

# Speaker's Biographies

## **Patrick McCarthy, Ph.D.** President & CEO, *Annie E. Casey Foundation*



The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private philanthropy dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children across the United States. Patrick has focused throughout his career on reforming the public systems that serve vulnerable families, closing youth prisons, and creating economically inclusive and family-supporting communities. Patrick is co-chair of Baltimore's Promise, serves on the Executive Committee for both Living Cities and the East Baltimore Development Initiative, as well as on the boards of Community Wealth Partners, the Foundation Center, One Baltimore, the Baltimore Community Foundation, and Bryn Mawr College. Previously, he was the Foundation's senior vice president. In that capacity, he oversaw work in the areas of health, juvenile justice, education, early childhood, youth development, child welfare and income security. Patrick has a Ph.D. in Social Policy from the Bryn Mawr College Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research and an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Montclair State University.

## **Barbara Ferrer, Ph.D.** Chief Policy Officer, *W.K. Kellogg Foundation*



As a member of the WKKF senior executive staff, Barbara is responsible for overseeing the development and execution of effective program strategy, fostering teamwork, integration and alignment, cultivating and maintaining a great service culture, and developing and monitoring policies, philosophies and organization-wide systems to accomplish the programmatic mission of the foundation. Barbara oversees the foundation's key program areas, which includes racial equity. She is also responsible for integrating the foundation's focus on the priority places of Michigan, Mississippi, New Mexico, New Orleans, Mexico and Haiti with the foundation's national networks in regard to education, health and economic security while holding up WKKF's core values of helping people help themselves and supporting communities as they affect change in their own lives. Prior to joining the foundation in 2014, Barbara was the executive director of the Boston Public Health Commission. She has also served as director of health promotion and chronic disease prevention and director of the Division of Maternal and Child Health at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. She received her doctorate from the Heller School for Advanced Studies in Social Welfare at Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts.

## **Jimmy Santiago Baca** Poet & Writer



Born in New Mexico of Indio-Mexican descent, Jimmy was raised first by his grandmother and later sent to an orphanage. A runaway at age 13, it was after Baca was sentenced to five years in a maximum security prison that he began to turn his life around: he learned to read and write and unearthed a voracious passion for poetry. He is the winner of the Pushcart Prize, the American Book Award, the International Hispanic Heritage Award and, for his memoir *A Place to Stand*, the prestigious International Award. In 2006 he won the Cornelius P. Turner Award, a national award recognizing one GED graduate a year who has made outstanding contributions to society in education, justice, health, public service and social welfare. In 2005 he created Cedar Tree Inc., a nonprofit foundation that works to give people of all walks of life the opportunity to become educated and improve their lives.

## **George Otero, Ph.D.** Co-Director, *Center for RelationalLearning*



George, a New Mexico native, is a well-known international educator, keynote speaker, and workshop presenter. He is the co-founder of the Center for RelationalLearning in Santa Fe. Over the years, George has worked closely with New Mexican and Australian schools, families and communities to ensure achievement, well-being, and better life chances for every child regardless of circumstances.

## **Chris Schueler** President and CEO, *Christopher Productions*



An Emmy Award winning producer, Chris has created more than 100 television programs over the past 20 years that have been broadcast throughout the country and around the world. Focusing on educational and social issues, Chris creates youth programming, cultural and social documentaries, and family series television all geared to create "television to touch the heart." His clients have included the United Nations, the National Institute of Mental Health, the PBS network, and the CBS Network Foundation, as well as other television networks and governments throughout the world. *Everyone's Business: Protecting Our Children* is one of his more recent projects.

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## **Allen Sanchez** President and CEO, *CHI St. Joseph's Children*

During his long tenure at CHI St. Joseph's Children, Allen directed the startup of the largest home visiting program in the United States serving families with children from prenatal to three years old. He also serves as the Executive Director of the New Mexico Conference of Catholic Bishops advocating for the well-being of children.



## **Veronica C. García, Ed.D.** Executive Director, *New Mexico Voices for Children*

Veronica is a life-long educator whose roles have included: classroom teacher; special education administrator; principal; superintendent of the Santa Fe Public Schools; Director of the Coalition of School Administrators; and most recently, New Mexico Cabinet Secretary of Education. She is the recipient of numerous awards and recognitions, including the National Governor's Association Distinguished Service to State Government, New Mexico Superintendent of the Year, and *Hispanic* magazine's Lifetime Achievement Award.



## **Amber Wallin, MPA** KIDS COUNT Director, *New Mexico Voices for Children*

As KIDS COUNT Director, Amber creates the annual data book and special reports, and oversees the New Mexico pages of the Casey Foundation's KIDS COUNT Data Center. She also does policy research on early childhood, tax and budget, food security, and family economic security issues. She came to NM Voices in 2012 as a Fellow from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities' State Priorities Partnership program, after which she joined the staff as a Research and Policy Analyst. Prior to joining NM Voices, Amber served as a Budget Analyst for the city of Las Cruces. She received her masters of public administration from New Mexico State University.



## **Jozi De Leon, Ph.D.** Vice President, *Division for Equity & Inclusion*

Jozi is the inaugural Vice President for Equity and Inclusion at the University of New Mexico. She has served in that role for 8 years but has engaged in work on diversity, equity and inclusion in all of her professional roles. Her role as UNM's Chief Diversity Officer is to bring transformational change to the institution to ensure that diversity remains at the center of the University's mission.



## **Conroy Chino** Consultant, *ChinoWorks*

Conroy established a lobbying and consulting firm in 2009 based on his work experience and familiarity with the executive and legislative branches of state government. His company offers the Tribes, Pueblos and Native Nations of New Mexico lobbying services and strategic political counsel to advance tribal priorities, protect their interests and sovereign status, and to advocate on their behalf. His experience in public policy includes Indian gaming, economic development, education, state/tribal gas and cigarette tax agreements, protection of sacred/cultural site and issues related to the government-to-government relationship between tribes and the state of NM.



## **Pamelya Herndon, J.D.** Executive Director, *Southwest Women's Law Center*

Pamelya is a graduate of University of Texas School of Law, and is a former General Counsel and Deputy Cabinet Secretary in New Mexico State Government. She serves as New Mexico's delegate to Vision 2020, the organization that is working to achieve economic and social equality for women by the year 2020.



## **Cindy Nava** Research Assistant, *RWJ Center for Health Policy & Center for Education Policy Research*

Growing up as an undocumented immigrant student, or "dreamer," Cindy is proud to call herself a Mexican-New Mexican working to serve the state she loves so much. Cindy has had key positions in education and immigration policy and politics at the state and national levels that had long been unattainable by undocumented students. Cindy has served as an intern and professional fellow for many state elected officials including the office of NM Senate Majority Leader. She has served as an advocate between community organizations and the legislative branch supporting education access for all students regardless of income or legal status.