

CHILDREN *and* FAMILY FELLOWSHIP

2010

CLASS OF CASEY  
FOUNDATION  
CHILDREN AND FAMILY  
FELLOWS



*The Annie E. Casey Foundation*



*The 2010–11 Class of Casey Foundation  
Children and Family Fellows*

## A LIFE-CHANGING PROGRAM, AN INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE

Through the Children and Family Fellowship, the Casey Foundation explicitly strives to increase the pool of diverse, visionary leaders with the confidence and competence to create supports and systems that help families make positive choices. Fellows strive to lead and sustain major system reforms and community change initiatives that benefit large numbers of children and families. During 20-months of Fellowship activities, participants broaden their vision, increase their networks and base of knowledge, expand and refine their skills, and accumulate the experience they need to lead these major change efforts. A unique opportunity for reflection, action, exploration, and learning, the Fellowship fosters career-enhancing growth.

The Fellowship serves as a complement to the Foundation's existing programs and funding strategies. As such, it represents an important investment in the human services field, in the future of communities, and in the futures of our most vulnerable children. The Fellowship represents the Foundation's ongoing commitment to encouraging the strongest possible leadership on behalf of America's children and families.

## A UNIQUE GROUP OF TALENTED, ASPIRING LEADERS

*It is our pleasure to introduce the 2010–11 Children and Family Fellows of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. These 18 women and men, like the 75 Fellows who have preceded them since 1993, are talented and accomplished professionals from across the country and throughout the children and family services field and related disciplines.*

*They are people deeply concerned about the distressing conditions facing too many children, families, and communities. They are a diverse group of individuals who want to accelerate their professional and personal development to help ensure that children, families, and communities are strong. They want all children and youth to have a permanent connection to a family, all families to be economically self-sufficient, and all systems that support children and families to work well for them.*

*As you will read in the following pages, many of these Fellows work across traditional cultural, disciplinary, and systemic boundaries. They may speak more than one language, mediate differences between policymakers and*

*community leaders, or negotiate between federal and state governments.*

*Although these characteristics are not formally elicited through the Fellowship's application process, we think they reflect some of the changing and complex requirements of public leadership today.*

*Leading significant change, whether in systems or communities, increasingly requires this kind of professional agility or fluency in diverse, multi-stakeholder environments. The Casey Foundation, therefore, has much to learn from this talented group of Fellows, and looks forward to facilitating their learning and development during the Fellowship.*

Donna Stark, Vice President  
Talent Management and Leadership Development  
The Annie E. Casey Foundation

Barbara N. Squires, Director  
Leadership Development  
The Annie E. Casey Foundation



Tanya Anderson



Elizabeth Black

Tanya R. Anderson, M.D., thinks every child should be able to shine like she did. “I came from humble beginnings and was very fortunate to be included in a small number of people considered gifted. But there were so many others I knew who had special talents and were not recognized, just because they didn’t look like the traditional package,” she says. “Systems should not be forced to pick out the top 10 percent of kids and only give them these chances.”

As chief of clinical services for the Illinois Department of Human Services’ Division of Mental Health, Anderson strives “to stop looking at kids and their issues and challenges in traditional ways.”

She continually brings new partners to the table to “take a step back and look at the issue from a different perspective” and hopes to glean skills to enhance collaboration across the child welfare, juvenile justice, and education systems. “It’s been an important part of my work to bridge traditional boundaries to make life better for children and families, and Casey is really all about that.”

A minister’s daughter raised in the Mississippi Delta in the 1970s, Elizabeth Spottswood Black boarded a school bus driven by Emmett Till’s uncle outside the Tallahatchie court house where Till’s murderers were acquitted by an all-white jury.

Growing up among impoverished farm families and wealthy landowners, Black “came to understand the impact of race, class, and gender and its impact on your life opportunities.”

As executive director of the Tennessee Department of Children’s Services Office of Child Permanency, Black works to ensure that family members play a key role in the placements of vulnerable children who can’t remain with birth parents. Under her leadership, the department has launched multiple strategies that have dramatically increased the percentage of initial placements with kin in pilot sites.

Black wants to sharpen her leadership skills to advance reform “with a methodology and at a pace that is workable for a large bureaucracy.” A key concern: “How do we address our own issues, blind spots, fears, and insecurities to maintain a safe, creative learning environment where employees can thrive while improving outcomes for children and families?”

Christopher Caruso



Ryan Chao

**Christopher John Caruso** appreciates Casey's "overarching commitment to children and families and ability to bring folks together from different sectors." Working in government and nonprofits convinced him that "the most innovative and effective solutions emerge when those two entities come together." As an assistant commissioner at the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development, Caruso heads the City's Out-of-School Time system, the country's largest municipally financed after-school initiative, providing youth development and educational programming for 80,000 students daily.

"I've spent most of my career focusing on the intersection between education and communities and exploring what they can do collectively to improve the quality of our schools and neighborhoods," says Caruso, who started his career at a New York City elementary school that partners with the Children's Aid Society to provide support and enrichment for kids and families.

He hopes to learn "how folks with the same interests and goals but different measurable outcomes can work together most effectively" to scale up successful approaches. "In New York, we have a lot of scale to achieve, so that is always a challenge."

**Ryan Chao**, executive director of Satellite Housing in Berkeley, California, started out pursuing a career in architecture, but became intrigued with "other aspects of how communities thrive and struggle."

After working in the heart of New York City, Chao realized that "in terms of making a more substantial difference in not just how things look but feel for community residents, I could have a bigger impact in the development arena."

Chao, who recently completed a community development fellowship at Harvard, relishes the opportunity the Casey Fellowship offers to learn from professionals doing other important work to strengthen families and communities "and being able to share candid perspectives."

Chao brings a different perspective because his agency serves low-income seniors and people with special needs in addition to families.

"The Fellowship challenges us to really change systems and how things are being done," he says, "and because Casey works in so many different areas, it provides the connections and the means to promote change that is bigger than any one of us can do on an individual or organizational basis."



Sam Cobbs

Daniel Dodd



**Sam Cobbs** is chief executive officer of First Place for Youth, an organization launched in 1998 in Northern California to provide affordable housing and supportive services to former foster youth. It is now a national model for providing permanent housing for high-risk youth.

“The Casey Foundation has always been on the cutting edge in providing innovative solutions for kids transitioning out of foster care,” notes Cobbs, who wants to apply Casey’s systems framework to his work and help his staff understand “your role as a person in your family of origin, in your organization, and in these bigger systems, and what we bring from our personal lives.”

His own career was strongly influenced by his father, who “operated the first re-entry program I ever knew of,” says Cobbs. “He owned a roofing company in Mississippi that hired ex-felons who couldn’t get jobs anywhere else.”

“The equity gap isn’t just about money and education,” he says. “Young people need families and mentors and the same opportunities, whether they’re in the foster care system or growing up in a middle-class family.”

**Daniel Dodd** leads Step Up Savannah, a collaborative of over 100 organizations from the government, business, nonprofit, and grassroots sectors working to move people from poverty to self-sufficiency.

Raised by a mother who came from Latin America, Dodd is passionate about developing the talents of residents so they can advocate effectively. Previously, he was a community organizer in Miami, Florida.

“We can have all the businesses, nonprofits, sectors of government, and think tanks on board, but if we don’t learn from and empower leaders from high-poverty neighborhoods to lead and drive the work, then we’re going to be very limited in our impact,” he says.

Dodd wants to learn how to better evaluate the collaborative’s effectiveness. He’s already shared a book assigned by the Fellowship about results-based accountability, *Trying Hard Is Not Good Enough*, with his staff and partner organizations. They are planning to use it as a basis for their strategic planning process this year. The Fellowship “is holding us accountable for not just learning theoretically, but applying the lessons within our organizations and communities,” he says.

Jeffrey Edmondson



Sandra Gasca-Gonzalez

In his work leading an Ohio partnership creating a new blueprint for education reform, **Jeffrey Edmondson** used Casey's KIDS COUNT initiative as the prototype for an annual report card charting milestones needed for a child to journey successfully from cradle to career.

Edmondson is an executive on loan from the KnowledgeWorks Foundation in Cincinnati to direct Strive, a partnership of educators, nonprofits, philanthropies, corporations, and elected officials. He jumped at the opportunity the Fellowship offers to learn “management skill sets that go with leading systems change in a very results-oriented way” and bond with “a network of kindred spirits.”

Growing up with a social-justice-oriented mother and a “business-minded” father, Edmondson “learned to marry those things in my life and work.” Having two young sets of twins also fuels his passion for change.

What bothers him most is “when we aren't purposeful in how we do this work for children and families and when we view it as charity,” says Edmondson. “When you start looking at it as an investment, you start taking it much more seriously.”

At age 11, **Sandra Gasca-Gonzalez** watched her father die of a heart attack—and her family try to pick up the pieces without outside support. She scoured the library for books about grief and loss and “learned about reaching out to people in the community.” Gasca-Gonzalez began opening up to teachers and coaches, and says “the difference that made for me personally made me want to help children going through traumatic loss.”

As president of KVC Behavioral HealthCare Nebraska, Inc., a nonprofit providing medical and behavioral health care, social services, and education, Gasca-Gonzalez oversees a 19-county child welfare and juvenile justice system. She's committed to safe, family-centered, and evidence-based practice with strong community ties.

Gasca-Gonzalez appreciates Casey's focus on scaling up successful work, using data-driven decisions, and addressing racial disparities. In a previous job in Kansas, she worked to heal racial tensions and eventually got elected to the local NAACP board. “Once I became part of that community, we were able to recruit more African-American homes, place more children with relatives, and stop sending them away from their community.”



David Jackson

Ron Jackson



David A. Jackson, who grew up in the South Bronx “when it was literally burning” in the early ’80s, is committed to improving places where people live and “not letting environment define opportunities.”

Serving in multiple positions culminating in assistant commissioner in the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development, with stints in the Atlanta regional office of the Enterprise Foundation and the One Economy Corporation, Jackson is now president and CEO of the Center for Working Families in Atlanta.

Designed to help low-income working families rise on the economic ladder by blending services and support to boost earning, financial literacy, and assets, the center concept springs from Casey’s family economic success agenda.

Jackson, who got an M.B.A. to better navigate housing deals, finds it trickier to measure success in social well-being.

“Affordable housing is hard, but you know if you can make the funding work, the project will go. In human development work, it’s not as simple,” says Jackson, who relishes connecting “to a network dedicated to improving outcomes for children and families innovatively in many different places.”

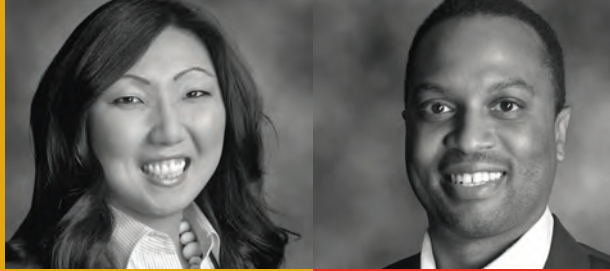
Ron Jackson promoted a two-generation approach to combating poverty, very much in line with Casey’s philosophy, as initiative director of Gheens Bridges to Tomorrow, a Metro United Way program in Louisville, Kentucky.

The initiative, supported by multiple partners, offers high-quality early care in a network of child care centers along with opportunities for parents to work with personal and financial coaches to bolster family economic stability. The effort has improved children’s test scores, helped parents reduce debt and improve financial literacy, and encouraged families to support each other through activities and workshops.

Jackson, who recently left that position to be an instructor in the Spalding University School of Social Work, wants “our next generation of social workers to seize opportunities to work collaboratively with children and families, across institutions, to improve community systems and our level of service.”

In bachelor’s and master’s courses, Jackson shares with his students “real-world knowledge on community-engagement strategies, program planning, results accountability, and policy change,” so they can learn “not just to provide a band-aid, but to see that we are stopping the bleeding.”

Hyeok Kim



Michael McAfee

Hyeok Kim takes pride in bringing a new vision to the 41-year-old community development agency she leads in Seattle.

At 34, she is executive director of InterIm Community Development Association, which works to revitalize and promote Seattle's Chinatown/International District and advocates for the Asian-Pacific American community in the Puget Sound region.

Kim used Casey child welfare reports frequently in previous jobs in state politics and hopes to apply the Foundation's data-driven approach in the community development realm.

The Fellowship "gives me room to talk through with my peers, in a safe place, challenges we face in affordable housing and community development," says Kim, who emigrated from South Korea at age five with her mother and two sisters after their father died.

"From day one, she struggled putting food on the table and keeping a roof over our heads. It's important to me that the way I contribute to society honors my family history," says Kim. "The diverse experience of Asian-Pacific Americans, especially in Seattle and the Pacific Northwest, is a story not often told on the national scene."

Working for the federal government gives Michael McAfee a different take on the Fellowship. "The conversations I'm having with my colleagues help me understand their challenges at the city, county, and state levels, where they're charged with spending federal money and understanding federal laws," says McAfee, senior community planning and development representative in the Chicago Regional Office of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). "These insights empower me to be a results-driven barrier-buster within HUD."

McAfee was "struggling and starving" to create a child-and-family focused foundation when he was hired by the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation, where he co-led a team that raised \$121 million in corporate and individual contributions. Among his accomplishments at HUD, he helped nonprofits access over \$1 billion in funding through the White House's and HUD's Centers for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships.

Cultivating the next generation of leadership at HUD is a passion McAfee hopes to pursue further in the Fellowship, "to ensure we have a critical mass of leaders to look at old problems with a fresh perspective and implement bold and sustainable solutions."



Heidi McIntosh



Henrietta Muñoz

Seeing children removed from their homes as a young social worker helped motivate [Heidi McIntosh](#) to devote her career to building up, rather than breaking down, families.

McIntosh, who came to the Fellowship as deputy commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Children and Families, recently was appointed to the Administration for Children, Youth, and Families, serving as a senior policy advisor over the Children's Bureau.

"Being in communities where I saw the blight all around and families struggling every day to make it, I wondered why people didn't put resources into these communities—they only took resources out," she says. In previous positions at the local, state, and federal levels, McIntosh has helped channel resources into helping communities better support kids and families.

McIntosh partnered with Casey Family Services in Connecticut to place children with severe challenges and develop permanency policies. She also worked to reduce racial disparities in the child welfare system.

"Every position I've had has helped build my desire to develop the capacity of individuals, organizations, and systems to respond to communities and families more effectively," she says.

[Henrietta Muñoz](#) grew up poor but thriving, with two parents for whom "the center of the universe was me." Despite their devotion, her parents "often felt silenced by the local government and the school system," Muñoz says. Her mother urged her never to let that happen to her, admonishing, "Someday, you'll have the opportunity to speak up for people like us."

Muñoz is fulfilling that destiny as coordinator of Casey's San Antonio *Making Connections* site, implementing a two-generation strategy to improve children's odds of success in school and help parents succeed economically and advocate for themselves.

Previously, Muñoz established relationships with local businesses and corporations to help build the second largest free tax preparation program in the nation, helping families recapture hundreds of thousands of dollars in Earned Income Tax Credits.

Whether by providing seed money or showcasing promising work elsewhere, "The Casey Foundation feels it has a responsibility not only to promote social change, but fiscal responsibility and empowering communities," she says. The Fellowship provides "a group of professionals to advance my thinking, rely on, be inspired by, and keep me accountable."

Gloria O'Neill



Enid Rey

Under **Gloria O'Neill's** leadership, the budget of the Cook Inlet Tribal Council in Anchorage has increased from \$8 million to \$46 million, while its staff has expanded from 70 to 300 employees.

The council provides social, educational, and employment services to 12,000 Alaska Natives and Native Americans annually. O'Neill, who became president and CEO in 1998, has pursued a variety of competitive grant awards, creative partnerships, fundraising, government appropriations, and a for-profit model of business and leadership. She also implemented a “paradigm shift” from serving clients as passive recipients to engaging them in decisions and actions to pursue their dreams.

“I’ve always admired Casey’s attention and investment in helping poor families,” she says. “We are all about the advancement of Alaska Native people and connecting them to opportunities to achieve their long-term potential.”

O'Neill hopes to learn more about results-based accountability and “how we can align systems so we can be smarter in working together.”

“I’m part of a large extended Alaska Native family, and this is my life’s work,” she explains. “It’s the community I live and breathe in.”

**Enid Mercedes Rey**, director of Hartford’s Office for Youth Services, knows Casey’s work through its Hartford-based initiatives; a long list of Casey staff and consultants have “professionally nurtured” her through the years. “Every time there was an opportunity for training, site visits, or capacity building, I was there,” she says. “These opportunities have helped me, the Hartford community, and the field to improve the quality of the work happening on the ground for children, youth, and families.”

Rey wants to use the Fellowship to enhance the development of a Roadmap for Youth Success in Hartford. Born in Puerto Rico, she’s made Hartford home and wants to build opportunities to entice others to stay and thrive. “Opportunities create stability. If everyone who can leaves, what resources remain for those who aren’t able to?”

Rey’s husband and five children—including a 21-year-old they took in who escaped traumatic circumstances in Guatemala—encouraged her to accept the Fellowship, agreeing to pick up the slack at home. “I want for the youth of the city the same thing I want for my own children,” Rey says.



Trenny Stovall



Carnitra White

Trenny Stovall planned to become a doctor, but a part-time job in college at a group home steered her to a career in law and child advocacy.

“I quickly realized that there was a disconnect between the courts and the foster care system,” she says. “There needed to be a bridge of support and communication between family disruption and reunification.”

As director of the DeKalb County Child Advocacy Center in Georgia, an agency lauded as a national model for child legal representation, Stovall works to ensure effective legal advocacy for abused and neglected children.

A stint producing child-welfare-related court television shows reinforced her belief that “no child enters the system in isolation—it’s always a family issue.” Casey’s family-focused approach appealed to Stovall, who hopes to “learn new concepts of organizational development and multi-disciplinary collaboration” to bolster her agency’s work and her effectiveness as a change agent.

“Had it not been for my grandmother who raised me, I could have easily been in foster care,” Stovall says. “I understand the importance of family and community in raising a successful child.”

Carnitra D.P. White, Maryland’s child welfare director, is passionate about reducing the number of children in out-of-home care. As a kinship care provider for her 12-year-old niece for the past seven years, she knows how important it is to support families and communities in providing the best care for children.

“We need to make sure every child has opportunities to be loved, to grow, and to thrive—and ensure systems are in place to make that possible,” says White, executive director of the Social Services Administration for the Maryland Department of Human Resources. “Every child should be able to be in a family setting with family members, who are either natural or new, that really love them so they can grow up to be the most productive citizens they can be.”

Supported by Casey, White’s agency has reduced the number of children in out-of-home care by more than 20 percent between 2007 and 2010.

White is also looking to the Fellowship for help in leadership succession planning, data-based decision-making, and “learning strategies to better implement some of our practice changes.”

FELLOWSHIP FACULTY/STAFF

standing left to right:

Kathy White, *Faculty*

Katie Norris, *Program Assistant*

Donna Stark, *Vice President,*

*Talent Management and Leadership Development*

Barbara Squires, *Director, Leadership Development*

seated left to right:

Jolie Bain Pillsbury, *Faculty*

Raj Chawla, *Faculty*

Angela Hendrix Terry, *Faculty*



The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private charitable organization dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children in the United States. It was established in 1948 by Jim Casey, one of the founders of UPS, and his siblings, who named the Foundation in honor of their mother. The primary mission of the Foundation is to foster public policies, human-service reforms, and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of today's vulnerable children and families. In pursuit of this goal, the Foundation makes grants that help states, cities, and neighborhoods fashion more innovative, cost-effective responses to these needs. For more information, visit the Foundation's website at [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org).

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