

2022 LASPN  
12<sup>th</sup> Annual  
Suicide Prevention Summit

# Healing Pathways for Support and Connection

Wednesday, Sept. 14, 2022



## DAY 1 PROGRAM

### Introduction: Knowing the Beginning



**Sam Chan, Ph.D.**, is a clinical psychologist and served as countywide District Chief with the Department of Mental Health where he directed the Children's Systems of Care, Family and Community Partnerships, Prevention and Early Intervention Unit. He was the first Co-Chair of the L.A. County Suicide Prevention Network. He previously held senior administrative and faculty positions at the California School of Professional Psychology, Children's Hospital Los Angeles, the USC School of Medicine, and the UCLA Department of Psychiatry. During his career, he has focused on transdisciplinary workforce development in the health care, education, and human services fields and created model advocacy, leadership, and community-building programs for culturally and linguistically diverse populations.

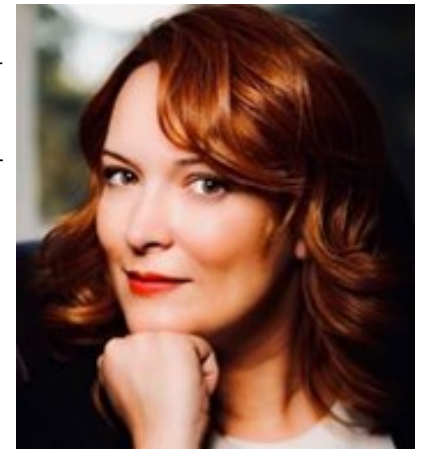
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### KEYNOTE SPEAKER-8:50 A.M.-9:10 A.M.

#### EMERGENCY: REMARKS ON LIFE, LOSS AND SURVIVAL

**Tess Banko**, MSW/MPA, is the Executive Director of the first of its kind UCLA/VA Veteran Family Wellness Center (VFWC) that serves Veterans alongside their families through resilience-

based wellness programming and services in partnership with the VA Healthcare System. Tess identifies with fellow Veterans and families on their paths to wellness and empowerment, as a devastating spinal injury in the Marine Corps at age 22 led to a tumultuous return to civilian life and the passionate pursuit of continued public service through social work and organizational leadership.



Tess lost her husband, an active duty Marine, to suicide while he was deployed overseas in 2004. In 2013, her own PTS surfaced in part due to sexual trauma experienced during military service. Through developing skills and knowledge in the arenas of social work, stress management, trauma, resilience and post-traumatic growth both personally and professionally, Tess believes that resilience, wellness and growth are possible under even the most challenging of circumstances.

Tess is honored to continue to serve the community beside and on behalf of her military and veteran sisters, brothers and their families via assisting with knowledge, resources, and programming. She is an LA County Veterans Advisory Commissioner for 3<sup>rd</sup> District County Supervisor Sheila Kuehl, a member of the Los Angeles Mayor's Veteran Suicide Prevention Challenge for Military and Veteran Families, and the 2nd Vice Chair of the Palisades American Legion Post 283.

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**SESSION ONE-9:10 A.M.-10:00 A.M.**

**A CANDID CONVERSATION ON LOSS AND SURVIVAL**

**MODERATOR**



**Ann Taylor**, is a suicide attempt survivor and a single mother of two. She is a crisis counselor for the Didi Hirsch Suicide Prevention Center 988 Lifeline and peer facilitator for the Survivor of Suicide Attempt (SOSA) support groups also at Didi Hirsch. She has been an advocate in suicide prevention and has been vocal about her experience in the hopes she will reduce the stigma around suicide and help others who may be struggling. She has been featured

in the documentary “The S Word” during which she first voiced much of her pain surrounding suicide ideation and attempts.

**PANEL MEMBERS**

**Julia Zirimu** (aka Julia Asea Boyle), is an Office Manager at Crabel Capital Management. Her professional career began as a teacher in Uganda, then a travel professional in the United Kingdom, and for over 20 years, she has been working as an administrative professional in the United States. For the past 11 years, she has participated in the Alive Together walk to raise funds and promote awareness for programs and services to help those struggling with mental illness and families that have lost loved ones to suicide. She is co-facilitating survivor support groups and helps people that have recently lost someone to suicide. After the loss of her son to suicide, Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services supported her with counseling services and an 8-week survivor support group that enabled her to live through the worst time of her life. Helping



people that have recently lost someone to suicide helps her to honor her son’s memory.

**Miguel Serricchio** lost his youngest son, Alex, to suicide just over six years ago and shortly after found Didi Hirsch. He took advantage of the different programs that Didi Hirsch has to support families with the loss of



a loved one by suicide. Shortly after using Didi Hirsch's services, he felt the need to give back. He didn't want the loss of his son to be just a statistic, so he started volunteering. For the past five years, he has had the opportunity to facilitate eight-week groups and monthly drop-ins in English and Spanish. Additionally, he has written articles for Didi Hirsch's newsletter, has been interviewed or served on panels, and his goal is to become a speaker for Didi Hirsch in their suicide-prevention program. Miguel is also an Executive Advisor to Bezyl.com, a digital mental health app with a mission to "help people help people." Originally from Buenos Aires, Miguel now resides with his wife, in Valencia, California. He holds a degree in international finance from the Universidad Argentina de la Empresa in Buenos Aires, Argentina and is a 35+ year veteran of the banking and finance industry. When not working or volunteering, Miguel enjoys cycling, hiking and traveling with his wife and spends as much time as possible backpacking with his oldest son and spending time with his daughter, daughter-in-law and granddaughter.



**Rebecca Russell** works with Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services as a Program Coordinator for the Suicide Prevention Center’s 24/7 crisis line. Her lived experience as a suicide attempt survivor informs the way she approaches her work in the fields of suicide prevention and community mental health.

Rebecca has her MA in Human Services and is currently earning a MA in Marriage & Family Therapy.

**Juan Diego Sanabria** is a United States Marine Corps combat veteran and recent graduate of California State University, Los Angeles with my Bachelor's Degree in Rehabilitation Services. Juan has just started Master's degree program for Rehabilitation Counseling and his new calling and passion in life is to work for and serve our veteran community with getting help for their mental health issues using my firsthand experience of suicidal ideation and loss to help improve the overall quality of life for our brothers and sisters in arms.



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## MOMENT OF CREATIVE WELLBEING-10:10 A.M.-10:30 A.M.

### VERSA STYLE WITH ARTS FOR HEALING & JUSTICE NETWORK

Featuring Jannet Galdamez & Maisha Morris of Contra Tiempo

**Jannet Galdamez** Jannet Galdamez is a dance artist born, raised, and based in Los Angeles, CA. Her love for dance and music began at a very young age through social, street, family settings. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Dance and minor in Education from the University of California Irvine June of 2012



training intensively in jazz, improvisation, modern and ballet. Jannet has been studying salsa for the last 17 years, Afro-Cuban dance, music, and culture for the last 10 years and she continues to dive deep in her studies of various dance forms inside the Latin and African Diaspora.

Jannet is currently rehearsal director, teaching and dance artist with CONTRA-TIEMPO Activist Dance Theater while simultaneously dancing with Kimbambula Cuban Dance Ensemble directed by Cuban Master Kati Hernandez and touring with Spanish Guitarist, Roni Benise's Emmy Award Winning World Music and Dance Spectacular. Jannet continues to blossom in her versatility as a dance artist... always grounded with the beat of a drum and with deep gratitude for her teachers, mentors, and elders. She is passionate about her journey - a journey guided by love, balance, connection, gratitude and rooted in celebrating and uplifting cultural and ancestral roots, community-building, self-discovery and self-empowerment through dance.

**Maisha Mercee' Morris-** Minister of Movement is a young woman raised to believe that she could do anything she put her heart and mind to, and that God would be with her every step of the way. Born of Odessa and nurtured in a home of loving parents and surrounded by siblings that have become friends. The love of the arts began early in life, with dance being the one that captured my attention and dedication. Following those steps all the way to both the west and east coast, building and excelling in a career as a professional dancer. The middle of her twenty's is when the question that would change everything entered the picture. God asked her, "Can I take the lead in this dance of life"? The journey continued and began to take on a new way of moving. The west brought her the love of God and the east called for her complete trust in Him. Nearing the end of that season a new one appeared, a call to come home. Not certain what that would bring, the choice and decision was obedience. In the time of reconnecting with home, connecting with identity was number one on the list. A true moment of wilderness walking. Knowing now that she is the daughter of the King and



a true worshipper, is what her calling of life is and there is a readiness to share the story of the good news with all. Mission- To be a vessel used to serve the Gospel through creative expression founded in the love and of God. Motto- The Gospel Sets Us Free To Be Who We Are Created To Be.

## SESSION THREE 10:40 A.M.-12:00 P.M.

### PASTORAL TRAINING AND SUICIDE AND EXPERIENTIAL JOURNEY

#### MODERATORS



**James Coomes** is a licensed clinical social worker with the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health. He holds a bachelor's degree in sociology and a master's degree in social welfare from UCLA. He has held a number of positions over the past 26 years with Los Angeles County and has been the program manager of the Olive View

Community Mental Health Urgent Care Center since 2007. In addition to crisis mental health work, he has a background in crisis negotiations, mediation, and child protective services. He is a member of the Service Area 2 Clergy Roundtable and currently serves on the Board of Trustees at his home church.

**Daniel Estrada** has worked with DMH roughly for 5 years. He is a Senior Typist Clerk for the departments Outpatient Services Division. Daniel serves as moderator and administrative aid to the Faith Based Advocacy Council, Vsee admin team and has lent a helping hand to many other units while helping to better serve our communities. As part of DMH, Daniel has worked hard to support our communities and serve the people of Los Angeles County by working with Houseless outreach, Suicide Prevention, Consumer and Family Affairs and the Mental Health Commission to name a few. He lives in La Puente, CA alongside wife and two children. When Daniel isn't working hard combating mental health stigmas, you'll find him playing guitar, playing video games and enjoying time with his family.



#### PANEL MEMBERS

**Pastor Christian Ponciano**, is a natural leader having participated in planting several churches in LA County, Central California, and Mexico. With his wife, Isela Ponciano founded Avivamiento en Tu Ciudad (Revival in your City) a ministry geared towards bringing support, training, and resources to

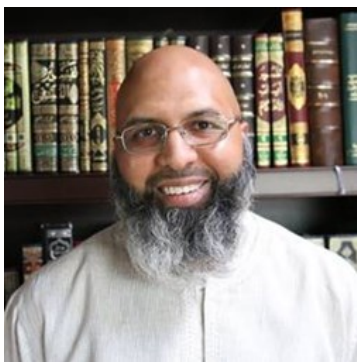
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christian churches in California and abroad. He is the current President of Rebuild 52 International providing a holistic approach to healing in spirit, soul (psyche), and body. He is also currently serving as the Chair for the Faith-Based Advocacy Counsel DMH and is a Professional Chaplain in good standing with Chaplains International since 2008. He holds a bachelor's in theology and a Master's in Biblical Counsel-

ing from LUT, Latin University of Theology. He is an active Mental Health Advocate, and his passion is to work and support the underserved and unprivileged communities in Los Angeles and in Tijuana, BC. He has transitioned from an independent nondenominational pastor to seeking ordination with the Presbyterian Church PCUSA.

**Shaykh Suhail Mulla**, is the Director of the Los Angeles branch of the Khalil Center - the nation's largest provider of Muslim Mental health Services. He is also the resident scholar of the Islamic Society of the West Valley and previously served as an Imam at the Islamic Center of Orange County. He also currently serves as the Muslim chaplain at both UCLA and CSU Northridge. A native son of the San Fernando Valley, Sh. Mulla received his bachelor's degree from CSU Northridge in African-American Studies and an MSW from UCLA. Sh. Suhail received his seminary training from Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt where he received his bachelor's degree in Shari'ah (Islamic Law). Sh. Mulla previously spent 10 years as a social worker with the Los Angeles Unified School District where he helped families and youth cope with difficult life issues. Sh. Mulla is a member of the Service Area 2 Clergy Roundtable.



**Pastor Carthel Towns** is the founding pastor of Ekklesia Christian Community Church. As a business manager and pastor, Pastor Towns has been engaged in the health and wellbeing of religious communities for a number of years. Shortly after establishing his current ministry, Pastor Towns encountered a series of situations which led him to identifying the need for mental health supports in communities of faith and the discovery of an extensive mental health service delivery system. Pastor Towns holds an MBA from California Lutheran University and has completed a PhD. in Organizational Leadership from



Northcentral University. Pastor Towns is a member of the Service Area 2 Clergy Roundtable.

**Pastor Andrea "Dre" Humphrey**, is the co-founding pastor of Hope's House, which began as a San Fernando-Valley-based bible study in 2001 for individuals who were unable to get to the larger worship centers in the Los Angeles area, and has since grown into a thriving ministry located in Granada Hills, CA. Pastor Humphrey earned her MBA and teaches at CSU Northridge, is the President and CEO of HOPE Community Development Center, operates an executive development and training organization and continues to provide pastoral care and guidance to over 700 congregants weekly across 21 different ministries.



**Rabbi Ken Chasen**, is Senior Rabbi of Leo Baeck Temple in Los Angeles. An outspoken advocate for social justice, Rabbi Chasen's writings have appeared in numerous books and publications, including the Los Angeles Times, The Forward, Variety, Thrive Global, and The Jewish Journal, among many others. In addition, he is a member of the adjunct faculty of the Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion, sits on the Executive Committee for Jews United for Democracy and Justice, and recently served as National Co-Chair for T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights. Rabbi Chasen is also a prominent Jewish composer whose works are regularly heard in synagogues and schools around the world. He is married to Allison Lee, the Chief Development Officer of TIME'S UP, and they are the parents of three children.



**Father Rodel Balagtas**, came to the Incarnation Catholic Community from St. John's Seminary where, for five years, he had served as Director of Pastoral Formation, Vice Rector, and Assistant Professor in the field of Ministerial Studies. Before that, he served as pastor of Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Los Angeles for 12 years.

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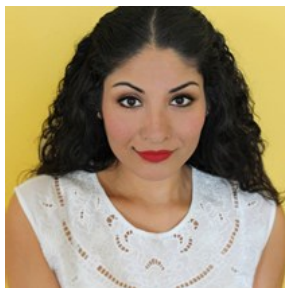
LUNCH: 12:00 P.M.-12:30 P.M.

MOMENT OF CREATIVE WELLBEING-12:30 P.M.-12:45 P.M.

**VERSA STYLE WITH ARTS FOR HEALING & JUSTICE NETWORK**

Featuring Marlene Beltran of the Unusual Suspects

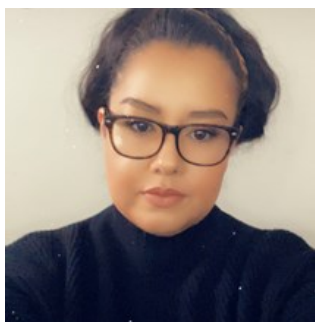
**Marlene Beltran** is an Arts educator and multi-disciplinary artist. An Alumnus of Cal Arts and first generation Chicana born and raised in Los Angeles, she is bi-lingual in Spanish and has over 15 years of teaching artist experience, building culturally relevant curriculum, centering social emotional learning, leading residencies and workshops with youth and communities throughout L.A. and surrounding areas.



SESSION THREE-12:45 P.M.-2:00 P.M

**OLDER ADULTS AND SUICIDE PREVENTION**

**MODERATOR**



**Aileen Montoya** has a Master's Degree in Public Administration and currently works with the Partners in Suicide Prevention unit with the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health. She has over ten years' experience working in the community providing suicide prevention education and training to the County of Los Angeles and has been certified as

a trainer in a variety of evidence based trainings. Aileen has experience as a former Children's Social Worker with the Department of Children and Family Services and Detention Officer with the Los Angeles County Probation Department. She has a passion for self-care and work-life balance for mental health professionals and enjoys being out in nature, hiking, and going fishing with her family.

**PANEL MEMBERS**



**Dr. Haydeh Fakhrabadi** is a licensed Clinical Psychologist. She received her M.A. in Clinical Health Psychology in 2001 and graduated from Pepperdine University with a Doctoral degree in Clinical Psychology in 2006. Dr. Fakhrabadi has been employed by Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) since 2008; she joined the Older Adult System of Care Administration in January of 2011. Dr.

Fakhrabadi is the lead trainer for the Outpatient Services Divi-

sion and provides training to the LACDMH workforce, mental health providers, and other community based organizations on various mental health related topics. Dr. Fakhrabadi is a frequent guest speaker at various local and national conferences providing presentations and trainings related to mental health.



**Kathryn L. Crain** is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker who graduated with a Master's in Social Work degree in 1999 from the University of Southern California. As a student, her interests included working with individuals with severe mental illness, adult and older adult populations. Ms. Crain began her social work career with the Los Angeles County Department of Mental

Health (LACDMH) in 1999 to the present. Her career with the department began as a clinical social worker in an outpatient clinic. She later transferred to the department's older adult FACTS training program for M.S.W. students, and in 2010 transferred to the older adult GENESIS field-based program. For the past six years, Ms. Crain has been with the Outpatient Services Division as a Program Manager I coordinating the Anti-Stigma and Discrimination (ASD) team, Service Extender and Wellness Outreach Worker (WOW) volunteer programs, and inter-departmental collaboration projects. During this past year her responsibilities expanded to overseeing the GENESIS program along with her other duties. Throughout her career, she has dedicated herself to serving disenfranchised populations, consulting with colleagues for the emotional well-being of the community, field instruction for M.S.W. students, and maintaining a private practice.

**Dr. Taya Varteresian, DO**, is a supervising psychiatrist at the LA county DMH. She serves older patients with the GENESIS outpatient services program that delivers field visits to homebound seniors throughout the LA county area. She is also Assistant Clinical Professor (volunteer) of Psychiatry & Human Behavior at the University of California Irvine, and Clinical Instructor at University of California Los Angeles.



BREAK-2:00 P.M.-2:10 P.M.

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**SESSION FOUR-2:10 P.M.-3:40 P.M**

**FINDING WHAT WAS LOST: EXPRESSING GRIEF WITH POETRY FEATURING NEW HOPE GRIEF AND STREET POETS, AN ARTS FOR HEALING & JUSTICE NETWORK MEMBER ORGANIZATION**



**David Leonard** has almost 20 years of experience working in the non-profit sector in Los Angeles including serving children & families with the YMCA, supporting Iraq/Afghanistan War Veterans at the Salvation Army, and now caring for those who are bereaved. David currently serves as the Executive Director at New Hope Grief Support Community in Long Beach, where he attended a

grief support group in 2008 after the sudden death of his mother after a lifelong battle with addiction. David is a member of the National Alliance for Children's Grief, serves on the Long Beach Trauma Recovery Center's Advisory Board, and has helped serve thousands of bereaved adults, children, and families through connection and support during his time at New Hope.

**Alyesha Wise-Hernandez**, in addition to her teaching, performing, curriculum-writing and community-building work with Street Poets, Alyesha helps lead the all-women open mic "She Writes." and a variety of other community events. The author of Carnival (NOT A CULT media), Alyesha Wise is a poet, teaching artist & TEDx speaker from Camden. She is the co-founder of Spoken Literature Art Movement (S.L.A.M.) and served as the Hollywood (Da Poetry Lounge) Slam Team head coach, leading the team to finals both years, most recently to 2nd place. She also served as the Los Angeles (Get Lit) Youth Slam Team co-coach from 2014-2017. Along with other slam highlights, she is a 2-time Women of the World Poetry Slam finalist.



**Chris Cano** attended Fuller Theological Seminary and graduated with a Masters of Divinity in 2009 and spent many years working in full-time pastoral ministry with both teens and adults in the Los Angeles area. In addition to working in ministry, Chris spent several years as a funeral service professional working with the bereaved and later went

on to become an adjunct instructor in the Mortuary Science Dept. at Cypress College equipping other professionals. Chris experienced significant loss in his own life and his per-

sonal and professional experiences have given him a heart and passion to work with those who are living with grief. In 2016, Chris volunteered and led grief support groups for adults with New Hope Grief Support Community. In 2018, New Hope hired Chris as their Director of Bereavement services where he has developed programs for bereaved adults, children, and families - especially those impacted by the death of a child and by suicide. Chris is a member of the National Alliance for Children's Grief, has facilitated training on grief and loss, and is currently pursuing his Certificate in Thanatology.



**Frank Escamilla**, known in the streets and open-mic venues of Los Angeles as "Bus Stop Prophet" for his propensity to bust rhymes in unexpected places, Frank has been deeply engaged in creative peace-making work for over 16 years, both here in LA, and as far away as South Africa and Sweden. A gifted poet, spoken word-artist, open-mic host,

community-builder and teacher, Frank first connected with Street Poets in 2013 and has been working with us ever since. As our Director of School programs, Frank oversees Street Poets school partnerships, community events and outreach. In his capacity as a master teaching artist, Frank facilitates writing workshops for everyone from Compton elementary school 5th graders to formerly incarcerated adults at Homeboy Industries. In any setting, his passion for the healing power of poetry and storytelling is truly infectious.

**CLOSING REMARKS 3:40 P.M.-4:00 P.M.**

**Many thanks to the amazing 2022 Videos**

**9/14/2022**

**LA County Youth**

**Senator Alex Padilla**

**Senator Anthony Portantino**

**Congresswoman Grace Napolitano**

**Didi Hirsch**



# Special thanks to our team:



Jewel  
Forbes



Elisabeth  
Nails



Celeste  
Meza



Tracie  
Andrews



Daphne  
Quick-Abdullah



Aileen  
Montoya



Stephanie  
Murray



Robert  
Stohr



Daisy  
Gomez



Franklin  
Romero



Carolyn  
Kaneko



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Cheryl  
Eskin



Nana  
Sarkodee-Adoo



Richard  
Mogil



Nelly  
Arias



Sandri  
Kramer



Ana  
Verdin-Hernandez

# Special thanks to our team:



Adrina  
Zeinalvand



Tiffany  
Buan



Vanessa  
Corona



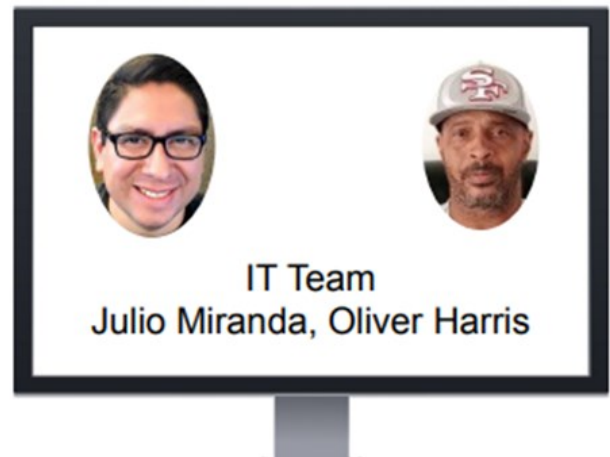
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