



## SAVE THE DATES

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### **Class of 2024**

**May 16, 2023, 5:30 PM**  
Informational Session

**May 20, 2023**  
Application Deadline

**July 20, 2023**  
First Learning Event—Orientation

### **Class of 2024 Graduation Celebration**

**April 27, 2024**

Join us for our 15th Anniversary Graduation Celebration!

For more information please visit [bn-mclp/events](https://bn-mclp.org/events).

[contactus@bn-mclp.org](mailto:contactus@bn-mclp.org)  
309-556-3651  
[bn-mclp.org](https://bn-mclp.org)



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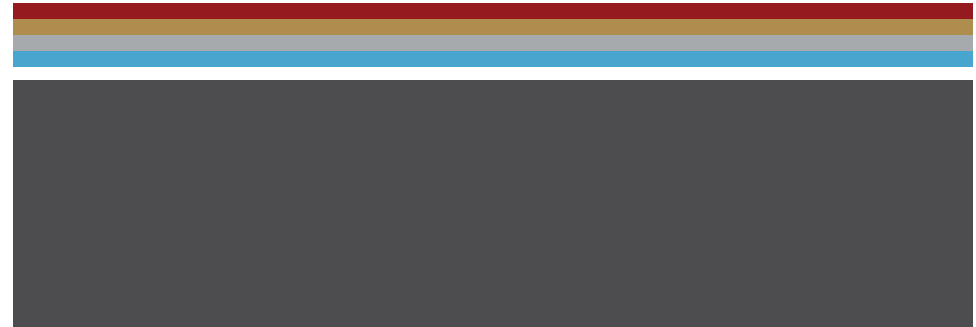


# *Class of 2023*

## **MULTICULTURAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM GRADUATION CELEBRATION**

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**SUNDAY, APRIL 30, 2023**  
6:00 PM, NORMAL, ILLINOIS



## VISION

Leadership that fosters a thriving, inclusive world

## MISSION

We develop leaders to engage the power of diverse perspectives to improve our world.

## VALUES

Servant Leadership, Self-Awareness,  
Diversity Inclusion, Integrity, Excellence,  
Social Justice, Community Action

From the Executive Director . . . . .	3
Graduation Program . . . . .	4
Menu . . . . .	5
Class of 2023 . . . . .	6
2023 Community Projects . . . . .	8
2023 Servant Leadership Award Recipient . . . . .	11
2023 Alumni Community Leadership Award Recipients . . . . .	13
Keynote Speaker—Elisabeth Williams-Omilami . . . . .	16
MCLP Team . . . . .	20
MCLP Alumni . . . . .	23
MCLP Board and Staff . . . . .	25
Thank You to Our Volunteers . . . . .	26
Thank You to Our Ad Sponsors . . . . .	27

Afni congratulates

**MCLP  
Class of 2023**  
and  
**Alyssa Foreman**



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and surrounding areas**

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**Congratulations to  
Annapoorna Halepatali  
and the 2023 Multicultural  
Leadership Program  
Graduates!**

ENGINEERS | ARCHITECTS | SURVEYORS | SCIENTISTS

## Congratulations MCLP graduates!

May each of you  
enjoy continued success  
on your life's journey.

*Deanna Frantschi and  
Carole Ringer*





**Faye Freeman-Smith  
Congratulates  
MCLP Class of 2023**

2422 E. Washington Street, #107  
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- Learning Design & Facilitation



Dear Graduates,

**May you have the heart  
and courage to go out  
and make an impact.**

Cheers to You!  
~Lacey MacLeod (Class of '15)

[TalentUplifted.com](http://TalentUplifted.com)

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eliminating racism  
empowering women  
**ywca**  
McLean County

THE MULTICULTURAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
PROUDLY PRESENTS THE

**MCLP CLASS OF 2023**



Sunday, April 30, 2023, 6:00 p.m.  
Illinois State University  
Bone Student Center Brown Ballroom  
Normal, Illinois



## We proudly salute the exceptional MCLP Graduates of 2023

Empowering a diverse student community by awakening the thirst for life-long learning in the leaders of tomorrow.

[www.iwu.edu](http://www.iwu.edu)

## Thank You

Thank you to all our table leaders, guests, and donors!

Our ad sponsors for this year's program booklet are:

Afni, Inc.  
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COUNTRY Financial, Inc.  
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DMH—Heinold  
Farnsworth, Inc.  
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Illinois Wesleyan University  
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Eureka, Illinois 61530  
(309) 467-4641  
[bheinold@dmhpcapc.com](mailto:bheinold@dmhpcapc.com)

# Thank You to Our Volunteers

Special thanks to our volunteers, alumni, and supporters! It is YOU who have made our success possible. You have sponsored over 300 MCLP graduates and over 70 community projects. The future is bright with opportunities, because you've partnered with the Multicultural Leadership Program. We appreciate all you do.

### Facilitators

Ashley Love  
Anthony Smith

### Mentors

Christy Borders  
Deanna Frautschi  
Nayoka Griffis  
Angell Howard  
Sue Kirk  
Kathleen Lorenz  
Rob McDade  
Christa Platt  
Lyn Potts  
Linda Randle  
Pretty Reji  
Del Saam  
Christina Schulz  
Christa Staley  
Jon Voegele  
Sean Wells  
Beth Whisman  
Ani Yazedjian

### Presenters, Panelists, and Guests

Krystle Able  
Phani Aytam

William Bennett  
David Bentlin  
Carol Burrell  
Tamara Childress  
Keith Cornille  
Faye Freeman-Smith  
Nayoka Griffis  
Angell Howard  
Court Hruska  
Jim Jacobs  
Kim Kauffman  
Luella Mahannah  
Lori Marmion  
Sonya Mau  
Sharon McFarland  
Paula Mitchell  
Eva Moore  
Georgia Nugent  
Gary Ohler  
Sharon Peoples  
Christa Platt  
Cecilia Ruffin  
Christina Schulz  
Katy Strezpek  
Barb Taft  
Camille Taylor  
Tony Torres

Ben Wright  
Jamel Wright

### Volunteers

Bob Bentley  
Nicole Boozer  
Leslie Clay  
Tony Coletta  
Kathy DeWerff  
Larry Dietz  
Julie Dobski  
Ravi Duvvuri  
Julie Emig  
Christina Evans  
Kori Folkerts  
Deanna Frautschi  
Christy Germanis  
Denise Geske  
Maggie Gibb  
Leslie Harding  
Jason Heissler  
Bev Hornickel  
Carol Hreha  
Jeff Hreha  
Court Hruska  
Chirathi Jayesinghe  
Mark Killick  
Susan Kirk

Vivian Kong Doctora  
Craig Luchtefeld  
Meta Mickens-Baker  
Carlos Miranda  
Keith Moldovan  
Kelly Neptune  
Amanda Papinchock  
Brittany Perkins  
Vicki Prude  
Pam Reece  
Sonja Reese  
Nikita Richards  
Carole Ringer  
Angela Rotta  
Del Saam  
Ashlyn Schnute  
Anthony Smith  
Bill Snyder  
Christa Staley  
David Taylor  
Jay Tummala  
Justin Vickers  
Michael Wolf  
Cat Woods  
Ani Yazedjian  
Sally Zuhn

Congratulations to the

# MCLP CLASS OF 2023!

Kevin Hall, author of *Aspire: Discovering Your Purpose Through the Power of Words* wrote, "There are a lot of starters in the world. Who doesn't love to start new and exciting things? Starting is the easy part. The hard part is finishing. It is finishing that separates those with passion from those without it."

Today, we are in the presence of finishers. Finishers who welcomed servant leadership principles allowing a personal transformation to occur during the 9-month program. Finishers who are informed, prepared, and equipped to meet the needs of their respective communities and the world. Finishers who have added value to a nonprofit project partner and are now included in the broad-networking community—MCLP alumni.

We are extremely proud of you and are excited about your "next." Where will you leave your impact next? Where will you add value next? Wherever the journey leads you, remember, you are a finisher. Congratulations again, MCLP graduates, you have finished strong!

*Cecilia Ruffin*

**Cecilia Ruffin**  
Executive Director  
Multicultural Leadership Program

# Graduation Program

**Welcome** ..... Amy Secretan, '22, Emcee

**Opening Remarks** ..... Sharon Peoples, '20, Board President  
Cecilia Ruffin, '18, Executive Director

## Enjoy the Buffet

*Please wait until your table is released by the wait staff.*

**Encouraging Words** ..... Michelle Freeman, '23, Class Speaker

**2023 Servant Leadership Award** ..... Presented by Sonya Mau  
Board Secretary

### Award Recipient

Carole Ringer

**2023 Alumni Community Leadership Award** ..... Presented by  
Sharon Peoples, '20, Board President

### Award Recipients

Nayoka Griffis  
Erica Scott  
Nicole Boozer  
Ashley Love  
Katie Pratt

**Keynote Address** ..... Elisabeth Williams-Omilami  
CEO of Hosea Helps, Inc.

**Recognizing Our Graduates** ..... Ashley Love, '20, Facilitator  
Anthony Smith, '22, Facilitator

**Closing Thoughts** ..... Cecilia Ruffin, '18, Executive Director

Ravi Duvvuri  
Cheryl Fogler  
Jill S. Hanson-Murray  
Luminita Hartle  
Jason Heissler  
Grace Hendricks  
Jennifer K. Ho  
Tawyna Isaacson  
Sara Keene  
Ajit Kolekar  
Ashley Love  
Patrick Lubala  
Regina Powers-Lubala  
R.J. McCracken  
Keith Moldovan  
Katie Montague  
Juliana Nelson  
Sharon Peoples  
Stephanie Stone  
Gig Supanichrattana  
Thomas Truong

## 2021

Jill Benson  
Corey Burgess  
Jenny Crones  
Vivian Doctora

Ruben Estrada  
Christina Evans  
Christy Germanis  
Alpheaus Johnson  
Hannah Johnson  
Kara Kirk  
Kelsie Langheim  
Valerie Langston  
Emily Nafziger  
Amanda Papinchock  
Brittany Perkins  
Donnelle Pressburger  
Linda Randle  
Tony Reis  
Sim Sandhu  
Madheswaran  
Singaravelu  
Jeese Slater  
Mariaton Tate  
Harsh Thakkar  
Jenni Thome  
Ben Wright  
Desiray Yeaw

## 2022

Sarah Bauer  
Kristen Buhrmann

Askar Choudhury  
Charice Crews  
Branden Delk  
Jill Elofson  
Kori Folkerts  
Brigette Gary  
Denise Geske  
Kristi Glesne  
Brandon Green  
Angie Hanson  
Sammi Kern  
Claressa Kirkwood  
Kim Lott  
Brooke McGuire  
Ryan Moore  
Shiquanda Murphy  
Rama Naraparaju  
Carl Olson  
Del Saam  
Amy Secretan  
Anthony Smith  
Camille Springer  
Cathy Summerville  
Shavantay Thomas

## MCLP BOARD AND STAFF

### 2023 Board of Directors

Sharon Peoples, '20  
President  
Erica Scott, '13  
Vice President  
Sonya Mau  
Secretary

Bert Neptune, '10  
Treasurer  
Barbara Bouboutsis, '18  
Past President  
Christy Borders, '20  
Damian Lewis, '15  
Katie Pratt, '16  
Santosh Raut, '12  
Simran Sandhu, '21

### 2023 Staff

Cecilia Ruffin, '18  
Executive Director  
Katie Pratt, '16  
Program Director  
Chirathi Jayasinghe  
Volunteer Intern

## MCLP ALUMNI

---

### 2015

Neil Alcorn  
Olemuel Ashford  
Rickielee Benecke  
Kyle Buchanan  
Javier Centeno  
Angela Click  
Michael Coleman  
Elias Corpas III  
Katherine Evans  
Eileen Galvez  
Nikki Gibson  
Jeremy Haley  
Ryan Huette  
Damian Lewis  
Lacey MacLeod  
Elizabeth Murry  
Dexter O'Neal  
Jesse Paul Padilla  
Catherine Poffenbarger  
Saket Raizada  
David Shields  
Jen Swearingen  
Soujanya Tokala  
Jay Tummala  
Heather Wagner  
Alex Williams

### 2016

Julie Beer  
Nikita Burns  
Georgene Chissell  
Leslie Clay  
Callie Cummings  
Hetal Dhirawani  
Vanitha Giriprakash  
Cindy Hauk  
Alex Jackson  
Vasudeva Kalla  
Phillip King  
Lohit Kumar  
Angela Kuppersmith

Carolyn LaVere  
Richard Lozada  
Alicia McKeighan  
Sunish Menon  
Poshlyn Nicholson  
Appana Pediredla  
Justin Prather  
Katie Pratt  
Darrell Richards  
Allegra Thigpen  
Jeffrey Vargo  
Reddy Venati

### 2017

Mohamed Jamal M.  
Mohamed Ayub  
Kiowna Brown  
Allie Browning  
Michael Canada  
Carol Christensen  
Jeff Crabill  
Steve Grady  
Arthur J. Haynes  
Terri Helregel  
Heather Johnson  
Sheena Keating  
Mark Killick  
Cherry Lawson  
Tommy Navickas  
Shena Palmer  
Carla Ramos  
Laura Severs  
Justin Vickers  
Eleisha Whitney-Olson  
Jocelyn (Joy) Winnell  
Susan Wright

### 2018

Kym Ammons-Scott  
Maria Basalay  
Barbara Bouboutsis  
Crystal Bricker  
Troy Clark

Emory Davis  
Julie Emig  
Chad Fisher  
Anitha Jayaram  
Shrima Karthik  
Gopalakrishnan  
Lucas Hellmer  
Barbara Little  
Beth Marsh  
Sandra L. Osorio  
Hari Rebba  
Raegan Rinchiuso  
Cecilia Ruffin  
Abigail Salch  
Madhura Shenoy  
Terrence Smith  
Angel Terrell  
Stephanie Turrentine  
Patricia Valente  
Alexis Wolstein

### 2019

Karthikeyan Baluswamy  
Beth Bradford  
Marianela Diaz  
Hidalgo  
Tura Dover  
Nayoka Griffis  
Court Hruska  
Swati Khanna  
Lori Marmion  
Sarah Moravec  
Tiara Randle  
BreAune Sanja  
Katherine Sawyer  
Sameeh Ullah  
Sharon Ware  
Julia Zuniga Almazora

### 2020

Sri Bandela  
Nicole Boozer  
Christy Borders

## GRADUATION BUFFET DINNER MENU

### House Salad

*Mixed salad greens with your choice of ranch, French, or fat-free Italian dressing*

### Sautéed Chicken Breast with Lemon Caper Sauce

*Tender chicken breast, bright with citrus*

### Pot Roast

*Slow roasted to perfection*

### Lentil Pasta with Marinara Sauce

*Roasted squash, zucchini, peppers, red onions, and artichokes tossed in marinara on gluten free lentil pasta*

### Roasted Vegetable Medley

### Mashed Potatoes and Gravy

### Dessert

*Chocolate fudge cake or cheesecake on a painted plate*

Cash bar is open 6:00–8:30 p.m.

Special custom-designed MCLP cocktail available.

Your drink ticket is good for wine, beer, or soda.

MULTICULTURAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

*Class of 2023*



Jennifer Caldwell



Shayla Dennis



Kalessa Edgeron



Alyssa Foreman



Michelle Freeman



Jennifer Funk



Annapoorna Halepatali



Lori Hall



Kela Leshoure

MCLP ALUMNI

**2010**

Margarita Alvarez  
 Jamaal Crayton  
 Carl L. Davis  
 Michael Donnelly  
 Marisanta Hidrogo  
 Karen Kapella  
 Lauren Kim Carapella  
 Daniel Liu  
 Macaria Lopez  
 Jhun Medina  
 Tom Moy  
 Bert Neptune  
 Nina Olvera  
 Don Paul  
 Vani Prasad  
 Teena Rajan  
 Mandava Rao  
 Roshanda Ross  
 Ken Starks  
 Mark Walcott  
 Gary Williams  
 Monica Williams  
 Joe Zacharias

**2011**

Vicente Adams  
 Erika Arnhart  
 Rahul Bafna  
 Sandeep Davalbhakta  
 Munjal Dave  
 Carolyn Davis  
 Rearn Dotson  
 Leslie Harding  
 Lori Harvey  
 Iwin Huang  
 Paul Hursey Jr.  
 Matt Johnson  
 Nida Kazim  
 Renee Lafontaine  
 Jon McWhirter  
 Anita Moore  
 Sharonna Owens

Brian Peacher  
 Kimberly Pfeifer  
 Latha Rao  
 Peter Stroyan  
 Theresia Taylor  
 Cavell Walcott  
 Yoon Yim  
 Denise Younge

**2012**

Anand Bhende  
 Carrie Broquard  
 Nicole Clemmens  
 Brian Cunningham  
 Gina Defa-White  
 Laura Duvendack  
 Juan Garcia  
 Sagar Gollapudi  
 Tim Golliday  
 Janet Hood  
 Craig Lutcheheld  
 Tina McCormick  
 Johnny Nguyen  
 Grace Pagowska  
 Janine Peacher  
 Henry Ramsey  
 Santosh Raut  
 Pretty Reji  
 Kristen Sand  
 Kari Sandhaas  
 Shleah Scarborough  
 Heather Stella  
 Henry Walker

**2013**

Tiffany Cho  
 Sabrina Coleman  
 Fernando Cornejo  
 Tony Curcuru  
 Chuck DiVerde  
 Goverdhan Galpalli  
 Aparna Idate  
 Emily James  
 Stephanie Kohl Ringle

Carlos Miranda  
 Alex Moncrief  
 Sudhir Pai  
 Tereva Parham  
 Ann Perry  
 Mary Riddle  
 Mauricio Sadicoff  
 Kelli Saizon  
 Erica Scott  
 Sparsula Simmons  
 Christa Staley  
 Missy Thomas  
 Emily Vigneri  
 Donald Wiggins  
 Michael Wolf  
 Jeff Woodard

**2014**

Tim Beccue  
 Shena Bedi  
 Seena Bhende  
 Alyssa Bisanz  
 Linda Bollivar  
 Joy Born  
 Tara Brown Carman  
 Emmanuel Calmes  
 Stephanie Duquenne  
 Phyllis Glover-Webster  
 Ivan Hall  
 Dipti Hattangady  
 Bobbi Hynes  
 Tejas Jani  
 Ajay Kalavala  
 Lauren Klump  
 Kiranmayi Konam  
 Cheryl Magnuson  
 Kristin Manzi  
 Sateesh Nallamotheu  
 Julie Navickas  
 Dakesa Pina  
 Jerin Thomas  
 Lola Thomas-Albright  
 Tammy Vancil

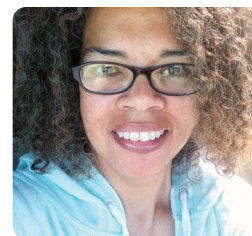


# Congratulations to our MCLP graduates!

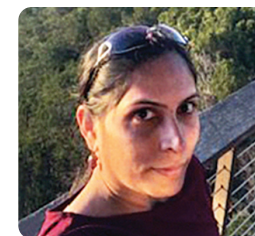
Jennifer Caldwell  
Jennifer Funk



Andrew McAllister



Misty Metroz



Sangeetha Mupparapu



Michael O'Connor



Rachel Riddle



Robyn Seglem



Oliver (OJ) Slavish



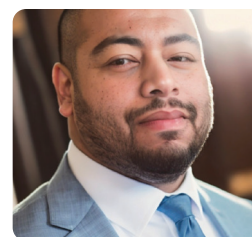
Yelyse Walls



Mandy Webster



Ashley Love  
Facilitator



Anthony Smith  
Facilitator



## Congratulations Multicultural Leadership Program Class of 2023!

Thank you for your commitment  
to learning, leading, and  
creating a more diverse and  
inclusive community.



## 2023 COMMUNITY PROJECT PARTNERS

### Heartland Community College

Define and build community relationships to enhance the growth of Heartland's Workforce Equity Initiative.

**Project Sponsor:** Terrance Bond

**Project Liaison:** Nayoka Griffiths

**Project Advisor:** Amanda Papinchock

#### Team

Kalessa Edgeron

Alyssa Foreman

Sangeetha Mupparapu

Rachel Riddle

Amanda Webster



### Milestones Early Learning Center & Preschool

Develop concise accessible family and employee handbooks to assure efficient business practices to create a sustainable environment for Milestones.

**Project Sponsor:** Charice Crews

**Project Liaison:** Charice Crews

**Project Advisor:** Christy Germanis

#### Team

Michelle Freeman

Lori Hall

Andrew McAllister

Misty Metroz

Robyn Seglem



Katie is very passionate about giving back and when not volunteering, she can be found reading a good book, knitting, or working on a fun jigsaw puzzle! Her six-word memoir during MCLP was "Passionate Leader Always Learning, Growing, Laughing," and it's still very relevant today. Katie is currently the Event Operations Coordinator for the National Restaurant Association Show, a division of Winsight Media.

#### Ashley Love, 2022

Facilitator



Ashley is a kind and loyal introvert with an adventurous side and an independent spirit. She was born and raised in Bloomington, where she is raising her three children. She loves a challenge

and her mind is always searching for a solution. Ashley incorporates her passion for figuring things out into her two favorite hobbies—jigsaw puzzles and board games. She is a lifelong learner and personal accountability is especially important to her. She believes a little kindness can go a long way and helping others is key to living a fulfilling life. She has a witty sense of humor, knows not to take herself too seriously, and is always willing to have a conversation about her curly hair. She graduated from MCLP in 2020 and came back as a facilitator for the classes of 2022 and 2023.

#### Anthony Smith, 2022

Facilitator



Anthony Smith is a second-generation biracial Filipino and Black American. He grew up in Glendale Heights, Illinois. Anthony attended Bradley University and graduated in 2008, with

a dual focus Bachelors degree in Criminal Justice and Sociology. He is thankful to have been raised by his Filipino grandparents who instilled a strong value system based on family and lending a helping hand whenever possible. In 2014, Anthony entered the insurance industry and has held leadership positions in various states including Illinois, Georgia, and Oregon. He is currently pursuing his Master's degree through the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater in Business Administration, with a focus in IT Management and a certificate in Project Management. Anthony joined the Multicultural Leadership Program to grow in his leadership skills and to exhibit the values of his fraternity, Theta Chi, and "Lend a Helping Hand." Anthony graduated from MCLP in 2022 and returned as a facilitator for the class of 2023.

#### Chirathi Jayesinghe

Intern



Chirathi is a junior at Illinois Wesleyan University and will graduate in May 2024. She is a Business major and minoring in Entrepreneurship and Journalism and

Communications. Chirathi enjoys spending time with friends and playing with her dogs. Chirathi says, "I wanted to intern at MCLI because I love and support everything that this organization has to offer and wanted to get more experience in the real world with my minor in Journalism and Communications."

# MEET THE MCLP TEAM

## Cecilia Ruffin, 2018

Executive Director



Our leadership tapestries are not beautiful just because of our successes and accomplishments. Our leadership tapestries are beautiful because they are interwoven with our failures and losses.

Each lived experience provides a thread that strengthens our resolve. As we evolve, our mission becomes clear—our tapestry was designed to be shared.

Cecilia's leadership tapestry is a rich fabric that she willingly shares with others. She is a wife, mother, and grandmother. She delights in all three roles. Cecilia is a committed servant leader with a demonstrated history of leading with values. She is passionate about trauma-informed supervision, family engagement, and leadership development.

Cecilia has volunteered at the McLean County Detention Facility for over 20 years. She believes that when people tap into their purpose, passion, and potential, goals become reachable, visions are manifested, and transformation becomes a reality. Cecilia graduated from the University of Phoenix with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology. She received a Master's degree from Liberty University in Pastoral Counseling and a subsequent Master's degree in Human Services Counseling: Marriage and Family.

As an MCLP graduate, class of 2018, Cecilia embraced the model of servant leadership. Cecilia leads with the value of social responsibility and this value has led her to being instrumental in building core programming within the Department of Juvenile Justice which greatly impacts the community and amplifies the voice for youth and families. She serves on the Family Engagement Committee and the Trauma Informed Aftercare Implementation Team.

She assisted in the establishment of the current Aftercare Transitional Program.

Cecilia is honored to build upon the capacity of the Multicultural Leadership Program as the Executive Director. She understands that the Multicultural Leadership Program provides a beacon of leadership development, not just within the Bloomington-Normal community, but beyond this geographical landscape. She is committed to the mission of developing a more diverse and inclusive community, one leader at a time.

## Katie Pratt, 2016

Program Director



Katie is a servant leader and is passionate about volunteering and engaging with community organizations, and strives to make a positive impact in the lives of others.

A MCLP alumna from the class of 2016, she has given her time and talents to a variety of local organizations since MCLP including Crossroads Fair Trade, For A Better Tomorrow, the League of Women Voters, West Bloomington Revitalization Program, and the Multicultural Leadership Program to name a few. Due to her community leadership, Katie has been twice nominated for a YWCA Women of Distinction award and has been recognized as one of McLean County's 20 under 40.

Katie attended Illinois State University and worked on campus for 9 years. Her passions led her to be engaged in the civic engagement efforts of the campus. She received the Redbird Proud Young Alumni Award in 2017 and remains an active alum. She currently serves on the Division of Student Affairs Alumni Ambassador Team.

## United Way of McLean County

Define, research, and assess services provided to Workforce 180 to provide long-term sustainability and connections.

**Project Sponsor:** David Taylor

**Project Liaison:** Kathleen Lorenz

**Project Advisor:** Brittany Perkins

### Team

Jennifer Caldwell

Kela Leshoure

Michael O'Connor



United Way  
of McLean County

## Multicultural Leadership Institute

Develop a diverse recruitment and retention volunteer plan.

**Project Sponsor:** Cecilia Ruffin

**Project Liaison:** Cecilia Ruffin

**Project Advisor:** Vivian Kong Doctora

### Team

Shayla Dennis

Jennifer Funk

Annapoorna Halepatali

O. J. Slavish

Yelyse Walls



# United Way of McLean County congratulates the MCLP Class of 2023!

We know that leaders like you *change lives...*



## MEET ONE OF OUR MENTORS: **NAYOKA G.**

Nayoka is a 2019 MCLP alumnus, and also a mentor: She volunteers her time to be a support person for the young men and women participating in United Way's workforce development initiative, Workforce180.

**"One of the reasons I became a Workforce180 mentor is for the opportunity to come alongside the students, to support them in their journey."**



USE THE QR CODE TO HEAR NAYOKA'S STORY, ALONG WITH A FEW OF OUR WORKFORCE180 STUDENTS.

This growing initiative needs leaders like you, to be a mentor to our growing number of students! If you are interested in being a mentor to a cohort and helping us reach more youth, email **Kathleen Lorenz** at [klorenz@uwaymc.org](mailto:klorenz@uwaymc.org)



**COUNTRY Financial**  
Proudly Congratulates Our Very Own!



**OJ Slavish**  
Class of 2023  
Graduate



**Rachel Riddle**  
Class of 2023  
Graduate



**Nicole Boozer**  
Alumni Community  
Leadership Award



**Ashley Love**  
Alumni Community  
Leadership Award

CONGRATS CLASS OF 2023!

*Be brave. Be bold.  
Be you.*

**Fox & Hounds Salon & Spa**  
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## MCLP PARTICIPANT CIRCLE OF SUPPORT



*So many people contribute to helping each MCLP graduate cross the finish line. Thank you to each person for their contribution.*

## 2023 SERVANT LEADERSHIP AWARD

# Carole Ringer

Carole Ringer is a gentle and humble soul who packs a wallop when it comes to her life's passion—to help our community thrive. Carole does it by expanding the definition of community for all. When she succeeds, she expands the expectations, experiences, and appreciation of new or diverse experiences for our community. Isn't that how a community becomes stronger, wiser, and more collaborative?

Carole's leadership on the board of the Illinois Symphony Orchestra has brought us more diverse music, but it has also brought in more diverse sectors from our community. Our community is learning to appreciate the power of music played by a live orchestra due to Carole's efforts. Carole applied her fundraising skills to support the orchestra as well as the BroMenn Foundation for the Mennonite College of Nursing and the Multicultural Leadership Program (MCLP). For many years, Carole has served as a mentor to one MCLP participant each year. She is still friends with many of "her graduates!"

She was the first Executive Director of Illinois Prairie Community Foundation and served on over twelve boards, including, Rotary Club of Bloomington, McLean County Museum of History, Women-to-Women Board, and Friends of the Arts at Illinois State University. She has been recognized for her contributions by many organizations including the Alpha Omicron Pi Alumnae Women of Leadership Award, an Illinois State Board of Education Award of Excellence, the first McLean County YWCA Women of Distinction Award in the Arts, and she was chosen as a founding member of Northwestern University Council of 100, a group of women executives. At Northern, she continues to serve on the Bienen School of Music Advisory Board.

Carole is the epitome of a servant leader. Her decisions, actions, and investments are all focused on making our community a better place to live in all its sectors: art, business, education, and health to name a few. She leads to serve others.



# Rob Dob's

Restaurant & Bar

We are so proud!

# Congratulations!

**MICHAEL O'CONNOR**  
and all the graduates from the  
Multicultural Leadership Program



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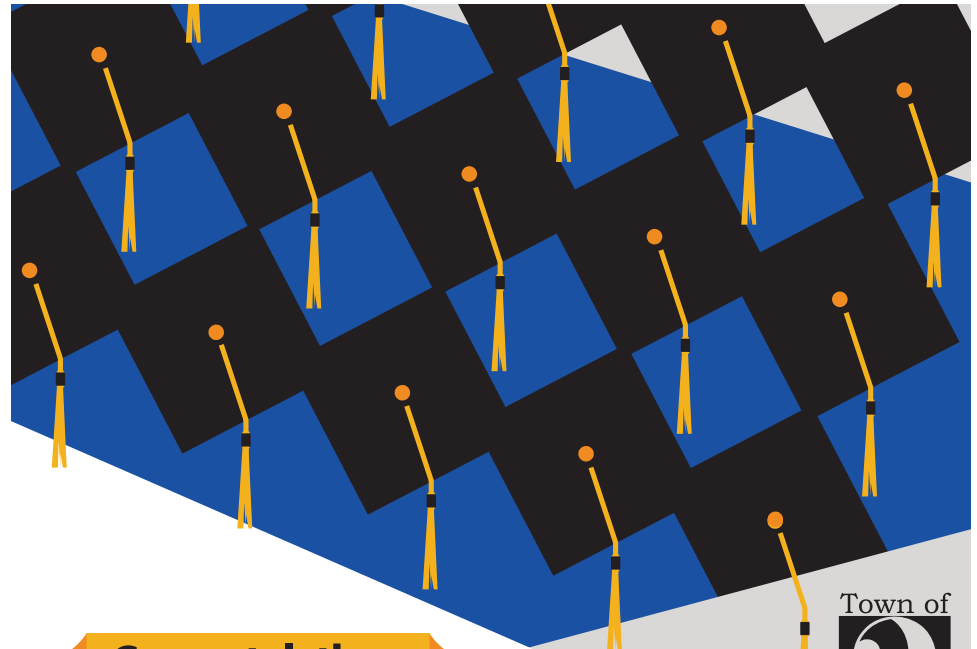
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**Congratulations**  
**2023 MCLP Graduates!**



## KEYNOTE SPEAKER

# ELISABETH WILLIAMS-OMILAMI

Actress, American Human Rights Leader, and CEO of Hosea Helps, Inc.



The daughter of civil rights leaders Hosea and Juanita Williams, Elisabeth played on the steps of their church, as her parents prayed and planned civil rights marches, like Selma, with Martin Luther King, Jr.

Yet, even after King's assassination, her parents continued to work for a better future for their children. Her father decided to start a non-profit called Hosea Helps, to serve the needy. Her mother became one of the first Black women to serve in the Georgia legislature.

As an adult, Elisabeth decided to continue her parents' legacy through theater arts. She is the founder of People's Survival Theater, one of Atlanta's earliest theater companies. She has acted in movies including: *The Blind Side*, *The Ray Charles Story*, *Selma*, *The Best of Enemies*, *Full Count*, and many more. She's written plays, including *There is a River in My Soul* and *The Life of a King*, which she co-authored with her mother.

After moving to New York City with her husband, actor Afemo Omilami, they decided to raise their children in Atlanta, so returned home. When her father died in 2000, she became the CEO of her father's organization. Elisabeth grew the assets of Hosea Helps from \$200,000 to almost \$3 million. Their services were originally focused on food for the hungry, then expanded to finding safe shelter and providing career training. Hosea Helps, which began by serving the needs of Atlanta and Georgia, is now serving the needy throughout the United States and the world.

Elisabeth has been acknowledged and awarded numerous times at state and country-wide levels for her humanitarian services. She was also inducted as an honorary member of the sorority, Zeta Phi Beta.

## 2023 ALUMNI COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AWARD

This year a team has been selected to receive the alumni community leadership award. The five alumni recognized today exhibited the highest level of leadership, guidance and deliverance for the classes who met via ZOOM. Specifically, they showed great:

- **Leadership** as we transitioned to a virtual program beginning with the class of 2021
- **Guidance** through a worldwide pandemic and social unrest that was unprecedented during recent times
- **Deliverance** of the MCLP experience for the class of 2020 graduation and the classes of 2021, 2022, and 2023.

The class of 2020 graduation was converted to virtual a month after the COVID shut-down. Then this team diligently worked to convert the program to virtual for the classes of 2021 and 2022. They paved the way for the class of 2023 to have the new hybrid MCLP experience (virtual program and in-person graduation).

In fact, despite all the external challenges to MCLP, most participants continue to describe their leadership journey as transformational.

Working as a team, these five made it happen. You guided each graduate in their quest to become better servant leaders with a focus on embracing the diverse perspectives of their communities. Each graduate gained the courage and confidence to move forward as a leader in service to others.

MCLP could not have navigated the extraordinary challenges of the past few years without these five, and we would not be at this moment of resuming in-person graduations without your fierce and courageous focus on helping each participant on their MCLP journey. We cannot thank you enough!

## 2023 ALUMNI COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AWARD



**Nayoka Griffis**, 2019, is a powerhouse of positivity determined to live a life of peace, purpose, and passion! She gives herself permission to grab fear in one hand, faith in the other, and live life full out. As an educator, trainer, and coach, she motivates, inspires, and encourages others to do the same. Nayoka enjoys lively conversations and her energy is contagious. She finds pleasure in turning strangers into friends and obstacles into opportunities. Nayoka is a Christian bridge-builder with a servant's heart. In this broken world, she values connecting and getting to know people on a deeper level. She wholeheartedly believes the best of her is designed to bring out the best in others. Nayoka graduated from MCLP in 2019 and returned as a facilitator for the classes of 2020 and 2021. She has two adult children and is the Associate Director of the Workforce Equity Initiative at Heartland Community College.



**Erica Scott**, 2013, is a program manager and management consultant with over 15 years of experience in assisting clients with their transformation journey. She received her degree from Jackson State University in Jackson, Mississippi, and currently works at KPMG. Erica is also a dedicated mentor and financial teacher, having supervised and facilitated many classes throughout her career. She is known for her passion for helping people be debt free and serving the community to help the next generation succeed. Erica Scott is an MCLP graduate of 2013. She returned to help as the COVID challenge required us to transform MCLP into a high-quality virtual experience. She stayed to serve as facilitator for the class of 2021.



**Nicole Boozer**, 2020, was born and raised in Normal, and loves the area so much she found her way back after law school. Figuring out the "why" behind life's many questions drives her, and she is always willing to consider another point of view or a new approach to an answer. Caring, kind, and intelligent, Nicole focuses on using her strengths to help those

around her achieve their goals and is always available with a sympathetic ear or a helping hand. Nicole enjoys spending time with her husband, Chuck, playing video and board games, and watching scary movies. She is passionate about expanding her culinary horizons by learning to cook other cuisines. She graduated from MCLP in 2020 and returned as a facilitator for the classes of 2021 and 2022.



**Ashley Love**, 2020, is a kind and loyal introvert with an adventurous side and an independent spirit. She was born and raised in Bloomington, where she is raising her three children. She loves a challenge and her mind is always searching for a solution. Ashley incorporates her passion for figuring things out into her two favorite hobbies—jigsaw puzzles and board games. She is a life-long learner and personal accountability is especially important to her. She believes a little kindness can go a long way and helping others is key to living a fulfilling life. She has a witty sense of humor, knows not to take herself too seriously, and is always willing to have a conversation about her curly hair. She graduated from MCLP in 2020 and returned as a facilitator for the classes of 2022 and 2023.



**Katie Pratt**, 2016, is a servant leader, and is passionate about volunteering, and engaging with community organizations. She strives for a positive impact in the lives of others. Her passions led her to be involved in ISU's civic engagement efforts. When not volunteering, Katie can be found reading a good book, knitting, or working on a fun jigsaw puzzle! Her six-word memoir during MCLP was "Passionate Leader, Always Learning, Growing, Laughing" and it's still very relevant today. Katie is currently the Event Operations Coordinator for the National Restaurant Association Show, a division of Winsight Media. She served as MCLP Program Director throughout the pandemic years.