



Why Have a Panel Series on *Fighting Poverty: Voices from the Front Lines*?

Yale Alumni Nonprofit Alliance (YANA) member, Alison Gardy, found herself repeatedly asking a question during the 15+ years she launched and directed a leadership and management capacity-building fellowship for mid-career community leaders tackling poverty-related challenges across five continents: **Why aren't these successful practitioners talking with one another?**

Consumed by front-line battles and management stressors, community leaders can feel isolated by overwhelming local circumstances and disconnected from peers – not only outside their communities, but even just down the road. Once exposed to one another, they discover much to share: common struggles and frustrations as well as strategies for success, practical wisdom, and a solidarity that transcends borders. **What if these on-the-ground champions of social progress had a forum in which to puzzle through their visions and conundrums together . . . might the war on poverty go to the next level of impact?**

Fighting Poverty: Voices from the Front Lines is an attempt to create that forum, starting with a panel series. Since poverty is a vast topic, each panel will be focused and intimate to encourage conversations of substance. And we are starting at home in New York.

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SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES *(in alphabetical order of appearance)*

ASTRID ANDRE *(Opening Remarks)*

Astrid Andre is a member of the Yale Alumni Nonprofit Alliance (YANA) and board member and co-chair of the Public Service & Social Justice Committee of the Yale Alumni Association of New York (yale.NYC). She currently serves as senior counsel in the legal department of the New York City Economic Development Corporation, and an adjunct lecturer at New York Law School.

Upon graduation from law school, she worked as an attorney with the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, and then worked as a real estate associate at Pillsbury Winthrop, LLP. Prior to her current position, she served as the policy director of the Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development. Astrid received her B.A. in Sociology from Yale University, Master's in Public Policy from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government with a concentration in Housing and Urban Development, and her Juris Doctorate from Harvard Law School.

MATTHEW KLEIN *(Moderator)*

Matthew Klein is Executive Director of the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity (NYC Opportunity) and a Senior Advisor in the Mayor's Office of Operations, where NYC Opportunity is housed. Matt oversees a portfolio of cross-agency initiatives focused on developing City-wide measures for opportunity and equality, bringing effective anti-poverty approaches to scale, and using technology and data to enhance the delivery of social services.

Matt previously served as the Executive Director of Blue Ridge Foundation New York, one of the country's first incubators of nonprofit organizations. While at Blue Ridge, Matt helped create and build 30 new social ventures that collectively grew to provide services to several hundred thousand clients each year with a combined budget of over \$250 million. Matt, a graduate of Yale Law School, Yale College, and the Boston Public Schools, also serves as an adjunct professor at NYU's Stern School of Business where he has taught courses on social venture investing and nonprofit management.



MIKE BRADY *(Panelist)*

Mike Brady, President and CEO of Greyston, is building on the organization's 35-year heritage as a leading social enterprise. Greyston is best known for its practice of Open Hiring™, which embraces an individual's potential by providing employment opportunities, regardless of background or work history, while bringing together the support and services needed to succeed in the workplace and to thrive in the community. Mike led Greyston Bakery as President for four years, driving strategic business development with long-standing partner, Ben & Jerry's, and with new partners such as Whole Foods Market. During this time, the Bakery realized nearly 100% revenue growth and became New York State's first registered Benefit Corporation. Mike recently took responsibility for all Greyston's programs and businesses including Workforce Development, Community Gardens, Housing, Health Services and Early Learning Center. Mike's passion lie in the integration of business and social good, particularly through the scaling of Open Hiring™, which has the potential to support millions of individuals facing barriers to employment. Mike is a regularly featured speaker and mentor on social entrepreneurship and mindfulness in business, having presented at Ted @ Unilever, CGI America, the Ashoka Future Forum, Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Wharton and Brown.

Prior to joining Greyston, Mike was a partner with BAO Food and Drink, where he oversaw the development of the first incubator in the country dedicated to organic food production and distribution. He has more than 20 years of experience in strategy and management positions, identifying business opportunities in high-growth and transitional industries. Mike serves as a business advisor to the American Sustainable Business Council (ASBC) and Social Enterprise Alliance (SEA) helping to promote policies for a sustainable economy. A graduate of the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School, Mike now lives outside of New York City with his wife and two sons.

DION DREW *(Panelist)*

Dion Drew is Supervisor and Trainer at Greyston Bakery. Rooted in a troubling cycle of poverty and incarceration, Dion was determined to make a change. In 2008, after completing another prison sentence, the Yonkers native vowed to make a better life for himself. After struggling to find gainful employment, Dion grappled with returning to his old ways. Greyston Bakery's unique Open Hiring™ model gave Dion his second chance. In 2009, he joined the Greyston team as an apprentice baker. Through his tenacity and strong work ethic, Dion received numerous promotions. Today, he proudly leads bakery employees as a Supervisor and Trainer.

Dion has shared his story at the United Nations and TED@Unilever. He has also been featured on The Today Show and in *New York Times* best-selling authors Sheryl Wudunn and Nicholas Kristof's book, *A Path Appears*. He is a constant champion of Greyston Bakery and Open Hiring and is working to bring the model to national scale.



NAZERINE GRIFFIN (*Panelist*)

Nazerine Griffin serves as Facility Director at The Doe Fund's 400-bed Peter Jay Sharp Center for Opportunity transitional shelter in Bushwick, Brooklyn. In this role, he is responsible for overseeing all aspects of one of the largest transitional paid work programs in the nation, providing individuals with the tools to rebuild their lives after periods of incarceration, homelessness and drug abuse.

As a 1994 graduate of The Doe Fund's *Ready, Willing & Able* program, Mr. Griffin uses his firsthand knowledge of the challenges and hardships that formerly incarcerated and homeless individuals face as they navigate the shelter system. Starting with sweeping the streets, Mr. Griffin rose through the *Ready, Willing & Able* program, eventually being hired to reorganize the Harlem facility after The Doe Fund took it over in 1996. Through his leadership, it was transformed from a dangerous, run-down building into the safe, clean and constructive place it is today. From there, he was promoted to Program Director at The Doe Fund's 70-bed Gates Avenue facility, marking his return to the place where he had started rebuilding his life as a program client. He was then promoted to his current role as Facility Director at Porter Avenue.

During his time with The Doe Fund, Mr. Griffin has served as a mentor to tens of thousands of men and has helped them transform their lives and reconnect with their children. He has also had a tremendous impact on The Doe Fund's operations, improving how it serves its clients and utilizes its resources.

GEORGE T. MCDONALD (*Panelist*)

George T. McDonald has dedicated his life and career to helping the homeless, the formerly incarcerated, veterans, and people living with AIDS achieve stable, productive lives by providing them with transitional work, housing, education and economic opportunity. Mr. McDonald spent 700 nights in Grand Central Terminal in the early 1980s, handing out sandwiches and clothing to the hundreds of homeless who slept there. Although the men and women he helped were grateful for the meal, they expressed their desire to work – to earn a living so they could afford a room of their own.

In 1985, Mr. McDonald founded The Doe Fund in order to address the structural barriers that cause people to become and keep people homeless: specifically, a lack of skills, support and opportunity. In 1990, Mr. McDonald and his wife Harriet Karr-McDonald began *Ready, Willing & Able*, The Doe Fund's signature program that offers a unique combination of paid work, occupational training, transitional housing, education, and social services. *Ready, Willing & Able* has since equipped more than 22,000 formerly homeless and incarcerated men with the skills necessary to achieve economic independence and permanent self-sufficiency.