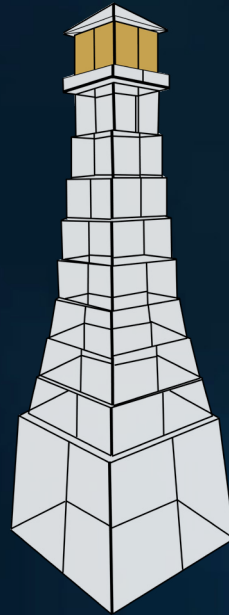


HONOREE YEARBOOK

THE BEACON AWARDS



JANUARY 25, 2024

FROM THE DESK OF

NASSER J. KAZEMINY

EIHS Chairman



DEAR FRIENDS,

Tonight, as we honor the 2024 Beacon Award honorees, we gather to celebrate the spirit of innovation and the embodiment of the American dream in these young entrepreneurs, activists, and philanthropists who are shaping the future of our great nation.

Here in the United States, the heartland of opportunity, a new generation of leaders is rising. These young pioneers are not merely creating businesses or movements; they are forging paths that lead to progress, prosperity, and a brighter tomorrow. Our honorees embody these principles. They have taken risks, challenged the status quo, and turned their dreams into reality. In doing so, they have not only achieved personal success but have also become beacons of inspiration for others to follow.

What sets these young people apart is not just their ability to identify opportunities, but their commitment to using their success to uplift others. They are building enterprises as well as communities: creating jobs and fostering a culture of innovation that ripples through the nation. This commitment to giving back is a testament to their appreciation of the profound responsibility that comes with success, and the privilege of being in America.

In the face of the challenges and uncertainties of this world, these visionaries have harnessed the power of technology, embraced diversity, and championed inclusion. By doing so, they have not only kept pace with a rapidly changing world but have also become architects of the future, shaping the landscape of American entrepreneurship, philanthropy, and social change.

May their stories serve as a testament to the enduring spirit of America, a spirit that thrives on innovation, resilience, and the relentless pursuit of a brighter future.

Thank you, and God bless America.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "N. Kazeminy", followed by a stylized, abstract flourish.



**THE DIVERSITY OF
THE AMERICAN PEOPLE
IS WHAT MAKES
THIS NATION GREAT.**

NASSER J. KAZEMINY

ABOUT EIHS

The Ellis Island Honors Society was created on its founders' profound conviction that the diversity of the American people is what makes this nation great. EIHS' mission includes a commitment to honoring and preserving the nation's ethnic and cultural diversity and to foster respect and understanding for the varied communities that constitute our country. In support of these goals, in 1986, EIHS began awarding the Ellis Island Medal of Honor to individuals of immigrant descent and others of distinguished character who have made it their mission to share with those less fortunate their wealth of knowledge, indomitable courage, boundless compassion, unique talents, and selfless generosity, all while maintaining the values of their ethnic heritage as they uphold the ideals and spirit of America.

In addition to honoring and promoting examples of immigrant contributions to the United States, the Ellis Island Honors Society supports the preservation of the Ellis Island National Monument, ensuring this gateway of hope is available for future generations of visitors. Ellis Island Honors Society also supports the education of students with immigrant heritage and raises funds for culturally focused events, emergency relief, and humanitarian programs by mobilizing its community of awardees and friends.



www.EIHonors.org



[@EIHonors](https://twitter.com/EIHonors)



[@EIHonors](https://www.instagram.com/EIHonors)

ELLIS ISLAND MEDALS OF HONOR

The Ellis Island Medals of Honor embody the spirit of America in their celebration of patriotism, diversity, and the importance of immigrants to our nation's economic and social success. The medal is presented each year on Ellis Island to a select group of individuals whose accomplishments in their fields and inspired service to our nation are worthy of commendation. The medal has been officially recognized by both Houses of Congress as one of our nation's most prestigious awards and its honorees are recorded annually in the official Congressional Record.

Since the medal was founded, we have honored many distinguished and diverse Americans including Presidents Ronald Reagan and Joe Biden, as well as six additional Presidents of the United States.



LEGENDS AWARDS

The Legends Award is presented to Ellis Island Medal of Honor recipients who deserve special recognition for continuing to make significant contributions to our nation after receiving the medal. These individuals have shown a lifetime of commitment to humanitarian causes and have earned the respect of their peers.

Founded in 1996, the Legends Award has been presented to Muhammad Ali, Gov. George Pataki, Sen. John McCain, Lee Iacocca, John B. Goodman, and other distinguished recipients.

The Legends Award is a natural progression for those exceptional individuals who have received the Beacon Award and the Ellis Island Medal of Honor.



INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN ELLIS ISLAND MEDALS OF HONOR AWARD

The International Humanitarian Ellis Island Medal of Honor Award was established to recognize and celebrate foreign nationals who are significant cultural figures and who have had an enormous social impact through their profession or humanitarian work. These honorees have used their international stature to bring attention to important social and humanitarian issues.



GLOBAL HUMANITARIAN ELLIS ISLAND MEDALS OF HONOR

Since 2011, EIHS has presented the Global Humanitarian Ellis Island Medal of Honor, which recognizes world leaders whose achievements on the world stage have made a significant impact on the lives and well-being of others, and whose professional, personal, and philanthropic contributions benefit our global community.

The Global Humanitarian Ellis Island Medal of Honor has been bestowed on such distinguished individuals as His Serene Highness Prince Albert II of Monaco; the former President of Ireland Mary McAleese; First Minister Peter Robinson and deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness of Northern Ireland; the President of Armenia, H.E. Serzh Sargsyan; and former Prime Minister of Japan Shinzo Abe.



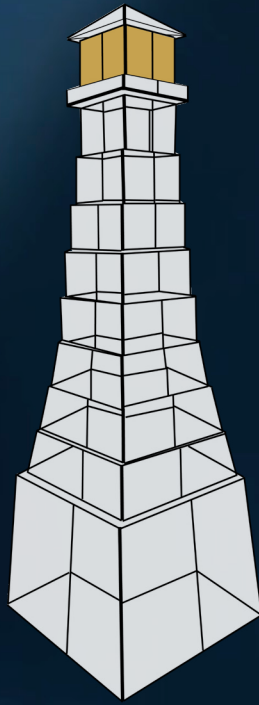
BEACON AWARDS

The Beacon Award salutes the amazing efforts of Millennials and ‘Gen Z’ who are revolutionizing the ways we communicate and do business in the 21st century. The Beacon Award was inaugurated in 2019 to celebrate and encourage the next generation of humanitarians and philanthropists, as well as recognize the achievements of young businesspeople who are creating new industry paradigms and developing advanced technologies that will benefit the nation and the world.

All honorees have distinguished themselves by excelling beyond their peers in their profession, civic service, or activism.



bea•con: noun /
a visible signal
or guide



ELLIS ISLAND HONORS SOCIETY CONGRATULATES
THE 2024 BEACON AWARD RECIPIENTS



MANEET AHUJA



EDITOR-AT-LARGE FORBES

 @WALLSTMANEET

Maneet Ahuja is Editor-at-Large at Forbes, where she covers the intersection of Wall Street, billionaires & entrepreneurial capitalism. She is also the Founder of ICONOCLAST, Forbes' premier global investor summit that convenes the world's most iconic industry titans, visionaries, institutional investors, changemakers and celebrities with collectively over \$20 trillion in AUM for high-level conversations on the most critical issues impacting our economy and markets today.

Maneet holds the unique distinction of being the only journalist at Forbes to also be an alumnus of the celebrated Forbes Under 30 list for media. She has interviewed some of the world's most powerful and influential leaders ranging from former U.S. president Bill Clinton to financial titans and investment legends like JPMorgan CEO Jamie Dimon, Carl Icahn, Marc Andreessen & former Meta COO Sheryl Sandberg.

Before joining Forbes, Maneet was awarded the prestigious Knight-Bagehot Fellowship at Columbia Journalism School and had over a decade-long tenure at CNBC, where she worked on major stories such as Lehman Brothers' collapse during the financial crisis and investigations into Herbalife. While at CNBC, she also co-founded Delivering Alpha, the network's flagship annual Wall Street summit and worked on Squawk Box where she launched coverage on hedge funds and alternatives. Prior to CNBC, she was a part of the Wall Street Journal's Money & Investing team and began her career on Wall Street at the age of seventeen working at Citigroup—which is where she earned the nickname “Wall Street Maneet.”

She was also the host of Spotify's special-edition podcast Megatrends (Gimlet media, 2019) and author of The Alpha Masters: Inside the Genius of the World's Top Hedge Funds, which has been published in five languages and sold over 30,000 copies.

“You may encounter many defeats, but you must not be defeated. In fact, it may be necessary to encounter the defeats, so you can know who you are, what you can rise from, how you can still come out of it.” —MAYA ANGELOU



FAISAL AL MUTAR



FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT IDEAS BEYOND BORDERS

 @FAISALALMUTAR

Born in Babylon and raised in Baghdad, Faisal Saeed Al Mutar experienced the villainy of extremism and authoritarian regimes firsthand. He survived the Iraq Civil War, the murder of his brother, and several kidnapping attempts before becoming a refugee in the United States in 2013. His brother's murder led him to start fighting against al-Qaeda in West Baghdad at 15 years old, using a contraband cell phone to send coordinates of al-Qaeda forces to U.S. commanders, and later from the United States as the founder of Ideas Beyond Borders, a non-profit dedicated to empowering people across the globe with access to new ideas and fresh perspectives

A practitioner of countering extremism and misinformation on an international scale, al Mutar has traveled to conferences and spoken on campuses across the globe about his experiences working to create positive change in the Middle East. IBB funds a network of underground schools for girls in Afghanistan and has educated tens of millions of MENA youth about Enlightenment ideas during its six-year history, breaking through the censorship imposed by regional authoritarians. IBB's Innovation Hub program, a small grants program that aims to empower individuals who are changing lives and creating hope in their communities, is revolutionizing how the international development world works in the Middle East. IBB cuts through the red tape and corruption of many international aid organizations and brings help directly to the people who need it. When earthquakes ravaged Turkey and Syria, IBB, under Faisal's tutelage, sprang into action. They not only facilitated direct humanitarian aid to those who needed it most on the ground, but they also continue to work with Innovation Hub grantees in the region to create jobs for those impacted.

Faisal received the "President's Volunteer Service Award" from President Barack Obama and currently serves on the leadership council at the World Liberty Congress, which brings together leaders and pro-democracy movements under autocratic regimes to learn and support each other in specific action-oriented areas. The WLC focuses on supporting freedom fighters at a political, strategic, financial, and legal level for movements and leaders. He publishes stories of the triumph of the human spirit authored by brave people from around the world on his Substack, The International Correspondent. Faisal lives and works in New York City.

"It is the great parent of science and of virtue: and that a nation will be great in both, always in proportion as it is free." —THOMAS JEFFERSON



DANIELA ALULEMA



PROJECT DIRECTOR CUNY-INITIATIVE ON IMMIGRATION AND EDUCATION

 DANIELAALULEMA

Daniela Alulema is the Project Director for the CUNY-Initiative on Immigration and Education, a researcher, and a nonprofit leader. Originally from Quito, Ecuador, Daniela brings her journey as an undocumented immigrant, her passion, and her belief in human-centered policymaking and research into her work. At CUNY-IIE, Daniela oversees the initiative's implementation, which aims to produce and disseminate resources for educators that center the strengths of immigrant communities.

She previously served as director of programs at the Center for Migration Studies, a think-tank that promotes the rights and dignity of immigrants. During her tenure at CMS, Daniela managed community-based research projects on the implementation of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, the impact of fear on how immigrants access services and programs in New York City, and the impact of deportation on US families and communities. She also authored reports on the impact of DACA and the critical role educators play in the lives of immigrant youth. Daniela has a deep commitment to applied research that supports evidence-based policymaking and person-centered work that focuses on the voices of the directly impacted.

Daniela worked at the New York State Youth Leadership Council, the first council led by undocumented youth in the state, participating in advocacy campaigns for the New York Dream Act and the federal DREAM Act, organizing legal clinics and informational sessions on the DACA program, and other initiatives that promote equal access to higher education to all regardless of immigration status. During her tenure, Daniela led the media committee, where she trained members on storytelling and created media placement opportunities to lift up and disseminate the NYSYLC's work. Her immigrant experience has been a driving force behind her work and commitment to inclusive and humane migration policy.

Daniela serves as a board member at National Pastoral Migratoria, an immigrant leadership ministry of service, justice, and accompaniment in parishes across the United States.

Daniela received her Master of Science degree in Urban Policy Analysis and Management at The New School and a bachelor's degree in Accounting from Baruch College, CUNY.

"It's hard to be what you can't see." —MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN, Children's Defense Fund founder



NOOSHIN BEHROYAN



FOUNDER AND CEO PAXON ENERGY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

 @NOOSHIN_BEHROYAN_OFFICIAL

Nooshin is an environmental engineer, former LEED architect who before the age of 40 has built the nation's 9th fastest growing company in America. She's an Iranian immigrant on a mission to help the nation's utilities, oil, and gas operators reach their ESG goals by providing cutting edge technologies for methane recapture. To date, her company, Paxon Energy has eliminated over 1.2 million tons of CO2 emissions from venting and/or flaring activities. As a first-generation immigrant and a single mother, Nooshin is highly committed to promoting gender diversity and workforce equality. She strives to address barriers and drive positive change, particularly for women engineers and veterans, who make up 20% of Paxon's employees.

Nooshin currently serves as the board president for the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO) San Francisco Bay Area chapter, as well as board of directors for Young President Organization (YPO) entrepreneurship, the advisory board for the University of California Davis. Nooshin's work has earned recognition and awards from organizations such as Business Times, Real leaders, the Women Presidents Organization (WPO), Forbes, Fortune, and Inc magazines. Nooshin holds a B.A. in Architecture from UC Berkeley, an M.S. in Civil and Environmental Engineering from UC Davis, and is a graduate of UCLA's EMBA Program. She is also a professionally trained piano player and has played for the U.C. Berkeley Jazz Ensemble.

"There is a freedom waiting for you, on the breeze of sky and you ask what if I fall? Oh but my darling what if you fly?" —ERIN HANSON



ROSEMARIN BELLIARD, ESQ.



ASSOCIATE GIBNEY, ANTHONY & FLAHERTY, LLP

 @ROSEMARINBELLIARD

Rosemarin Belliard is the proud daughter of immigrants from the Dominican Republic and an attorney committed to advancing and protecting the rights of immigrants in the US.

Belliard is an Associate at Gibney, Anthony & Flaherty, LLP, where she advises multinational corporate clients on U.S. Immigration and Nationality law. She assists clients in obtaining employment-based immigrant and nonimmigrant visas, concentrating primarily on the PERM labor certification process. She has appeared at numerous Permanent Resident interviews at USCIS offices throughout the country.

Rosemarin holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from CUNY John Jay College of Criminal Justice and a Juris Doctor from New York Law School. During her time in law school, Rosemarin was awarded the Government Fellowship and Chief Justice Rose R. Bird Award for Motivation in Pursuing Public Interest Law. As a law student, she volunteered with the Safe Passage Project and served as an intern for Chief Judge Dora L. Irizarry of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York. Prior to law school, Rosemarin was selected as the New York City Urban Fellow for the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, where she assisted the office in its mission to facilitate the successful integration of immigrant New Yorkers.

Rosemarin is dedicated to the advancement of pro bono work and diversity, equity, and inclusion in the legal profession. Currently, she serves at her firm as Chair of the Pro Bono Committee and has provided New Yorkers with immigration assistance through the New York City Advocacy Initiative, CUNY Citizenship Now, and Dominicanos USA.

She is the incoming President of the Dominican Bar Association, which supports Latino members of the legal profession and the at-large Latino community by providing scholarships and mentorship to law students, conducting career information activities for high school students and organizing pro-bono events for the community. She is a board member of 100 Hispanic Women National, Inc., a non-profit, non-partisan women's organization which promotes the professional advancement of Latina women in the government and corporate sectors.

Rosemarin Belliard, Esq. continued

In 2019, Rosemarin established the Trailblazer Scholarship at CUNY John Jay College in loving memory of her mentor, the former director of the Pre-Law Institute of John Jay College, Vielka Holness, Esq. The scholarship is awarded annually to a first-generation undergraduate student, from a traditionally underrepresented background in the legal profession, who plans to attend law school upon graduation.

Rosemarin is an active runner and 2023 NYC Marathon finisher who believes in the transformative power of running and movement.

“But experience has taught me that you cannot value dreams according to the odds of their coming true. Their real value is in stirring within us the will to aspire. That will, wherever it finally leads, does at least move you forward. And after a time you may recognize that the proper measure of success is not how much you've closed the distance to some far-off goal but the quality of what you've done today.” —SUPREME COURT JUSTICE SONIA SOTOMAYOR

SETH BLAUSTEIN



FOUNDER & CEO DOLLAR DONATION CLUB

 SETH-BLAUSTEIN-0A858214

Seth Blaustein is a futurist, social entrepreneur, filmmaker, and the visionary founder and CEO of Dollar Donation Club, a groundbreaking unified giving subscription platform that empowers individuals to make a meaningful impact on the world's most pressing social issues, with contributions starting as low as \$1 per month.

With a track record spanning over a decade in leading philanthropic impact campaigns, Seth has harnessed the power of storytelling through his videos, amassing an astonishing 80,000,000 views and mobilizing over \$15,000,000 in support of various causes.

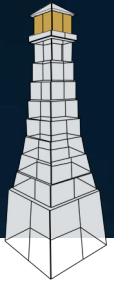
Before starting Dollar Donation Club, Seth founded the Telepathic creative agency and produced the annual Future Frontiers conference in Austin, TX--bringing together global luminaries to reimagine our world for the better.

At the heart of Dollar Donation Club's mission is creating a super-philanthropist—a collective of everyday individuals from all over the world, each contributing at least one dollar per month, pooling their resources to tackle humanity's most daunting challenges. His vision has the potential to revolutionize the way we approach philanthropy, turning it into a global movement for change while focusing on measurable results for every dollar donated.

Dollar Donation Club also makes giving easy for corporations, boasting partnerships with major companies, such as Levi's, SAP, Toyota, Niagara Water, and the San Francisco 49ers NFL team. Dollar Donation Club's groundbreaking work has been featured in Forbes, NPR, Business Insider, and Yahoo Finance.

Beyond his groundbreaking work with Dollar Donation Club, Seth thrives on pushing boundaries and embracing new challenges. You may have seen him testing his mettle on "American Ninja Warrior," climbing trees for exercise, or enjoying a swim at Barton Springs pool in his beloved Austin, Texas, where he currently resides. Seth is also a lifelong meditator and has traveled throughout India over the last decade.

"Criticize by Creating." —MICHELANGELO



ERIK BOTTCHER



COUNCIL MEMBER NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 3

 EBOTTCHER

Erik Bottcher is a dedicated public servant and activist who has devoted his life to progressive causes and to the betterment of the community he loves. In 2021, he was elected to represent City Council District 3, which includes the neighborhoods of Greenwich Village, Chelsea, Hell's Kitchen, Hudson Square, Flatiron, Times Square, the Theater District, and the Garment District.

Growing up in a small town in the Adirondack Mountains as the only gay person he knew, Erik's personal struggles with depression sparked in him a lifelong dedication to helping the most marginalized members of our society. His career in public service began in 2009 as the LGBTQ & HIV/AIDS Community Liaison in the City Council's community outreach unit, where he organized grassroots campaigns on issues including hate crimes, transgender rights, housing for people with HIV/AIDS, and marriage equality.

Erik then served as the statewide LGBTQ Community Liaison in the governor's office, where he helped organize the fight for marriage equality in New York State, working with activists from Buffalo to Montauk in an unprecedented grassroots campaign to garner support for the Marriage Equality Act. New York State made history as the largest state to legalize same sex marriage.

As City Councilman, Bottcher has focused on mental health, sanitation, and employment, as well as the needs of NYC public housing and the unhoused.

"We need, in every community, a group of angelic troublemakers."

—BAYARD RUSTIN



JENNIFER H. CUNNINGHAM



JOURNALIST AND EDITOR-IN-CHIEF NEWS DIVISION, BUSINESS INSIDER

 JENNIFER-H-CUNNINGHAM-5451534/

Jennifer H. Cunningham is an award-winning investigative journalist, editor, and newsroom leader. Cunningham is a versatile media executive, and has spent nearly 20 years writing, reporting, editing, and skillfully managing teams in the fast-paced, high-pressure world of news. Her mastery lies in implementing content strategies and comprehensive news visions while managing the daily demands of breaking news. Her deep experience in using data and analytics in news coverage decisions has set new standards for the industry.

She is the Editor-in-Chief of the News Division at Business Insider, overseeing bureaus in the United States, United Kingdom, and Singapore. Under Cunningham's leadership, the newsroom won its first Pulitzer Prize, in 2022.

The married mom of one began her career in journalism as a municipal reporter for her hometown papers, the Herald News and the Bergen Record, before working her way up to general assignment reporting for the New York Daily News, where she covered crime, national news, and entertainment.

After spending about a decade as a reporter, Cunningham decided to step into the editing realm. She became senior editor of exclusive news and investigative reporting at Interactive One, working with a small team to cover the intersection of celebrity, entertainment, and the legal system. She later joined Business Insider as Executive Editor during the height of the pandemic, overseeing an 80 person plus newsroom, and was promoted to Editor in Chief in 2022.

Cunningham's own reportage has appeared in the New York Daily News, iOne, Cheddar TV, amNew York, Essence Magazine, and The Bergen Record Newspaper. She's covered historic events like the Sandy Hook Elementary school shooting, Hurricane Sandy in New York City and New Jersey, and both the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections. Her coverage of Whitney Houston's death won an award from the New York Association of Black Journalists.

In her spare time, Cunningham volunteers with the Newswomen's Club of New York – the nation's oldest nonprofit advocacy group for women in the newsroom – where she is the immediate past president.



Jennifer H. Cunningham continued

She is a graduate of the Pennsylvania State University, and obtained her Master's Degree in journalism from the City, University of London. Cunningham resides in New Jersey with her husband, Peter Mulligan, and daughter, Marigold.

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

—MAYA ANGELOU

IMANI ELLIS



CEO AND FOUNDER CULTURECON AND THE CREATIVE COLLECTIVE

 IMANIIMANI

Imani Ellis is the CEO and Founder of CultureCon and The Creative Collective, a community dedicated to facilitating brave spaces for Black and Brown creatives. Born in Imani's one-bedroom apartment as a means to foster meaningful connection, TheCCnyc has since parlayed into the fastest-growing community devoted to creatives of color.

TheCCnyc's marquee event is CultureCon, a conference celebrating the impact diverse voices have on culture. Past speakers include Tracee Ellis Ross, Will Smith, Regina King, John Legend, Spike Lee, Lena Waithe, and more. CultureCon is the first of its kind ideas conference that caters to all aspects of creative and young professional life.

In addition to community events, The Creative Collective provides countless resources and workshops. In the height of the pandemic, The Creative Collective launched CultureCon At Home, a virtual campus that reached over 22,000 creatives in over 131 countries around the world, and Creative Curriculum, a series of digital masterclasses touching on everything from entrepreneurship to navigating the corporate world.

Named a "2021 Breakthrough Creative" by Ebony, and a "Diversity Champion" by Adweek, Imani has been recognized by Forbes as a "Visionary" and "One To Watch" by Black Enterprise. Imani graduated from Vanderbilt University with a major in communications and a double minor in German and Film.

"I come as one, but I stand as 10,000." —MAYA ANGELOU



KENNY GARDNER



CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER DAVITA INC.

 KENNY-GARDNER

Kenny Gardner is a proven, transformative, multi-disciplined executive with over a decade of experience in the healthcare services industry. Currently serving as a member of the executive leadership team in the role of Chief People Officer (CPO) for DaVita Kidney Care, a Fortune 500 health care services provider for end stage renal disease patients. As CPO, Kenny develops and executes DaVita's enterprise talent strategy for more than 65,000 teammates across the globe.

In addition to his current experience as CPO, Kenny spent 9 years as a senior P&L owner responsible for \$1.5bn in operations inclusive of core dialysis delivery, value based care programs, and leadership of DaVita's independent diagnostic laboratory. Mr. Gardner was accountable for driving clinical quality, strategic growth activities, operational excellence, and building exceptional teams and culture.

In addition, Kenny also serves as an independent director for Owens and Minor (OMI) a publicly traded national leader in medical supply manufacturing and distribution into both acute care settings and direct to patients.

Prior to joining DaVita, Kenny spent several years in the financial services industry. Culminating in a career as an investment banker in Morgan Stanley's mergers and acquisitions department.

Kenny is actively engaged as a civic leader with involvement across a number of causes including, Bridge of Life Medical Missions (board), Energize Colorado (board), the East Harlem Tutorial Program (board), the Pérez Art Museum stewardship fund for black art, the 5,000 Role Models of Excellence Project, the American Diabetes Association's National Advocacy Committee, and more.

Kenny holds a Master of Business Administration from the Stanford Graduate School of Business, where he was recognized as an Arbuckle Leadership Fellow, as well as a Bachelor of Science with honors from Florida A&M University.

"Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony." —MAHATMA GANDHI



REPRESENTATIVE JUNIE JOSEPH



STATE OF COLORADO, DISTRICT 10

 JUNIE4COLORADO

Junie Joseph, the current State Representative, brings a unique blend of personal experience and professional dedication to her role as a public servant. Living in Boulder as a renter, she faced the challenges of a law student while concurrently serving on the Boulder City Council. Despite the demanding workload,

Junie successfully balanced her responsibilities, eventually earning her law degree, passing the Colorado Bar, and establishing her family law practice. Notably, her grassroots campaign for Boulder City Council in 2019 set a record for the highest votes received by a registered Democrat in a nonpartisan election. During her four years on the City Council, Junie passionately advocated for working people, championing criminal justice reform, bilingual emergency announcements, and transparency through initiatives like OpenGov. As a member of various committees, including the financial strategy committee and beyond the local level, Junie represented Boulder's interests in state and federal realms, contributing to organizations like the Colorado Municipal League's policy committee and the National League of Cities Human Development Committee. Her commitment to grassroots engagement extends to her role as a former precinct captain and current Area Coordinator with the Boulder County Democratic Party. Junie's experiences as a lawyer, small business owner, and immigrant from Haiti uniquely position her to address challenges like criminal justice disparities, homelessness, and climate justice. Her dedication to social justice, human rights, and inclusivity aligns with the values of the National Democratic Party, emphasizing economic fairness, healthcare as a right, diversity as strength, and the defense of democracy. Junie Joseph looks ahead to continuing her advocacy in the State House, urging grassroots support from residents of Colorado State House District 10.

"We must accept infinite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope."

—DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

ASHLEY KULIKOWSKI



CEO, FEARLESS MOVEMENT OWNER, ART FOR HOPE STUDIO

 [ASHLEYKULIKOWSKI37](#)

Ashley Kulikowski is a 26-year-old Non-Profit Leader, Business Owner, and Social Media Marketer. She is the Founder and CEO of Fearless Movement, a Mental Health Advocacy non-profit organization; Co Founder of Fearless Women Ministries, and recently launched a business, Art for Hope Studio - a psychology-based, mental health art studio providing events and a K-5 school curriculum.

With a Bachelor's degree in psychology and various leadership roles, Ashley has funneled her passion into purpose by providing free mental health treatment and services for youth and women, as well as access to art therapy for those who need it most.

Ashley has received numerous honors such as becoming a 30 under 30 SNJ Recipient, Top 5 Philly Magazine Health Hero Award Finalist, and South Jersey Young Professional Association Halo Award Recipient. She is a public speaker, mentor, and current representative of the Miss America Organization.

As an Epilepsy Warrior for the past 12 years, Ashley continues to empower schools, hospitals, and community groups to rise above fear. She has cultivated large partners such as Nemours Children's Health, Jefferson Hospital, H&M, and others. Each year, through Fearless Movement and Art for Hope Studio, she serves over 2,000 individuals with her incredible team, and has reached over 100,000 people across the nation since inception.

As a survivor of teenage depression and anxiety, Ashley has found purpose in pain by sharing her story publicly as a catalyst for change. Through Fearless Women, workshops, and speaking engagements, Ashley improves the mental, social, and emotional health of our youth and professionals within the workplace. She believes that God did not give us a spirit of fear, but of love, power, and a sound mind and together, we can walk in that truth. While she's not working, she enjoys authentic Mexican cuisine, playing the piano, Bible studies, painting, and running!



Ashley Kulikowski continued

Ashley shares, “It’s a tremendous honor to receive the Ellis Island Honors Society Beacon Award. When I read the email, I was inspired to continue both my professional and philanthropic dreams even when things get hard. A true beacon of light is when you continue to persevere despite hardship and build leaders by example within your team and community. When those around you feel and see your light, they can become the light too and it’s a fire that cannot be tamed. The Ellis Island Honor Society is helping ignite change that lasts by inspiring multiple leaders across the nation, and I thank God I get to play a small part in that this year.”

“She is clothed with strength and dignity and will laugh without fear of the future.” —PROVERBS 31:25

SARAH MCFARLAND



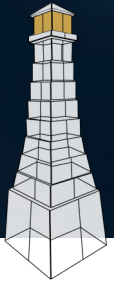
PRESIDENT MCFARLAND CONSULTING AND MCFARLAND DEVELOPMENT

 **INSTAGRAM SARAHHUNTMCFARLAND**

Second generation Korean American, Sarah McFarland, is the Best Selling author of “Get Up Girl: Release Your Roar!”, which emphasizes the importance of self-discovery, finding one’s voice, and breaking free from victimhood. As a business consultant and entrepreneur, Sarah has helped to create and scale businesses in varying sectors including land development, distribution, energy, logistics, and shipping. Sarah currently focuses on mergers and acquisitions consulting in the lower to mid-market range (5-50 Million dollars). She helps to raise and deploy capital, offers succession planning, aids in securing strategic partnerships, assists in acquiring and selling companies, and provides financing assistance at various stages for the client’s business holdings.

Her former experience includes being an owner of a land development company, and in 2019, a Congressional appointment to an agricultural task force for the state of Nebraska. Sarah also owned a distribution company where her private label products sold in over 150 on-site locations in Hawaii. In addition, as a partner, Sarah was integral in creating and scaling a logistics company to grossing over \$20,000,000 in sales annually in just under 4 years.

Mrs. McFarland also has a passion for philanthropic endeavors: participating on several boards with a specific focus on assisting women and children in need, including fighting domestic violence and child sex trafficking. Sarah also started her own foundation called “Let Love Be Greater,” which directly focuses on providing financial assistance for survivors of abuse and trafficking. In 2016, Sarah was honored by the California State Assembly for humanitarian lead efforts as the key facilitator in coordinating legislation toward a global response that helped repair a broken cease-fire agreement for a country in need. For a number of years, Sarah has also been a delegate for Hawaii to the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington DC, and a delegate representing the United States in both South Korean and Israeli humanitarian efforts. Sarah has a great passion for bridging the divide between countries torn apart by division and war.



Sarah earned her bachelor's degree in Communications and Marketing from Chaminade University (2007) and holds an EMBA focusing on Strategic Management from Hawaii Pacific University (2011). Continuing Education Certificates include Financial Markets with Honors from Yale University, Private Equity and Venture Capital from Bocconi University, Customer Analytics and Crowdfunding from Wharton University.

Sarah is a dedicated wife and mother to two beautiful children. She is also an avid outdoors adventurer. She enjoys mountain biking, rock climbing, surfing, traveling and riding her motorcycle!

"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." —EDMUND BURKE

AMIRTEYMOUR MOAZAMI



GENERAL PARTNER ENEA CAPITAL

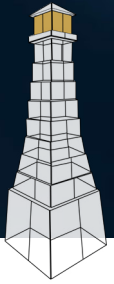
✕ AMIRTEYMOURSV

Amirteymour Moazami is a General Partner at ENEA Capital. He helps portfolio companies with fundraising, hiring, and business development. Amirteymour is on the Board of Advisors to Reality Defender (Enterprise-Grade Deepfake Detection), Mesh (embedded finance API), and Lexie.AI (an AI-native app builder). Previously, Amirteymour worked closely with Ethos.VC, a next-generation alternative investment management firm.

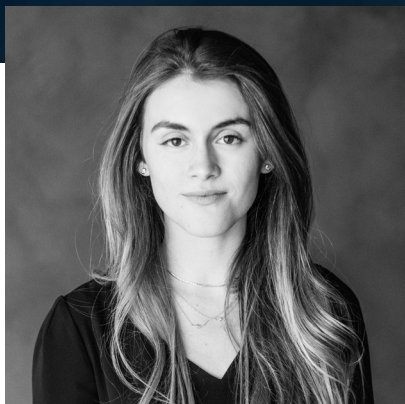
His portfolio companies include Onda (Cyber insurance co-founded by Joe Lonsdale), Astra Space (IPO), Workera.AI (co-founded by Andrew Ng), Zadar Labs, Linqip, Rocket Doctor (Digital Health Platform), and Cohesity (\$3.7B valuation). Prior to Ethos.VC, Amirteymour worked at Caspar.AI, a Ron Conway (Partner, SV Angel) and Deep Nishar (Partner, General Catalyst) backed smart home technology company co-founded by Stanford University Professor David Cheriton (Co-Founder & Chief Scientist, Arista Networks; First investor in Google; Early investor in VMware). At Caspar.AI, he was responsible for all things non-Engineering - Sales, Marketing, Business Development, Hiring, and Fundraising.

Amirteymour received a Bachelor's Degree in Economics from the University of Southern California, where he graduated Magna Cum Laude. He enjoys long-distance running, family, and learning.

"Run from what's comfortable. Forget safety. Live where you fear to live. Destroy your reputation. Be notorious. I have tried prudent planning long enough. From now on I'll be mad." —RUMI



ZOE OZ



CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER BILT REWARDS

 @ZOEYASOZ

Zoe is the Chief Marketing Officer at Bilt Rewards, the first loyalty program that lets you earn points on rent. She helped found the company back in 2021, and leads the marketing team, customer acquisition, and brand strategy. Bilt recently announced a \$3.1B valuation, and has acquired millions of renters around the country as its customers. Prior to joining Bilt, Zoe co-founded and led marketing for Kairos, a startup studio and fund focused on building companies for millennials and Gen-Z. Under her leadership, Kairos became the most followed venture capitalist firm on social media. Zoe graduated from Harvard University with High Honors.

"I never look back, darling. It distracts from the now." —EDNA MODE



BEN PASTERNAK



FOUNDER DEFIANT FOOD GROUP

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Over the past twenty years, Benjamin Pasternak has built, owned, and operated businesses in packing technology and food innovation, focusing on improving and changing how we nourish the world. Through close-knit relationships with the best chefs, food scientists, and business leaders, Ben is revolutionizing the culinary world by developing menu items with a high nutritional impact and superior taste and texture.

Pushing the boundaries of flavor and quality in the culinary landscape, Ben currently spends his time as the CEO and founder of NourishCult. Comprised of his two companies, Defiant Food Group and AuraPea, he and his food innovators design animal and plant-based options. Ben's expertise in sous vide cooking combines his background in packaging technology and supply chain logistics to allow these two companies to create delicious, pre-cooked food options that offer solutions for food safety, labor costs, and significantly shorter cook times.

Ben believes that how we manufacture food is failing us. Supply chains are reckless, nutritionally and environmentally, and the status quo isn't solvent or sustainable for businesses and communities. Ben believes there is no compromise for healthy, sustainable, and delicious food, and that we should defiantly ask questions to revolutionize the future of food.

Mr. Pasternak believes that by bringing together visionaries who will create a legacy rooted in trust and security, we can reimagine how we grow and process food to make production easy, flavorful, and repeatable.

Ben is Defiant because in setting out to modify the food industry, he discovered that with the right science, technology, processes, and most importantly, PEOPLE, it could be revolutionized.

"There are no problems, only opportunities for growth." —REBBETZIN DENA WEINBERG



LIEUTENANT THOMAS RICHES



NEW YORK CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT RESCUE COMPANY 2

 R2FDNY

Thomas Riches is a FDNY Lieutenant with the FDNY's elite Special Operations Command Rescue Company 2 in Brownsville, Brooklyn. In January of 2006 Thomas was assigned to Ladder 103, a busy fire unit in East New York, Brooklyn. After years of developing his skills and training for diverse emergency scenarios, in 2017, Thomas was promoted to Lieutenant, showcasing his leadership and commitment to the Fire Department of New York.

After years of rigorous training and excelling in high-risk rescue operations Thomas was selected for a key leadership role in Rescue 2; an elite special operations unit reflecting high-level expertise and trust. Today he regularly leads numerous high-risk and lifesaving operations demonstrating exceptional bravery and skill. Thomas' training paid off when he was able to rescue 3 children trapped above a heavy fire condition in a private dwelling in May of 2023. Currently Thomas is awaiting promotion to Captain after placing in the top 30 out of nearly 1000 applicants. Lieutenant Riches was recommended for this honor by his Company Commander Liam Flaherty, who is a past Ellis Island Medal of Honor recipient.

Thomas was inspired to join the FDNY following the death of his brother Firefighter Jimmy Riches who was killed during performance of duty on September 11, 2001. At 16 years old, Thomas helped his father and two other brothers carry Jimmy home out of the rubble of the World Trade Center. At 21 years old, Thomas demonstrated resilience and courage by joining the ranks of the FDNY at his first opportunity, showing his dedication to public service and honoring the memory of those who lost their lives protecting others.

In his spare time Thomas coaches his children's youth sports and helps manage "The Friends of Jimmy Riches," a non-profit organization founded by family and friends in honor of his brother which provides scholarships to children of first responders.

"It's your reaction to adversity, not adversity itself that determines how your life's story will develop." —DIETER F. UCHTDORF

SAMUEL SABIN



**SALES, MARKETING &
SUSTAINABILITY LEAD
SABIN METAL CORPORATION**

**BOARD MEMBER
ANDREW SABIN FAMILY FOUNDATION**

 **SAMUEL-SABIN**

Sam Sabin completed his Bachelor of Science from Wake Forest University, studying Business Enterprise Management and Italian. At university, he became part of the Andrew Sabin family foundation and dedicated himself to helping others. He has volunteered at orphanages in Ukraine during the Russia conflict & planted trees with local school children in Greenland to raise conservation awareness.

Sam wanted to be more informed about sustainability issues and attended Columbia's Sustainability Management program in 2019. During graduate school, he started a company that provided training and placement in skilled trade opportunities. The venture was part of Columbia University's Alamaworks Accelerator in the spring of 2021, participated in College Ventures Demo Day, and was selected for Colombia's startup lab.

Mr. Sabin now works with his family at Sabin Metal, building the sustainability program while serving in marketing and sales. He currently serves on the board of the International Precious Metals Institute and co-chairs the institute's Sustainability Committee. In addition, Samuel sits on the Emerging Leaders Board at Wake Forest University and the Advance Team at MD Anderson.

Outside of work and philanthropy, Sam is an avid outdoorsman, and most of the time, you can find him skiing tree lines or fly fishing in remote streams.

"A life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives."

—JACKIE ROBINSON



ANNA SKAYA



FOUNDER AND CEO BASEPAWS

 ANNASKAYA

Anna Skaya is the CEO and founder of Basepaws, an animal health company that specializes in genetics and early detection of diseases in our pets. If you have heard of 23andMe, think of this as 23andMeow.

Anna founded the company in 2016, and in 2022 Basepaws was acquired by Zoetis, a Fortune 500 company and the world's largest producer of medicine for pets. Over those six years, Anna took the company from the early days in her California garage - a classic American startup tale - to three separate episodes of Shark Tank, and ultimately into consumers' homes.

Most Americans have pets, and many of us consider them our family. Together with Zoetis, Anna's company Basepaws works to make the lives of pets longer and healthier across the globe, selling in over 100 countries, winning awards, and building the largest databases of life-saving genomic data.

Serving our pets - and their people - is Anna's passion, and her life's mission.

Anna's interest in genetics marks a recent shift in her diverse career in consumer technology. Basepaws is her fourth startup; previously she was the CEO of Groupon in various markets abroad, and ran two other digital companies, with mixed success. Accomplishment is rarely linear and while today we celebrate the great work she has done with Basepaws, each one of her successes and failures helped her grow and brought her here.

These days, Anna continues to lead Basepaws, is on the Board of the Petco Foundation, and mentors budding entrepreneurs on how to effectively build and scale their startups. Originally from Odessa, Ukraine, she now calls Miami home, where she lives with her husband, daughter, and two very cool cats.

"The greatest danger to our future is apathy." —JANE GOODALL



ADAM SULEMAN



PRINCIPAL EQUINOX HOSPITALITY

 ADAM-SULEMAN-537999222

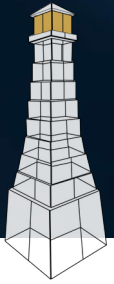
Adam Suleman was born in Dearborn, Michigan. His first home was the Hyatt Regency Dearborn, where his father was the General Manager, thus starting his hotel career at a young age. In 1990, the family moved to San Francisco as Abdul was promoted within Hyatt as Senior VP and the family lived in the Hyatt Regency San Francisco for five years.

Adam Suleman currently serves as a Principal for Equinox Hospitality with much of his background focusing on real estate acquisitions and investments. In Mr. Suleman's career, he has led approximately \$200,000,000 in real estate deals/transactions. Prior to Equinox Hospitality, Adam had extensive hotel operational experience from his time with Starwood Hotels & Resorts' W Brand – working on properties in New York, New Orleans, and San Francisco. While with Starwood, Adam was awarded many accolades such as Manager of the Year and Manager of the Quarter.

Adam has been a repeat guest speaker at hospitality and business education programs in the Bay Area, such as San Francisco State University and the University of San Francisco. He is also a registered broker with the Department of Real Estate in California. In the December 2014 issue of Hotel Business Magazine, Mr. Suleman was named as one of 2015's eight rising stars in the hotel industry.

Outside of the hospitality industry, Mr. Suleman also invests in other real estate classes both personally and in joint ventures such as multifamily, assisted living, work-force housing, land, and retail.

In addition to business and hospitality, Mr. Suleman is committed to philanthropy, and currently serves on the Board for Pathways for Kids, a San Francisco-based charity focused on assisting inner city children and young adults. He has been with this organization for about 13 years while serving as one of its past Presidents, and has also served on the Board of Trustees for Grace Cathedral School for Boys in San Francisco.



Adam Suleman continued

Mr. Suleman currently serves on the Board for Hotel Business Magazine, which is one of the largest hospitality publications in the United States and worldwide. Mr. Suleman has been a long-standing member of YPO (Young Presidents' Organization).

Mr. Suleman graduated from Santa Clara University and earned a bachelor's degree in finance and economics. He also studied international business at Imperial College in London in 2005 as well as completed a certificate program for Cornell in Hotel Real Estate and Asset Management.

Adam Suleman lives in San Francisco with his wife, Alexandra Suleman, and their beautiful baby daughter, Chiara.

"The challenge of leadership is to be strong, but not rude; be kind, but not weak; be bold, but not bully; be thoughtful, but not lazy; be humble, but not timid; be proud, but not arrogant; have humor, but without folly."—JIM ROHN

MATTHEW WHITAKER



**WORLD RENOWNED EMMY
NOMINATED, PIANIST, ORGANIST,
COMPOSER, AND ARRANGER**

 **MATTHEWWHITAKEROFFICIAL**

Born in 2001 in Hackensack, NJ, Matthew Whitaker grew up surrounded by music. His love for playing music first began at the young age of 3 after his grandfather gave him a small Yamaha keyboard.

At 9, Matthew began teaching himself how to play the Hammond B3 organ. Four years later, he became the youngest artist to be endorsed by Hammond in its 80+ year history. He was also named a Yamaha Artist at 15, becoming the youngest musician to join the stellar group of jazz pianists. In 2022, he joined the ranks of the Nord Keyboard Artists.

Matthew has toured both here in the US and abroad, performing before The Youth Assembly at the United Nations headquarters in NYC, and on other world-renowned stages, including Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, the Apollo Theater, Carnegie Hall, SFJAZZ Center in San Francisco, The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC; The Raymond F. Kravis Center for the Performing Arts, Monterey Jazz Festival, Newport Jazz Festival, Playboy Jazz Festival, Telluride Jazz Festival, and at international venues in France, Italy, Germany, Indonesia, UK, Australia, Switzerland, Portugal, Japan, Spain, Morocco, and South Korea.

In 2010, Matthew was a winning participant in the “Child Stars of Tomorrow” competition, as part of Amateur Night at the Apollo. A year later, at just 10 years old, he was invited to perform at Stevie Wonder’s induction into the Apollo Theater’s Hall of Fame. He returned to the Apollo for FOX TV’s revival of Showtime at the Apollo in 2016, where he won the audience over with his rendition of Stevie Wonder’s classic “I Wish.” Matthew has been on national and international radio and television, including the Today Show documentary series “Boys Changing the World,” the Harry Connick Jr Show, an appearance on the syndicated TV talk show Ellen, and a segment on the most-watched news magazine on television 60 Minutes.



Matthew Whitaker continued

In 2019 and 2020, Matthew won the ASCAP Foundation Herb Alpert Young Jazz Composers Award for his original compositions “Emotions” and “Underground!” He has written music for films, including “Matthew Whitaker: About Tomorrow,” for which he was also the Producer, Musical Director, Arranger, and Composer of the Original Score, and “Starkeisha” for ESPN’s Andscape.

Matthew’s music has also been featured in Apple’s television commercial “The Greatest,” and he has released three records: Outta The Box – 2017 Jazz Foundation of America, Now Hear This – 2019 Resilience Music Alliance, and Connections – 2022 Resilience Music Alliance.

Mr. Whittaker was the musical director for the World Premier of BILLY STRAYHORN: Something To Live For at the Pittsburgh Public Theater in September 2023.

“The true beauty of music is that it connects people. It carries a message, and we, the musicians, are the messengers.” —ROY AYERS

RYAN WILLIAMS



FOUNDER, CEO, AND EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN CADRE

 RYANAWILLIAMS1

Ryan A. Williams is the Founder, CEO, and Executive Chairman of Cadre, a next generation real estate investment platform with more than \$6 billion of assets closed or managed since founding in 2014. A native of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Ryan has built businesses in multiple industries over the past 20 years, and has had multiple successful exits. The ventures Ryan has built have mainly focused on leveraging technology to enhance previously offline, inefficient industries and processes. He has been recognized as a leading entrepreneur and advocate for social and economic justice while being featured on the cover of Forbes Magazine, named Crain's New York 30 under 30, The Commercial Observer 30 under 30, and more recently named a member of Forbes 30 Under 30 and Fortune's 40 under 40.

Ryan's company, Cadre, is a leading technology-driven real estate and alternatives investment platform. Cadre's portfolio is primarily comprised of multifamily and industrial real estate assets around the U.S. His firm has generated a ~28% Net IRR to its investors, and returned more than \$500 million in capital to its investors across multiple funds and separate accounts. Cadre has also raised more than \$175 million in corporate funding, being backed by institutional investors such as Andreessen Horowitz, Harvard Management Company, Soros Fund Management, David Rubenstein (Founder of Carlyle), Khosla Ventures, Ford Foundation, Goldman Sachs, General Catalyst, and others. Cadre's LP's include institutional investors such as foundations, endowments, and corporate pensions along with a network of more than 50,000 high net worth investors globally.

Prior to founding Cadre, Ryan worked at The Blackstone Group as an investment professional focused on real estate private equity where he helped invest in more than \$5 billion of real estate assets. Prior to working at Blackstone, Ryan worked at Goldman Sachs in its technology, media, and telecom investment banking group.



Ryan Williams continued

Ryan graduated from Harvard College in 2010 with honors. Ryan is a member of the Real Estate Executive Council, an Ambassador for All Star Code, a not for profit aimed at creating economic opportunity for young men of color by providing them with the tools to succeed in today's innovation economy, specifically through technology and coding internships and classes. Ryan also serves as a Co-Chair for First Chance Campaign / Concordance, an organization focused on breaking the cycle of prison re-incarceration and promoting re-entry to society. Ryan is an advisor to the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship, a member of Bridge Street African Methodist Episcopal Church in Brooklyn, NY, and advisor to Bridge Street Development Corp.

"What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us." —RALPH WALDO EMERSON

RAZEEN ZAMAN, ESQ.



STAFF ATTORNEY ASIAN AMERICAN LEGAL DEFENSE AND EDUCATION FUND

Razeen Zaman is a staff attorney at the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund where she directs the Immigrant Rights program. Razeen was the Campaign Organizer for the New York State Youth Leadership Council, a nonprofit dedicated to advancing immigrant youth rights, where she helped spearhead the campaign for the New York Dream Act, legislation that gives undocumented students access to state financial aid in New York for higher education purposes. As the lead campaign organizer, Razeen organized lobby days in Albany, rallies, direct actions including civil disobedience actions, and a 150-mile walk from New York City to Albany to raise awareness about the bill. She also helped form a coalition of immigrant rights organizations, youth-led organizations, unions, and education advocates which worked together for eight years for the bill to become a law.

Razeen's past affiliations include Brooklyn Legal Services, where she represented immigrants in removal proceedings during the height of Trump's deportation regime, and the NYU Immigrant Defense Initiative.

"You have to act as if it were possible to radically transform the world. And you have to do it all the time." —ANGELA DAVIS





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THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING FOR THEIR GENEROUS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE BEACON AWARDS 2024

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2015 Ellis Island Medal of Honor Recipient





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