

Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Students National Student-Parent Action through Research Knowledge (SPARK) Launch Event

Speaker Biographies

Theresa Anderson is a principal research associate at the Urban Institute. She is a member of the Building America's Workforce cross-center initiative in the Income and Benefits Policy Center and is affiliated with the Center on Education Data and Policy. She leads teams in conducting in-depth, mixed-methods research on evaluations of workforce, education, and social safety net programs and policies. She is particularly interested in improving access to and success in education throughout the life course, from early childhood to adulthood. Her work has focused on student parents, low-income families, opportunity youth, adult education students, underprepared college students, high school students from historically underserved populations, and public housing residents.

Amber Angel serves as Program Officer for ECMC Foundation where she oversees the Single Mother Student Success Initiative. As a previous first-gen single student parent, Amber is passionate about student parents and is an advocate for higher education support initiatives for all underserved students. Amber also teaches 21st Century Employability Skills courses as an Adjunct Instructor at Los Angeles Valley College (LAVC). Prior to ECMC Foundation, Amber served as a Program Manager at LAVC Family Resource Center (FRC) and as a Student Parent Advisor for Ascend at the Aspen Institute. She has presented nationally on 2Gen student success, including speaking at the United States Department of Education Summit. Amber has over 10 years of experience working in higher education and managing public and private grants. Amber's story of overcoming higher education obstacles, as a student parent herself, was featured on PBS NewsHour Weekend. Amber holds a Bachelor of Science in Family Studies from California State University, Northridge.

Mary Ann Matta DeMario is a specialist in the Institutional Research Office at Monroe Community College in Rochester, NY. The founder of the Student-Parent movement at MCC, her research on and advocacy for Student-Parents earned the College one of four Single Moms Success Design Challenge grants nationwide. She was the keynote speaker at an inaugural event of the Susan B. Anthony Center at the University of Rochester, and is a member of the Postsecondary Success for Parents Initiative at Ascend at the Aspen Institute.

Autumn Green is a Research Scientist at Wellesley Centers for Women, where she directs the Higher Education Access for Parenting Students Research Initiative. In fall 2021, she also became a Non-Resident Fellow at the Urban Institute, where she works with the Income and Benefits Policy Center and the Building America's Workforce Initiative. Dr. Green's research, advocacy, campus program development, and other change-making work has made transformational contributions to the fields of higher education and two-generation postsecondary and occupational mobility pathways from poverty for low-income families. Her forthcoming book, *Surviving, Striving and Thriving: Low-Income Mothers in Higher Education* documents the experiences of low-income mothers pursuing higher education in ten states, situating their experiences within the systems and policy contexts that they must navigate to succeed in college.

Marie Hocker is a Principal at Imaginable Futures. She works with organizations to increase family prosperity and well-being with a focus on the education of student parents and young children. Previously, Marie worked for Detroit Employment Solutions Corporation (DESC) where she served as executive director of Grow Detroit's Young Talent. She led efforts to raise \$12 million in annual funding and build employer partnerships to train and employ more than 8,000 youth over the summer. Prior to joining DESC, Marie spent 10 years at Ford Motor Company (Ford) holding positions in government and community relations. She was responsible for building and maintaining positive relationships with members of Congress and staff while covering transportation and workforce development policy in Washington, D.C. She also engaged local government officials and other industry stakeholders to deliver business and philanthropic objectives in Ford's Michigan plant communities. In addition, she developed and implemented mobility initiatives, including workforce development planning for autonomous vehicles and a national autonomous vehicle jobs coalition. Earlier in her career, Marie worked for U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow as a Legislative Correspondent.

Cordero Holmes is a undergraduate student at Arizona State University. Cordero is a Phoenix native who has roots in the very city that goes back several generations. He is an enrolled member of Tohono O'odham Nation and a proud community member of the Buckeye Road area. What makes Cordero's story so interesting is that he is the epitome of change and growth. Cordero was sentenced to prison for 10 ½ years at the age of 20 years old, and since his release has been motivated to cause change. He has worked with the Computing Alliance for Hispanic Serving Institutions out of the University of Texas El Paso, is a student voice on the Maricopa Council on Black American Affairs within the Maricopa Community College District, and is a member of Arizona Department of Education's Indian Education Advisory Council where he works with other Native American community leaders and advises Arizona's Superintendent of Education about policies regarding Indigenous children. In addition to these things, Mr. Holmes also visits the Durango Juvenile facility often to speak to the young people, assists the unhoused population within The Zone with food and clothes, and is featured in a PBS documentary produced by Roadtrip Nation titled Being Free where he advocates for women and men currently incarcerated. Cordero has developed a love for humanity that has sparked a commitment for racial equity and equality. His courage to persevere through adversity is why he is an exceptional leader, not only for the youth and formerly incarcerated, but for all people who desire to maximize their fullest potential and impact those around them. He is a father of four, a recent graduate of Rio Salado College, and is now a student at Arizona State University's Barrett, The Honors College where he is studying Public Service and Public Policy.

Ryan Kelsey is the Urban Institute's inaugural director for Building America's Workforce, where he helps shape Urban's workforce research agenda, leveraging the Institute's expertise in workforce development, postsecondary education, training, apprenticeships, work supports, job quality, and much more. Kelsey has more than twenty years of experience weaving together innovations in education, philanthropy, and workforce programs to foster a more equitable world. Before Urban, Kelsey served as the Markle Foundation's executive director for partnership development, where he led the formation of strategic partnerships with leading philanthropies and nonprofits as well as internal strategic planning and Markle's learning and evaluation agenda. He was previously the chief strategy and innovation officer at Achieving the Dream, a national nonprofit that supports a network for reformed-minded community colleges; and program officer at the Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust, where he developed and managed a \$45 million portfolio of grants focused on US higher education, STEM learning, K-12 teacher preparation, and educational technology.

Jessica Lee is a Senior Staff Attorney at the Center for WorkLife Law, and Director of the Center's Pregnant Scholar Initiative, the nationwide legal resource center for pregnant and parenting students. Jessica's research and advocacy advances gender and racial equity in the workplace and in

education, and she is a nationally-recognized expert on the laws at the intersection of employment, education, and maternal and infant health.

Joanna Reyes is a postdoctoral scholar at Arizona State University and co-founder of Mothers of Color in Academia. A scholar-activist, Dr. JoAnna M. Reyes has fought for parenting student equity since 2015 as an organizing member of Mothers of Color in Academia, a student collective of Women of Color mother scholars that organized to build systemic support for parenting students. Through this collective, she helped found multiple campus entities and was a charter member of the first ever systemwide taskforce for parenting students at her large state institution. Her efforts have helped raise the visibility of parenting student needs from a single campus to the system, state, and national level. An art historian, Dr. Reyes is a Presidential Postdoctoral Scholar at ASU's Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts and has previously worked at the Getty, LACMA, and the Hispanic Society Museum and Library, New York. From 2016-2019, she served as the book review editor for *Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies*. Working on both colonial Mexican and modern Chicana/o art and visual culture, Dr. Reyes' academic research interests include identity formation and expression, social histories of art production, and the twin specters of colonialism and imperialism.

Kimberly Salazar is an Undergraduate Student at the University of California Berkeley. Kimberly is the mother of a 5-year-old who is currently working towards a bachelor's in sociology at the University of California, Berkeley. She is a participant of the Undergraduate Research Apprentice program at Berkeley and was awarded a summer stipend grant to assist in Dr. Yu-Ling Chang's current research project investigating racial equity and CalWORKs reforms in California in the context of the global pandemic. She also is a recipient of the Patsy Takemoto Mink Education Support Award and part of the Leadership Council for Student Parent Families at the Urban Institute. Kimberly has maintained a 4.0 GPA while at Berkeley and has been accepted to the Sociology Senior Honors Program where she will be completing a research project exploring the barriers and tensions student parents face while navigating both the CalWORKs system and postsecondary educational institutions. Kimberly's future goals include publishing an academic journal article before graduating with her bachelor's degree and earning a Ph.D. in social welfare.

Nathan Sick is a Senior Research Associate at the Urban Institute.

Maria Ramirez is the Director of Equity Initiatives at NYU Steinhardt. She also serves on the NYU Global Inclusions Officer Council, and is the co-founder of the NYU Mothers of Color Support Group. Maria is an alumna of the NYU Higher Education and Student Affairs graduate program, and is currently a student in the NYU Sociology of Education doctoral Program. Her scholarship focuses on supporting student parents from minoritized groups on college campuses, education policy pertaining to student parents, and antiracism in education. She has presented on these topics at the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in Education (NCORE), the annual NASPA conference, and the NYU Student Affairs conferences; and has led public conversations about antiracism for NPR and other media outlets. Throughout her time at NYU as a graduate student and administrator, Maria has received the Dean's Award for Impact for her work as Director of Equity Initiatives, the Linda Vega award for Excellence and Dedication from the Undergraduate Student Government, Steinhardt Give-A-Violet award for administrative professionals and the President's Service Award for her leadership role in the Association of Student Affairs Professionals.

Heather Willoughby is a STARS Program Assistant at the University of California Santa Cruz.