NWSN Board Members and Officers

2023-2024

NWSN National Women's Shelter Network

CONSTANCE COLLINS

President and Executive Director, National Women's Shelter Network, Inc.
President, Sundari Foundation, Inc. dba Lotus House Women's Shelter, Miami, Florida
Contact: constance@thenwsn.org

Moved by the sight of a homeless woman bathing in the fountain of what would be her last commercial development, Constance Collins concluded a 20-year, highly successful, for profit, commercial real estate, finance and business career in 2004 to found the Lotus House Women's Shelter in Miami, Florida.

Ms. Collins shepherded Lotus House from its humble beginnings serving 34 women nightly to today's model, state-of-the-art, comprehensive homeless services facilities, known as Lotus Village. Designed to be universally accessible, child friendly and serve high special needs women, youth and children, Lotus Village includes an in-take sanctuary, model children's wellness center, early childhood education and care center, evidence based child and family therapies, access to health and mental health care, an employment and education center, professional culinary center, healing hands salon, arts and activities lab, hydroponic farm, neighborhood health clinic, and currently under construction, a brand new, model neighborhood children's resource center at Lotus Village to provide deeper educational and therapeutic supports, diverse programming and greater access to health, legal and social services and community resources for the children, youth and families sheltered by Lotus House and its surrounding community.

Lotus House is now the largest women's homeless shelter in the nation, sheltering over 525 women, youth and children nightly, offering trauma-informed, wrap-around supportive services and enriched resources to help them heal, reclaim their lives and build the foundation for safer, brighter futures. Since inception, Lotus House has sheltered over 11,000 women and children and counting, with more than 85% exiting successfully from the shelter system. Ms. Collins attributes Lotus House success to use of trauma-informed, evidence-based, best practices, the hard work, love, compassion and passion of the expert Lotus House team, and the power of community coming together to save and change lives.

Those same principles for success explain the power of the National Women's Shelter Network, an initiative Ms. Collins spearheaded at Lotus House in the midst of the pandemic, to connect and join forces with women's shelters and safe haven programs from across the country. With domestic violence on the rise and women's shelters standing at the intersection of gender based violence and

homelessness, the imperative was clear. Women's shelters and safe haven programs across the country needed to come together in shared learning and community to advance best practices, elevate the voices of those with lived experience, and establish a powerful new voice for more resources to end and prevent homelessness for vulnerable women and children nationwide and the shelters that serve them. Over 20,000 miles on the road later, having personally visited nearly 100 shelters in communities large and small all across the nation, Ms. Collins now leads the National Women's Shelter Network which includes over 330 shelters, and growing. The successful inaugural conference of the NWSN in September 2023 in Miami, Florida convened more than 220 leaders from shelters across the nation and other experts in related fields to share information, innovation, best practices and cutting edge research. The NWSN is now a force on a national level, working with Federal officials to highlight critical gaps and needs and advance public policy initiatives to uplift women and children in need to end and prevent homelessness.

A dedicated volunteer, Ms. Collins is President and Executive Director of the National Women's Shelter Network leading the movement to end and prevent homelessness for the most vulnerable women and children in our country and the shelters that serve them. She continues to serve as President of the Lotus House Women's Shelter and its extended family of charitable organizations, recognizing the importance of remaining close to the ground in her service work. After nearly 20 years as a full time volunteer, she remains more committed than ever in her mission to end and prevent homelessness in our country. Her advocacy is deeply rooted in and informed by direct service to women and children in need, creating trauma-informed, evidence-based solutions that address the gender-specific needs of women, youth and children experiencing homelessness.

Ms. Collins helped author and served as the co-principal investigator in one of the largest service driven research projects ever conducted in the United States to understand more deeply the developmental progress, mental health and wellbeing, and trauma histories of sheltered children, as well as effective therapeutic interventions to heal, support and strengthen children and mother-child relationships impacted by trauma. She has conducted and guided research and intensive real world experience in a wide range of fields intersecting with homelessness: root causes of homelessness and the impacts of gender-based violence; gaps and needs analyses of gender-based violence and victim's support systems; collective impact models to elevate and amplify the impact of shelters and community providers; designing trauma-informed shelter environments, operations and programming; HIV and health care services in good samaritan clinics; LGBTQIA+ sensitive services; utilization of new market tax credit and complex financing to build shelter capacity and neighborhood centers; elevating and advancing persons with lived experiences in operations, programming and management; and building organizational infrastructure and capacity, fundraising and financing to support and advance nonprofit mission and impact.

Her education includes a Bachelor of Arts degree from Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut and a Juris Doctorate degree from University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado, in addition to Foundations in Contemplative and Palliative Care from the New York Zen Center for Contemplative Care. She has co-authored and received many awards for her work over the past 20 years on behalf of Lotus House. Ms. Collins is licensed to practice law in the State of Florida and the District of Columbia. For more information, please contact us.

SHAKOYA GREEN LONG

Vice President, National Women's Shelter Network, Inc.
Chief Executive Officer, Thomas House Family Shelter, Garden Grove, California
Contact: shakoya@thomashouseshelter.org

Shakoya Green Long, is an established professional in the behavioral health and social services field. A native of Southern California, she earned a bachelor's degree in Child and Family Development from San Diego State University and a Master of Human Behavior from National University. She also obtained a second master's degree in Social Work from California State University Dominguez Hills.

Mrs. Green Long's acquaintance with social services and its impact on individuals is relatively due to her own lived experiences. Ms. Green was born into a home with drug-addicted parents and, as a result, was raised by her maternal grandmother.

As an experienced Social Worker, she has combined her traumatic lived experiences with her management acuity expertise to facilitate awareness of program goals, objectives, and desired outcomes for her staff.

Her fervor for human development and community awareness have sustained her professional proficiency and ensured longevity and success within her line of work. Mrs. Green Long is presently the Executive Director of Thomas House Family Shelter located in Garden Grove, Ca. Thomas House empowers unhoused families with children to become independent and self-sufficient.

ALEXIS STEEL

Treasurer, National Women's Shelter Network, Inc.
President, St. Mary's Center for Women and Children, Dorchester, Massachusetts
Contact: asteel@stmaryscenterma.org

Alexis Steel joined St. Mary's Center in February 2018 as Senior Vice President of Operations and Compliance; she was appointed as the Chief Operations Office in January 2020 and was named President of St. Mary's Center in September 2020.

In her role, Ms. Steel oversees all operations of the agency, including six residential, education, employment, and prevention programs. She also oversees government contracts, human resources, facilities management, finance, and fundraising.

Ms. Steel is a member of the National Women's Shelter Network's Steering Committee, which is focused on raising awareness of the unique needs of women and children experiencing homelessness. Throughout her career, Ms. Steel has worked within communities to better the lives of women and children via global health initiatives and programs.

Prior to joining St. Mary's Center, Ms. Steel served as Senior Global Operations Manager at Consortium for Affordable Medical Technologies (CAMTech), where she managed internal and external operations for domestic and international programs, provided financial oversight, and led evaluation and strategic planning.

Ms. Steel brings extensive experience in program and financial management, working with leading academic hospitals internationally and large multinational corporate companies in the tech, healthcare, and pharmaceutical spaces. In addition, she previously served in a grant oversight capacity for federal and private foundations for both Mass General and Brigham and Women's Hospital. Ms. Steel earned her bachelor's degree from Trent University, graduating with a double major in Global Studies and Culture Studies.

PATRICIA BOSMAN

Secretary, National Women's Shelter Network, Inc.
Executive Director, The Haven of Grace, St. Louis, Missouri
Contact: pbosman@havenofgracestl.org

Patricia R. Bosman is the Executive Director of The Haven of Grace in St. Louis, MO, a shelter for pregnant women and their children. She is a strategic, operational, and entrepreneurial executive with more than 30 years of experience across nonprofit and corporate sectors.

Lauded as a natural connector and peacemaker, she is skilled at collaborating cross-functionally, communicating persuasively, and problem-solving with ease. Patricia has an unwavering commitment to underserved communities, and a passion for building strong relationships with everyone from clients to teams to partners and everyone in between -- always with a healthy dose of integrity, adaptability, and respect.

Prior to entering the world of nonprofit, she enjoyed a distinguished career as a leader in the telecommunications industry, and for more than 20 years, she has managed domestic and international information technology initiatives for AT&T, Inc., formerly SBC Corporation.

A dedicated volunteer, she is the immediate past Chairman of the Board of Trustees for St. Elizabeth's Adult Day Care Center, she is a former National Technology Chairperson for CARATS, Incorporated, and Past Vice President of the Metropolitan St. Louis Chapter of Jack and Jill of America, Incorporated. She has also served Better Family Life Incorporated of St. Louis and the Urban League Guild of Metropolitan St. Louis and Sentinel Charities.

Patricia holds a Bachelor of Arts in Marketing and a Master of Arts in Management and Leadership from Webster University. She is a graduate of the CORO Women in Leadership program, and she has corporate management certifications under the Harvard Mentorship Series and Leading with Distinction programs at AT&T, Inc. Patricia is married to jazz artist and composer, Dwayne Bosman, one half of the Legendary Bosman Twins. They have a blended family of 7 children and a growing number of grands.

ISABELLA DELL'OCA

Executive Director, Sundari Foundation, Inc. dba Lotus House Women's Shelter
Contact: isabella@lotushouse.org

Isabella Dell'Oca is the Executive Director of the Lotus House Women's Shelter, the largest women's shelter in the country. She began her career after graduation from Loyola University Chicago, where she got her degrees in Social Work and International Relations.

Passionate about making a lasting impact on her community, she joined Lotus House's Employment and Education team, later transitioning to Community Outreach.

She was very involved in the development of Lotus Village, home to Lotus House, designed as a mixed-use "village" combining state of the art shelter facilities and holistic, trauma-informed, supportive services to heal, nurture and uplift children and families experiencing homelessness.

When the facility opened she became the Deputy Director of Programming, overseeing all aspects of arts and activities, employment and education initiatives.

Her leadership skills led to her promotion to Director and subsequently, Executive Director. Along with a team of 130, who are widely recognized as the best in the field, thousands of lives have been transformed to date and will continue to be transformed for generations to come.

KIMBERLY LIVSEY

Chief Program Officer, Atlanta Mission, Atlanta, Georgia
Contact: kimberly.livsey@atlantamission.org

Kimberly Livsey is currently the Chief Program Officer at Atlanta Mission. She received her Masters of Science in Community Counseling from Mercer University and earned her bachelors in Psychology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is a Licensed Professional Counselor by trade and also provides clinical supervision to emerging counselors.

Kimberly's professional experience includes managing various mental health clinics throughout metro Atlanta as well as providing individual and family counseling to children, adolescents, and adults. Her experiences have led her to work in the fields of juvenile justice, foster agencies, group homes, local school systems and city municipalities.

Currently her work allows her to help develop and implement trauma informed services to one of the most overlooked populations of society, those facing homelessness.

Her mission throughout all of her work is to facilitate hope, model excellence, and serve with compassion those who are discouraged, hopeless and marginalized. No matter what the setting, Kimberly strives to serve as an adaptable individual who can provide initiative, creativity, and a high degree of flexibility and who can relate life experiences to the situations of others in a helpful manner.

SANDRA JACKSON

President & CEO, House of Ruth
Contact: sjackson@houseofruth.org

Ms. Jackson is the President and CEO of House of Ruth in Washington, DC. She provides management leadership for the city's largest provider of housing and services for women, children and families rebuilding their lives and healing from trauma, abuse, and homelessness.

She provides key leadership in the areas of administration, programming, and strategic planning to support the agency's mission, initiatives and oversee its 16 programs and ten million-dollar budget.

Ms. Jackson is an experienced executive with proven accomplishments in the areas of agency and program management, program and system development, contract management, and developing key community partnerships.

She has provided guidance, training and direction for staff, clients, contractual providers, and community partners.

LISA MICHAELSON

Vice President Women's and Children's Programs, Union Gospel Mission Twin Cities, Missouri
Contact: lmichaelson@ugmtc.org

Lisa Michaelson is an inclusive servant leader with a proven ability to inspire and activate diverse people, partnerships, and resources to maximize social impact for individuals, organizations, and communities.

Lisa currently provides strategic and visionary leadership as vice president of women's and children's programs at Union Gospel Mission Twin Cities.

Previously, as executive director of YMCA of the North's Youth and Family Services, she collaborated with local and global communities to co-create innovative responses to reduce disparities and advance equity and social justice.

Lisa holds a BS in Social Work from St. Cloud State University and brings 20 years of professional and lived experience to the field.

She can dream big and has the skills and grit necessary to develop and motivate teams to execute and produce stellar outcomes in the government, business, and nonprofit sectors.

As an energetic advocate and natural connector, Lisa is thrilled to be a board member of the National Women's Shelter Network.

MARGARET MITCHELL

Chief Executive Officer, YWCA USA, Inc., Washington, DC
Contact: mmitchell@ywca.org

Margaret Mitchell anticipates trends and has a proven track record of creating competitive breakthrough strategies. She communicates vision, purpose, and core values. As a strong decision maker who builds consensus, she is a consistent top performer who pursues growth with energy and drive.

Margaret strives for personal and organizational excellence. Recognized for savvy in building relationships at all levels inside and outside the organization, she guides an organization with a steady hand and maintains focus, even in challenging situations.

Prior to becoming CEO of YWCA USA, Margaret served as the President & CEO of YWCA Greater Cleveland, a 150-year-old social justice organization that provides direct service, collaboration, and advocacy in the community, focused on racism, empowering women, and homelessness. She has more than doubled the budget, the staff, and the services of YWCA Greater Cleveland through her leadership, financial acumen, and fundraising.

Among her achievements, in 2019, she led the call to Declare Racism a Public Health Crisis in Cleveland and across the state through her leadership in the Ohio YWCA Council. Additionally, Margaret led the acquisition of the Norma Herr Women's Center, Cleveland's largest homeless emergency women's shelter. She also launched the transformation of the YWCA Greater Cleveland Early Learning Center into a unique, unduplicated preschool that currently operates the only trauma-informed preschool serving children and families experiencing homelessness.

Previously, Margaret was the President & CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters Greater Cleveland, and served as the VP of Business Development and Director of Partnerships at Big Brothers Big Sisters of North Texas (now BBBS Lone Star).

In each of these roles, she expanded the reach and effectiveness of the organization – from board development, partnership recruitment, fundraising and organizational transformation focused on data. Earlier, Margaret held senior leadership roles at Menttium, a for-profit industry leader in one-to-one corporate mentoring, featuring cross-company programs serving the Fortune 500. She began her career in publishing as an editor and writer.

Margaret received a BA with honors in Mass Communications from Hampton Institute – a Historically Black College and recently attended Strategic Perspectives in Nonprofit Management at Harvard Business School. In 2020, The Cleveland Orchestra, in partnership with the City of Cleveland, honored her with the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. – Outstanding Service Award. In 2019, YWCA Greater Cleveland, ranked in the "Top 10 of the Top 100 Workplaces" by *The Plain Dealer – Advance Ohio* and was recognized as a "Business Longevity Honoree" by *Smart Business Magazine*.

KATIE O'BRIEN

Executive Director, Rose Haven, Portland, Oregon
Contact: kobrien@rosehaven.org

Katie O'Brien has served as Rose Haven's Executive Director since 2020, after working with the agency in a variety of capacities since 2009.

With 30 years of non-profit experience, her proven track record of success in strategic visioning and cultivating relationships has played a pivotal role in building the infrastructure for Rose Haven to support increased demand for services in Portland, Oregon, where they are experiencing the second nd highest rate of unsheltered homeless in the country.

Operating for 26 years, Rose Haven remains the city's only day shelter and resources center for women, children, and gender diverse communities experiencing homelessness and poverty.

Katie and her team provided consistent and compassionate services throughout the pandemic; a source of practical and emotional support to those most vulnerable in the community. Simultaneously, Rose Haven designed and built a new, trauma-informed facility that tripled capacity and is now daytime home to 3,000+ people annually.

ALYSSA SANCHEZ, LMHC

Asst. Vice President, Transitional Housing, Samaritan Daytop Village, Briarwood, New York
Contact: alyssa.sanchez@samaritanvillage.org

As Assistant Vice President of Transitional Housing, Alyssa Sanchez-Cook, LMHC, oversees the clinical management and administrative operations of 34 family and single adult shelters throughout New York City. She has 20 years of experience in the fields of behavioral health, workforce development and homeless services.

Ms. Sanchez-Cook joined Samaritan Daytop Village in 2017 as Program Director for a female adult shelter and was promoted to Senior Director of Transitional Housing with oversight for six shelters. Previously, she was Senior Director of Vocational Services for the WeCARE program at FEGS Health and Human Services where she provided job search and training services to more than 2,000 adults with medical and mental health conditions.

At EAC Network, she managed multiple vocational programs funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, New York State Office of Addiction Services and Supports, and the Nassau County Department of Social Services.

Ms. Sanchez-Cook holds a Master of Arts in Rehabilitation Counseling from New York University and a Bachelor of Science in Human Development and Family Studies from Cornell University. She is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor and is certified as a Recovery Coach and an Offender Workforce Development Specialist.

Since 2005, Ms. Sanchez-Cook has been a site supervisor for practicums and internships at Hofstra University's Counseling and Mental Health Professions program.

AMY TURK

Chief Executive Officer, Downtown Women's Center, Los Angeles, California
Contact: amyt@downtownwomenscenter.org

Amy Turk, LCSW, is the Chief Executive Officer of the Downtown Women's Center (DWC). Amy has held leadership positions in the field of social work and homeless services since 2001.

Amy began her tenure at DWC in 2013 as the Chief Program Officer, where she administered all of DWC's programs and social enterprise. In 2018, Amy served as DWC's Chief Innovation Officer, providing leadership in the development and implementation of new organizational projects and fostering vital relationships with community partners.

Appointed as CEO in early 2020, Amy has grown revenue by 106%, created a new three-year strategic plan, and is deepening DWC's focus on social justice. In the 12 years prior to joining DWC, Amy progressively took on more responsibilities to assist women experiencing homelessness from case management to serving for seven years as Director of Daybreak, a project of The People Concern.

Amy has held numerous local, statewide, and national leadership positions in efforts to end homelessness, including as a John A. Hartford Foundation Practice Change Leader award recipient for her efforts to improve healthcare for older adults experiencing homelessness, a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's 100 Million Healthier Lives Campaign Systems Leader, National Trauma Recovery Center Association Advisory Board Member, founding member of 1 in 4, a national social change movement to end homelessness among women, founding co-lead of the Los Angeles Domestic Violence Homeless Services Coalition, Los Angeles County Coordinated Entry System Councilmember, National Women's Shelter Network Board Member, and the previous Board Chair for Los Angeles Central Providers Collaborative.

As a volunteer, Amy served for six years as a certified sexual assault and domestic violence hotline counselor and trainer with Peace Over Violence in Los Angeles. Amy holds a bachelor's degree in sociology from Pepperdine University and a master's in social work from California State University, Los Angeles.

EMILY SEPULVEDA-WHEELAND

Chief Executive Officer, The Delores Project, Denver, Colorado
Contact: emily@thedeloresproject.org

Emily Sepulveda Wheeland (she/her) is the CEO of The Delores Project (TDP), located on the ancestral and unceded land of the Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Ute Nations in Denver, Colorado.

TDP is named after Delores Big Boy, a Lakota Sioux woman who experienced chronic homelessness in Denver and died on its streets in 1999.

In her memory, The Delores Project operates a 24-7, housing-focused shelter with wrap-around services for women, transgender, and nonbinary adults and a supportive housing community for formerly homeless individuals with a disability.

Emily has a Master's degree in Social Justice and Ethics from Iliff School of Theology, is a 2018 StartingBloc Leadership and Social Innovation Fellow, and has worked at The Delores Project since 2015 in a variety of roles.

At her core, she is an artist whose work and way of being in the world are informed by the belief that we belong to each other.

JENNIFER HANLON WIGON

Executive Director, Women's Lunch Place, Boston, Massachusetts
Contact: jennifer@womenslunchplace.org

Jennifer Hanlon Wigon, MBA, is the Executive Director at Women's Lunch Place (WLP), a daytime shelter and advocacy center in Boston that provides nutritious food, housing support, recovery programs, and other services to women experiencing hunger, homelessness, and poverty. Prior to being named to that role, she served as the Director of Finance & HR.

Through her leadership, WLP has successfully navigated the COVID pandemic and is now implementing a proactive Strategic Plan focused on innovative new programming to address the disproportionate impact of food insecurity, housing instability, and economic disenfranchisement on the physical and mental health of women. Previously, Ms. Hanlon-Wigon worked as a finance business partner in the high-tech industry.

She began her career in the Financial Development Program at Digital Equipment Corporation (now Hewlett Packard) and worked for Integra Technologies Corporation. She later utilized the technical and entrepreneurial expertise she developed to lead community non-profits with a particular interest in supporting women and girls. Jennifer served as President for both Wellesley A Better Chance and Wellesley Service League.

She was also a member of Womenade Boston, a collective giving circle, and the Board of Trustees of the Wellesley Scholarship Foundation, serving as Chair of the Scholarship Committee. Ms. Hanlon Wigon received her Bachelor of Science in Finance from Boston College, and her Master of Business Administration from Babson College, where she served for many years as a volunteer coach in Babson's Coaching for Leadership & Teamwork Program.

KARA ZORDEL

Chief Executive Officer, Community Forward SF, San Francisco, California
Contact: kara.zordel@communityforwardsf.org

Kara Zordel has over 20 years of experience leading nonprofits with the mission to end chronic homelessness. Kara joined Community Forward SF in 2019 after leading the national award-winning best practice, Project Homeless Connect.

Prior to Project Homeless Connect, Kara created the first-of-its-kind housing program in New York City that housed and empowered upwardly mobile women who had previously been unhoused.

She also led social services in the South Bronx, worked with the Federal Emergency Management Agency post 9/11, and has worked for UNICEF Tanzania.

Kara graduated from Columbia University with a master's degree in social work and international policy. Kara lives in the SOMA neighborhood of San Francisco with her partner and two cuddly pups. She loves San Francisco and enjoys exploring its beauty, art, and music.