



## Presenters and Speakers

**Sue Abderholden, MPH** has devoted her career to changing laws and attitudes that affect people with disabilities and their families. Since the fall of 2001, she has served as the executive director for NAMI Minnesota (National Alliance on Mental Illness). She has held leadership positions with Arc of Minnesota, U.S. Senator Paul D. Wellstone and PACER Center. Sue has a B.A. in political science from Macalester College and a master's degree in public health administration from the University of Minnesota. She and her family had a foster care license for many years providing respite care for families of children with disabilities and youth aging out of foster care. She is a community faculty member for the U of MN School of Social Work teaching health and mental health policy. Ms. Abderholden has received numerous awards for her advocacy including the 2020 Esther Wattenberg Policy Award.

**Susana De Leon** began her career as an English and EL teacher, in Los Angeles California. In Minnesota she has served as Intercultural Specialist, ALC Coordinator and currently as Administrative Dean at Eastern Carver County Schools. Her path in education began as a desire to improve the educational system for our underserved population and to support the growth of all students.

**Celi Haga** is the Director of Communications and Community Relations for Eastern Carver County Schools. She came to the role with over 20 years of experience in public affairs in the nonprofit and public sectors. She believes deeply in public education, and the role effective communications plays to lift up the work public schools do every day for every student.

**Jimmie Heags Jr., MA, LSC, LPCC, LADC, ACS**, is a District Wide Restorative Practice Staff Development Assessment Specialist (SDAS) for Osseo Area Schools. Also, he is a trainer in Crisis Prevention and Intervention (CPI) as well as various Social Emotional Learning (SEL) approaches such as the Nurtured Heart Approach. In addition to his work at Osseo Area Schools, he serves as an instructor for People Incorporated's Training Institute and as an Clinical Counselor for MN Adopt. Jimmie's clinical work has been with mostly black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC). He approaches his work with genuine curiosity, and feels honored to be trusted with the thoughts, feelings and the general vulnerabilities held by individuals and

groups. Prior to his work as an associate therapist, and Restorative Practices trainer, he served as an Adjunct Instructor for Adler Graduate. In his free time, Jimmie enjoys participating in recreational martial arts and hanging out with family and friends.

**Dr. Cheryl Holm-Hansen** is a community psychologist who brings 30 years of experience conducting community-based research related to children's mental health. In addition to serving as the Co-Director of the Midwest Center for School Mental Health, she manages a consulting firm specializing in children's mental health research and strategic planning. Her portfolio includes many evaluation and research projects designed to help schools, mental health providers, and local/state governments understand community needs, develop effective services, build stronger systems, and demonstrate impact. Prior to establishing her consulting practice, Dr. Holm-Hansen spent 21 years as a Senior Research Manager at Wilder Research in Saint Paul, Minnesota.

**Kevin Kling**, best known for his popular commentaries on National Public Radio's *All Things Considered* and his storytelling stage shows like *Tales from the Charred Underbelly of the Yule Log*, delivers hilarious, often tender stories. Kling's autobiographical tales are as enchanting as they are true to life: hopping freight trains, getting hit by lightning, performing his banned play in Czechoslovakia, growing up in Minnesota, and eating things before knowing what they are. Kevin Kling describes his zodiac sign as "Minnesota with Iowa rising..." He grew up in Brooklyn Park and Maple Grove, Minneapolis suburbs, and graduated from Gustavus Adolphus College in 1979 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in theater. His storytelling started when a friend from the now defunct Brass Tacks Theatre asked him to perform his stories. Since then, he has been awarded numerous arts grants and fellowships. The National Endowment for the Arts, The McKnight Foundation, The Minnesota State Arts Board, The Bush Foundation, The Jerome Foundation and others have recognized Kling's artistry. In 2014 Mayor RT Rybak named Kevin "Minneapolis Story Laureate". Kevin was born with a congenital birth defect — his left arm is about three-quarters the size of his right arm, and his left hand has no wrist or thumb. In 2001 Kevin was in a motorcycle accident and suffered brachial plexus injury (BPI). The brachial plexus nerves in his right arm were pulled completely out of their sockets. Currently, he has partial use of his left arm and cannot use his right arm at all. Kevin Kling continues to write plays and stories in a rigorous fashion, and travels around the globe to numerous storytelling festivals, residencies, and has been invited to perform the acclaimed National Storytelling Festival in Jonesborough, TN for several years. Kevin has released a number of compact disc collections of his stories, has published five books, "The Dog Says How", "Holiday Inn", "Big Little Brother", "Big Little Mother" and "On Stage with Kevin Kling."

**Arika Mareck** is the Director of Equity and Inclusion for Eastern Carver County Schools. Prior to her current role, she served as a Regional BARR Program Manager serving schools in Minnesota, Maine, California, and Tennessee. Arika has served as an equity leader and underserved student advocate since she began her teaching career and has presented nationally on equity. She firmly believes the United States can eliminate the racial disparities in public education and that this begins with teacher beliefs and practices.

**Peter Morse** has almost two decades of experience in education and youth program development. He is currently the Principal of Jonathan Elementary in Chaska, Minnesota. At the same time that Pete was being hired as the principal at Jonathan Elementary, he was

diagnosed with advanced cancer. This health journey has made him a strong advocate of social-emotional support for their students at Jonathan but equally as much for the families and staff with the understanding that what is happening outside of the building deeply impacts the work we do inside our buildings. He has taught at all levels from elementary, middle school math and science, and high school social studies. Having started his career in education he stepped away for eight years to serve as Vice President of the Urban Ventures Leadership Foundation, a nonprofit in the Philips neighborhood of South Minneapolis focused on closing the achievement gap. He received his bachelor's degree from St. Olaf, and his master's from the University of Minnesota. He is married to a fellow educator and has three children.

**Dr. Charlene Myklebust, Psy.D.**, holds a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology from Adler University in Chicago and earned her educational administration credentials from the University of Minnesota. She is President and Educational Leadership Consultant with EQ Learn, LLC and Stone Arch Learning, LLC., providing live and on-line continuing education. Char has served as a regular and special education teacher, public school administrator, mental and chemical health provider, and Executive Director of Mental Health and Partnerships in Intermediate District 287. She is currently a consultant in private practice. Char was recognized for "Outstanding Service" by the Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health (MACMH) and received the "Educator of the Year" award from the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI-MN). Char contributed to the development of Mind UP, a Social Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum for children and adolescents. She also consults with education programs in a variety of metro and out-state school districts. Dr. Myklebust speaks at national and international conferences about topics related to children's mental health, trauma, resilience, restorative practices, social emotional learning, and staff wellness.

**Erin Rathke** is an Assistant Superintendent in Eastern Carver County Schools. She has held positions of Principal, Assistant Principal, School Improvement Specialist for Turn-Around Schools, Instructional Coach and Teacher. Erin is a committed and results-driven instructional leader committed to organizational health and rigorous academic excellence for all students with over twenty years of experience in urban and suburban school districts.

**Dr. David Read Johnson** is the Co-Director, Post Traumatic Stress Center, New Haven, CT; Associate Clinical Director, Department of Psychiatry, Yale University School of Medicine; and CEO, Miss Kendra Programs.

**Dr. Steven Rippe** has over 20 years of experience working with functional teams and senior leaders, building and implementing innovative organizational designs. A successful educator, principal and University administrator, Steven has worked with passionate founders to create nationally recognized organizational programs and teams who transform themselves into high performing, dynamic learning organizations.

**Pam Ryan Mejia** is one of 100 Dare to Lead™ Facilitators in the world trained and mentored by Dr. Brené Brown with expertise in serving educational systems and their communities. She is the author of BetterTogether<sup>3</sup>, a SEL and Wellness program for students, educators and caregivers, grounded in the research of Dr. Brown with a focus on empathy, resilience, courage and connection. Pam is also certified as a Social and Emotional Intelligence Coach by the

Institute for Social + Emotional Intelligence (ISEI)®, has a MA in Curriculum and Development from the University of Minnesota as well as an M.ED in Educational Leadership from Hamline University. Pam has a DEI in the Workplace Certification from the University of Florida and is certified by Dr. Timothy Clark of LeaderFactor in 4 Stages of Psychological Safety in the Workplace. Her mission is to help school districts improve the health and wellness of the entire school community.

**Dr. Mark Sander** is a Senior Clinical Psychologist for Hennepin County and the Director of School Mental Health for Hennepin County and the Minneapolis Public Schools. He is also the Co-Director of the Midwest Center for School Mental Health. He is a Certified Master Training on the Adverse Childhood Experience Study and a Visiting Scholar at Wilder Research. He is on the Advisory Board for the Center for School Mental Health at the University of Maryland School of Medicine and a Board Member for the MN Trauma Project. Dr. Sander has published journal articles and book chapters on school mental health and has presented extensively on school mental health and ACEs and developing trauma sensitive schools at local, state and national conferences. He lives in Minneapolis with his wife, Sarah and their three daughters.

**Lisa Sayles-Adams, Ed.D.**, is Superintendent of Eastern Carver County Schools. A student-centered leader, Lisa is committed to ensuring educational equity and excellence for every learner. A proud graduate of the Saint Paul Public School system, she has served as Assistant Superintendent, principal at all levels and a middle school teacher. She recently completed her Doctorate in Educational Leadership from Minnesota State University Mankato.

**Noah “NuhuBabuKubwa” Isaiah Sims** is the Director of Equity for Brooklyn Center Community Schools. As a leader in Systemic Equity, Nuhu is deeply committed to decentering normative patterns of systemic racism, white supremacy, and oppression along the lines of gender identity, sexual orientation, class, ethnicity, and culture. Nuhu employs a range of theoretical and practical modalities to guide instruction, build curriculum, and create culturally responsive/racially literate mental models. Nuhu is well versed in the heuristics of Cultural Anthropology, Post-Colonial Theory, Diaspora Studies, Critical Race Theory, Emancipatory Pedagogy, and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy. It is Nuhu’s strident passion to help people build community and coalition based on the strength of their differences. This is not an easy task, but it is the necessary one. Sims’ belief in being critically human drives Nuhu to build a better world. Nuhu never loses sight of that. Nuhu’s primary influences are the Black, Queer, feminists who demanded that all people, regardless of their identity intersections, have a seat at the table. We all deserve to feel like we belong. Nuhu’s life’s work is to create a space where that happens.