



HEAL Fall 2014 Learning Community Presenter Bios

Ama Atiedu

Ama Atiedu is the local evaluator for Kaiser Permanente Southern California Community Benefit's HEAL Zone and Healthy School Partnership initiatives and Thriving Schools Partnership Project. She holds a master's degree from Iowa State University and a master's degree in organizational development from Pepperdine University. Atiedu's previous evaluation experience includes working for the California Department of Public Health as a research associate and for Los Angeles Universal Preschool as a research and evaluation specialist. In that role, she conducted formative evaluation studies for the California 5 a Day (Champions for Change), a statewide social marketing campaign aimed at promoting fruit and vegetable consumption and physical activity to prevent chronic diseases. Atiedu believes the components of organizational development, research, and evaluation each play a pivotal role in the evaluation process and her professional interests include merging the three components into one field.

Kathy Bertleson

Kathy Bertleson has worked with the Lompoc Unified School District for nearly 10 years and currently serves as the manager of Child Nutrition Services. She firmly believes that good nutrition and health can affect a student's academic performance. Bertleson earned her bachelor's degree in dietetics from the University of Connecticut, and currently serves as the chair of the District Wellness Committee.

Angela Coron

Angela Coron is the managing director of Community Benefits for Kaiser Permanente Southern California. She brings more than 30 years of health and human services management experience to her role, and oversees more than 40 Community Benefit programs, community initiatives, and grant funding in the Southern California Region. Before joining Kaiser Permanente, Coron served as associate director for Healthy Families and Medi-Cal Outreach in the California Department of Health Services, responsible for developing policy and program within the department. She has also served as acting director of Health and Human Services for the City of Long Beach. Coron holds a bachelor's degree in business administration, and earned her master's degree in public health from the University of California, Los Angeles. She is a founding board member for Long Beach Nonprofit Partnership, and serves as an advisor for several organizations such as the California Health Interview Survey.

Sid Haro

Sid Haro brings more than 20 years of experience in education to his role as assistant superintendent of education services for the Lompoc Unified School District. Previously, he worked with school districts and state education departments across the country and Canada in the areas of leadership development, teaching and learning, and coaching. He is an experienced educator, teaching education levels from primary school to college. Additionally, Haro has served as a principal at both the elementary and secondary level, and as a state coordinator within the University of California, Office of the President. Haro received a bachelor's degree in liberal studies and a master's degree in educational leadership from California State University, Hayward. He also received Educational Leadership and both his teaching and Administrative Service credentials from California State University, Hayward. Since moving to Lompoc, Haro has been particularly impressed with the community's passion, involvement, and interest in education. He feels lucky to be in a position to help support staff, teachers, and administrators to build coalitions and collaborative teams and improve student achievement.

Judy Harper

Judy Harper is a senior program director responsible for managing a portfolio of fiscal sponsorship projects and identifying, developing, and leading new projects and strategic initiatives at Community Partners. She brings nearly 20 years of experience in the nonprofit sector, providing organizational development support, designing programs, and developing resources for a wide range of nonprofit initiatives. Previously, she served as the associate director for the Border Philanthropy Partnership at the Synergos Institute, directed community development programs at MAAC Project's affordable housing communities, was program officer for San Diego Dialogue's cross-border and regional collaborative projects, and served as associate director for development at the San Diego Repertory Theatre. Harper was also an adult instructor at the Cesar Chávez Continuing Education Center, and is a founding board member of the Media Arts Center San Diego. She holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Occidental College and a master's degree in Latin American studies and regional planning from University of California, Los Angeles. A former Fulbright Fellow in Mexico and a San Diego Rotary Club Ambassadorial Scholar in Brazil, Harper speaks fluent Spanish and Portuguese.

Joseph Mendizza

A Los Angeles native, Joseph Mendizza has been a teacher with the Los Angeles Unified School District for nine years. Driven by the belief that students can exceed their own expectations, he became involved with campus health as the lead teacher for Hollywood High School's Health, Nutrition, Arts and Sciences Small Learning Community. He launched the campus garden project which spurred the creation of an environmental club. As a result, he was appointed co-chair of the Hollywood High School Wellness Council. Mendizza is a graduate of California State University, Northridge with a master's degree in special education. He is currently in pursuit of a master's degree in educational leadership and policy studies.

Michael Muse

Michael Muse has been with the City of Ontario's Recreation and Community Services Department for more than 12 years. He has worked in various program areas such as movies in the park, aquatics, and teen programming. Muse has worked with youth-oriented organizations such as Little League and the American Youth Soccer Organization, and several elementary and high schools throughout the Inland Empire. Currently, he oversees the Dorothy A. Quesada Community Center and collaborates with community leaders to bring about new programs and experiences to residents.

Arpiné Shakhbandaryan

As a program manager with Community Partners, Arpiné Shakhbandaryan provides technical assistance, peer learning opportunities, facilitation, and project management for the Southern California Kaiser HEAL initiative and the Thriving Schools Partnership Grants. Previously, she worked at the City of El Monte coordinating the Policies for Livable, Active Communities and Environments initiative funded by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. The program is dedicated to fostering policy change that supports the development of healthy, safe, and active environments for all community residents. Shakhbandaryan brings experience in policy and program development for healthy eating and active living initiatives, coalition building, and public sector, nonprofit, and community collaboration. She received a bachelor's degree in biology and a master's degree in public health from the University of Southern California.

Dr. Lily Torres

Dr. Lily Torres serves as the principal of Longfellow Elementary, the largest elementary school in the Whittier City School District. She is passionate about student achievement and closing the achievement gap for minority students. Her dissertation focused on resilience factors that support high achieving Latino students at risk. Torres has been an education professional for 15 years, previously serving as an administrator for Burbank Unified School District, and a teacher and literacy coach for the Mountain View School District.

John Yamamoto

John Yamamoto is the vice president and regional counsel for the Kaiser Permanente Southern California region, and vice president and assistant general counsel in the national legal department. He is a member of Kaiser Foundation Hospitals and Health Plan Southern California Leadership Team, the President's Leadership Team, and the Joint Operating Group comprised of leaders from Health Plan/Hospitals and Southern California Permanente Medical Group. Prior to his work with Kaiser Permanente, Yamamoto was a health law attorney at the national law firm of McDermott Will & Emery. He received his juris doctor degree from the University of Michigan Law School, and received his bachelor's degree in public policy and management from Carnegie Mellon University. Currently, he serves on the board of trustees for Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science as well as the board of directors for Asian Americans Advancing Justice.

Phil Yoder

Phil Yoder is the community development pastor at First Southern Baptist Church in Anaheim. He has served at this church for two years and consults with other churches and nonprofit organizations in Orange County for community development resources. Prior to his 17-year career as a pastor, he worked in the field of social services.

Vera Washington

Vera Washington is a founding member of Parents in Action in Lancaster, a community group dedicated to increasing parent involvement healthy eating and physical activity initiatives. She also serves as a member of the District Budget Advisory Committee and the district's African American Advisory Council (AAAC). Additionally, Washington participates in her local PTA, school site council, and school site AAAC. She is an active library volunteer at Discovery School and serves as a Sunday school teacher and coordinator for Antelope Valley Christian Center. She has majored in English literature at Pepperdine University, and previously worked as a paralegal in Los Angeles.

Dianne Wilson-Graham

Dianne Wilson-Graham is the founder, president and chief executive officer of the California Center for Excellence in Physical Education, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to unlock the potential of the educational community to provide every student with high quality physical education instruction. Previously, she served as the state director of physical education with the California Department of Education where she provided statewide leadership and technical assistance to schools in providing quality physical education programs. Wilson-Graham led the development of the Physical Education Model Content Standards for California Public Schools and provided leadership for many state wide initiatives related to physical education and physical activity. She has served as the state chairperson for Action for Health Kids and is a former president of the California Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance. She and is the co-founder of the California Physical Education Professional Development Series and the California Physical Education Assessment Tools Project.

Steve Zimmer

Steve Zimmer is an experienced teacher, counselor, advocate, and community activist. His work on innovative classroom programs, service learning, school-based intervention services, community organizing, and school community relations is known throughout the city. During his career, he has worked to increase student graduation rates and foster family stability. After joining Teach for America and completing his summer student teaching at Jefferson High School, Zimmer was placed as an ESL teacher at Marshall High School in Silver Lake. He founded the Multilingual Teacher Career Academy, which later served as a model for Los Angeles Unified School District's Career Ladder Teacher Academy programs. He also created Marshall's Public Service program, which has allowed students to plant more than 500 trees, repaint more than a thousand miles of graffiti covered walls, and volunteer in more than 5,000 elementary classrooms. Zimmer has also contributed to the Comprehensive Student Support Center, which provides comprehensive health services for Marshall Students and their families. He is a long-time supporter of immigrant rights and progressive labor in Los Angeles. From 1998 to 2003, he served as Council District 13's representative on the commission that oversees Los Angeles' Community Development Department. Zimmer is the recipient of the Angels over Los Angeles Award from Los Angeles' Commission of Children, Youth and their Families, the Carino Award from El Centro Del Pueblo and the Jackie Goldberg Public Service Award from the LACER Foundation. He has also been honored as a Distinguished Alumni by Goucher College.