

INSIDE

InterCommunity

A LOOK INSIDE
THE WORK WE DO
& THE INSPIRING PEOPLE
WHO MAKE IT HAPPEN



InterCommunity
Health Care

Health Care for the Whole Person

March is National Social Work Month

March is [National Social Work Month](#), a time to celebrate social workers and the many contributions of the profession. InterCommunity thanks the dedicated professionals who effect positive change every day with individuals, families, groups, and entire communities.



Addressing Racial Inequity



RACIAL/ETHNIC
EQUITY
INITIATIVE

InterCommunity Health Care

Update from Kim Beauregard, President & CEO

InterCommunity has a long tradition of hiring the BEST PEOPLE and being a great place to work. However, the death of George Floyd last spring and events that followed brought into focus the need for InterCommunity to challenge itself to be more racially equitable and inclusive.

We began the Racial/Ethnic Equity Initiative (REEI) with our advisors, Rosario & Associates LLC, Rosaida Rosario, Deanne Shapiro and Michelle Stewart-Copes. They worked with our REEI committee to teach and support us on our beginning journey towards greater equity. They brought us on a journey which led to employee and Board of Directors' engagement through surveys and working with the task forces of the REEI. Important outcomes have been a greater awareness of the systemic racism embedded in our society and in almost every organization including InterCommunity, and the development of an extensive inventory of recommended actions and changes to make our organization more racially equitable and inclusive.

This work will continue to focus on Culture, Strategic Alignment, Education, Recruiting and On-boarding, and Career Development. Our assessment phase with the Rosario & Associates group will come to an end on March 22, 2021, with many thanks, as the

co-chairs present final recommendations to the executive team and the full REEI. We will then jump into the next phase of implementation. The REEI committee has modeled some of the vulnerability and empathy that we want to extend to our full organization and we will be doing this as we continue on our journey. Please look forward to more news on this work and feel free to call or email me any suggestions as we move forward.

Meet the REEI Co-Chairs



Yvette Garner

Yvette is a co-chair of the Organizational Culture subcommittee of the REEI. The three objectives of this committee are to provide opportunities for employees to have a voice that is heard and valued in organizational decisions, eliminate barriers for employees to express concerns, and ensure that all employees feel respected and not separated by program silos.

While the subcommittee is still in the early planning and information-gathering stage, Yvette noted that some ideas discussed include having InterCommunity town hall meetings so employees can weigh in with their concerns, cultural education programs in which employees can make presentations, and perhaps the creation of an ambassador or neutral party to support employees and listen to their concerns.

Yvette noted that a possible barrier is staff's willingness to participate or having the time to participate. She added "If staff feel good, it also impacts client care." She stated that



Colleen Mastroianni

Colleen Mastroianni is also a co-chair of the Organizational Culture subcommittee. She has worked for InterCommunity for over five years and is the Manager of Behavioral Health Home (BHH) and Community Foundations. She is a Licensed Professional Counselor.

Colleen stated that the REEI will iron out objectives and action plans and present these to the Executive Leadership Team (ELT). "It's important for staff to feel supported and valued. Whether a barrier is perceived or actual, it needs to be addressed and it's important to receive employee feedback. Being silent translates to complicity, and my duty as a white person is to help facilitate a stance on social justice issues."

Colleen added that the REEI is thinking big picture and one challenge facing the group is to spend time focusing on desired outcomes rather than going to next steps. "There are many great people on the task force with great ideas." She would like to see even

the REEI is a diverse committee that is dedicated and committed to InterCommunity's growth. "We are listening to staff and have their best interests at heart," she stated. "We invite staff to use the committee as a vehicle to address their concerns."

Yvette is a counselor in InterCommunity's Detox Center and has worked for InterCommunity for ten years.



Nancy Castro

Nancy Castro is co-chair of the Employee Development and Learning subcommittee. She explained that there are 3 specific goals this committee is focused on: training staff across the board on racial equity, recruiting and training a more diverse workforce, and improving staff leadership skills and leadership development. The subcommittee would like to see a 10% increase in equity that would be monitored on an annual basis.

Nancy noted that the work of the task force will be ongoing with outcomes measured annually. She feels that the Executive Leadership Team has been receptive and supportive of the work of the REEI.

Nancy is a Data Report Writer-Analyst on the IT team at InterCommunity and will start her third year of employment at

more people involved on the REEI so there is adequate representation.



Sherie Etienne

Sherie is also a co-chair of the Employee Development and Learning subcommittee. She noted that one challenge regarding employee training is that not all InterCommunity departments have the same flexibility or schedules. "Currently we lack adequate training on anything cultural or race-related. We are shining a light on this and addressing the fact that people of color didn't feel heard. As a team, we have the same vision with what we want to see."

Sherie feels there is good representation on the task force as a whole, and that InterCommunity directors are "ready and willing to hear about employee concerns." "It's important work," she added. "As an employee of color, my perspective may be different. I advocate for the population I work with daily, and we should do that for staff also. I'm pleased that InterCommunity wants to do this, and it's a good opportunity to work with other professionals in the agency as well. Working on the subcommittee is stepping out of my comfort zone. I hope all the goals and outcomes we're developing will be implemented."

Sherie has worked for InterCommunity for three years and

Spotlight on Staff: Nancy Gonzalez



Nancy Gonzalez is a Registered Nurse at InterCommunity's East Hartford health center. Besides assisting patients with their medical care, explaining treatments and medications and helping psychiatric patients in crisis, Nancy has spent a lot of time in the past couple of months providing COVID vaccinations to those eligible under state guidelines.

"I would say 85% of people are super-excited to get the vaccine and 15% are nervous about it, but once it's explained to them, they feel reassured," she stated. Having suffered with COVID herself in November, she feels that educating the public about the merits of the vaccine is extremely important. "I was healthy, an avid runner, and very physically fit. But when I contracted COVID, I was in intensive care for six days and almost died. I didn't have the risk factors you read about, I always wore a mask, and statistically I should have had a mild case."

The unpredictability of the disease makes it all the more dangerous. "You can lose your sense of smell and taste," she noted. "And the number of people who have died from this disease is terrible. Getting the vaccine is so much better than getting COVID! I'm lucky to be alive and grateful to be back working in the community again. If I can help one person to get the vaccine or wear a mask, or not congregate with a lot of people, it's worth it."

Spotlight on Staff: Jennifer Valva

Promoted in October 2020 to Director of Adult Behavioral Health Services in InterCommunity's East Hartford community health center, **Jennifer Valva** oversees outpatient adult services and helps patients obtain the care they need. Jennifer has held several positions at InterCommunity's locations in Hartford and East Hartford in the past nine and a half years, and has a deep understanding of the services InterCommunity offers. "I connect clients with other InterCommunity programs and help them navigate the system," she stated.



Jennifer is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, a Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor, an Acupuncture Detoxification Specialist, and a registered yoga teacher. Her interest in holistic therapies fits nicely with InterCommunity's focus on treating the whole person. "What makes InterCommunity unique is client-centered care," she noted. "We provide care to everyone, regardless of their ability to pay, and InterCommunity's culture emphasizing whole person health care makes it the best place to be."

Introducing the Executive Committee of InterCommunity's Board of Directors

The InterCommunity Board of Directors operates through a number of standing committees. These are the Governance Committee, Development Committee, Finance Committee, and Audit Committee. There may also be other committees periodically established for specific tasks or projects.

There is one more standing committee -- the Executive Committee. It consists of five individuals: Bill Young, Chairperson; Sasa Harriott, Vice Chairperson; Jennifer Raulukaitis, Treasurer; Andre Santiago, Secretary; and, Brian Cutino, immediate past Chairperson.

The Executive Committee has the unique responsibility of acting on behalf of the full Board of Directors between board meetings if needed, while reporting any actions it takes to the full Board. Since the full Board of Directors meets every month, independent decisions by the Executive Committee should be rare, but available if needed in an urgent or emergency situation. The Executive Committee is also available to be involved in sensitive matters which may arise or to assist the CEO if requested.

We are especially grateful for the extra service of these directors to InterCommunity.



Bill Young



Sasa Harriott



Jennifer Raulukaitis





**Let your family and friends know
they can get all the health care
they need at InterCommunity!**

