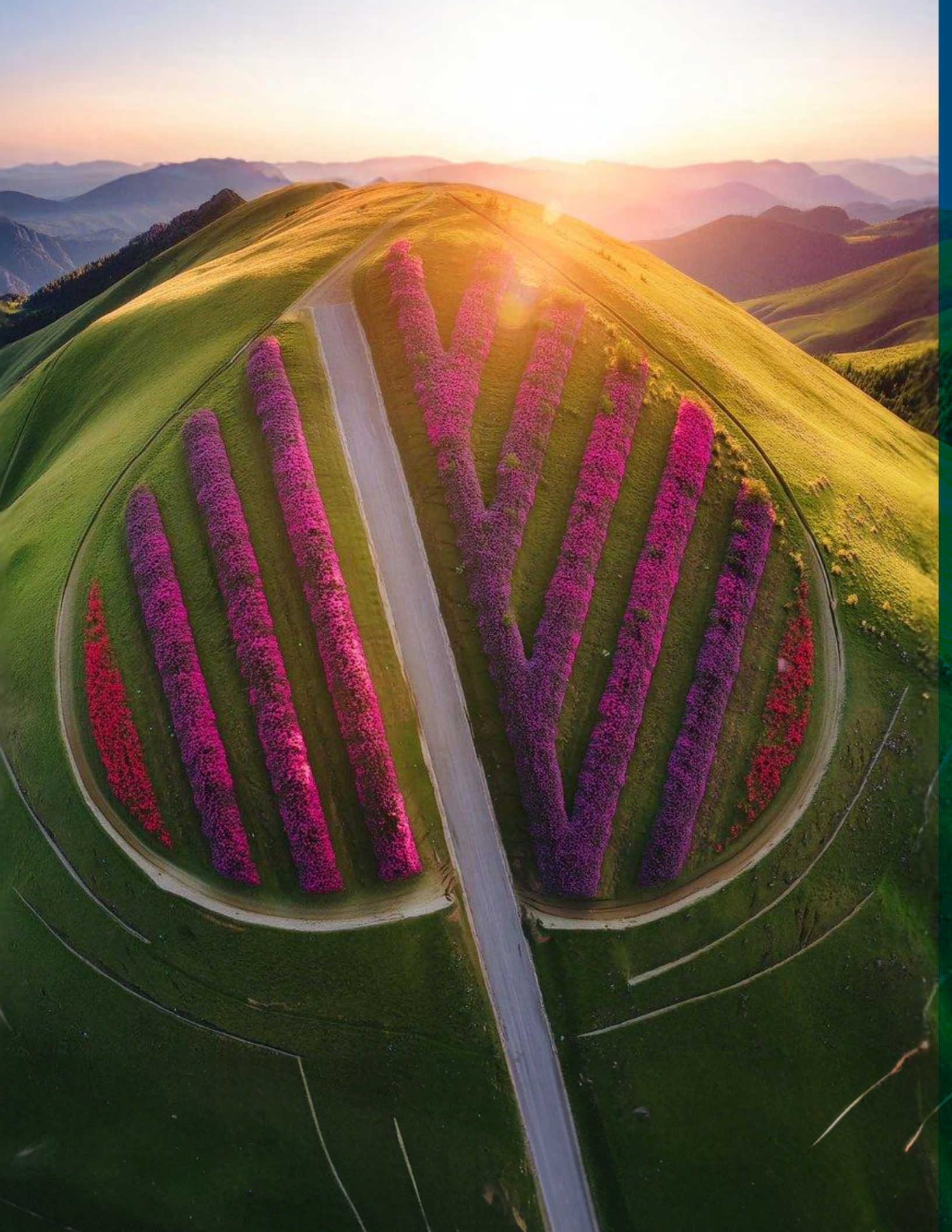




Healthy Communities Fellowship Five Year Impact Report



ASPEN GLOBAL
INNOVATORS GROUP
asp institute



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Thank you from Lola Adedokun, Executive Director of Aspen Global Innovators Group

Dear Supporters,

As we celebrate this groundbreaking journey chronicled in our five-year Healthy Communities Fellowship impact report, I am filled with an overwhelming sense of gratitude and admiration for all that we have accomplished together. This report reflects not only the remarkable stories of our fellows' achievements, but also the unwavering commitment and dedication of our entire community.

To our fellows: Your passion, resilience, and tireless efforts to drive positive change in your communities are nothing short of awe-inspiring. You have shown us what it means to lead with courage, compassion, and unwavering dedication to health equity. Your stories are a testament to the power of local leadership and the transformative impact it can have on the world.

To our mentors, coaches, review team members, and partners: Your guidance, support, and expertise have been invaluable in shaping the Healthy Communities Fellowship into the impactful program it is today. Your commitment to nurturing the next generation of leaders and amplifying their voices has been instrumental in driving positive change in communities around the world.

To our supporters and stakeholders: Your belief in our mission, your unwavering support, and your dedication to the ideals of health equity have been the driving force behind our success. Your generosity, advocacy, and partnership have enabled us to continue our work and expand our reach, making a tangible difference in the lives of countless individuals and communities.

As we look ahead to the next chapter of our journey, let us carry forward the lessons we've learned, the successes we've achieved, and the bonds we've forged. Let us continue to stand together, united in our devotion to building a world where equity, justice, and values-based leadership drive health and development efforts in all sectors.

Thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for being a part of this incredible journey. Together, we are truly making a difference, one community at a time.

With heartfelt gratitude and anticipation for the future,

LOLA ADEDOKUN
Executive Director
Aspen Global Innovators Group





About Aspen Global Innovators Group

For more than 30 years, the Aspen Global Innovators Group (AGI) has elevated health and development leaders and innovators from 55 countries across Africa, the Americas, Asia, the Caribbean, and the Pacific Island States to design, champion, and advocate for innovative programs, policies, and partnerships that result in a safer, more equitable, and healthier future for all people and communities. Our network of 5000+ individuals and organizations has served 200 million people, improving health, well-being, and equity. We identify and amplify the voices of visionary, proven, and impactful local leaders, advocates, and practitioners.

AGI is dedicated to driving equitable change in global health and development. Our mission is to catalyze leaders worldwide to drive equitable, locally-rooted, and globally networked solutions to health and well-being. At AGI, we firmly believe that impactful change is achieved through collaboration, innovation, and community-driven solutions.

As we celebrate five years of the Healthy Communities Fellowship, AGI remains committed to advancing health equity and supporting BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) leaders in their endeavors to create lasting change in their communities and beyond. We invite you to join us in our mission to build a world where equity and justice serve as the driving forces behind health and development efforts for all.



2020 Healthy Communities Fellows

Letter from the Healthy Communities Fellowship Leadership

Dear Friends,

As we commemorate five impactful years of the Healthy Communities Fellowship (HCF), it is imperative to highlight a foundational aspect of our program: our steadfast commitment to centering BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) voices at every step. When I joined the HCF in 2019, I was thrilled to be part of a groundbreaking initiative that amplifies community-led solutions, particularly those championed by BIPOC leaders. Little did I know that the world would soon be engulfed by a global pandemic, further exposing the deep-rooted disparities in healthcare access and outcomes experienced by BIPOC communities. Despite these challenges, our fellows have demonstrated remarkable resilience, dedication, and innovation in addressing health equity issues within their communities.

Today, as I reflect on the achievements of our HCF fellows, it's evident that they have set a new standard for community-driven change. Their stories of impact, their unwavering commitment to health equity, and their leadership serve as a beacon of hope in the face of adversity. I extend my deepest appreciation to our fellows, the Aspen Global Innovators Group (AGI) team, the mentors, the review committee, and our partners who have contributed to our collective success.

As you delve into our impact report, you will witness the profound impact of BIPOC-led initiatives on community health outcomes. Our dedication to engaging alumni, expanding in new communities, and fostering self-sufficiency reflects our devotion to equipping BIPOC leaders to be architects of lasting change.

The past five years have underscored the transformative power of BIPOC leadership in driving positive change. As we navigate the challenges ahead, let us reaffirm our pledge to advancing health equity and uplifting often overlooked voices. Together, we will shape a brighter, more equitable future for all.

Thank you for your steadfast support, belief in local leadership, and commitment to health equity.

With heartfelt gratitude and anticipation for the journey ahead,

TSION GHEDAMU

*Associate Director
Healthy Communities Fellowship
Aspen Global Innovators Group*





1988 / Friday, April 23, 2021

THE ASPEN TIMES

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HEALTH TALK

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Having a path to climate equity

Having a path to climate equity is an increasingly important goal for many organizations in Aspen. That's why, according to the Aspen Institute, the organization's research shows that organizations that are taking steps to address climate change are more likely to attract top talent and investment. The Aspen Institute's research also shows that organizations that are taking steps to address climate change are more likely to attract top talent and investment. The Aspen Institute's research also shows that organizations that are taking steps to address climate change are more likely to attract top talent and investment.

Rolling Stones backup steps into the spotlight at JAS June Experience

LOCAL SPIRITS

\$13.99 Copper Peak 2021
Aspen Valley Distillery

CLIMATE 412

ASPEN INTERNATIONAL LUXURY REAL ESTATE
970.404.1590

IDEAS 2023

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ASPEN GLOBAL INNOVATORS GROUP

STAFF

The Healthy Communities Fellowship

The Healthy Communities Fellowship (HCF) has cultivated a network of BIPOC leaders over the past five years, leveraging their lived and proximate expertise to drive transformative initiatives addressing health disparities and promoting equity within their communities. By investing in individuals intimately familiar with the challenges at hand, the program empowers fellows to design and implement effective solutions aimed at improving community health. Through 12 months of tailored communication, narrative, and leadership training and coaching, the fellowship prepares fellows to lead from a place of both lived and learned experience.

The HCF aims to help fellows acquire crucial skills which allow them to position themselves as experts in their field. From crafting opinion pieces to devising advocacy plans, conducting interviews, and managing social media, participants gain a comprehensive toolkit

essential for effecting meaningful change. The program leverages the vast experience and influential network of AGI to provide fellows with unparalleled opportunities to learn from and connect with global leaders.

Successful Healthy Communities Fellows are individuals deeply committed to making a difference within their communities. They approach the fellowship as an investment in their own personal growth, actively engaging in training and mentorship, while fostering mutual support within their cohort. As a U.S.-based fellowship, program participants benefit from curated connections with global leaders, which allows fellows to expand their impact beyond their local communities. By supporting the HCF, funders play a pivotal role in cultivating a new generation of leaders who will drive positive change in their communities and beyond.

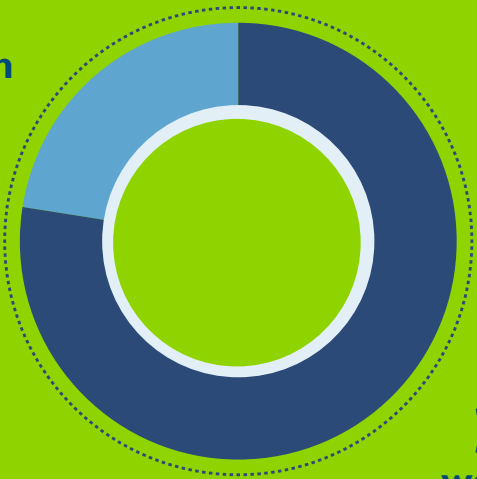


Veron Blue, 2023 Healthy Communities Fellow

Our Alumni

In 2019, the Healthy Communities Fellowship welcomed its inaugural class of six fellows. Since then, the program has welcomed 43 additional fellows from across the United States. Our network of BIPOC health equity champions includes:

9
men



34
women

Fields/Specialties

Community Health	Mental Health
14	3
Maternal Health & Birth Equity	Housing
11	3
Health Innovation	Food Security/Water Access
4	3
Community Development	Criminal Justice Reform
4	1



2023 Healthy Communities Fellows

In 2023, the Healthy Communities Fellowship program welcomed 10 new fellows from Alaska, Oklahoma, and Texas, bringing the total number of fellows since the program's inception to 43. The 2023 cohort includes:



ALEX BAILEY

*Outdoor Equity Advocate and Youth Mentor
San Antonio, Texas*

Alex Bailey, Founder of Black Outside, Inc., is an educator and third-generation outdoor enthusiast, who uses his radical imagination to re- envision outdoor programming for Black youth. He began his educational career as a camp counselor, witnessing first-hand the transformative power the outdoors can have on youth while also recognizing the lack of diversity in the summer camp industry. Today, he works to cultivate spaces that meet Black youth and families at the intersection of joy, cultural relevancy, and outdoor exploration. Alex is the founding Executive Director of Black Outside, Inc and is a proud alum of Teach for America, Echoing Green, and Wild Gift.



VERON BLUE

*Mental Health Advocate and Faith Leader
San Antonio, Texas*

Veron Blue, Founder and Executive Director of Faith & Community Wellness Center, Inc., is a local pastor, mental health coach and advocate whose passion is to connect faith leaders to the transformative power of mental health treatment and support. Pastor Blue's work involves equipping faith-based communities of color to educate their congregations and communities by removing the stigma, shame, and silence associated with mental illness. After being trained as a mental health coach, Veron began to experience the transformative effect of the knowledge of mental health. Transformed people do indeed transform their families, churches, and communities. She is the lead of Rapha Mental Health Ministries, a group of nine churches who have banded to educate Northeast San Antonio to provide a safe place for healing and restoration for families in our community who are dealing with mental health challenges.



JAMAR HILL

*Youth Sports Mentor and Racial Equity Champion
Anchorage, Alaska*

Jamar Hill, Founder of Gamers Baseball Alaska/RBI Alaska, is a former professional baseball player and current youth coach whose lived experiences empower him to provide access to athletic resources and experiences that have real world value outside of sports. Jamar Hill works with boys and girls ages 8-18 living primarily in the Mountain View neighborhood of Anchorage, Alaska. Mountain View has been recognized at times as the most diverse neighborhood in America, which includes white, African American, Latin American families, Native Alaska, Asian, and Polynesian families amongst many other ethnic groups. Poverty, civic design, as well as the geography of Alaska create a condition that blocks access for these kids to participate. Jamar Hill convenes hard conversations involving race and equity that stimulate increasing resources being directed toward sustainable support impacting Anchorage's most diverse and most underserved kids. Jamar's experience traveling the country as a pro player and taking on the challenges of creating subsidized sports facilities and programming have offered him a unique perspective of how the issues he's taking on in Alaska are common systemic problems on a national level.



OMARE JIMMERSON

*Birth Equity Activist and Women's Health Advocate
Tulsa, Oklahoma*

Omare Jimmerson, Executive Director of the Tulsa Birth Equity Initiative, is the daughter of a Nigerian immigrant and also a mother of two, who is working to save the lives of Black women in a healthcare system that continually dehumanizes them. As an undergraduate working with teens, she saw young girls being treated as adults and denied their right to childhood. This sparked her interest in making sure young people had knowledge to advocate for their own bodily autonomy. She works to ensure every woman is treated with dignity and respect and, most of all, as a human. By bringing doula care to Black and Brown women, her organization gives them back the power to advocate for their care.



STEPHEN LUCKE

*Urban Agriculture Innovator and Environmental Justice Advocate
San Antonio, Texas*

Stephen Lucke, Founder of Gardopia Gardens, is a food systems expert and activist focused on health and environmental justice. He educates and empowers communities, teaching them to lead healthy and sustainable lifestyles through urban agriculture. In his college years, he became aware of San Antonio's obesity epidemic and climate crises, sparking his journey to help find a solution to declining planetary and population wellness, which disproportionately impacts BIPOC communities. In 2015, Stephen founded Gardopia Gardens to help solve the challenges facing his community by ensuring current and future generations have the knowledge and skills to cultivate a high quality of life for themselves and society, fighting against malnutrition related diseases and environmental degradation.



ALANA PETERSON

*Indigenous Economic Leader and Sustainable Development Visionary
Sitka, Alaska*

Alana Peterson, Executive Director of Spruce Root, is an entrepreneur and non-profit leader whose lived experience brings together Indigenous values with western economic systems to build towards a sustainable future. She started her first business at age seven, taking wood scraps from her father's carving shed and painting them to sell to tourists on the docks. Working with other small businesses deepened her understanding of the transformative power of an entrepreneur's journey. Alana brings this expertise to her work with Spruce Root, a community development financial institution that is building up a strong small business sector in her home region of Southeast Alaska. She believes that small business is the foundation of a strong community, much like the root system of a healthy forest floor.



DR. JANEL PASLEY

*Nonprofit Equity Champion and Creative Innovator
Tulsa, Oklahoma*

Dr. Janel Pasley is a visual artist, writer, innovator, and community advocate who works to strengthen the non-profit sector and challenge existing systems to achieve equity in the funding space. She founded The Astute Creative, LLC as a mechanism to provide authentic and strategic creative services to small business owners seeking to find their creative advantage. Dr. Pasley believes that there is untapped potential in all of us and is committed to helping others realize and visualize their purpose. She currently serves as the Program Officer at Ascension St. John, championing the Community Health Equity Catalyst Strategy (CHECS).



DR. CHRISTOPHER MCNEIL

*Medical Education Pioneer and Community Mentor
Tulsa, Oklahoma*

Dr. Chris McNeil, Founder of the Youth Medical Mentorship, is an Emergency Medicine Physician and School Board Member at Union Public Schools who is creating pathways to medical education for BIPOC children. Identifying students with an affinity for medicine early, he is able to create a pipeline of mentorship programs, building hospital internships, promoting recruitment for allied health professions, influencing educators, and creating strategic partnerships that extend from cradle to careers. His goal is to create a legacy of guidance for students to envision themselves in medical careers and to increase the number of BIPOC doctors which has been proven to lead to better outcomes for underserved communities.



ASHLI SIMS

*Black Wealth Advocate and Entrepreneurship Storyteller
Tulsa, Oklahoma*

Ashli Sims is a storyteller who breaks down barriers and opens doors so Black entrepreneurs can build wealth for themselves, their families, and future generations. Growing up in the shadow of Black Wall Street, she only knew of the Tulsa Race Massacre as a tragedy and a cautionary tale. She didn't learn Tulsa was the epicenter of Black wealth until she left her hometown. As Managing Director of Build in Tulsa, Ashli is helping reclaim the narrative that Black Wall Street is not a history lesson, but a blueprint. She believes the next Black-led billion-dollar company will be based in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Fellowship Impact

By the Numbers

43

fellows have completed the fellowship

11

communities represented across the United States

650

person-hours of training delivered through over 50 training sessions

450

person-hours of mentorship provided

30

fellow publications

8

in-person peer convenings facilitated

10

networking opportunities facilitated

10

innovative solutions incubated and supported

Raised over \$6 million to deepen and expand their work

ASPEN IDEAS



Stephen Lucke, 2023 Healthy Communities Fellow

“What is your advocacy goal for this year?”



VERON BLUE
Founder and Executive
Director of Faith & Community
Wellness Center, Inc.

“My advocacy goal is to create generational change in the African American community, where mental health is concerned.”



DR. CHRISTOPHER MCNEIL
Founder of Youth
Medical Mentorship

“To develop, recruit, and retain our underrepresented healthcare workforce.”



ALANA PETERSON
Executive Director of Spruce Root

“Our advocacy goal is to build regenerative economies across southeast Alaska so that people can forge futures based on the unique Indigenous place we live in.”



“What have you learned through the Healthy Communities Fellowship?”



OMARE JIMMERSON

Executive Director of the
Tulsa Birth Equity Initiative

“I am an expert... I’ve been doing this work for a couple of decades but still wasn’t owning that piece of being an expert. The Healthy Communities Fellowship has helped me step forward and take ownership of my truth.”



STEPHEN LUCKE

CEO and Founder of
Gardopia Gardens

“I’ve learned so much! Opening up a network [has been critical]. San Antonio, Texas, which is a small market, and not coming from a philanthropic world, it’s really tough to get your name out and your organization out there. I feel like the Aspen Institute provided more confidence in my ability and opened doors that normally I would not have access to.”



DR. JANEL PASLEY

Founder of The Astute
Creative, LLC

“You cannot underestimate the power of community. You cannot underestimate your value. You cannot underestimate that you are an expert in this field.”



“What was the highlight of your fellowship experience?”



ALEX BAILEY
Founder of Black
Outside, Inc.

“Exploring different communities of the fellows. Traveling to Tulsa, being in Washington D.C., and learning about the deep and powerful community work that so many leaders are engaged in.”



JAMAR HILL
Founder of Gamers Baseball
Alaska/RBI Alaska

“I loved being a part of the storytelling training. Along with seeing how everyone else came up with their own unique story to tell to the group, it really personalized the relationships with each individual fellows and created a connecting point for all of our lives and individual challenges.”



ASHLI SIMS
Managing Director,
Build in Tulsa

“The best highlight is the 2023 Healthy Communities Fellowship and the cohort. The friendships that I’ve developed; the men and women that I get to spend time with and be inspired by. They are truly and incredible group of people. It’s still challenging for me to say that I’m an expert, but I’m so pleased to say that I’m surrounded by expertise with my fellows.”



Jerry Blassingame: Transforming Communities Through Restorative Justice with a Healthy Equity Lens

Jerry Blassingame, Executive Director of Soteria Community Development Corporation, joined the Healthy Communities Fellowship in 2019, driven by his passion for community empowerment and reentry advocacy. With an architectural engineering background and a commitment to aiding those impacted by incarceration, Jerry founded Soteria World Outreach Ministries in 2007 after serving three and a half years of a 20-year prison sentence, focusing on housing management and community projects.

Jerry's fellowship journey showcases personal transformation and community-driven solutions. Motivated by a desire to enhance his advocacy skills and expand his network, Jerry applied for the fellowship. "I'm a lifelong learner, and I saw the fellowship as an opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals and gain new perspectives," he explains. Focusing on advocacy and media skills, Jerry entered the program with a clear set of goals and expectations.

Throughout the fellowship, Jerry was immersed in a rich learning environment that enhanced the skills he needed to run his nonprofit and develop his brand successfully. "The writing workshops were particularly impactful for me," he notes. "As someone who writes poetry and op-eds, learning from media professionals was invaluable." His participation in Aspen Ideas: Health further amplified his voice and expanded his network, opening doors to new opportunities and connections.

Despite pandemic challenges, Jerry remained committed, leveraging coach and mentor support to overcome obstacles. Notably, his op-ed titled "Ex-Con,' Ex-Offender' and 'Ex-Inmate' Are Words That Reduce Millions to Stereotype" underscored the importance of humanizing language for incarcerated individuals.



**2019
Fellow**

Jerry's involvement in the fellowship profoundly influenced his approach to addressing health equity and community issues. "I now view all of our work with a health lens," he explains. "From providing health screenings to addressing mental health challenges, the fellowship has broadened my perspective and transformed our approach to community development."

Looking ahead, Jerry remains focused on integrating health equity into all aspects of his work. "We now send everyone to get health screenings when they're released from prison," he shares. "And we're hiring a part-time mental health professional to provide support to our clients."

Reflecting on the unique value of the program, Jerry emphasizes the importance of storytelling and communication skills. "As nonprofit practitioners, being able to share stories is critical," he says. He also suggests enhancing alumni connections and facilitating ongoing engagement to maximize the program's impact.

"[The Healthy Communities Fellowship] gave me a new lens to look at my work, and social determinants of health came alive," Jerry shares in gratitude. His journey serves as a testament to the transformative power of community-driven solutions and the importance of continuous learning and growth in advancing health equity and community development.

Monique Castro's Vision for Indigenous Wellness

Monique Castro, a Xicana and member of the Navajo (Diné) Nation, joined the Healthy Communities Fellowship in 2020, driven by her commitment to Indigenous wellness and community healing. Raised in southeast Los Angeles, Monique's background as a licensed therapist and founder of the Indigenous Circle of Wellness equipped her with a deep understanding of the challenges faced by Indigenous populations. Her involvement in the fellowship aimed to address the glaringly overlooked mental health needs of Indigenous communities in the Los Angeles area.

Throughout her fellowship experience, Monique engaged in dynamic learning environments that stretched her personal and professional boundaries. "The biography development activity, media training, and interview exercises provided invaluable opportunities for self-reflection and skill development. I learned how to center my purpose and values when presenting myself," recalls Monique. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic and her personal journey, Monique's resilience and commitment to her mission remained steadfast. "The fellowship was my anchor during a tumultuous time, and it helped me stay focused on my mission."

Monique's involvement profoundly influenced her approach to health equity and community issues. "Engaging with a diverse cohort of women leaders allowed me to gain insights into the intersectionality of maternal and mental health," she explains. "It reshaped my perspective on wellness and empowered me to advocate for inclusive solutions." The fellowship not only equipped Monique with practical skills but also instilled a sense of belonging and empowerment among extraordinary women leaders.

Despite being virtual, Monique valued the mentorship and networking opportunities provided by the fellowship. "The support and



2020
Fellow

camaraderie within the fellowship community were invaluable," she says. "The program's emphasis on amplifying the voices of diverse health equity champions sets it apart. Often in health, we focus on the disparities within our communities, and they're valid, but I appreciated learning from others about how their communities are thriving. The fellows are doing incredible work, and it was so helpful to have positive examples to look to."

Looking back on her journey, Monique takes pride in the resilience and strength she gained through the fellowship. "Despite personal losses and struggles, I emerged stronger and rooted in my purpose," she reflects. To future fellows, she emphasizes the importance of dedicated time and full presence in the program. "Seize every opportunity for growth and connection," she urges. Monique recognizes the unique value of the Healthy Communities Fellowship in bringing together top leaders and fostering innovative solutions. "The fellowship has the power to transform not only your work but also your life."

Healthy Communities Fellow Alumni Spotlight



Our Vision for the Next Five Years

As we reflect on the remarkable journey of the HCF's first five years, we are inspired to chart a visionary path for the future. This is shaped by our unwavering commitment to empowering local leaders and catalyzing change in communities across the nation. Here's a glimpse of our aspirations:

HCF Alumni Engagement

Our esteemed alumni network is an incredible resource that we want to further engage and harness for their expertise and background. These individuals not only completed the fellowship but also have become catalysts for positive change in their communities. Our vision entails supporting a dynamic alumni community that actively collaborates, mentors, and shares with each other. Through ongoing training, mentorship opportunities, and alumni-led initiatives, we will ensure that the impact of the HCF extends far beyond the initial program.

Deepening investment in HCF communities

In addition to expanding to new regions, we are committed to ensuring the long-term sustainability and self-sufficiency of existing our fellowship communities. A prime example of this commitment is our work in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where we began working in 2021. In 2023, we welcomed 10 place-based fellows into our network and are ensuring that, even as alumni, they have the tools and resources to continue pushing for equitable health outcomes in their community. Over the next five years, we will continue to invest in our place-based fellows across local communities, empowering them to take the reins of their initiatives and to continue to meet and support each other. By transitioning to community-led initiatives, we aim to create lasting change and establish a blueprint for others to follow, thus paving the way for further expansion into new communities.

Expansion to New Communities

Our vision broadens our reach, encompassing new communities that can benefit from the transformative power of the Healthy Communities Fellowship. In the coming years, we aim to establish fellowship programs in regions such as Durham, North Carolina; Memphis, Tennessee; Atlanta, Georgia; and beyond, thereby extending our strong network of healthy equity leaders. By forging strategic partnerships with local institutions and organizations, we will create opportunities for leaders in these areas to drive meaningful change within their own communities. These regional expansions will enable us to address unique challenges and amplify the impact of our fellowship on a national scale.

Our vision for the next five years is ambitious, driven by the belief that local leaders hold the key to transformative change. We invite our partners, supporters, and stakeholders to join us on this journey as we cultivate a new generation of leaders poised to spearhead positive change in their communities and beyond.

Thanks for Your Support

At the heart of our journey lies a network of dedicated partners and donors whose unwavering support is instrumental in the success of the HCF. We extend our deepest gratitude to those who have shared our vision and walked alongside us on this transformative path.

This includes national foundations and local philanthropies, whose dynamic collaboration bridges the gap between global vision and local impact. The result is the creation of sustainable local ecosystems that empower communities from within. The synergy between these two pillars of support enables us to achieve a more profound and lasting effect on community health.

Our local partners, including Methodist Healthcare Ministries, H.E. Butt Foundation, George Kaiser Family Foundation, and the Rasmuson Foundation, represent the cornerstone of our community-focused approach. Their commitment to the well-being of their respective regions not only strengthens the impact of the HCF but also ensures that our initiatives resonate with the unique needs and aspirations of local communities.

National foundations, like the Aetna Foundation and the Johnson & Johnson Foundation, bring a wealth of experience, resources, and broader perspectives to our mission. Their generous support allows us to scale our efforts, broaden our reach, and leverage the collective wisdom of a diverse range of communities and regions. Together, we transcend geographical boundaries and weave a tapestry of change that stretches far

beyond any single community.

In the spirit of collaboration and shared purpose, we recognize that we make a difference through the harmonious partnership of national and local entities. The fusion of global vision with local dedication is the secret to building resilient, self-sustaining ecosystems of change.

As we move forward, we invite current and prospective partners to continue this journey with us. Your support not only fuels our programs but also the hopes and dreams of the individuals and communities we serve. Together, we will amplify our influence, nurture local leaders, and create a healthier, more equitable future for all.



We extend our deepest gratitude to those who have shared our vision and walked alongside us on this transformative path.

Jennie Joseph, 2019 Healthy Communities Fellow



Transformative Mentors: Shaping the Trajectory of Healthy Communities Fellows

Under the leadership of AGI Executive Director, Lola Adedokun, the Associate Director of the Healthy Communities Fellowship, Tsion Ghedamu, manages the fellows and supports them with by providing connections with world-class mentors, including those who have specialized expertise in writing opinion editorials and public speaking. This group includes:



MIA BIRDSONG

Mia Birdsong is a pathfinder, community curator, and storyteller who steadily engages the leadership and wisdom of people experiencing injustice to chart new visions of American life. With a remarkable ability to illuminate and harness the brilliance of everyday people, Mia ensures that our collective gifts reach larger spheres of influence, spur cultural and political change, and create wellbeing for everyone. In her book *How We Show Up: Reclaiming Family, Friendship, and Community* (Hachette, June 2020), Mia charts community life, guiding us towards the promise of our collective vitality. In “More Than Enough,” her podcast miniseries from *The Nation*, she expands the discourse on the current guaranteed income movement by tapping into the voices and visions of low-income people.



RACHEL JONES

Rachel Jones is a contributor for *National Geographic Magazine*, a Development Media Consultant, and a two-time Top 10 Media Writer on LinkedIn. Jones, who has reported for National Public Radio, Knight Ridder News Service, and the Detroit Free Press, also served as Project Director for the Internews Network’s Gulu, Uganda Radio Training Center from June 2007 to February 2008. Jones helped train and mentor five dozen Ugandan reporters and editors, covering issues including health, education and child welfare following more than two decades of civil war in Northern Uganda. Jones was posted to Kenya in July 2008 through the Knight Health Fellowship Program of the International Center for Journalists. She was based with Nation Media Group, the largest media company in East and Central Africa.



EMILY KAISER

Emily Kaiser is a former journalist who brings more than 20 years of experience covering stories from two dozen countries. After graduating from Northwestern University’s Medill School of Journalism, she joined Reuters in Chicago and then went on to postings in Washington, D.C., London, and Singapore. She invests in media companies with a demonstrated commitment to building inclusive newsrooms that reflect the diversity of the communities they cover. Emily is a director of the George Kaiser Family Foundation, which aims to break the cycle of poverty primarily through investments in early-childhood education, criminal justice reform, and access to healthcare. She is also a director of Global Press Institute, which trains and employs local journalists to report from some of the least-covered places on earth.

Our Review Committee

Our ability to consistently select talented fellows with the drive and the ideas to promote health equity in their communities would not be possible without our Review Committee. The Healthy Communities Fellowship hosts a Review Committee of renowned leaders to advise on fellow selection and program development. Alongside our wonderful mentors, Mia Birdsong and Rachel Jones, over the years the Review Committee have included the following individuals:



DR. DAVE A. CHOKSHI

Dave Chokshi is chair of the Common Health Coalition and Sternberg Family Professor of Leadership at the City College of New York. Chokshi previously served as Health Commissioner of New York City and led New York City's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including its historic campaign to vaccinate over 6 million New Yorkers. Earlier, he was the inaugural chief population health officer at NYC Health + Hospitals (H+H), the largest public health care system in the nation, where he also served as CEO of the H+H Accountable Care Organization. Chokshi practices primary care internal medicine at Bellevue Hospital and has held senior leadership roles spanning public, private, and nonprofit sectors. He is nationally recognized as a transformational leader, clinical innovator, policy expert, and advocate for a stronger and more equitable health system.



DR. GARTH GRAHAM

Director and Global Head Healthcare and Public Health Google / YouTube
A cardiologist, researcher and public health expert Garth Graham joins Google as Director and Global Head of Healthcare and Public Health Partnerships at YouTube and Google Health. He previously served in two US administrations as US Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health, and was Assistant Dean for Health Policy and Chief of Health Services Research in the department of medicine at the University of Florida School of Medicine, President of the Aetna Foundation as well as Vice President & Chief Community Health Officer at CVS Health. He currently serves on several boards, including the National Heart Lung, and Blood Institute Advisory Council; the Institute of Medicine Board on Population Health and the board of the National Quality Forum.



ALICE LIN FABIANO

Alice Lin Fabiano is an accomplished business leader and social impact, advocate. Currently serving as the Vice President of Community Impact for Corporate Sustainability at American Express, she oversees the company's global community impact initiatives, grantmaking, and colleague engagement programs that aim to drive positive business, societal, and environmental impact. Prior to joining American Express, Ms. Lin Fabiano was the Global Director at Johnson & Johnson, Global Community Impact. In this capacity, she lead its social innovation efforts and drives strategy and partnerships to support and champion people on the front lines who are at the heart of delivering care. Ms. Lin Fabiano holds an M.B.A. from Harvard Business School and a B.A. from The Johns Hopkins University.

Our Review Committee



ERASMA MONTICCIOLO

Erasma Beras Monticciolo is an Afro-Latina thought leader and recognized public advocate raised in Brownsville, Brooklyn by way of Barahona in the Dominican Republic. As the co-founder and past Executive Director of Power of Two, Erasma was named to the “Inaugural Care 100,” honoring the 100 most influential people working to re-imagine and re-humanize the care system. With 15 years’ experience in transformational leadership and advocacy specializing in the early childhood space, Erasma serves on the board for both the New York Zero to Three Network (NYZTT) and the Citizens’ Committee for Children of New York (CCC). She is a Promising Ventures Fellow, an Aspen Institute Healthy Communities Fellow, and an NYU Senior Leaders Fellow.



DR. JABRAAN PASH

Dr. Jabraan Pasha is a physician, educator, and social activist. He currently serves as an associate professor of internal medicine and assistant dean of student affairs at the University of Oklahoma School of Community Medicine in Tulsa. Additionally, he is an international speaker on implicit bias and social determinants of health, driven to raise awareness and address the factors beyond the bedside that shape health disparities.



DR. JANEL PASLEY

Dr. Janel Pasley is a visual artist, writer, innovator, and community advocate who works to strengthen the non-profit sector and challenge existing systems to achieve equity in the funding space. She founded The Astute Creative, LLC as a mechanism to provide authentic and strategic creative services to small business owners seeking to find their creative advantage. Dr. Pasley believes that there is untapped potential in all of us and is committed to helping others realize and visualize their purpose. She currently serves as the Program Officer at Ascension St. John, championing the Community Health Equity Catalyst Strategy (CHECS).

Our Funding Partners



EMMA ROBBINS

Emma Robbins is a Diné artist and social justice fighter, working with her community on the Navajo Nation to secure access to safe drinking water. After losing a grandmother to cancer caused by uranium contamination in the water and growing up in one of the areas with the highest concentration of water poverty, Emma went on to lead the Navajo Water Project, collaborating with communities to help the 30% of those on the reservation without running water. Emma weaves her art into her work to raise awareness about the need for clean water on Native Nations. Emma's favorite part of her work is working with fellow Indigenous women to combat the water crisis.



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Partner with Us

Our mission is to drive positive change in communities across the nation, and we recognize that this cannot be accomplished alone. We invite you to join us in this transformative journey and become part of our community of changemakers committed to advancing health equity and community-led solutions. Here are various ways you can engage and contribute to the HCF:

We welcome partnerships and support from those actively engaged in the health space of cities where we aspire to expand our program in the coming years: Durham, North Carolina; Memphis, Tennessee; and Atlanta, Georgia. Your local knowledge, networks, and resources are invaluable in helping us create a meaningful impact in these communities. Let's work together to build healthier and more equitable futures. We also welcome partners tackling health inequity at the national level.

Nominate a Fellow

The heart of our program lies in selecting passionate and dedicated fellows. If you know someone who embodies the spirit of community leadership and is committed to driving change in the realm of health equity, we encourage you to nominate them for our program. Our fall nomination process provides an opportunity to identify and support the next generation of health equity champions.

Share Our Fellows' Stories

Stories have the power to inspire and ignite change. Help us amplify the impact of our fellows by sharing their stories within your networks and communities. By showcasing their remarkable journeys and accomplishments, you contribute to the ripple effect of awareness and advocacy, extending the reach of our mission far and wide.

Invest in the Program

Please join us in investing in the Healthy Communities Fellowship and the vision of our Fellows. By supporting this program, you help ensure that those with firsthand experience of community challenges are equipped to devise and implement effective solutions, driving sustainable and impactful improvements. Together, we will continue to uplift communities, nurture local leaders, and create a brighter and healthier future for all.

*For inquiries, partnerships, or to get involved,
please contact us at*

HealthyCommunities@aspeninstitute.org



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2023 Healthy Communities Fellows



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