCW
Greer Jordan, PhD, MBA; MCW
Adina Kalet, MD; MCW
Biraj Karmacharya, PhD, MPH, MS, MBBS;
Dhulikhel Hospital, Nepal
Kelly Keegan; MCW
Kim Kinner; American Cancer Society
Erin Klein; MCW
Jennifer Klumb, MEd; MCW
Christopher Knight, MA; MCW-Central WI
Sara Kohlbeck, PhD, MPH; MCW
Brenda Konczal; MCW
Jennifer Koop, PhD, ABPP; MCW
Jason Kraiss; MCW
Jennifer Kusch, PhD; MCW
Jamila Kwarteng, PhD, MS; MCW
Devon Lacy; MCW
Kellie LeGrave; MCW
Brian Lewis, MD, FACS; MCW
John "Mac" Longo, MD; MCW
Kajua Lor, PharmD; MCW
Mara Lord, PhD, MBA; MCW
Ugwuji Maduekwe, MD, MMSc, MPH; MCW
Cindy Mand, MBA; MCW
John Mantsch, PhD; MCW
Cheryl Maurana, PhD; MCW
Kari McDermott; MCW
John Meurer, MD, MBA; MCW

Linda Meurer, MD, MPH; MCW
Ravindra Misra, PhD; MCW
Adrienne Mitchell, MBA, SPHR, PMP; MCW
Reggie Moore; MCW
Ann Nattinger, MD, MPH, MACP; MCW
David Nelson, PhD, MS; MCW
Debra Nevels, MSHCM; MCW
Kevin Newell; Royal Capital
Kate Niemer, MBA; MCW
Corina Norrbom, MD; MCW-Central WI
Sarah O'Connor, MS; MCW
Jessica Olson, PhD, MPH; MCW
Aasim Padela, MD, MSc, FACEP; MCW
Amy Parry, MPH; MCW
Teresa Patitucci, PhD; MCW
Shary Pérez, MPH; MCW
Sara Pillay, PhD, ABPP; MCW
Kelsey Potratz; MCW
Amy Poupart; Native American Research
Center for Health
Jordyn Prell, MS, CGC; MCW
Amy Prunuske, PhD; MCW-Central WI
Maureen Pylman, PhD; MCW
Katherine Quinn, PhD; MCW
Kerrie Quirk, MEd; MCW
John R. Raymond, MD; MCW
Madhumita Ravikumar, MS, BDS; MCW
Stacy Reid, PharmD, BCPS; MCW
Mary Reinke, MBA, MS; MCW
M. Riccardo Colella, DO, MPH; MCW
Raul Romo; MCW
Karen Ropel; MCW
Leslie Ruffalo, PhD, MS; MCW
Robert Sanders, Esq.; MCW
Patricia Schmidt; MCW
Nathan Schwanz; MCW
Ram Shrestha, MD; Dhulikhel Hospital, Nepal
Malika Siker, MD; MCW
Becky Silldorff; MCW

Christopher Simenz, PhD, MS; MCW
Hannah Soczka; MCW-Milwaukee
Taylor Sonnenberg, MD, MSGH; MCW
Ryan Spellecy, PhD; MCW
Melinda Stolley, PhD; MCW
Devarati Syam, PhD; MCW
Bipin Thapa, MD, MS, FACP; MCW
Travis Thatcher; MCW
Janine Tucker, MS; MCW
Christa Wagner, PhD; MCW
Terri Walkush; MCW-Central WI
Dori Ward, PhD, MPH; MCW
Greg Wesley, JD; Greater Milwaukee
Foundation
Benjamin Weston, MD, MPH; MCW
Sara Wilkins; MCW
Diamond Williams; MCW-Milwaukee
Joni Williams, MD, MPH; MCW
DeShanda Williams-Clark, MSCP;
Pathfinders
Tracy Wilson, MPH; MCW
Joanna Woodbury, APSW; MCW
Staci Young, PhD; MCW
Jennifer Zamora, MS; MCW

2025 CONFERENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE



Karen Dotson, MHA

Program Director II

Clinical and Translational Science Institute - MCW



Barbara Farrell, MBA

Owner

Focus Administrative Services



Abby Gorecki, MPH

VP of Community Health

16th Street Community Health Centers



Natalie Reinbold, MS

Director, Trinity Fellows Program

Marquette University



Debra Nevels, MSHCM

Program Manager II, Community Outreach and Engagement

Cancer Center - MCW



Caitlin Vicini

Senior Community Relations Consultant

Chorus Community Health Plans



THANK YOU!

*MCW's Office of Community Engagement team
thanks 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 III

Yesica Desarden

Program Coordinator III

Zeno Franco, PhD

Associate Professor

Ayodele Idowu, MBA

Business Operations Coordinator

Jai Lor

Administrative Associate

David Nelson, PhD, MS

Professor

Sarah O'Connor, MS

Program Director I

Kelsey Potratz

Program Coordinator III

Leslie Ruffalo, PhD, MS

Associate Professor

Christopher Simenz, PhD, MS

Assistant Professor



2025 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 recipients!

COMMUNITY PARTNER AND PROGRAM

414LIFE

Community and hospital-based violence intervention program

Lea S. Denny, MS, LPC, NCC, NMT, Dr. h.c.

Healing Intergenerational Roots (HIR) Wellness Institute

MCW STUDENT

Alenna Beroza, MS

Medical Student, Class of 2026, MCW-Milwaukee

MCW STAFF

Courtney Jankowski, MPH

Institute for Health and Humanity, MCW

AnaKaren Manriquez Prado, BA

Office of Research, MCW

MCW FACULTY

Sara A. Kohlbeck, PhD, MPH

Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine, MCW

Jessica Olson, PhD, MPH

Institute for Health & Humanity, MCW

MCW Community Engagement

DONATION DRIVE

The Office of Community Engagement is collecting new or gently used baby items for Missionary Currie for Women and Children Inc., a non-profit community organization that helps Milwaukee's homeless women and children.



How to donate:

- **May 5 - May 30:** Drop off your donation to boxes at the MCW-Milwaukee campus or ThriveOn King.
- **May 9:** Bring your donation to the President's Community Engagement Award Luncheon at the MCW-Milwaukee campus (event registration is required).
- **Throughout May:** Purchase items from the Amazon Wishlist.

Examples:

- Baby Formula
- Diapers
- Diaper Bags
- Wipes
- Bottles
- Blankets
- Onesies
- Socks



Scan or tap the QR code to donate
via Amazon Wishlist



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

MCW Community Engagement

ENGAGEMENT HUB

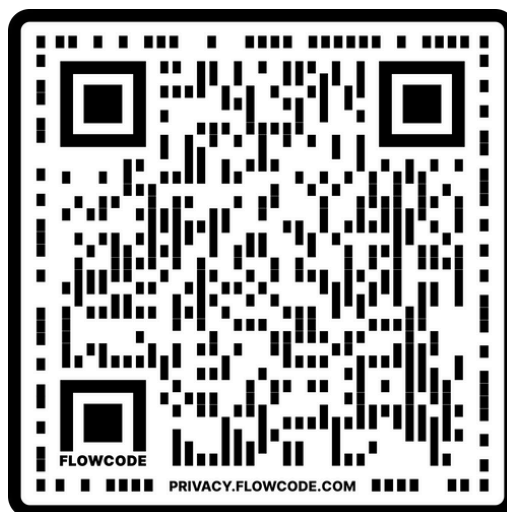
The Office of Community Engagement launched the ‘Engagement Hub’ on GivePulse, Inc.—a platform connecting MCW with community volunteer opportunities!

MCW faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to join the platform—steps are outlined below and it takes just a few minutes:

- Click “Join” or “Log In” and sign in via MCW OneLogin
- Click on your name in upper right corner to edit your profile
- Update your basic information and add a profile photo

MCW community partners and other community-based organizations interested in posting volunteer opportunities on the Engagement Hub are encouraged to sign up for a free basic account!

Scan or tap the QR code to get started!



Interested in learning more or have questions?
Contact Kelsey Potratz at kpotratz@mcw.edu!

CONNECT WITH US



Scan or tap below 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

or

email us at communityengagement@mcw.edu



**MEDICAL
COLLEGE
OF WISCONSIN**

Community Engagement