IRVING HARRIS FOUNDATION

Vol. 2, No. 4
Fall 2025

Healing Circle

ON THE Horizon

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A NOTE FROM PHYLLIS GLINK

Investing in Leaders, Catalyzing Change

Inspired by our founder's beliefs, the Irving Harris Foundation has supported the growth and development of leaders across our focus areas for decades.

Irving believed in people and their ability to lead transformative change. He knew that when leaders are empowered, supported and well resourced, they are free to dream, innovate, and collaborate in new ways—all of which is vital to building a more just world for babies, families, and communities.

More than ever, we understand that people fuel ideas, transform systems and lead social change. Investing in leaders who bring diversity in background, expertise, and lived experiences remains a core part of the Foundation's approach to building the long-term capacity and infrastructure of the fields in which we work. Our investments in leadership development include everything from training community-based doulas, reproductive care providers and health workers to supporting graduate and post-doc students in maternal child health, early childhood development and in infant mental health, to empowering grassroots organizers, movement builders and future policy and advocacy drivers. Our funding helps create joyful spaces for connection and shared learning, build collective power, strengthen movements, and nurture pipelines of social justice change agents.

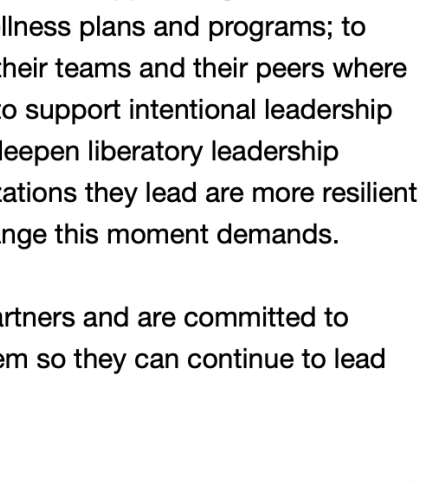
In this issue, we're highlighting a few of our partners and programs that reflect this wide range of approaches:

- **Erikson Institute's Barbara Bowman Leadership Fellows**;
- the **Harris Professional Development Network's Leadership Cohort**;
- **Collective Power for Reproductive Justice's Collective Rising and Emerging Leaders Network**; and
- **Avodah's Jewish Service Corps and Justice Fellowship**.

Today, we know that our non-profit leaders and partners are holding and navigating immense challenges that are impacting their wellbeing and the stability and long-term viability of our non-profit infrastructure. They are exhausted and burning out at a time when their leadership is essential. The Foundation will continue to provide flexible support to grantees that can be used to further their employee wellness plans and programs; to create safe spaces for connections with their teams and their peers where they can feel resourced and dream; and to support intentional leadership development opportunities designed to deepen liberatory leadership practices so our partners and the organizations they lead are more resilient and able to lead the transformational change this moment demands.

We are honored to work alongside our partners and are committed to investing in them in ways that nourish them so they can continue to lead with courage, conviction, and strength.

Phyllis Glink
Executive Director

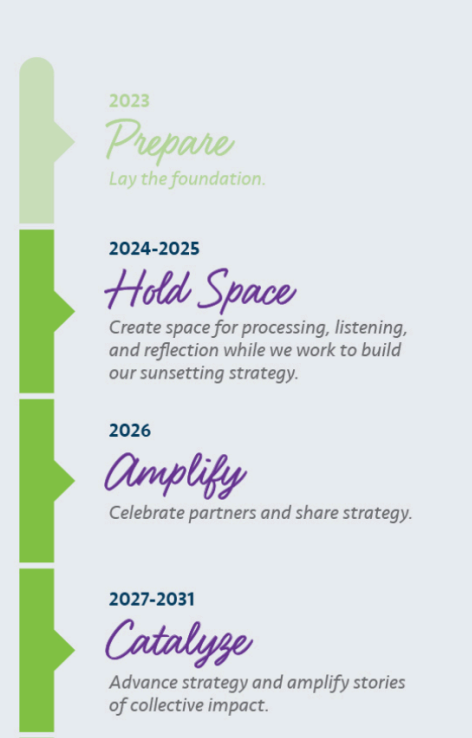


OUR NEXT CHAPTER

Imagining Possibilities

The Irving Harris Foundation is on an intentional journey to sunset in 2032. We are continuing to explore ideas and strategies for the work ahead and look forward to sharing more with you as our plans take shape.

To bring further perspective to our planning, Phyllis and Denise are participating in **SOAR (Spend Out And Regeneration)**, a cohort of sunsetting foundations convened by the Justice Funders Network. Over the next year, the group will meet several times to build community and share best practices.


2023
Prepare
Lay the foundation.
2024-2025
Hold Space
Create space for processing, listening, and reflection while we work to build our sunsetting strategy.
2026
Amplify
Celebrate partners and share strategy.
2027-2031
Catalyze
Advance strategy and amplify stories of collective impact.
2032
Close
Finish spend-down and sunset operations.

GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT

Developing Leaders for a More Just World

Erikson Institute
Barbara Bowman Leadership Fellows

For early childhood policy to be effective, it must be shaped by those who reflect the communities it serves. In the early 2000s, a group of Illinois funders (including IHF) recognized an opportunity to strengthen the state's pipeline of community-informed policy and advocacy leaders. Together, they created an intensive two-year training and development program that graduated 15 fellows between 2009 and 2015 which included working in policy and advocacy organizations to put learning into practice. This program evolved over time and is now housed at Erikson Institute (Erikson) and known as the **Barbara Bowman Leadership Fellows**. Barbara T. Bowman was a close collaborator of Irving Harris and together with Maria Piers and Lorraine Wallach they co-founded Erikson in 1966.

Since 2016, the Fellows program has equipped more than 70 mid and senior-level early childhood professionals with the tools, training, and supportive community they need to empower them to advocate for more just and effective policies. Fellows are provided with coaching, mentorship, and reflection and healing spaces to help them manage the complexities they confront as they advance equity through early childhood policy and systems change. Over 10 months, fellows learn to navigate every step of the policy process—from identifying a problem and analyzing data to writing policy briefs and even presenting their recommendations to state legislators during Advocacy Day in Springfield.

The program's impact doesn't end at graduation. Fellows can draw on the relationships, resources, and expertise at Erikson as well as their cohort members and alumni network as they continue their advocacy efforts in their communities and move forward in their careers.

Photo courtesy of Erikson Institute

> ***"We consider our Fellows extensions of Erikson, and we are always glad to offer support as they advance their advocacy for children and families across the state, well after they have completed the program. We celebrate how our cohorts remain connected and work together."***
>
> **— Dr. Ayanna F. Brown**
> *Vice President for Strategic Growth and Partnerships, Erikson Institute*

For more information, visit:
https://www.erikson.edu/academics/professional-development/policy-executive-leadership-programs/barbara-bowman-leadership-fellows/

Photos courtesy of Erikson Institute

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK
IRVING HARRIS FOUNDATION

PDN Leadership Cohort

For individuals leading change on behalf of their communities, it's essential to nurture their own growth, invest in their leadership, and combat isolation—ideally in a setting that builds community while honoring each participant's unique identity, background, and style. That's exactly what the **Harris Professional Development Network (PDN) Leadership Cohort** is designed to do.

The cohort offers an immersive, highly interactive professional development experience for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health leaders in the PDN. Led by Eveline "Ev" Shen—author, award-winning leader, and creator of the Courageous Operating System—it provides a framework that helps leaders clarify their purpose, align their actions, and lead with confidence.

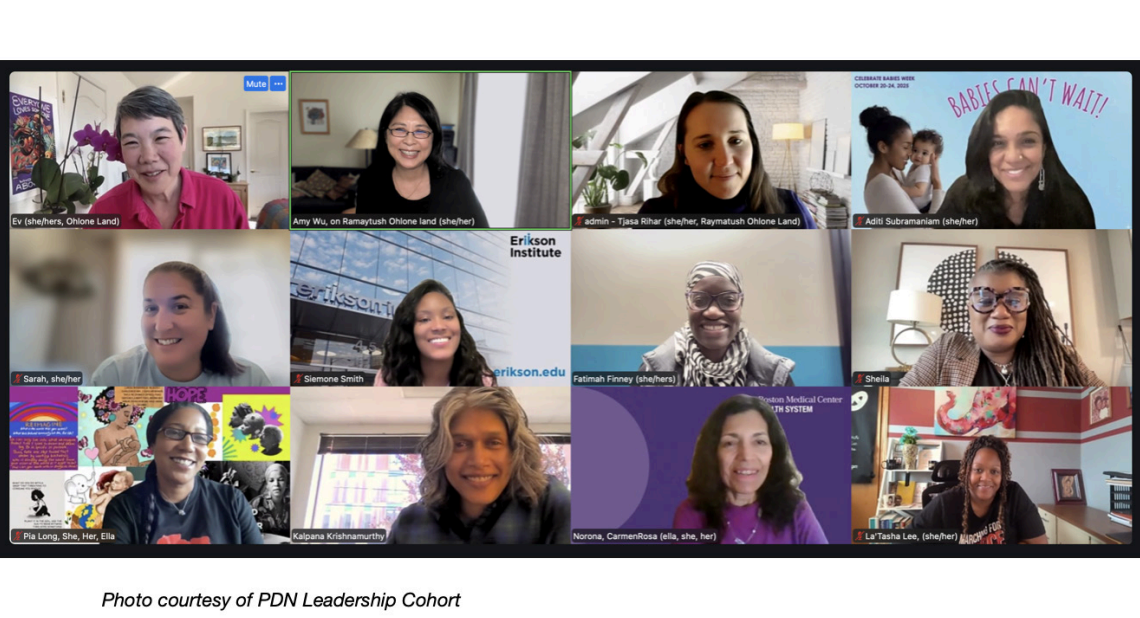


Photo courtesy of PDN Leadership Cohort

Across 5–7 virtual sessions, leaders engage in full cohort training modules, small group discussions, and reflective practices such as storytelling, poetry, and breathing and movement exercises. Each participant also receives one-on-one coaching. Now in its second year, the cohort has added tools to help leaders manage stress, care for themselves, and stay grounded while navigating today's complex challenges—so they can continue to advocate and lead courageously for their communities.

> ***"Leaders often experience self-doubt that reflects external systems, not their abilities. The cohort helps participants see that their leadership style isn't wrong—in fact, it's often rooted in their culture and community. This gives them the confidence to embrace their style as a strength that benefits their communities."***
>
> **— Ev Shen**, *Principal, Leading Courageously*

For more information about the Harris Professional Development Network (PDN), visit:
https://www.irvingharrisfdn.org/how-we-work/initiatives/harris-professional-development-network/

COLLECTIVE POWER for Reproductive Justice

For more than 40 years, **Collective Power for Reproductive Justice** has been developing and amplifying the next generation of leaders in reproductive health, rights, and justice. Founded in 1981 as the Civil Liberties and Public Policy Program at Hampshire College, the organization has grown alongside the movement it helped to shape. Today, it serves as a powerful training ground for young people, emerging leaders, and those new to reproductive justice.

Collective Power combines education and activism through programs like Collective Rising, a 10-week paid internship that places undergraduates with reproductive and social justice organizations across the country, and the Emerging Leaders Network, a national leadership development and movement-building network for emerging activists. Participants gain hands-on experience, mentorship, and opportunities to build connections across the reproductive justice movement.

COLLECTIVE POWER 2025
Photos courtesy of Collective Power for Reproductive Justice

Co-executive director Lucy Trainor says, ***"Our work goes far beyond placing people in reproductive justice organizations. We now have alumni across the country who are bringing the values and lessons learned from one another into Congress, the medical profession, academia—we've become this far-reaching network that is advancing justice across every sector."***

Youth development is central to Collective Power's approach, and the organization's decades of experience supporting student activists directly challenge the misconception that young people are disengaged from civic life.

> ***"I have yet to meet a young person who's apathetic—they're just not being heard. At Collective Power, we hold youth at the core, because their thinking is central to how we move the work forward."***
>
> **— Marisa Pizii**
> *Co-Executive Director, Collective Power of Reproductive Justice*

For more information, visit:
https://collectivepowerrj.org/

AVODAH
Sparking Jewish Leaders, Igniting Social Change

Avodah believes that when it comes to advancing justice, early exposure to the work matters. Since 1998, the organization has supported more than 1,700 young Jewish leaders at the critical early stages of their social justice journeys, helping them turn values into action and community into lasting change.

> ***"We want young people to discover what they care about and what lights them up—all while building community and exploring their Jewish identity together."***
>
> **— Cheryl Cook**, *CEO, Avodah*

Avodah empowers young adults with tools and experiential learning to address today's most pressing issues. In the nation's only year-long Jewish service immersion program, Corps Members live and learn together in intentional communal homes in Chicago, New Orleans, New York, and Washington, DC. While they deepen their social justice framework through holistic programming and values-driven community building, Corps Members gain firsthand experience by serving directly at local organizations that tackle crucial social and economic justice issues, similar to AmeriCorps.

Photos courtesy of Avodah

The Justice Fellowship extends that same spirit of learning and connection to early- and mid-career professionals in Chicago and New York. After completing either program, participants join Avodah's active alumni community—and 98.6% remain engaged in justice work throughout their lives.

In the face of growing polarization—and mindful that today's young leaders came of age during the pandemic—Avodah is helping participants stay grounded in hope and connected in community.

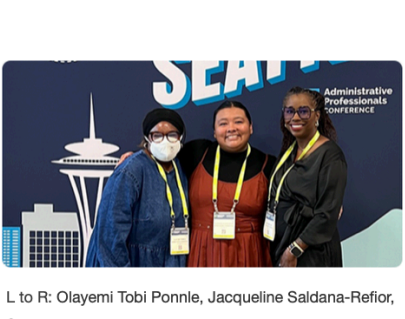
"Everyone has a role to play in creating a more just society," says Cook. ***"Our goal is to give young people the tools and community they need to stay rooted in their values as they navigate change."***

For more information, visit:
https://avodah.net/

LEARNING TOGETHER

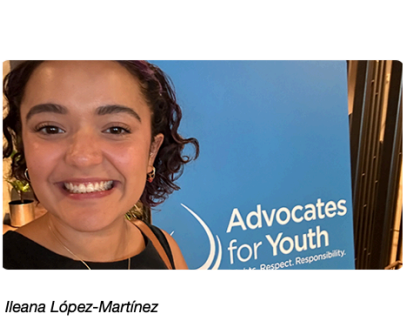
Highlights from Recent Conferences and Convenings

Providing opportunities to connect, learn, and grow is just one way we nurture the leadership of our own team here at IHF.


L to R: Olayemi Tobi Ponnle, Jacqueline Saldana-Refior, Stephanie Luca

Administrative Professionals Conference 2025 – The premier international training event for administrative and executive assistants, organized by the American Society of Administrative Professionals. Sessions focused on leadership, AI, and more.

Who Attended: Stephanie Luca, Olayemi Tobi Ponnle, Jacqueline Saldana-Refior


Ileana López-Martínez

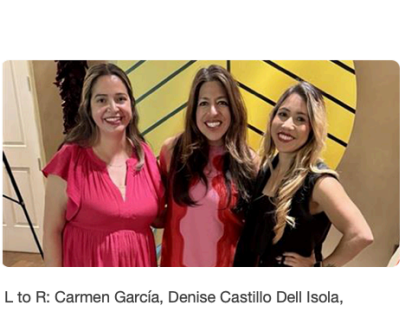
Advocates for Youth's Youth Activist Institute – Each year, over 100 youth activists come together for a five-day conference to learn, share, and collaborate—building the skills and strategies they need to create change in their communities.

Who Attended: Ileana López-Martínez

L to R: Star August Ali, Ausannette García-Goyette, Nora Kropp

Black Midwifery Collective Funder Briefing – Funders gathered to learn more about the Collective's Illinois Birth Justice Strategic Planning Summit, Midwifery Education program, and more!

Who Attended: Ausannette García-Goyette


L to R: Carmen García, Denise Castillo Dell Isola, Ausannette García-Goyette

Hispanics in Philanthropy (HIP) and Native Americans in Philanthropy (NAP) – For the first time, HIP and NAP united for a groundbreaking joint conference.

Who Attended: Ausannette García-Goyette, Carmen García and Denise Castillo Dell Isola,

L to R: Iveree Brown Donnell, Tonia Spence, Kirbi Range, Stephanie Luca

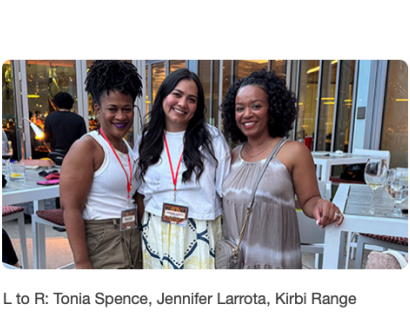
IECMH Retreat – IHF's Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) program team came together for two days of team building and strategy

Who Attended: Iveree Brown Donnell, Stephanie Luca, Kirbi Range, Tonia Spence

Carmen García

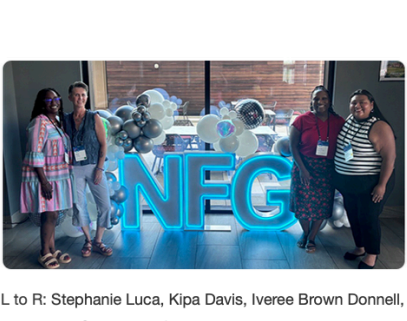
ILLCF Raíces Public Policy Conference – Every year, policymakers, stakeholders, and community members gather to dive into the Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus Foundation (ILLCF) Raíces platform, advancing work across education, health equity, immigration and much more.

Who Attended: Carmen García


L to R: Tonia Spence, Jennifer Larrota, Kirbi Range

La Cocina's La Red – This capacity-building session in Colorado brought together Latine early relational health supervisors and trainers. Participants connected, shared strategies, and strengthened culturally affirming approaches to better support young Latine families.

Who Attended: Kirbi Range, Tonia Spence


L to R: Stephanie Luca, Kipa Davis, Iveree Brown Donnell, Jacqueline Saldana-Refior

NFG's 2025 National Convening – Discussions centered on community power building, driving grassroots change, and strategy and collaboration to help liberate philanthropic assets and build stronger, more equitable communities.

Who Attended: Iveree Brown Donnell, Kipa Davis, Stephanie Luca, Jacqueline Saldana-Refior, Tonia Spence

Erikson Institute Funder Briefing – IHF helped organize a briefing for funders to learn more about Erikson's strategic plan, policy and leadership efforts, community-level work, and impact.

Who Attended: Carmen García, Denise Castillo Dell Isola and Olayemi Tobi Ponnle

Feminist Funded 2025 – This Women's Funding Network event is the largest global conference of leaders in feminist philanthropy. Participated gathered to advance gender justice and create a more just, equitable, and safer world for all.

Who Attended: Ausannette García-Goyette

Welcome!
ADVANCING COURAGEOUS CHANGE
EVERTHRIVE ILLINOIS ANNUAL GALA

EverThrives' 2025 Advancing Courageous Change Gala
IHF was thrilled to attend this beautiful evening honoring EverThrive Illinois and their work to make reproductive justice a reality for all Illinoisans.

L to R: Ausannette García-Goyette with Dr. Arden Handler, reciepient of EverThrive's 2025 Health Equity Champion and longtime IHF grantee partner.

Black Midwifery Collective: An Evening with Tatyana Ali
This gathering featured actress and advocate Tatyana Ali and Star August Ali, licensed Black homebirth midwife and founder of the Black Midwifery Collective, in a conversation exploring maternal health equity, midwife-led care, legacy building, and the power of community in sustaining health and well-being.

L to R: Jeanine Valerie Logan, IHF grantee partner and founder of the Chicago South Side Birth Center, with Ausannette García-Goyette

TEAM MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

5 Questions with
Kirbi Range
Program Officer, Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health

Kirbi is a passionate advocate for health equity, systems change, and community collaboration. In her role at IHF, she focuses on IECMH grantmaking, supporting the PDN, and building strong relationships with grantee partners.

1. What value or commitment is central for you?
Collaboration—I feel the best ideas and outcomes are created when we bring diverse perspectives together. Working in both community-based and philanthropic spaces focused on maternal and child wellbeing has allowed me to learn, listen, and dream with others so that we can birth beautiful ideas and make meaningful changes that support young children, their families, and communities.

2. How do you continue to grow and develop as a leader?
I'm fortunate to learn from inspiring partners across the country who are leading bold, innovative efforts. Their vision and approaches constantly challenge me, expand my own thinking and shape how I collaborate. I'm currently participating in a leadership development program and plan to apply for a fellowship in 2026 to further deepen my impact and broaden my perspective.

3. What's on the horizon that has you most excited about the work you do?
Our next PDN convening in 2026, where we can be in community with our grantees and partners. Our relationships with our partners are a deep part of our work, so we cherish our convening time as a space to be with one another—where we not only learn together, but embrace joy, healing, and rest.

4. How do you think philanthropy can best support grantee leaders today?
This moment demands bold, intentional, and transformative action. Foundations have an opportunity and a responsibility to work more collaboratively to confront the barriers and systemic harms that persist. This means rethinking how we show up for our partners and how we fund movements. By investing in leaders who are advancing community-driven strategies, foundations can play a pivotal role. Collective approaches and shared accountability are key.

5. What's one thing people might not know about you?
I love interior decorating and home décor. I recently moved into a new home and have enjoyed every bit of the process of furniture and décor shopping. It's been an enjoyable and creative outlet. I love creating a welcoming, warm, and inviting space where people feel comfortable, cared for, and at home.

CONGRATULATIONS

Cheers to Our Team

IHF is thrilled to celebrate our team members' growth and leadership.

Fellowships & Professional Development

Iveree Brown Donnell completed an Infant and Early Childhood Family Mental Health Certificate Program offered through Georgetown University.

- **Ausannette García-Goyette** completed the Just Economy Institute Fellowship.
- **Carmen García** completed Justice Funder's Harmony Initiative Leadership Program.
- **Ileana López-Martínez** became a Certified Health Education Specialist.

Awards
IHF received the **Madrinas del Movimento Award** for being La Red's Title Sponsor.

Board Service
Ausannette García-Goyette joined Funders for Reproductive Equity's Board of Directors.

Let's keep leading courageously towards a more just world for every baby, family, and community.

IRVING HARRIS FOUNDATION