



# 2016 CLASS OF CASEY CHILDREN AND FAMILY FELLOWS



THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

# A LIFE-CHANGING PROGRAM. AN INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE.

Building a brighter future for all children and families in the United States requires bold and catalytic action. Program and system reform investments are not enough to overcome complex barriers to success and produce substantial and sustainable results. Strong leaders with the vision, skills and ability to champion and drive change are essential to make a lasting difference.

Now in its third decade, the Casey Foundation's Children and Family Fellowship increases the pool of diverse, visionary leaders equipped to lead initiatives with the power to transform lives. The 16-month executive leadership program selects accomplished, influential leaders across disciplines serving children and families from the public and private sectors and academia. **The Fellowship challenges and stretches their assumptions and advances their ability to accelerate success with a steadfast focus on results.** Fellows develop the competence and confidence to forge partnerships across their organizations and communities to achieve specific, measurable results in child and family well-being.



# A **UNIQUE** GROUP OF TALENTED, ASPIRING LEADERS.

We are delighted to introduce the 2016–2017 class of the Casey Foundation’s Children and Family Fellowship. Launched in 1993, the program has hosted 10 Fellowship classes, enrolling more than 100 accomplished professionals from communities across the country.

Like the Fellows who have preceded them, these 16 women and men are dynamic leaders across a range of sectors and disciplines, from government service to community-based organizations. **While their experiences are diverse, they share a mission and a passion to make things better for young people.** Compelled by the trials and triumphs of their families and communities and mentors who inspired them, they are committed to ensuring that all children and families have the options, opportunities and support to thrive.

These leaders work to ensure that more children experience success in school, higher education and the workplace; more parents are economically self-sufficient; and more families can achieve the American Dream. They seek to right wrongs

in the systems that serve vulnerable families so that more families stay together and young people remain connected to loved ones, champions and role models. And they fight for equitable and affordable opportunities to get a good education, find high-quality housing and secure jobs with benefits and advancement potential.

Beyond what they are able to achieve as individuals, these Fellows will be able to expand their reach through the Casey Fellowship Alumni Network. The network is a powerful and supportive coalition of past and current Fellows that helps drive and sustain large-scale efforts to improve outcomes for children, families and communities.

The Fellowship has much to learn from the exemplary leaders profiled in the following pages. We welcome the opportunity to help them set their sights even higher and realize their vision for the children and families they serve.

Lisa Hamilton, Vice President  
External Affairs  
The Annie E. Casey Foundation

Barbara Squires, Director  
Leadership Development  
The Annie E. Casey Foundation



## BOBBY CAGLE

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When **BOBBY CAGLE** became director of the Georgia Division of Family and Child Services, he set out to eliminate a backlog of 9,000 cases languishing in the system. Cagle worked with staff throughout the state to address delayed investigations into abuse and neglect and resolve each one. Children and families received needed support, and Cagle helped ensure caseworkers were hired to reduce caseloads and build more accountability into the system.

“It was a tough process, but we tried to keep it as positive as possible,” notes Cagle. “We shared stories about families and children we were helping to highlight the people behind the numbers.”

Unfortunately, better child welfare results won't improve kids' futures without addressing other factors, such as educational outcomes, notes Cagle. “The Fellowship will help expand my skillset around engaging other partners for a common purpose.”

Cagle was adopted as a baby, and the child welfare director who helped make it happen became his godmother and mentor. “This work is very difficult and stressful, but I don't have to dig deep to find motivation.”

**RAQUEL DONOSO** directs the Mission Promise Neighborhood in San Francisco, a federally funded initiative providing cradle-to-college support for low-income children and families.

“Much of the work so far has focused on creating a more positive school culture, addressing families' needs and supporting parents to be more active in school and community life,” she says. The initiative has helped produce encouraging reductions in truancy and chronic absence, but academic gains are harder to influence.

“The Fellowship can help me build the skills, tools and network of people doing large-scale systems work to learn how we can align the services and contributions each partner is making to have a deeper impact,” says Donoso.

Her experience as a single mother at age 18 inspired her to pursue policies to help struggling families. “When I applied for benefits, I learned firsthand how people were treated in these settings,” says Donoso. She is grateful that her son, now a college graduate, received world-class early schooling at UCLA while she was a student. “These kinds of opportunities need to be available to all children.”

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## RAQUEL DONOSO



**FELIPE FRANCO** began helping peers get out of scrapes at an early age. “When younger neighborhood youth got in trouble, I was the one called on to help,” he says.

Currently the deputy commissioner of the Division of Youth and Family Services in New York City’s Administration for Children’s Services, Franco has championed the needs of troubled youth throughout his career. He has spearheaded major juvenile justice reforms and worked to ensure that young people get appropriate treatment and support.

“We need do whatever we can to turn the curve for these youth,” says Franco, who is encouraged that “people are finally beginning to see that black and Hispanic kids from disadvantaged backgrounds with the right options and skills can thrive.”

Franco grew up in a close-knit family in Puerto Rico. “Grandparents, aunts and uncles always nudged me in the right direction,” he says. Trained in clinical psychology, Franco recognizes the power of supportive networks. “Our best work happens by helping the people who serve young people surround them with positive role models to build positive relationships.”

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## FELIPE FRANCO



## DREAMA GENTRY

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**DREAMA GENTRY** initially practiced law, but wanted to have a bigger impact on children and families in her native Appalachia. She got a job with her alma mater, Berea College, working on a small grant to boost achievement at a rural middle school.

Today, Gentry is executive director of Partners for Education, a program based at Berea serving 35,000 people with cradle-to-career programs, including a Promise Neighborhood grant. “They let me be entrepreneurial and grow the work, and now we have 300 boots on the ground, including AmeriCorps workers, college employees and school teachers,” she says. The program also supports parents and child care providers in ensuring children enter school ready to learn.

The Fellowship offers “a peer group that can stretch me and challenge me and offer constructive feedback to help me lead a team to results,” says Gentry. A lifelong Appalachian Kentucky resident and the first in her extended family to graduate from college, Gentry understands the power of education. “We have to remember the needs of rural America in this work.”



## DEEPMALYA GHOSH

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**DEEPMALYA GHOSH** started his career in 1993 providing therapy to youth involved in foster care at the Queens Child Guidance Center, a small nonprofit. Rebranded as the Child Center of New York, the organization now reaches more than 16,000 children and their families a year throughout New York City. About half of its \$40 million budget supports a youth development division launched and led by Ghosh.

As associate executive director for youth development and community engagement, Ghosh helped shift the focus from clinical services to a “more organic” array of activities open to all youth and families in the community. “In every new area, we start by planting one seed and then another,” says Ghosh. “The Fellowship provides an opportunity to be more thoughtful and strategic about how we focus resources and measure results.”

Ghosh experienced upheaval as a teenager when his father’s illness necessitated a move from a high-end suburb to a much poorer neighborhood. “My friends tell me I’ve come full circle,” he muses. “The things I saw then, I can really do something about.”

Born and raised in India, **RITIKA SHARMA KURUP** is a firm believer that education can change the destiny of children living in poverty. The daughter of first-generation college students, she has experienced firsthand how her parents’ education transformed her and her brother’s lives.

Earning a master’s degree in social work in India and another in the United States, Kurup has devoted her career to helping children reach their potential, regardless of their circumstances. Before moving to the United States in 2000, she worked with homeless children and youth living on the streets in New Delhi.

As assistant director of ReadySet*Soar*/Learn to Earn in Dayton, Ohio, Kurup leads Montgomery County’s Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, part of a cradle-to-career effort to ensure children succeed through high school, college and the workplace. She brought community, county and city partners together to launch the county’s birth to third grade action plan and expanded summer learning programs.

“I’m excited to have this pool of colleagues to learn from and contribute to in taking this work to scale,” says Kurup.

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## RITIKA SHARMA KURUP



**SUSAN LAMPLEY** tackled tough social issues in Atlanta for years. In the office of the mayor of Atlanta, she exceeded the targets and timelines of an initiative that placed 1,022 homeless individuals into permanent housing.

In 2014, she moved to New Haven, Connecticut, to become senior program manager at the Melville Charitable Trust. At the Trust, Lamp-ley spearheads a group of national foundations working to expand affordable housing for very low-income families. She is using Results-Based Accountability to help the group align and measure its efforts and is excited about applying Fellowship teachings to a collaborative approach. “I love that everyone brings their projects to the table and we have the chance to support each other,” she says.

Watching her father, a doctor, volunteer to promote health care for the homeless and other causes, Lampley was drawn to philanthropy as a child. She also had strong role models and mentors. “I can’t imagine persevering without them, so I feel strongly about being able to provide a leg up to someone who doesn’t have it.”

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## SUSAN LAMPLEY



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## IRA LUSTBADER

**IRA LUSTBADER** challenged authority and “had strong feelings about injustice and inequality” at an early age, he says. The turning point in his career path came when he got a grant in law school to do civil rights work in Alabama. “It opened my eyes to issues of race, class, poverty, advocacy, community organizing and learning how you can be part of something larger,” he says.

Lustbader’s work as a lawyer before becoming director of litigation at Children’s Rights included launching class action suits to vindicate victims of corporate abuse. “At Children’s Rights, I apply that entrepreneurial approach to accountability in critical government systems such as child welfare,” says Lustbader, who has fought for reforms in many states to improve the lives of vulnerable children.

“There is an urgent need to be more collaborative to effect and leverage change,” he says. “The Fellowship brings diverse people and sectors together to form networks and bring different perspectives, and we can immediately employ its teachings on results-based leadership in our work with partners around the country.”



## KRISTEN MCDONALD

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**KRISTEN MCDONALD** is lead strategist for a multimillion-dollar, community-focused effort to bolster school success for 65,000 children in six Detroit neighborhoods — one-third of the city’s children.

Ambitious goals do not daunt her. Before joining the Skillman Foundation as vice president of program and policy, McDonald was architect of a comprehensive system of support for children from birth to 5 in Michigan. In her current role, she has mounted a major Detroit school reform effort, helped launch 15 college preparatory high schools and helped design an urban youth initiative that employs 8,000 young people ages.

“While we are seeing kids graduate in much higher numbers, it’s simply not good enough,” says McDonald. “We are working alongside neighborhood residents to take a hard look at what isn’t working. The Fellowship coincides with what we are doing internally at Skillman and within the community.”

McDonald had a stable family, but her parents grew up in poverty and their struggles affected her own parenting. Advocating for her children and others has been transformative. “I know the power a community can have for kids.”

**MARK PAYNE** has devoted his career to improving the odds for youth in Chicago neighborhoods. He has seen childhood friends lose their lives to the streets or the prison system.

“Every time we lose young men and women, we lose capacity, talent and brainpower,” says Payne, executive director of CeaseFire Illinois, which promotes a public health approach to stem violence. “I want to do anything I can to stop that.”

Payne previously worked with the Chicago Police Department and the mayor’s office, revamping community policing and violence prevention efforts. In professional and voluntary roles, he has strengthened businesses, parks and schools. “I use these connections to mentor activists of all ages,” he says.

One young man Payne started mentoring at age 16, when the teen started exhibiting violence, now has a successful career and family at age 33. “I’m most excited about seeing people grow,” he says.

Payne wants to build on his community relationships and develop broader partnerships. “The Fellowship is an excellent opportunity to connect with other people doing this important family work.”

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## MARK PAYNE



Protection, preservation and permanence are the watchwords for **FRANK PRADO**, statewide director of operations for Florida's Statewide Guardian ad Litem program. Advocating for children in the child welfare system also means helping them participate in activities most kids take for granted. That includes overcoming barriers to participating in sports, getting a driver's license, going on field trips or sleeping at a friend's house. "It's a tragedy that these youth have to be part of the system, so we try to minimize the impact," he says.

When Prado was only 12, his parents sent him away from his native Nicaragua at a time of civil unrest to live with an aunt in Italy. "Although I knew it was in my best interests, I wish children didn't have to go through this experience."

Working with other agencies effectively is critical to meet the needs of growing numbers of kids entering the system, says Prado. "Having the right intentions doesn't always translate into practice. We have to be accountable for their well-being."

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## FRANK PRADO



## MATTHEW RANDAZZO

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In the course of a career leading nonprofits and educational enterprises, **MATTHEW RANDAZZO** has raised \$200 million and forged partnerships with some of the nation's largest foundations, along with elected officials and private industry leaders. As chief executive officer of the National Math and Science Initiative, he has met with President Obama to discuss expanding STEM programs and attended an event hosted by Vice President Joe Biden to discuss better serving children of military personnel.

As a Casey Fellow, Randazzo is excited about building results-based leadership strategies and connecting with "a smart network of champions advancing child and family well-being from myriad angles."

The child of low-wage workers in Detroit, Randazzo was the first in his family to go to college. His parents sold their most valuable asset, the house his mother had grown up in, to rent housing in a suburb with better schools. Expanding access to 21st century jobs is a key aspiration for Randazzo. "I'm pushing an equity portfolio focused on serving more underrepresented students in science and math, including Latinos, African Americans and girls," he says.



## ESTHER SHIN

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As executive vice president of Urban Strategies, Inc., in St. Louis, **ESTHER SHIN** champions socioeconomic transformation for children and families through policies, programs, services, educational opportunities, housing and community development.

Shin's job involves overseeing components of the Choice Neighborhoods program in Columbus, Ohio; Memphis, Tennessee; New Orleans; San Francisco; and St. Louis. Choice Neighborhoods is an initiative of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development that creates common cause among stakeholders in disinvested communities. "I am excited to learn from the Fellows what is translatable or scalable from the successful work they have done," says Shin.

The child of South Korean immigrants, Shin grew up in a racially integrated St. Louis neighborhood but "no one looked like us," she says. "My upbringing has had a huge impact on my perspective on race and community work."

Shin is grateful for the opportunity to look beyond the daily challenges of running an organization. "The Fellowship allows us to step out of the comfort of being a practitioner and focus on the mountaintop view."

Early in his career, **STACY SPANN** left a lucrative job on Wall Street and joined the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone Development Corporation. "As risky as it was, I felt like this was the right thing to do," notes Spann, who pursued his passion to develop innovative housing for low-income families and is now executive director of the Housing Opportunities Commission in Montgomery County, Maryland.

"I grew up in public housing, so connecting a family who happens to make less money to a high-quality, well-designed place to live means something," he says. "I want to change not just the way we house people, but how we connect families to benefits, work and educational opportunities to open up a world of options."

The Fellowship will help him sharpen his leadership ability and build leadership within his organization, Spann says. "I'm excited to be part of a continuum of leaders from different sectors working to support families and children," he notes. "I want to come back with a laser focus on how to continuously improve results."

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## STACY SPANN



As administrative coordinator of the Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice, **KRISTIE STUTLER** is overseeing the largest reform in the state's juvenile justice system in 20 years. It was spurred by legislation to reduce the number of low-level offenders in out-of-home confinement through better decision making and treatment at every point in the system.

Building teamwork is critical. "You can make a lot happen with legislation, but you can also encounter resistance," notes Stutler. "We have worked hard to be inclusive and create space for those voices to be heard."

Stutler is excited about networking with peers focused on the best outcomes for kids and families. "Surrounding myself with people who will challenge me and push me and can be objective is a huge benefit," she says.

Growing up, Stutler noticed that children who had a motivational network of people and productive activities were more successful. "I had a coach who was instrumental in pushing me and setting high expectations," she recalls. "Sometimes those supports are the difference between you and the kids who get in trouble."

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## KRISTIE STUTLER



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## JOSEPHINE WONG

Before becoming deputy director of the Department of Community and Human Services for the King County government in Seattle, **JOSEPHINE WONG** held several high-level operations positions. Most recently, as chief operating officer of Capitol Hill Housing, she reduced vacancy rates for low-income housing from over 9 percent to less than 2 percent in two and a half years. As a result, families were housed more quickly and buildings that were operating in the red became self-sustaining.

In her current position, Wong oversees the full range of human service needs. "I could be in property management at the biggest company, but it's not rewarding if you can't make the system changes we desperately need to address racial inequities and income inequality."

Wong left her native Singapore at 17 to complete her education in North America. "When I had to navigate the educational and health systems, I experienced entrenched institutional racism," says Wong. She is excited to contribute her skills and perspective to the Fellowship. "I feel mentally and emotionally ready to work harder for systems change."

Staff/Faculty:

Katie Norris, *Consultant Program Assistant*

Barbara Squires, *Director, Leadership Development*

Raj Chawla, *Faculty*

Jolie Bain Pillsbury, *Faculty*

Angela Hendrix Terry, *Faculty*

Marian Urquilla, *Faculty*



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