



Lynn Haglin
Vice President/KIDS PLUS Director

Lynn Haglin's experience spans over 30 years in education, administration, community development and philanthropy, with an extensive background in early childhood, youth development and inter-generational programming. She began her career as a Kindergarten teacher and Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) educator.

Since 1992, Lynn has led the Northland Foundation's nationally recognized KIDS PLUS Program, which, under her guidance, has grown into an array of children, youth and inter-generational initiatives encompassing 52 community coalitions throughout northeastern Minnesota. She holds a Master of Arts in Educational Leadership and Administration from Western Michigan University and a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from Bemidji State University.



Denise Mayotte
Executive Director, The Sheltering Arms Foundation

Denise Mayotte is the Executive Director of the Sheltering Arms Foundation and the co-chair of the Start Early Funders Coalition.

Previously, Denise worked as a program officer for the arts at the McKnight Foundation and as the executive director of the Neighborhood Resource Center.

She serves on the board of In Progress, a youth media organization, as Policy Committee Chair of the Strategic Leadership Team for Youth Community Connections in addition to numerous other civic and community leadership roles.



Sarah Clarke
Lobbyist, Hylden Advocacy & Law

Sarah has been active in Minnesota politics for a decade with her work on campaigns ranging from school board races to presidential campaigns. Her successes on the campaign trail lead her to seek opportunities to advance good public policy. During her work with the Minnesota State College Student Association, she was successful in increasing financial aid for over 8,000 high-need students.

Her recent work with Clean Energy Economy Minnesota allowed her to further hone her grassroots and policy skills by connecting businesses with elected officials to support favorable outcomes for the burgeoning clean energy industry. Sarah is a native of Savage, Minnesota and has a bachelor's degree in political science and history from the University of Minnesota. She lives in Minneapolis with her husband and is pursuing a law degree.





George Latimer

George Latimer was the long-time mayor of Saint Paul, Minnesota from 1976 until 1990. Born in Schenectady, New York, Latimer attended Saint Michael's College and Columbia Law School. He practiced law in Saint Paul from 1963 until he was elected mayor.

After his mayoral tenure, he served as dean of Hamline University's law school from 1990-1993, and as a special advisor to Henry Cisneros, President Bill Clinton's Housing and Urban Development Secretary, from 1993-1995. An expert on urban affairs and development, George has been a visiting professor of urban studies and geography at Macalester College in Saint Paul since 1996.

The Saint Paul Central Library was re-named the George Latimer Central Library by former mayor Chris Coleman in 2014.



Dianne Haulcy Senior Vice President of Family Engagement, Think Small

Dianne oversees the administration of early learning scholarship dollars for the state of MN, Hennepin County and Northside Achievement Zone, Basic Sliding Fee for Ramsey County as well as outreach for providers and parents. Dianne has over 25 years of experience in the non-profit sector.

Dianne has directed five early childhood programs all serving inner-city, low-income, ethnically diverse populations. She has overseen many human services programming in the areas of behavioral health; in-home parenting; youth outreach and out-of-school-time services; shelter and services to homeless families and individuals; and many other family and community programs.

Known for her leadership in the early childhood field, Dianne serves as the Chair to the Voices and Choices for Children Coalition, a coalition of professionals of color and American Indians advocating on behalf of children and families of color in Minnesota, vice chair of the Governor's Early Learning Council, and sits on the Parent Aware Advisory Committee, PreK-3rd Grade Work Group and is the co-chair of the Northside Achievement Zone Early Childhood Action Team.



Takara Henegar Associate Program Officer, The Saint Paul & Minnesota Community Foundation

Takara works as an Associate Program Officer for The Saint Paul & Minnesota Community Foundation and was a former Ron McKinley Philanthropy Fellow. She drives community investment through the Foundation's Diversity Endowment Funds and the Building Community Capacity grants. Takara brings 19 years of diverse nonprofit experience to the Foundations, in addition to her Master's in Nonprofit Management from Hamline University. Takara's insights benefit from exposure to many issue areas including education, arts, housing and homelessness.





Stephanie Thomas
Vice President of Early Childhood, YWCA Minneapolis

Stephanie Thomas is the Vice President of Early Childhood at YWCA Minneapolis and responsible for leadership and strategy of all early childhood education sites, and workforce development.

Stephanie joined YWCA Minneapolis in August 2017. She has 23 years of nonprofit experience as a senior leader, demonstrated capabilities in program development, team leadership, relationship development and strategic management.

Stephanie's focus has been in early childhood education and school-age care and has been an advocate for early childhood and school-age care on a state and national level.

Stephanie is a past board member of MnAEYC-MnSACA and is a member of the MnAEYC-MnSACA Policy and Advocacy Advisory Group.



Sheila Williams Ridge
Director, Shirley G. Laboratory School, University of Minnesota

Sheila Williams Ridge is the Director of the Shirley G. Moore Laboratory School at the University of Minnesota. She holds a BA in Biology from the University of MN in Morris and an MA in Education from Concordia University in St. Paul.

Sheila began her career in early childhood education as the Business Manager/Assistant Director and Teacher/Naturalist at Dodge Nature Preschool. She is passionate about encouraging and promoting nature-based play and education as well as equity, inclusion, and access to nature for all children and families.

In her role at the University of Minnesota, she teaches a student teaching seminar and has infused an anti-bias framework throughout the student teaching experience.



Betty Emarita
Owner, Development & Training Resources

Betty Emarita advances early care and education policy nationally and internationally, working with foundations, US state agencies, and nonprofit organizations and institutions.

Betty is co-leading the Family and Community Knowledge Systems Data Project, Center for Family and Community Data, Knowledge, and Well-Being, Wilder Research.

Betty is a member of the Minnesota Start Early Funders Coalition, the Association for International Childhood Education, and is on the steering committee for Voices and Choices for Children, a statewide advocacy organization for children of color and American Indian children in Minnesota.

