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New York  
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# LOCAL LEADERS WITH **IMPACT**

A PANEL DISCUSSION

WITH LEADERSHIP WESTCHESTER ALUMNI

APRIL 25, 2023 8:30-10:30 AM

## SPEAKER BIOS



**Alisa H. Kesten, Vice Chair, Westchester Women's Agenda  
(LW 2005)**

Alisa Kesten graduated from Leadership Westchester in 2005. Alisa is a vice chair of the Westchester Women's Agenda (WWA), the leading advocacy group in Westchester County working to improve the lives of women by advancing racial, economic, and social equity and justice for all. She is an active participant in many areas of the WWA's work, serving on its two Racial Equity Working Groups, the Communications Committee, and as co-chair of the Nominating Committee. From 2010 to her re-wirement in June 2020, Alisa was honored to be the executive director of Volunteer New York!. Alisa has an extensive multi-sector professional background including nonprofit management, communications, political management, and early childhood education.

Alisa is a board member emeritus of the New Rochelle Public Library Foundation; member of the Leadership Council of the Support Center for Nonprofit Management in New York City; former vice president of Nonprofit Westchester; and a member of two collective giving groups: Impact100 Westchester and The Giving Circle of Lower Westchester. She is a mentor in Opportunity Youth Part (OYP), an Emerging Adult Justice initiative in New Rochelle. Through the Her Honor mentoring program of Westchester, Alisa maintains a connection to two wonderful women she first met during their senior years in Mount Vernon High School.

Alisa earned her M.S. in Early Childhood Education from the College of New Rochelle and her B.A. in Political Science from Emory University. She and her husband called New Rochelle home for 37 years and consider the city a wonderful place to have established their family and its values. They currently reside in Pelham.



**Ian Ceppos, Executive Vice President, Jones Lang LaSalle Inc  
(LW 2015)**

Ian Ceppos serves as an Executive Vice President at JLL's Stamford, CT office. Ian is a Tenant and Landlord Agency Representative who focuses on office and industrial commercial real estate transactions and specializes in healthcare.

A seasoned professional, the last 18 years of Ian's commercial real estate career have been focused in Fairfield, Westchester, and Rockland counties. Prior to joining JLL, Ian worked at Colliers for five years and the CT office of CB Richard Ellis for seven years, representing clients and projects during his tenure with the firms.

Ian holds a bachelor of science degree in business management from George Mason University School of Management. Ian is the past president of Westchester County Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA), and is active in various community and charitable events, including volunteering at Silver Hill Hospital on a weekly basis.



## **Reverend Steve López, President, Yonkers Board of Education (LW 1996)**

Reverend Steve López is the current president of the Yonkers Board of Education and has served as a Trustee of the Yonkers Board of Education since May of 2013.

During his tenure with the Yonkers Board of Education, Reverend López has led the reorganization and updating of the Trustees office, as well as all standing Board of Education committees. “None of these accomplishments are created in a vacuum,” notes Reverend López, “It is only with the commitment of my fellow Trustees, the Trustees support staff, parents, the administration, teachers and labor that these new initiatives help to develop, encourage and foster active participation within the educational community.” Although community involvement has been important to Reverend López, his priorities are his family and his service to God. “It is with a focused determination that I keep my family a priority in life. Aside from my personal relationship with God there is nothing paramount to spending time with my family and bringing my children up in the faith.”

Reverend López is an ex-officio member of all committees of the Board. In addition, he serves as treasurer on the Executive Committee of the Conference of Big 5 School Districts and is a member of the New York State Education Department committee of practitioners.

Having been a lifelong activist for those in need, Reverend López has always been a staunch advocate for the rights of others. He is currently Assistant Pastor at Calvary Center Church in Yonkers, an evangelical church which dedicates itself to service to the community. Reverend López has also served as President of L.A.T.Y.N., President of the Yonkers Puerto Rican Day Parade Foundation (now the Hispanic Day Parade), Chairperson for the Martin Luther King Jr. Commission for Nonviolence and Vice-President of Untermeyer Performing Arts Council. Reverend López has also served on the Yonkers Human Rights Commission, the Yonkers Council for HIV-AIDS as well as various other committees and studies.

Within the professional arena, Reverend López is a 33-year education veteran. A Yonkers resident, he is currently the Director of Client Services for the New York City Department of Education, where he provides direct logistical and technical support within the Division of Teaching and Learning. He has also held positions with the New York State Division of Human Rights, the Greenburgh Central District and Yonkers Public Schools, where he initially began his educational career.

Reverend López holds a Bachelor of Behavioral Science degree and a Master of Science in Organizational Leadership degree (Summa Cum Laude) from Mercy College.



## **Joanne Dunn, Executive Director at Youth Shelter Program of Westchester (LW 2019)**

Joanne Dunn, a human service professional who has over 15 years of experience creating and executing programs throughout the Westchester County, NY region and beyond. She is the first women to lead the Youth Shelter Program of Westchester, an alternative to incarceration program that serves young men between the ages of 16-21, awaiting disposition or sentenced for various criminal convictions.

Walking in the door of the shelter, Ms. Dunn was challenged with understanding the historical context of the shelter and shaping its identity and service model moving forward. Since her arrival, the Youth Shelter has been able to increase its residential capacity from 33% to 83% with a steady referral system with the local and county criminal courts, Westchester County District Attorney's office and Westchester County Department of Corrections.

Prior to joining Youth Shelter, Ms. Dunn spent 12 years with Westhab Inc. where she eventually became Assistant Vice President of Youth and Employment Services. Highlights of her time at Westhab include placing over 1,927 individuals while also serving over 2000 youth through Westhab's comprehensive year round youth programs. She was instrumental in Westhab's expansion of programming into 3 of the 5 boroughs of New York City and 5 counties (Ulster, Dutchess, Rockland, Sullivan and Orange) in the Hudson Valley.

"Not he who has much is rich, but he who gives much" from Erich Fromm, is one of Joanne's favorite quotes as she believes wealth comes from those around her and being of service to her fellow man.

Joanne is a dual recipient of the Peekskill NAACP outstanding service to youth and families award. In addition, has received an outstanding community servant for youth award from the Nu Si Zeta Chapter of the Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. She was honored by the National Council for Negro Women for being a "Women of Distinction" as it relates to her civic work in empowering young ladies to fulfill their full potential and received a Westchester Woman of Influence Award. In 2017 she received the Business Council of Westchester 40 under 40 Rising Star Award. She is a 2019 graduate of Leadership Westchester and credits this program for helping her understand her life's calling.



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YSOW was the recipient of Nonprofit Westchester's 2022 Keep Westchester Thriving Organizational "Changemaker" Award, and in 2022 Joanne Dunn received a Community Service Award from the Westchester Multicultural Chamber, the Sheros Award by the Westchester County Youth Bureau and was named as one of 914INC.2022 Top CEOs and Business Leaders.

Her mission in life is to empower and employ others to channel their pain into their purpose; particularly those who are troubled with life's obstacles and helping them use these adversities as a vehicle for good/change. She continues to push her own boundaries personally and professionally.



**Dr. Valerie Mason Cunningham, Co-Founder and Co-CEO of Mason & Rice, LLC (LW 2018)**

Dr. Valerie Mason Cunningham is an accomplished strategic and value driven executive. With over 30 years of progressive executive leadership and extensive change management experience at Xerox Corporation. She held successful positions in operations, sales and marketing, communications, strategic alliances, organizational transformation, and business development. Valerie has a proven history of creating business value. Additionally, as a strategic visionary leader building individual growth and organizational leadership, she has dedicated her life to empowering leadership qualities that initiate success and teaches professionals to focus on accountability and actions, resulting in business growth outcomes and development of high-performance work teams.

Valerie actively engages in the advocacy, discussions and design for a diverse workforce and work environment, embracing the power of inclusion and belonging. Her stated mission and purpose are to share her experiences, to help inspire executives and professional leaders to enhance their skills and maximize their impacts and full potential, both professionally and personally.

Valerie served as a board member on the University of Connecticut, (Stamford location) Business School Advisory Board, and served on the Vendor Advisory Council for CompTIA. Additionally, she served as Chair of the Board of Directors and Executive Committee Chair for Volunteer New York! for the last three years of her nine-year tenure on the board. She led the organization as chair during a major transition of leadership and through the pandemic leaving the organization in sound business standings with growth in business, resources, and revenue. Prior to Board Chair at Volunteer New York!, Valerie served as the board secretary, governance committee member, strategic planning committee member, a graduate of the Leadership Westchester (LW)-class of 2018 and member of the LW Alumni Association. Currently she serves as a member of the Board of Trustees, Development Committee member, and Strategic Executive Search Committee Member at Mercy College and is a member of the "Friends of "URI " (Urban Resource Institute) focused on Domestic Violence. She is the managing principal of PRIDE Matters, LLC an executive coaching and strategic business consultancy firm, and Co-Founder and Co-CEO of Mason & Rice LLC, a global consultancy firm focused on DEIA&B.





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Valerie earned her Bachelor of Science degree in business management and marketing communications, with a concentration in computer science from the State University of New York Old Westbury. She began her undergraduate education at Spelman College where she studied computer science. Valerie received an Honorary Doctorate of Commercial Science degree from Mercy College. She has received several business and community awards including the Women's Executive Achievement and Community Service Award from the YWCA Greenwich CT and was featured on the MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour highlighting Xerox: Strength in Diversity. Most recently, she was awarded the 2023 Trailblazers Economic Development Madam C.J. Walker Award from the Westchester County Executive Office, Board of Legislators and the African American Advisor Board of Westchester County.

Valerie is a certified executive leadership and life coach and certified Lean Six Sigma Green Belt. She is an exceptional public speaker and business facilitator. In May 2020 she delivered the commencement speech for the School of Business at Mercy College. Most recently, in March 2022, she delivered a TEDx talk entitled, "You Have to Go Through Something to Get to Something." Valerie has been invited to speak on several Podcasts, at Leadership events, and participating on many executive leadership panels.

Currently, Valerie resides in New York, with her husband and is a dedicated mother to her son who resides in Georgia. She believes that experiences matter, everyone's journey has a purpose in life, and the greatest freedom is the freedom of choice.

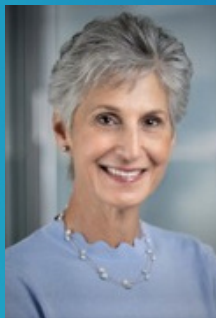






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In-Person • 2023

# Local Leaders with Impact

## PANEL DISCUSSION

What Motivates Leaders,  
How Leaders Inspire Others &  
What That Means For An  
Engaged Community

**Tuesday, April 25**

8:30 AM – 10:30 AM

**REGISTER NOW FOR FREE**