



American
Society
on Aging

COHORT 3  **THE CATALYSTS**

PROFESSIONAL BIOS

ASA RISE COHORT 3: THE CATALYSTS

Nikki Davis, MBA, is the Vice President of Program Administration for Wise & Healthy Aging, a Los Angeles based non-profit focused on older adult (50+) services. In her role, she oversees Member Services' engagement programs such as lifelong learning and congregate meals. Additionally, Nikki supports the billing operations for care management services and manages performance measurements for the organization's federal, county, and city grants.

Ms. Davis was previously the Senior Director/Regional Officer of Community & Volunteer Engagement for a national non-profit. Her experience includes serving as Vice President for a residential property board where she continues as the communications director. She began her social responsibility journey on a medical and teaching mission to Nairobi, Kenya while serving on a humanitarian non-profit board. She has facilitated Futures & Foresight methodology workshops, as developed by the International Federation of Red Cross Red Crescent Societies based in Geneva, and supported humanitarian, volunteer, and innovation strategy discussions with partners in Rome, Oslo, Madrid, and San Salvador.

She holds an MBA degree from Pepperdine University, a bachelor's degree in communications from Loyola Marymount, and a Global Studies certificate from the University of Oxford.



As a public speaker, she has presented at the United Nations Population Fund in New York, Points of Light Institute Conference, Smart Growth Conference, at Pepperdine University, and given local network TV interviews following disasters.

She is a third cohort Fellow of American Society on Aging's ASA RISE

Priority Area of Interest: Social Impact and Innovation

Priority Area of Interest: Ageism and Culture

ASA RISE COHORT 3: THE CATALYSTS

Cristina Diaz, MPH is the Caregiver Programs Coordinator for AgeOptions. She provides technical support to all nine Caregiver Resource Centers (CRCs) in suburban Cook County, manages the Respite Registry, and oversees caregiver programs and special projects. This includes the memory café program, which encompasses both CRC partners and Targeted Culturally Linguistically Isolated Persons (TCLIP) agencies, the funded partners who offer services to Limited English-Speaking communities.

Additionally, Ms. Diaz supervises the Caring Together Living Better Program (CTLB), a program that partners with local church and faith-based community organizations to provide support to Older Adults and caregivers in the Western suburb region, the State Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (GRG) program and the Dementia Friendly initiative.

Ms. Diaz obtained her Master's in Public Health, certificates in Health Promotion and Epidemiology, and her Bachelors in Health Sciences from Benedictine University. In May of 2023, Ms. Diaz was appointed to the Illinois Department of Public Health's Alzheimer's Association as the Area Agency on Aging's representative for the State. Currently, Cristina serves as co-chair to AgeOptions Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DREI) Staff Committee.



She is a third cohort Fellow of American Society on Aging's ASA RISE.

Priority Area of Interest: Health and Well-Being

ASA RISE COHORT 3: THE CATALYSTS

Michelle Irby is the Intergenerational Tutor Program Manager at San Diego Oasis, an organization that promotes life long learning. She has had the privilege of working with amazing volunteers and helping to grow the Intergenerational Tutoring Program. In addition to recruiting, training and managing volunteer tutors, she also coordinates all of the Elementary School Book Giveaways and oversees the Intergenerational Summer Camp. She has such passion for serving the community and a huge heart for literacy.

Prior to her role at San Diego Oasis, she worked as a Program Manager for Greenville Literacy Association; a non-profit Adult Education Program located in Greenville, South Carolina. In that role, Ms. Irby managed day-to-day operations of the program and digital literacy initiative through student and volunteer recruitment, training, supervision, assessment, internal and external agency referrals, and corresponding metric tracking and reporting.

Ms. Irby earned a Bachelor's of Science in Sociology from Arizona State University. She considers herself a life long learner.



She is a third cohort Fellow of American Society on Aging's ASA RISE

Priority Area of Interest: Ageism and Culture

ASA RISE COHORT 3: THE CATALYSTS

Victoria Jackson, MS currently serves as the Community Support Network (CSN) Coordinator at Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) that operates as the Community Care Hub (CCH) for the CSN. MARC's CSN is a regional Community Integrated Health Network (CIHN) composed of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) that are committed to facilitating an array of support services including care planning, home delivered meals, transportation and Evidence Based Programs (EBP) for health care entities (HCE) and other providers. She also serves as the Leader Training Coordinator for MARC's 2021-2024 Administration for Community Living (ACL) Chronic Disease Self-Management Education (CDSME) grant for the statewide delivery of EBPs and person-centered supports for Social Drivers of Health (SDOH), is MARC's Evidence-Based Program (EBP) Coordinator, a Master Trainer and Leader of CDSME Programs, and Leader for Walk with Ease and Active Living Every Day.

Prior to joining MARC, she served as the Health and Wellness Coordinator for the City of Liberty, Missouri in their Parks and Recreation Department where she provided oversight and supervision to wellness center staff and coordinated both an array of evidence-based programs and an Employee Wellness Incentive Program for City employees.



She is also the lead author of a peer-reviewed manuscript published in the International Journal of Food Science and Technology entitled "Dietary Oxidized Lipids, Health Consequences And Novel Food Technologies That Thwart Food Lipid Oxidation: An Update."

Ms. Jackson has a Master's of Science in Nutrition and a Bachelor's of Science in Health Studies from the University of Central Missouri. She is committed to creating a healthier community by fostering community connections, providing quality health and wellness programs and strengthening support services.

She is a third cohort Fellow of American Society on Aging's ASA RISE.

Priority Area of Interest: Health and Well-Being

ASA RISE COHORT 3: THE CATALYSTS

Desta Johnson is a Senior Consultant for Member Education at Blue Cross Blue Shield Federal Employee Program. Previously she served as the Sr. Health Educator for UnitedHealthcare's integrated Medicare and Medicaid plan. She is a passionate and dedicated professional with a strong background in healthcare and a commitment to improving the well-being of individuals.

With a strong focus on Dual Special Needs Plans (DSNP) and individuals eligible for Medicare, Ms. Johnson ensures that members receive comprehensive information on health topics and benefits. She collaborates with interdisciplinary teams to tailor programs that address community needs and bridge gaps in member education. She has a deep understanding of Medicare and Medicaid program guidelines and ensures compliance with data protection regulations and privacy policies. Additionally, she strategically enhances marketing communications and manages the design and delivery of member education for over 5.5 million members.

Previously, she leveraged her expertise in remote patient monitoring and telehealth solutions by effectively utilizing technology to enhance patient engagement and deliver proactive care interventions. She has designed and delivered engaging educational materials, workshops, and presentations to a diverse range of members.



Ms. Johnson's professional journey reflects her passion for making a positive impact in the lives of individuals.

With a Bachelor's degree in psychology and a minor in biology from the University of Alabama, Ms. Johnson has a solid foundation in understanding human behavior and the biological aspects of health. Through her combined expertise in healthcare coordination and health education, she continues to contribute to the advancement of integrated healthcare solutions that enhance member experiences and promote equitable access to quality care.

She is a third cohort Fellow of American Society on Aging's ASA RISE.

Priority Area of Interest: Health and Well-Being

ASA RISE COHORT 3: THE CATALYSTS

Makieya Kamara, is a licensed certified social worker in Boston, Massachusetts where she leads the Elder Services Department and is the Project Director for the AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparents Program, (FGP) at Action for Boston Community Development, Inc. She is responsible for developing and managing a wide range of programs and services designed to support the welfare and independence of older Greater Boston residents, and to promote the civic engagement of elders, with special focus on the needs of multi-cultural & multi-lingual low-income elders.

Additionally, as the Project Director for the Foster Grandparents Program, she is responsible for the financial and administrative management of the program, supervision & development of FGP Coordinators and provides day to day support for a small group of foster grandparents. After 10 years of working with adolescents and youth in congregate care, she shifted to the field of aging, with a focus on intergenerational spaces and intersectional aging. Her interests include digital equity, loneliness, & social isolation of Older Adults, grandparents raising grandchildren, and gerontological social work education.



She received her Master's of Social Work from Wheelock College, School of Social Work, her Master's in Non-Profit Leadership from Boston University, Questrom School of Business, and her Bachelor's of Science from Northeastern University College of Criminal Justice.

She is a third cohort Fellow of American Society on Aging's ASA RISE.

Priority Area of Interest: Equity and Justice

ASA RISE COHORT 3: THE CATALYSTS

Shivanti Kariyawasam, MSG, OTD, OTR/L is the Manager of Programs, Research & Impact at Rebuilding Together's National office, and is a licensed occupational therapist at Kindred Long Term Acute Care Hospitals. Dr. Kariyawasam is passionate about refining and integrating the continuum of health care older people often experience with changes in their health- whether that be in post-acute care environments, or community-based aging in place. She believes her dual roles in clinical and non-clinical environments enable her to better understand issues older people often experience when accessing healthcare, recognizing care is delivered in a continuum. Dr. Kariyawasam believes both her personal and professional experiences have shaped her understanding of successful aging.

Prior to becoming an occupational therapist, Dr. Kariyawasam began her career managing daily operations for multi-year aging research projects on generative engagement in late adulthood and home-based palliative care delivery. A Sri Lankan-American dual citizen, Dr. Kariyawasam worked in Colombo, Sri Lanka in the international development sector on aging initiatives, recognizing the nation's status as one of South Asia's fastest aging countries. Her current work at Rebuilding Together focuses on supporting the development and evaluation of national safe and healthy housing programmatic initiatives centered in a person-first and community-oriented approach.



Dr. Kariyawasam earned both a Bachelor of Science in Human Development and Aging and a Master of Science in Gerontology from the University of Southern California Leonard Davis School of Gerontology. She additionally holds a clinical doctorate in occupational therapy from Washington University in St. Louis School of Medicine. She is also a Certified Aging in Place Specialist (CAPS).

She is a third cohort Fellow of American Society on Aging's ASA RISE.

Priority Area of Interest: Health and Well-Being.

ASA RISE COHORT 3: THE CATALYSTS

Cinthie Lopez Paz leads the implementation of the L.A. Found, a countywide initiative aimed at helping families and caregivers of individuals with cognitive impairments and intellectual/developmental disabilities who are prone to wandering in Los Angeles County, California.

She started her career in the public sector in 1998 and found her calling in public service. She draws on a vast array of experience, including policy work, communications and outreach team leadership. Additionally, has been a subject matter expert for automation projects.

Born in Santurce, Puerto Rico, she relocated to California with her family in 1989. Ms. Lopez Paz earned a Master's degree in public administration from California State University Northridge and a Bachelor of Arts in Humanities with a concentration in public administration from California State University Dominguez Hills.



She is a third cohort Fellow of American Society on Aging's ASA RISE.

Priority Area of Interest: Social Impact and Innovation

ASA RISE COHORT 3: THE CATALYSTS

Charles Markham is the Program Manager of the Onsite and Special Programs Department at DOROT, a social service organization and community space for Older Adults 60+ in New York City, New York. He is a creative arts and culture program administrator, dance educator, and artist dedicated to building social cohesion and bridging the gap between the Arts and Social Services.

A graduate from Goucher College in Baltimore, MD in 2013, Mr. Markham received his Bachelor of Arts in Dance with a concentration in arts administration and choreography. While at Goucher, he had the privilege to work with world renowned artists such as Sean Curran, Jennifer Archibald, and Constance Dinapoli of the Paul Taylor Dance Company, amongst many others. Mr. Markham's work and training has taken him to Edinburgh, Scotland and London, England, where he performed at the International Fringe Festival and trained at Pineapple Studios and Middlesex University.

Over the past 10 years, Mr. Markham has worked in the Non-Profit sector with diverse populations including teenagers, adults with developmental disabilities, adults brain injuries, and now older adults. Previously, in his work as Program Director of the Service Net Enrichment Center for Adults with Brain Injuries, he implemented the use of expressive art modalities in program modules to foster therapeutic interventions and social connections.



In his current role, he oversees the development and implementation of wellness programs that have the aim of alleviating social isolation and offering a global perspective. Through his role, he has been able to develop strategic community partners that generate opportunities for lifelong learning, community building, and program engagement that is both culturally relevant & competent.

He is a third cohort Fellow of American Society on Aging's ASA RISE

Priority Area of Interest: Ageism and Culture

ASA RISE COHORT 3: THE CATALYSTS

Nadia Murphy, LCSW, is the Manager of the VOICES 60+ Senior Advocacy Program at Hospital for Special Surgery in New York City, New York. In this role, she provides support, advocacy, and community resources to patients and community members 60 and older.

She began her career working in an inpatient unit at St. Peters Hospital in Albany, New York, with stroke survivors and their caregivers. Shortly after beginning her career in Albany, Ms. Murphy returned to New York City to continue providing medical social work services to adults in the city in which she grew up. There, she worked at Mount Sinai Hospital-Queens with Older Adults and their family members in a designated stroke unit and the intensive care unit. Most of the patients for which she provided services were diverse Older Adults from low-income communities, uninsured or had need-based insurance plans such as Medicaid.

After four years of working in inpatient hospital units, Ms. Murphy shifted to working as a social worker for the emergency department at New York Presbyterian-Allen Hospital. There, she provided crisis intervention, linked individuals to vital resources, and connected many with community agencies to ensure their safety when discharged. She then became the Social Work Supervisor in the Care Management Department of New York Presbyterian-Brooklyn Methodist.



After missing working with Older Adults in a patient-facing role and desiring to incorporate that work with macro social work, using education and program development to elicit change, she moved to her current position with Hospital for Special Surgery.

Ms. Murphy earned her Master's degree in Social Work from SUNY Albany and a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from Stony Brook University. She is a member of Uptown Interagency Council on Aging and Toastmasters International.

She is a third cohort Fellow of American Society on Aging's ASA RISE.

Priority Area of Interest: Healthcare Equity and Justice

ASA RISE COHORT 3: THE CATALYSTS

Kim Nguyen, Ed.D., is a professional communicator who has worked in many industries, including healthcare, biotechnology, and financial services. Currently, she is a Lead Communications Director with United Services Automobile Association (USAA). She focuses on enterprise-wide communications -- primarily technology changes and requirements -- for USAA's 37,000 employees. Ms. Nguyen has supported three chief diversity officers at USAA and built and executed an enterprise diversity, equity, and inclusion communications plan.

She has been a part of corporate teams at Kaiser Permanente, Genentech, and Visa. Additionally, she worked as an independent consultant at Levi Strauss and Bank of the West.

Ms. Nguyen earned a Bachelor of Arts in English from the University of the Pacific, a Master of Arts in Organizational Development from the University of San Francisco, and a Doctorate of Education in Organizational Change and Leadership from the University of Southern California. In 2022, she launched Silver Scaffold, Storytellers & Advocates for Older Adults, which focuses on elevating the voices of older adults, advocating for their digital inclusion, and reframing aging.



The findings and recommendations from two research studies she conducted on older adults and technology were recently published in *Intergenerational Relations - Contemporary Theories, Studies and Policies*.

She is a third cohort Fellow of American Society on Aging's ASA RISE.

Priority Area of Interest: Social Impact and Innovation.

ASA RISE COHORT 3: THE CATALYSTS

Tae Y. Oh, LSW, is a Planning Analyst at Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA), a private, non-profit organization serving as Philadelphia County's Area Agency on Aging (AAA). Mr. Oh is responsible for managing, coordinating, and facilitating agency-wide and departmental planning and program development efforts.

Prior to becoming a Planning Analyst, Mr. Oh was an Assessment Worker responsible for conducting comprehensive assessments for long-term care services. Mr. Oh's love for working with older adults blossomed when he was the primary caregiver for his grandmother. Although there have been challenges in navigating the health and social care systems stemming from limited English proficiency and cultural unfamiliarity, he has met the Good Samaritans who walked with him and his grandmother throughout the journey.

Having first-hand experience in caregiving and receiving help from others highlighted the importance of programs and services that support older adults. Since then, he has continued to walk the journey with Older Adults who need support. He dreams of seeing the programs and services provided through the Older Americans Act (OAA) come to life more fully for minority older adults.



Mr. Oh earned a Master of Social Services with a concentration in community practice, policy, and advocacy from Bryn Mawr College, and a Bachelor of Social Work and a Bachelor of Science in Biblical Studies from Cairn University.

He is a third cohort Fellow of American Society on Aging's ASA RISE.

Priority Area of Interest: Equity and Justice

ASA RISE COHORT 3: THE CATALYSTS

Zeena Regis is the Faith Engagement Director at Compassion & Choices, the nation's oldest, largest, and most active nonprofit working to improve care, expand options and empower everyone to chart their end-of-life journey. She is responsible for advancing community outreach and education efforts across the country. Primarily she directs and leads diverse and inclusive outreach programs targeting faith, religious, spiritual, agonistic, and atheist communities.

Prior to her role with Compassion & Choices, Ms. Regis was a hospice chaplain and grief care coordinator for almost a decade. She serves on the faculty of Columbia Theological Seminary's Older Adult Ministry Certification program.

Her training includes a Bachelor's of Arts in Political Science from Agnes Scott College and a Master of Divinity from Columbia Theological Seminary. Ms. Regis is also a playwright. Her latest work, *A Free Black Woman's Guide to Death & Dying*, was selected for the Synchronicity Theatre's arts incubator project and premiered in May 2022. She is a member of Presbyterian Older Adult Ministry Network, National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization and the Georgia Gerontology Society.



She is a third cohort Fellow of American Society on Aging's ASA RISE.

Priority Area of Interest: Equity and Justice.

ASA RISE COHORT 3: THE CATALYSTS

Dan Stewart is the Deputy Director of the Aging Equality Project for the Human Rights Campaign Foundation. In this role, he provides leadership and management for the Long-Term Care Equity Index (LEI) and other projects to promote LGBTQ+ inclusive policies and practices in long-term care and senior services. He is also responsible for high-level strategy and vision as well as day-to-day management and implementation of the LEI. A queer, Chicano, transgender man and gerontologist, he speaks nationally on LGBTQ+ aging and has dedicated his career to advocating and bettering the lives of LGBTQ+ Older Adults.

Mr. Stewart received his Bachelor's of Arts in Psychology from Saint Louis University and his Master's of Science in Gerontology from the University of Missouri-St. Louis. He has served on numerous regional and national Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion councils.

In his free time, he creates art inspired by his indigenous Mexican heritage. He resides in Denver, Colorado.



He is a third cohort Fellow of American Society on Aging's ASA RISE.

Priority Area of Interest: Equity and Justice

ASA RISE COHORT 3: THE CATALYSTS

Stacy Subida, MSW, LCSW, is a Supervisor of Family and Support Services for the Caregiver Portfolio at the city of Chicago's Area Agency on Aging, the Department of Family and Support Services, Senior Services Division. In her role, Ms. Subida is responsible for overseeing staff, monitoring delegate agencies, and planning, development, implementation and evaluation of programs. Her work within the Caregiver Portfolio supports family caregivers and care recipients' abilities to live in their homes and communities through Older Americans' Act funded Title III-E programming. In addition, Ms. Subida oversees Title III-B Chore and Residential Repair programs and pilot programs including the Senior Food Box Program and Community Aging in Place - Advancing Better Living for Elders, (CAPABLE) Program.

Ms. Subida is committed to the aging network with nearly 20 years of experience in the field. Prior to her current role, she worked in a variety of home and community-based settings including case management and supervision, crisis intervention, and managing a senior center. She previously served on the Leadership Core as Senior Media Director for the Chicago Bridge, a grassroots group of professionals providing opportunities for professional development, leadership, and support to emerging professionals the field of aging.

She has been a longtime supporter and former board member of the



Alliance of Filipinos for Immigrant Rights and Empowerment (AFIRE) Chicago, a non-partisan grassroots community organization that works to build the capacity of Filipinx/a/os to organize towards progressive change and to amplify the voices of undocumented families, new immigrants and refugees, domestic workers, low-wage workers, seniors, and youth.

Ms. Subida holds a Master's of Social Work, Gerontology Concentration, from the George Warren Brown School of Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis and a Bachelor's of Science in Social Work from Saint Louis University.

She is a third cohort Fellow of American Society on Aging's ASA RISE.

Priority Area of Interest: Social Impact and Innovation.

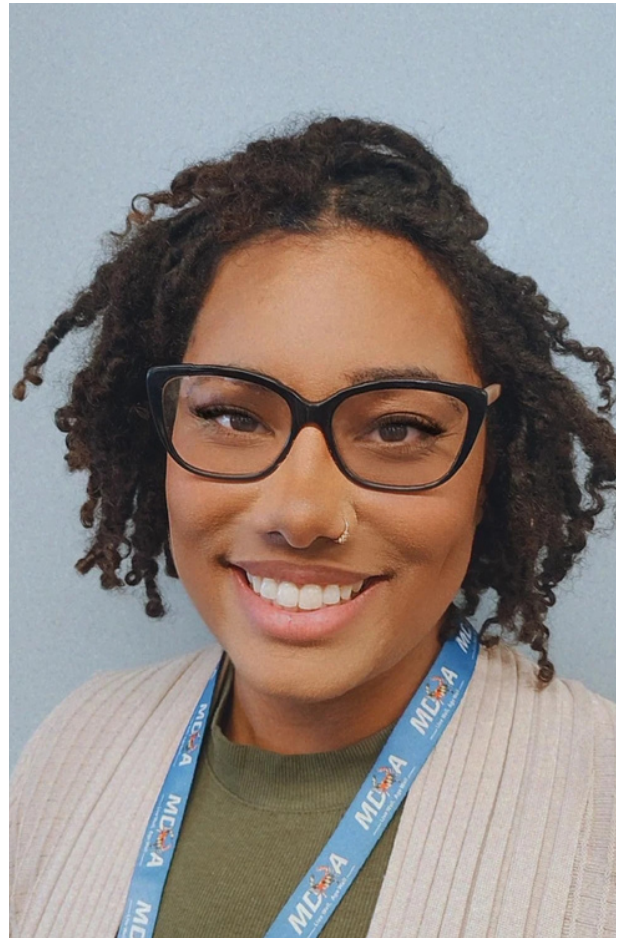
ASA RISE COHORT 3: THE CATALYSTS

Chelsea Denise Wheeler is the Program Manager for Supportive Communities with the Maryland Department of Aging Supportive Communities initiative. The initiative is dedicated to advancing the concept of "Longevity Ready Maryland" with the goal of assisting communities in their efforts to enable aging Maryland residents to live independently within their local neighborhoods. The initiative actively promotes and supports the village concept, emphasizing the neighbor-to-neighbor model as a key approach to achieving the objective. She is a dedicated professional with a passion for making a positive impact in the field of social services.

Ms. Wheeler's journey in the human services field began over a decade ago, and she has since amassed a wealth of experience working with at-risk populations. Her strong work ethic, excellent communication skills, and ability to collaborate effectively have enabled her to thrive in various local, state, and federal capacities.

With a Bachelor of Science degree in Family Science from Towson University, Ms. Wheeler possesses a solid foundation in social work principles, practices, and theories. She is well-versed in interpreting and applying laws, policies, and regulations to ensure the appropriate delivery of services to those in need.

Throughout her career, Ms. Wheeler has demonstrated her expertise in program management, policy development, and implementation.



Ms. Wheeler's commitment to serving vulnerable populations is exemplified in her current role where she oversees program operations, supports planners, financial services, and participant satisfaction. She continuously evaluates and improves the program to ensure the highest quality of care for Older Adults.

Beyond her professional achievements, Ms. Wheeler values her family and cherishes the experiences and lessons learned while growing up in Baltimore. She embraces diversity and believes in creating a more equitable society for all individuals. In her free time, Ms. Wheeler enjoys exploring new research and engaging in activities that promote personal growth and well-being.

She is a third cohort Fellow of American Society on Aging's ASA RISE.