



Racial Equity Fund of The County of Santa Barbara Grant Making Committee

The Fund for Santa Barbara (The FUND) employs an activist-led participatory grant making process. The REFCSB grant making committee is an inspiring group of volunteers with deep roots in Santa Barbara County and insight to a range of issues affecting our community.

Connie Alexander (she/her)

Connie Alexander is the Co-Founder and Co-Executive Director of Gateway Educational Services, which started in 2009. She has 25 years of experience in higher education, including teaching and student services. She holds degrees in Political Science and History. Her role with Gateway includes daily operations, curriculum development, training, the College Readiness Program, and Summer Camps. The mission of Gateway is to create access and equity through education for all students. Connie has been involved in grassroots organizing for many years. Connie serves as President of the Santa Barbara Chapter of the NAACP. She loves spending time gardening, cooking, reading, and watching documentary films when not working.

Rosalyn Y. Collins (she/her)

Rosalyn Y. Collins is an Etiquette and International Protocol Consultant and Radio DJ/Host who has lived in Santa Barbara since 1992 when she came to UCSB. She graduated with an emphasis in Black Studies, and a B.A. in Religious Studies (with a concentration in Jewish Studies). She continues her journey towards a career as a Licensed Clinical Psychologist; as a Research Assistant for the Miller Memory Lab at UCSB while concurrently attending Fielding Graduate University. Rosalyn has been involved with various MultiCultural, Mental Health, Gender, and Disabled Students orgs on the UCSB campus. As well as, holding positions through several community organizations including but not limited to MLK, Jr. Committee of SB, SB RiteCare Childhood Language Center, Franklin Center Advisory Board, Kiwanis Club of Santa Barbara, Endowment for Youth, Greater Hope Missionary Baptist Church, Bible Study Fellowship Int'l, Job Smart. Inc., GUSD, Cancer Center of Santa Barbara, and other non-profits.

Lyiam Galo (he/him, they/them)

Lyiam Galo is a first generation Honduran immigrant and UCSB alumnus. A lifetime volunteer and optimist, he strives to foster an equitable community with a focus on the historically underserved – specifically the unhoused, the LGBTQ community, and people of color. Lyiam coordinates a county-wide United Way AmeriCorps program that serves veterans and people experiencing homelessness. He supports accessible resources for monolingual Spanish speakers, advocacy for undocumented folks, and creative food security initiatives. Lyiam rents in downtown Santa Barbara with his partner and 19 plant children.

Kristena Gordon (she/her)

Kristena Gordon has lived on the Central Coast for most of her life. As a former military dependent, she has had the opportunity to travel and live abroad. After High School, Kristena attended Allan Hancock College. She then transferred to Hawaii Pacific University where she graduated with a Bachelors of Arts degree in Psychology. Following college, she attended Thomas Jefferson School of Law, graduating with a Juris Doctor. Kristena currently works as an insurance defense attorney. Kristena is involved in several local community organizations that focus on promoting nonviolence and progressive change in Santa Barbara County.

Rachel Johnson (she/her)

Rachel Johnson has been on the Fund's Grantmaking Committee (GMC) since 2018, currently serves as the GMC Liaison to the Fund's Board of Directors, and is the Chief Program Officer at the Foundation for Santa Barbara City College. Her professional and volunteer work is deeply rooted in social justice and educational equity, and guided by her core values - justice, curiosity, health, collaboration, and authenticity. Rachel's work at the SBCC Foundation supports programs and community collaborations that address a broad spectrum of issues, including educational access, comprehensive basic needs support, sustainability projects, and more. Rachel also serves on the board of the Santa Barbara County Food Action Network and recently completed an appointment to the Community Formation Commission on Police Oversight for the City of Santa Barbara.

Jennifer Navarro (she/her/ella)

Jennifer Navarro Rios is a first-generation, Mexican, Santa Barbara native. Her passion for social justice stems from her experiences as a first-generation Mexican woman, and she is particularly interested in intersectionality among social justice issues, including immigrant rights, mental health, equity in education, and reproductive justice. She received her Bachelor's Degree in Sociology from the University of California, Santa Barbara in 2015. While she was in college, Jennifer was the grant making intern for the Fund! Jennifer completed her Master's in Clinical Psychology at Antioch University in September 2022 and currently works as a therapist for CADA. She also has extensive experience in grant writing. In her spare time, Jennifer volunteers and participates in social justice events, enjoys barbecuing with her family, and is always on the lookout for new adventures.

Chuy Valle (they/them)

Chuy was born and raised on Chumash land (Carpinteria, CA) to migrant parents. After attending college on Ohlone Territory (Berkeley, CA) and backpacking through Central America they resettled in Santa Barbara to reconnect with their history and build a more inclusive community. Chuy is an organizer, mixed-media storyteller, and "Do-It-Yourself" Artist who actively participates in building cooperative and participatory structures that support people power. Their work is centered around (re)imagining our futures through stories and action to honor our interconnectedness and (re)build our relationship to land and one another.