EQUITY SUMMIT
2021

A New Day

Honoring the Safety, Dignity, and Prosperity of Women, Girls, and Families
Summit Agenda

MAY 7, 2021 | 9:30 AM-12 PM CST

Opening Ceremony | 9:30 a.m.
Great-grandmother Mary Lyons, Ojibwe Elder, Author, & Activist
Great-grandmother Mary Lyons is an Ojibwe Elder, world-renowned Wisdom Keeper, empowerment coach, activist, and author. She will lead an opening ceremony and share a land acknowledgement as we recognize and share gratitude for Indigenous culture within our communities and the land on which we gather, live, and work for change.

Welcome from Board Leadership | 9:40 to 9:45 a.m.
Nevada Littlewolf, WFMN Board Chair
Chanda Smith Baker, WFMN Board Vice Chair

State of the Foundation | 9:45 to 10 a.m.
Gloria Perez, President & CEO, Women’s Foundation of Minnesota
What will it take to harness the possibility for a new day of gender and racial equity? Reflecting on her first year as President & CEO, Gloria Perez will share key Foundation updates and impact from the past year, highlight the critical and collective vision we heard in WFMN’s 2021 Road to Transformation Listening Series and chart our path to a future of justice for all.

Featured Speaker Introduction | 10:00 to 10:05 a.m.
Dieu Do, WFMN Innovator and Civic Engagement Advocate

Keynote Address | 10:05 - 10:15 a.m.
LaTosha Brown, Co-Founder, Black Voters Matter
Highlighting the incredible movement of women voting, running, and leading in politics, LaTosha Brown will share the work of critical movements for social change, their relevance in Minnesota, and more.

Keynote Conversation | 10:15 to 10:35 a.m.
LaTosha Brown, Co-Founder, Black Voters Matter
Lulete Mola, Chief Strategy & Innovation Officer, WFMN
LaTosha Brown and Lulete Mola will engage in thoughtful conversation about the ongoing struggle to realize a new day, the impact and power of civic action and community-led social change, and the leadership of Black, Indigenous, women of color, and youth at the forefront of movements for justice, as we build hope through collective action for whole-family well-being.

Presenting Sponsor Remarks | 10:35 to 10:40 a.m.
Patricia Harris, Social Impact Manager, Best Buy Co., Inc.
Our gratitude to Best Buy as the returning WFMN Equity Summit Presenting Sponsor.

Grounding – Artistic Performance | 10:40 to 10:45 a.m.
Shá Cage will share her commissioned piece, a grounding performance inspired by this moment and our potential for change.
Breakout Sessions | 10:50 to 11:45 A.M.

Organization Leader & Grantee-Partner Session
Transforming and Adapting Strategic Plans for A New Day
Milano Harden, President & CEO, The Genius Group
Milano Harden will introduce the Big Picture framework as a transformational tool for organizational change. Participants will have time to reflect, imagine, and generate desired results to stabilize their organizations. Milano will inspire participants to create new conditions for social change that supports communities to thrive.

Young Women & Youth Session
A session for young women and youth leaders ages 12 to 24, including Young Women’s Cabinet members, WFMN Innovators, and program participants.

Innovation & Entrepreneurship for a New Day
Hilal Ibrahim, Founder & CEO, Henna & Hijabs
What is innovation? Hilal Ibrahim, a WFMN Innovator alumna, will share the story of how she came to launch her business. Hilal will answer questions about starting a new business, how she defines innovation, and share challenges she has faced along the way. Participants will have time to reflect on their own ideas as they help to create a Minnesota where all young people can thrive.

Donor & Corporate Partner Session
Advancing Policy to Accelerate Equity for a New Day
Kalisha Dessources Figures, Special Assistant to the President for Gender Policy at the White House
Jasmine Brett Stringer, Founder, Carpe Diem with Jasmine and #SHARETHEMICMN
Raie Gessesse, WFMN Policy Fellow
We celebrate the establishment of the White House Gender Policy Council, and believe that the movement for gender and racial equity and justice is activated on every level. For leaders in business, family, and civic life, now is the time to harness our leadership and advocacy to advance meaningful change—from the White House to the state house to the boardroom. In this session, speakers will share timely insights on what it takes to drive leadership for gender and racial equity policy to change systems for good.

Grounding – Breathe Easy with Black Girl In Om | 11:45 to 11:50 a.m.
Lauren Ash, founder of Black Girl In Om, will guide attendees back to the Summit main stage with a reflective moment of grounded breath to imagine a new day.

Reflections & Closing | 11:55 to Noon
Gloria Perez

Stay for it …

Saturday, May 8, 12-1 PM CST

Join on Saturday as the A New Day Summit experience continues with a virtual Self-Care Saturday retreat in meditation, mindfulness, and journaling, led by Black Girl In Om!
We believe in the possibility of a new day. In this time of crises and transformation, we not only believe that a new day is coming - we see that it is here and emerging around us. A new day of safety, a new day of dignity, a new day of prosperity for all women, girls, gender-expansive people, and families. Thank you for joining us to honor all that we are and all that we can build when we come together in beloved community. This Summit is a place to learn, to connect, to teach, to celebrate progress, and to imagine radically forward. As participants in this day, we hope you receive exactly what you need to continue your work of social change.

The heart of our investments to catalyze equity lies in the power we are building with the vibrant communities across Minnesota, united in our common cause for the well-being of our state’s women, girls, and families. We believe in the vitality of the lives, vision, and leadership of those pushed to the margins for too long. The solutions for our way forward come from people and communities closest to the issues.

Our thanks to Best Buy, our presenting sponsor, and to each Summit sponsor for your steadfast support of the Women’s Foundation of Minnesota. We extend our gratitude to each of you for shaping today’s program and serving as an essential component of our impact in driving gender and racial equity.

We press forward together with courage and possibility, rooted in community, and growing together for a new day.

Gloria Perez
President and CEO

Lulete Mola
Chief Strategy & Innovation Officer
Meet the Speakers

LAUREN ASH
Founder, Black Girl In Om

Lauren Ash is a meditation and yoga teacher and founder of Black Girl In Om. Her vision has led to the creation of transformational experiences and content that radically centers and authentically speaks to a historically and consistently marginalized global community. From executive producing and hosting the Black Girl In Om podcast to touring the globe guiding meditations, yoga, and transformational conversations for thousands of Black women and women of color, Lauren’s contributions to the world ultimately reflect what she once needed and didn’t see. Lauren centers compassionate presence, unconditional love, and intention and has been recognized as a trailblazer in the contemporary wellness movement. She has been featured in The New York Times, Well+Good, and Shape, and was included on ESSENCE’s “Woke 100” List and on Wanderlust’s “35 under 35 in Wellness to Watch.”

CHANDA SMITH BAKER
Chief Impact Officer & Senior Vice President, The Minneapolis Foundation; WFMN Board Vice Chair

Chanda Smith Baker has more than 20 years of experience working in, for, and with underestimated communities. At the Minneapolis Foundation, which she joined in 2017, Chanda oversees grantmaking programs, provides strategic direction to community initiatives and partnerships, and is the founder and host of the award-winning podcast Conversations with Chanda. Previously, she spent 17 years at Pillsbury United Communities, a complex community-based nonprofit where she served in a variety of leadership positions before assuming the role of president and CEO in 2011. Chanda has also served on numerous nonprofit and philanthropic boards throughout her career, and her civic leadership has been recognized with several awards and commendations. She unwinds by spending time with family and loves to travel, shop, and watch football.
**LATOSHA BROWN**  
**Co-Founder, Black Voters Matter**

LaTosha Brown is an award-winning visionary thought leader, institution builder, cultural activist and artist, and connector. She is the co-founder of Black Voters Matter, Black Voters Matter Fund, and Black Voters Matter Capacity Building Institute, all of which boost Black voter registration and turnout and increase power in marginalized, predominantly Black communities. LaTosha is also the visionary, founder, and co-anchor of the regional network Southern Black Girls & Women's Consortium. This $100 million, 10-year initiative invests in organizations that serve Black women and girls with every component of the program, inception to execution, to be created by Black girls and women in the South. LaTosha is also the 2020 Hauser Leader at the Center for Public Leadership at Harvard Kennedy School, the 2020 Leader in Practice at Harvard Kennedy School's Women and Public Policy Program, and a 2020-2021 American Democracy fellow at the Charles Warren Center at Harvard.

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**SHÁ CAGE**  
**Founder & CEO, NuWay Consulting & Catalyst Arts**

Shá Cage is a cultural worker, writer, performer, and director who has worked across the United States and internationally. As a thought leader, she’s been called a Change-maker, one of the leading artists of her generation, and a mover and maker. Currently, she is the CEO and Founder of Catalyst Arts and a lead producer and consultant with Tru Ruts, a Black-led community organization with a 23-year history committed to the advancement of Black narratives. In 2020, she launched NuWay Consulting with her partner E.G. Bailey, which is piloting a city-wide Anti-Racism initiative. Shá Cage has been a leading lady on major stages including at the Penumbra Theater and the Guthrie Theater, a producer of feature films, a director and writer of plays, and a recipient of career achievement awards including an Emmy Award, Ivey’s, McKnight and TCG/ Fox Fellowships. However, her proudest work is community healing and transformation through art. She is also a gardener and is the proud mother of two.
**DIEU DO**

Community Organizer & Program Manager, 
Future Leaders of American Government Fellowship; WFMN Innovator

Dieu is recent graduate of Hamline University where she studied Political Science, Criminal Justice, and Social Justice. Dieu is fiercely passionate about civic engagement, social change, and creating pathways for historically underrepresented communities into local, state, and federal government systems. She currently serves as a Community Organizer and Program Manager of the Future Leaders of American Government Fellowship. Dieu is excited to dedicate her life’s work to activating the next generation of political leaders and serving as a civil rights attorney.

**KALISHA DESSOURCES FIGURES**

Special Assistant to the President for Gender Policy, White House

Kalisha Dessources Figures is a researcher, strategist, and policymaker who serves as Special Assistant to the President for Gender Policy at the White House where she focuses on intersectional policy that advances equity for Black, Indigenous, and women and girls of color. Before joining the Administration, Kalisha worked on the Biden-Harris Transition as Deputy Director for Issue and Constituency Engagement. Over the past several years, Kalisha has consulted for several organizations and initiatives that focus on racial equity, gender equity and civic engagement while also working on her PhD at Yale University. Kalisha served in the second term of the Obama-Biden Administration as policy advisor to the White House Council on Women and Girls. Before that, she was a middle and high school math and science teacher in Philadelphia. Kalisha received her bachelor’s degree from Cornell University, and her master’s degree from the University of Pennsylvania. She is a proud Haitian American from New York and currently lives in Maryland with her husband and son.
RAIE GESSESSE
WFMN Policy Fellow; Midwest Program Manager, IGNITE National

Raie is a fierce leader with over seven years of experience organizing in her community to build the power of young women, and especially young women of color. At 18 years old, Raie was appointed by former Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton to serve as a Cabinet member on the nation’s first-ever Young Women’s Cabinet. Since then, she has worked to elevate the voices of hundreds of young women across the state, impacting law and policy at every level. She has led campaigns to expand career opportunities for women of color, increase teachers of color across the state, and wrote a bill to establish paid internship opportunities for young women in government, business, philanthropy, and nonprofits. In 2019, she was awarded the national Truman Scholarship for her commitment to public service and graduated with highest honors and Phi Beta Kappa. Currently, Raie is the Midwest Program Manager for IGNITE National. In her role, she has expanded IGNITE’s presence across the region and accelerated young women’s tools to run for elected office. In the fall, she will pursue a master’s degree in public policy from Harvard’s Kennedy School as a 2021 Paul and Daisy Soros Fellow to continue her advocacy for immigrants and new Americans.

MILANO HARDEN
Principal & President, The Genius Group

Milano Harden is the principal and president of The Genius Group, Inc., which works with leaders, philanthropy, and communities to develop organizational strategy, leadership learning, and grantmaking design support. Prior to this role, Harden worked as program director of The Healthcare Georgia Foundation and manager of Education Initiatives, Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. He is also the former program evaluator at the Department of Community Services, Northwestern Memorial Hospital. He has extensive training and experience in philanthropic strategy, leadership and organizational development, nonprofit management, equity and inclusion, and community health improvement.
PATRICIA HARRIS  
Social Impact Manager, Best Buy Co., Inc.

Within her time at Best Buy, Patricia has overseen implementation and execution of Best Buy’s signature programs, Best Buy Teen Tech Centers, and Geek Squad Academy. In her current role, she manages the Best Buy Foundation’s Community Grants Program and leads Community Disaster Response for her team. Her additional experiences include successful employee engagement strategies with dollars for doers’ programs, sponsorships, as well as developing digital literacy trainings. Patricia also has experience with public and private partnership partners with partners such as the White House ConnectHome initiative, an initiative to bring high-speed Internet to low-income households with school-aged children in HUD-assisted housing. Patricia earned a bachelor’s degree in organizational development from DePaul University. She is a socially responsible individual committed to promoting philanthropic, community, and diversity initiatives, as well as advocating for human equality.

NEVADA LITTLEWOLF  
Executive Director & Campaign Manager, Our Children MN; President & Co-Founder, Seven Teachings LLC; WFMN Board Chair

With over 25 years of executive experience, Nevada has held multiple leadership roles with foundations, government, nonprofits, and political and policy campaigns. She is an organizational and business founder and a former elected official, representing the City of Virginia, Minn., from 2002-2018. She is a citizen of Leech Lake Nation. Nevada has spent her life working with women, children, people with disability, LGTQIA+TS, communities of color, and Indigenous people. She builds power with communities, locally in Minnesota and across the country. Nevada holds a BFA from University of Minnesota Duluth and is currently an MPA graduate student at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs. She is a 2016 Bush Fellow and serves on the boards of ClearWay, MN Urban Debate League, and Oldenburg Arts and Cultural Community. She is co-owner and president of the business Seven Teachings and the executive director of Our Children MN, the campaign to pass the Page Amendment to create a civil right for Minnesota children to have a quality public education.
HILAL IBRAHIM
Founder & CEO, Henna & Hijabs

Hilal Ibrahim was 18 when the idea for her company, Henna & Hijabs, was born. While preparing for her high school graduation, she wasn’t able to find a sustainable and high-quality hijab to wear as she walked across the stage. She took matters into her own hands and designed her very first hijab. Now age 26, Hilal has evolved and grown her business to meet an urgent global need – healthcare hijabs for patients and health care workers. Ibrahim is leading change in healthcare by creating medical apparel that is culturally inclusive for millions of Muslim women patients and healthcare workers in Minnesota and around the world. In addition to being founder and CEO of Henna & Hijabs, Ibrahim serves on the board of Park Nicollet Foundation.

GREAT-GRANDMOTHER MARY LYONS
Ojibwe Elder, Author, Activist

Great-grandmother Mary (GGM Mary) is an Ojibwe Elder, world-renowned Wisdom Keeper, empowerment coach, activist, and author who works at the intersections of the criminal justice system, environmental issues, child welfare systems, and develops policy and advocacy strategies to help reduce the chances of family separation and MMIW (Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women). She is an international keynote speaker and seminar leader and has been featured at events including the Parliament of World Religions, NYC Climate March, and Global Elder’s Gathering on Climate Change. She also previously acted as a United Nations Indigenous Observer. GGM Mary is the author of Wisdom Lessons, focusing on self-development, self-care, and personal empowerment. A pioneer in the human potential field, she has spent nearly 50 years teaching thousands of people meditation, prayer, affirmation, and intuition. GGM Mary is mother of 9, grandmother of 12, and great-grandmother of 1, and has also fostered many children throughout the past 50 years. She is one of five women co-founders of the global “Grandmothers of the Sacred WE” where she developed a Circle Leadership style organizational structure. She believes we can change the world for the better again if we come together as a community.
LULETE MOLA
Chief Strategy & Innovation Officer, Women’s Foundation of Minnesota

Lulete Mola is committed to social change that is intersectional, asset-based, and led by communities most impacted. As the Chief Strategy and Innovation Officer at the Women’s Foundation of Minnesota, Lulete puts this commitment to action as the lead strategist and co-visionary of community investments, field-building programming, strategic communications, and bold fundraising that enable large-scale systems change. In this role, Lulete also leads the Young Women’s Initiative of Minnesota. Lulete is founder and co-chair of the Philanthropic Collective to Combat Anti-Blackness & Realize Racial Justice, a coalition of foundations and philanthropic organizations transforming the field of philanthropy and establishing a historic, Black-Led Movement Fund. She is on the Minnesota Council of Foundations Board of Directors, the VoteRunLead National Advisory Board, and serves on Minnesota’s Advisory Task Force on Expanding the Economic Security of Women. Lulete leads engagement and professional development initiatives in Minnesota’s East African community and is active in the movement for Black lives. Lulete graduated summa cum laude from the University of Minnesota.

GLORIA PEREZ
President & CEO, Women’s Foundation of Minnesota

Gloria Perez is President and Chief Executive Officer of the Women’s Foundation of Minnesota (WFMN), where she leads the first statewide women’s foundation in the country. WFMN has distributed more than $32 million through community investments; conducts ongoing research on the status of women and girls in Minnesota; advocates for public policy that results in greater economic security and safety for women and their families; and invests in organizations and leaders to build the field and achieve gender and racial equity. Perez became one of the country’s leading experts in two-generation strategies to reducing poverty as President & CEO of Jeremiah Program, a national nonprofit whose proven, holistic approach transforms families from poverty to prosperity two generations at a time. Perez has more than 25 years of experience across sectors, ranging from small business, for-profit corporations, to nonprofit human service organizations.
JASMINE BRETT STRINGER
Founder, Carpe Diem with Jasmine and #SHARETHEMICMN

Speaker, on-air lifestyle expert, and author, Jasmine is the award-winning author of *Seize Your Life: How to Carpe Diem Every Day*, and founder of the internationally recognized lifestyle brand Carpe Diem with Jasmine and the #SHARETHEMICMN movement. In these times of transformational change, Jasmine is on a mission to help people live empowered and authentic lives. Through her Seize Your Life keynotes, workshops, and customized coaching sessions, Jasmine guides clients and audiences through a simple process to identify their goals and achieve their personal definition of success. Oprah Winfrey has called Jasmine a “carrier of the light.” As a sought-after lifestyle expert, she has been featured on a variety of media outlets, such as OWN TV, Yahoo, MSN, The Huffington Post and is a weekly lifestyle contributor to local CBS television station WCCO-TV. When not in Minneapolis, Jasmine can be found at the airport or on the family farm in rural Minnesota with her husband.