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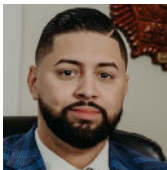
NACC WELCOMES THE THIRD COHORT OF NACCLR MEMBERS!

NACC is thrilled to introduce the newest cohort of lived experience experts on NACC's **National Advisory Council on Children's Legal Representation**. The council is comprised of young professionals, advocates, and leaders who have navigated the child welfare system and seek to contribute their expertise to advancing NACC's mission and core strategies.



GINA CABIDDU, MSW | WASHINGTON

Gina (she/her) is a program coordinator with Kids Mental Health Pierce County. In her role, Gina provides technical assistance and training to establish a Youth Regional Behavioral Health Navigation program across Washington state. Her previous experience includes working in public child welfare in Kitsap and Thurston Counties, statewide non-profit regional leadership in Pierce County, and board and coalition work spanning housing, business, behavioral health, violence prevention, and county policy. Her passion for her work stems from her experience as a foster youth adopted out of the system when she was nine years old. Gina enjoys going to concerts in different states and backpacking in the Pacific North West.



ARIQUE DROSS III, JD | NEW YORK

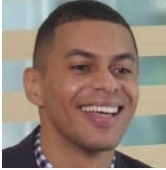
Arique (he/him), an attorney in New York and California, launched his career prosecuting child abuse/neglect cases in Manhattan, NY, and later handled criminal cases in Brooklyn, NY as an Assistant District Attorney. His own journey through nearly two dozen foster homes, the juvenile justice system, and Rikers Island, enriches his understanding of the personal and legal complexities families entangled with the system face. As an appointed member of New York's Family Court 18B Panel, Arique regularly represents parents and children in a range of family law matters, from custody issues to child abuse/neglect matters. As the owner of a law firm, a father of three, and a former foster parent, Arique continues his personal and professional voyage within the system, blending unique personal insights with professional acumen to advocate effectively for his clients and impact change.



JADE GARZA, JD | NEW YORK

Jade is a native-born West Texan, where she spent 7 years in kinship foster care. After aging out of care, she attended the University of North Texas, where she received her Bachelor of Arts in English, Writing, and Rhetoric. Though always motivated by her own experiences in care, Jade found her passion for child advocacy through work with CASA of Denton County as a Volunteer Advocate, and later became a Casework Supervisor. In 2022, she received her Juris Doctorate from the Maurice A. Deane School of Law at Hofstra University. During law school, Jade served as a Legal Extern for the National CASA/GAL Association for Children. She has also volunteered with the D.C. Family & Youth Initiative as a Board

Governance Committee Member, and interned in Hofstra's Youth Advocacy Clinic. Jade is a passionate advocate for children, families, mental health, and social initiatives with the potential to support families. Jade will begin her post-graduate legal career as an Agency Attorney Interne in the Division of Family Court Legal Services, representing the New York City Administration for Children's Services.



LOUIS GASPER | MARYLAND

Louie works as the Jurisdictional Project Coordinator for the Capacity Building Center for States (ICF) where he leads project management and coordination efforts for the Tailored Services department. Louie has a bachelor's in political communication from the Evergreen State College and transitioned full-time from his role as a Young Adult Consultant. Louie has worked on reforming the child welfare system since he was 13 years old, collaborating, and leading projects ranging from the local to the international level with various organizations. Within these organizations, Louie has served in various capacities as a chapter president/leader, chairman of policy, legislative committee representative, programs and policy intern, "all-star" intern, conference facilitator, peer fellow, change management consultant, and youth trainer. In the scope of his work, Louie has participated in projects based on relationship building, group home reform, youth advocacy, housing/homelessness, LGBTQIA+ rights, race relations, social worker, and foster parent accountability, permanency, mental health, sexual and physical abuse, and trauma, and systems reform among child welfare.

As an agent of change, Louie consistently looks for opportunities to employ strategic planning processes that offer clear, mission-based solutions. Louie also currently holds a position on the National Association of Black Journalists Political Task Force Executive Board as Secretary/Treasurer. His interdisciplinary approaches and skills for analyzing public policy, reviewing legislation, writing and editing, project management, media monitoring and curation, and communications enhances his work to offer a unique approach to solutions addressing child welfare reform.



PARKER, MSW | CALIFORNIA

Parker (ze/zir), a dedicated professional in the field of social work, holds a Masters of Social Work from the University of Michigan. With a passion for transformative change, ze has found zir calling as a consultant with the University of California, Davis. In this role, Parker actively develops and facilitates training programs for various stakeholders, including counties, social workers, foster parents, and youth on a wide range of topics like Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression, Wrap Around Services, Extended Foster care, and more.

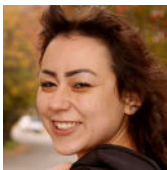
Beyond zir academic accomplishments, Parker's artistic talent shines through. Ze has garnered recognition for zir powerful poetry and spoken word performances, winning numerous competitions and being featured in prestigious publications like the Imprint and Riot Poetry Book, published by Journey House. With over a decade of experience working with system-impacted individuals, Parker has made a significant impact through zir efforts in policy, advocacy, and training. Zir unwavering dedication to social justice and equitable change has made Parker an invaluable asset to the communities ze serves.



KAYLA POWELL | IOWA

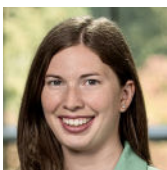
Kayla (she/her) is the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) and Youth Development Coordinator for the Iowa Department of Human Rights. In this position, Kayla primarily focuses on overseeing the NYTD data collection on older youth in and transitioning from foster care, advancing authentic youth engagement and positive youth development within state agencies and contributing to juvenile and criminal justice research activities using participatory models. She is the staff support to Iowa's Youth Justice Council, leads a data team of young adults with lived child welfare experience, coordinates Iowa's Family and Youth Engagement Summit and serves on Iowa's Children's Justice Advisory Council. Outside of this role, Kayla is a Young Adult Consultant with the Capacity Building Center for States, a Jim Casey Fellow with the Annie E Casey Foundation, and a Court-Appointed Special Advocate (CASA).

Kayla is a national public speaker, having presented at places like Harvard University, the National CASA Conference, the Coalition for Juvenile Justice Conference, and multiple Annie E Casey convenings. She also has a degree in Occupational Therapy and is a licensed and board-certified Occupational Therapy Assistant. Kayla has over 9 years of lived child welfare experience and 9 years of professional child welfare experience. She is a proud mom to Kniko Ky and enjoys travelling and practicing yoga.



KRISTEN POWELL | KANSAS

Kristen is a 24 year old Mexican American woman from San Antonio, Texas. She is the mother of 3 beautiful children Zachery, Gabriella, and Nicholas and they live in Wichita, KS. Kristen started her career at 18 working with her mentor and friend Dr. Karen Irene Countryman Roswurm as a Prosperity Coach at the Institute for Transformative Emancipation, Center for Combating Human Trafficking. While at ITE-CCHT, Kristen worked to create survivor informed, survivor led services and was integral in developing programming that focused on holistic healing for victims and survivors of human trafficking. Kristen currently works as a journalism intern and researcher for author and journalist Nell Bernstein where she researches youth advocacy and the movement to close youth prisons.



LAURA SINGER, JD, MS.ED | DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Laura (she/her/hers) is an associate attorney at Jones Day in Washington DC. She is a proud alumna of Syracuse University (BA), Johns Hopkins (Ms.Ed), and Georgetown University Law Center. Before serving as an attorney, she was a Teach for America Corps member. Passionate about reforming both the foster care and education systems, she is a doctoral candidate in American University's Educational Leadership program. She plans to open a school for foster youth. Laura is a CASA mentor and in her spare time enjoys traveling, running half marathons, and cheering on her favorite sports teams.

**JORDAN SOSA** | CALIFORNIA

Jordan serves as the Legislative Manager for California Youth Connection (CYC), a youth-led advocacy organization that empowers young leaders to transform systems impacting current and former foster youth through legislative, policy, and practice change. His passion for youth voice in child welfare comes from his motivation to increase equity and dismantle structural oppression that exists within the systems that impact children and youth. He supported the passage of Assembly Bill 46 (California Youth Empowerment Act), Senate Bill 512 (Supporting Foster Youth in California Community Colleges), Assembly Bill 1061 (Placement Stability for Probation-Supervised Youth Placed in Foster Care), and Assembly Bill 175 (Modernizing the Foster Youth Bill of Rights).

In 2018, Jordan interned with the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Ways and Means working on the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) policies impacting states' child welfare systems. He published a policy report with the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute (CCAI) to present a briefing to Congress and the White House on how the federal government can improve the U.S. child welfare system. Jordan also served as an Advisory Board Member for the nsoro Foundation, which provides direct academic scholarships and college preparatory programs for foster youth. He is a member of the New Leaders Council (NLC) – Sacramento Chapter, an organization that develops, connects, and uplifts inclusive, cross-sector leaders who transform our country through social and political change rooted in equity. Jordan obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration with a Minor in Human Services at California State University, Fullerton with the support of the Guardian Scholars Program. He is a father of an amazing boy and a caregiver of two very powerful and independent girls. He loves camping and traveling with his wife.

**DANIELLE N. WHITTAKER, JD** | GEORGIA

Licensed as an attorney in 2019, Danielle (she/her) started her career as a Public Defender in the Alcovy and Atlanta Judicial Circuits before transitioning to the role of Judicial Staff Attorney in the Juvenile Court of Fulton County, Georgia. In her role, she serves as a liaison between the juvenile court judge and the public by providing legal advice and opinions to judges and drafting the orders of the court.

Danielle is a lifetime member of Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity, Incorporated, the Gate City Bar Association, the Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys, Georgia Supreme Court Committee on Justice for Children, and serves as a Big Sister through the Big Brothers Big Sisters program of Metro Atlanta.

Danielle earned her Bachelor of Arts Degree, Cum laude, from Howard University in Washington, D.C., and her Juris Doctorate Degree, Cum laude, from Atlanta's John Marshall Law School.

**NICOLE WONG, JD, MST** | NEW YORK 

Nicole grew up in the New York City foster care system, living with several diverse families. She holds a BA in Political Science from Queens College, a Master of Science in Teaching from Fordham University, and a Juris Doctorate from Maurice A. Deane School of Law at Hofstra University. During her legal academic career, Nicole represented indigent clients in the Hofstra Law Criminal Justice Clinic, worked as a Research Assistant to Professor James J. Sample, and was a member of Hofstra Law Review, Moot Court Board, and the Christian Legal Society. As a 2022 Pro Bono Scholar, Nicole spent her last semester of law school taking the bar exam early and doing full-time pro bono work with a national non-profit organization that advocated for prisoners' rights.

Nicole was selected as a Latino Justice CLASP intern, providing her legal internships with Goldman Sachs in 2020 and Paul Hastings, LLP. in 2021. Nicole will begin working at Paul Hastings LLP. full-time in Fall 2022. Upon graduation, Nicole was selected by her esteemed law school faculty to receive the Christopher G. Gegwich Outstanding Law Student Award. Prior to law school, Nicole served as a 12th grade English Language Arts teacher in the South Bronx with Teach for America. She also served as the Tutor Manager for the Dorm Project, where she oversaw the roll-out of tutoring services for approximately 125 college students in foster care at the City University of New York. Nicole's current volunteer work includes serving: as the Vice-President for Programming on the Executive Board for At the Table (a NYC-based academic support program for those with lived-experience in foster care), on the Trustee Board for City of Refuge House of Prayer (a Christian ministry in Queens); and on the Selection Committee for Project Fairness (a NYC-based scholarship fund for youth in foster care). In her spare time, she reads, tackles creative projects, and enjoys nature.

**ALISTAIR** | MISSOURI