

Inaugural First Monday Co-anchor Leadership Team



Merle McGee is President and CEO of Everyday Democracy, a capacity building organization that uses dialogue and action to foster a multiracial democracy by engaging and uplifting everyday people that power local democracies across the nation. Merle brings nearly 25 years of experience in nonprofit settings, including significant executive leadership experience. Most recently, she has served as Chief Equity and Engagement Officer for Planned Parenthood of Greater New York. There she led organizational transformation by conceiving and implementing Reviving Radical, an initiative to reckon with the organization's history and build accountable relationships with communities of color.

Prior to her work at the Planned Parenthood affiliate, Merle served as Chief Program Officer at YWCA of the City of New York. In this role, she launched numerous program initiatives, fostered strategic partnerships and spearheaded internal cultural change initiatives focused on social justice, race and gender equity.

Ms. McGee has also been an Adjunct Assistant Professor of Public Administration at New York University's Robert F. Wagner School of Public Affairs, where she taught nonprofit consulting and Race and Identity in Organizations. Ms. McGee earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts from New York University, Tisch School of the Arts, and a Master of Science in Nonprofit Management from The New School, Milano School.



Danielle Sered envisioned, launched, and directed Common Justice. She led the project's efforts, locally rooted in Brooklyn but national in scope, to develop and advance practical and groundbreaking solutions to violence that advance racial equity, meet the needs of those harmed, and do not rely on incarceration. Before planning the launch of Common Justice, Danielle served as the deputy director of Vera's Adolescent Reentry Initiative, a program for young men returning from incarceration on Rikers Island. Prior to joining Vera, she worked at the Center for Court Innovation's Harlem Community Justice Center, where she led its programs for court-involved and recently incarcerated youth. Danielle has designed and directed programs that teach conflict resolution through the arts in

schools and juvenile detention centers, has had extensive involvement in gang intervention work, has developed and implemented violence intervention and trauma-informed care practices and curricula, and has experience with a variety of mediation, restorative justice, and conflict resolution techniques.

Danielle sits on the Downstate Coalition for Crime Victims, the Advisory Council to the New York State Office of Victims Services, the Diversity Advisory Committee to the federal Office for Victims of Crime, the New York State Governor's Council on Reentry and Community Reintegration, and the Advisory Board to the National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice. She co-facilitates the monthly Undoing Racism™ Executive Collective group with the Anti-Racist Alliance in New York. She has presented at dozens of conferences nationally, including the Aspen Ideas Festival and the Bipartisan Summit on Criminal Justice Reform, and is the author of *The Other Side of Harm: Addressing Disparities in our Responses to Violence*. She teaches about restorative justice at the CUNY Silberman School of Social Work. Danielle received the 67th Precinct Council Award for Service, given in recognition for leadership in reducing violence in Brooklyn, and the Brown Memorial Baptist Church Extraordinary Woman Award. Under her leadership, Common Justice received the Award for Innovation in Victim Services from Attorney General Holder and the federal Office for Victims of Crime in 2012. A Stoneleigh fellow, Danielle received her BA from Emory University and her master's degrees from New York University and Oxford University (UK), where she studied as a Rhodes Scholar.



Laura Shmishkiss is an equity consultant, coach and trainer who has committed her life to working for social justice, equity, and liberation. She brings 25 years of experience as an educator, trainer, activist and organizational leader in both nonprofit organizations and schools. As a white, Jewish woman, she has a vested interest in dismantling white supremacy and all other interconnected forms of oppression that live within ourselves and the world. Her consulting practice supports individuals, groups and institutions to engage in practices that support disruption of and healing from oppression at all levels. Throughout her career, Laura has held many leadership roles within the nonprofit and education sectors. Most recently, Laura served as

Executive Director at Center for Racial Justice in Education, a nonprofit organization that trains educators to dismantle racism wherever children learn. Laura's past roles include Director at Bronx Community High School, Senior Director of Programs at Coro New York Leadership Center, and founder of Coro's "Exploring Leadership Program," a youth activism program that partnered with New York City teens to organize for change in public education.

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In her early career, she worked as a youth development practitioner and middle school teacher, with a specific focus on youth leadership and civic engagement. As a consultant, Laura specializes in equity-based training, facilitation and coaching; white antiracist practice and organizing; program and curriculum design; retreat planning and facilitation; leadership development; strategic planning; team building; and collaborative leadership practice. She approaches her work from an intersectional lens, rooted in the work of Black feminist scholars such as Kimberlé Crenshaw, Bell Hooks, and Adrienne Maree Brown. She also integrates a trauma-informed and somatics-based framework that supports a holistic process for affecting transformative change. As an herbalist, Laura believes that social justice work is inseparable from healing work which is inseparable from restoring an interdependent relationship with the land.

Laura earned a Master's Degree in Public Administration from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs, a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology from Colby College, and a teaching certification from San Francisco State University. She was featured in The Limited's "Leading Looks Like" campaign which highlighted the unique ways in which women redefine and inspire leadership. She also serves on the Board of Directors at Camp Kinderland, a 90-year-old summer camp committed to social and racial justice. Laura lives in Brooklyn, New York, and loves to spend time gardening in her community, and nurtures her own vitality through dancing, running, cooking and practicing yoga.



Dr. Alan B. Siskind has had an extensive and distinguished career in mental health and clinical practice, as a practitioner, administrator, teacher and author. He is called upon frequently as an expert on family issues, the treatment of adolescents, young adults, and adults. Dr. Siskind is a nationally recognized speaker and consultant on a range of topics impacting families and communities. Until 2007, Dr. Siskind served as CEO of the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services, the nation's premier voluntary mental health and family service agency, which serves over 65,000 clients annually in 185 programs in the five boroughs and in Westchester. Alan is the Co-editor of "Strategies for Deconstructing Racism in the Health and Human Services" (2016).



Mary Pender Greene, LCSW-R, CGP, is the President & CEO of MPG Consulting (MPGC), a company that is committed to eliminating bias and structural racism in the workplace. She is a career/executive coach, antiracist consultant, public speaker, and a psychotherapist with a private practice in Midtown Manhattan. She is a thought leader in the social services industry, recognized by her peers for her wisdom, contributions, and novel ideas on implicit bias, structural racism, and creating an inclusive institutional culture.

MPG Consulting supports organizations and leaders in their pursuit of an inclusive, fair, and respectful workplace that values all individuals and embraces diversity. Their racially and culturally diverse team brings to organizations a wide range of experience as coaches, clinicians, trainers, managers, and anti-racist organizational consultants in mental health, education, child welfare, business, legal, social justice and social service settings.

Mary is the former Assistant Executive Director at the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services. She is the author of *Creative Mentorship and Career-Building Strategies: How to Build Your Virtual Personal Board of Directors* (2015) and coeditor of *Strategies for Deconstructing Racism in the Health and Human Services* (2016).