

# Speaker Biographies

**Sarah Brecknock**, Advancement Associate, Community Action Partnership of Strafford County (CAPSC). Sarah has a B.A. and M.A. in Psychology, with a research methodology/data analysis focus. After completing graduate school, she worked at Boston University for two years in institutional research and program evaluation. She moved from higher education to the market research/marketing industry, where she spent about 13 years. She joined CAPSC in April 2017 and manages social media, fundraising events, and the donor database. One of her goals has been to increase CAPSC's presence on social media platforms to raise awareness for its programs and services. In addition to her work with CAPSC, Sarah is a yoga instructor, runner, and is working towards a graduate certificate in Social Media Marketing. A mom of twin boys, she serves as President of the PTA of their school, as well as President of the Somersworth Elementary Music Boosters Club.

**Sue Buckley, MS**, brings a broad range of experience in the field of human services at both the state and local level. For the past ten years, the majority of Sue's work with non-profit agencies has been with State CSBG programs, Community Action Agencies, and Community Action Associations. Sue has worked with State CSBG Directors to develop monitoring protocols, practices, and tools and has participated as a member of three state CSBG monitoring teams. In addition, Sue analyzed state CSBG policies and procedures as part of a NASCSP project and developed a state specific CSBG policy and procedure manual. As part of an agency assessment team, Sue organizes and participates in the on-site agency review that culminates in the presentation of an agency's strengths and challenges and provides recommendations for program improvement. Sue has provided trainings to community action agencies on topics including Board Basics, Succession Planning, Creating Useful Needs Assessments, and Leadership development. In addition, Sue collaborated with David Tucker and the Community Action Partnership to create the Batter Up Leadership Development toolkit for the partnership.

**Jason Edens** is the founder and Director of the Renewable Energy Alliance, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to fighting energy poverty with solar power and ensuring that solar energy is accessible to all. As a thought leader on issues of energy and equity, Jason and his team have installed nearly a thousand low-income solar installations throughout the country and abroad forging an inclusive clean energy future. From solar micro grids in the developing world to low-income shared solar in the U.S., RREAL is proving that solar is a powerful tool in the fight against poverty. Jason is a licensed building contractor, has a Master's of Science in Environmental Policy and lives in an off-grid solar powered home in northern Minnesota with his wife and a small pack of dogs.

**Ryan Esbjerg** Life presents challenges to us all. It was only when Ryan worked through some personal darkness that the birth of Flex Your Face was initiated. Meaning to Smile, Flex Your Face, started as a Face book group in 2014 and has grown into a global community with 74 Brand Ambassadors in 25 states and 8 different countries. This year Flex Your Face University was launched with the mission to strengthen every community we were part of by igniting positive relationships through sharing knowledge. With the unending goal to inspire through simplicity, Ryan is excited to spread the Flex Your Face mission every single day.

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**Denise Harlow**, CCAP, was named the Chief Executive Officer of the Community Action Partnership in December 2014. She has been with the Partnership since 2011 and served as Senior Director of Training and Technical Assistance and Interim Chief Operating Officer. Prior to her tenure at the Partnership, she was the CEO of the New York State Community Action Association and Sr. Vice President for Capacity Building for the New York Council of Nonprofits. Ms. Harlow has more than 28 years of experience in the nonprofit sector, has served on several nonprofit boards of directors, and was an appointee to the Governor's Early Childhood Advisory Council in New York State. She started her Community Action career as a social worker with the Schenectady Community Action Program. She has a Masters Degree in Social Work from the University at Albany where she was also a Fellow on Women and Public Policy at the Center for Women in Government and Civil Society, and holds a Bachelor Degree in Social Work from Valparaiso University.

**Lori Hathaway** is the Housing Stabilization Data Entry Specialist at Southwestern Community Services, Inc. (SCS). She came to SCS from the Workplace Success Program in 2009, beginning her career in the Weatherization Program, moving to the Housing Stabilization Program in 2011. Lori was the Personal Achievement Award recipient at the 2009 NNE CAP Conference, held at The Mount Washington Resort at Bretton Woods that year! She is thrilled to now be presenting and sharing the knowledge and experience she has accumulated over the past 9-years. Lori lives in Keene, NH and loves living in the community she serves. She is the mother of twin girls who are currently making their own way in the world. She enjoys spending time with friends and family, watching movies, reading, and drinking coffee! As some may recall, she also made her singing debut at the 2017 Conference!

**Meagan Johnson** is known as a "Generational Humorist" and has an outspoken, take-no-prisoners Gen X attitude and challenges her audiences to think differently and act decisively when dealing with multiple generations. Meagan graduated from Arizona State University Business School with a BS in Marketing. After working several years in a sales environment Meagan became discouraged to hear all the negative comments about Generation X. (Generation X is the 50 million people born between 1965 and 1980.) As a Gen Xer herself, she felt these comments were of course unfounded. She was further frustrated by the blinders her own managers seemed to have. Meagan began to research everything from small to large corporations in order to find successful ways to work the younger generation. From that ZAP THE GAP Solving the Multi-Generational Puzzle was born. Since 1997 Meagan Johnson has entertained and educated thousands of audience members. She has written a variety of articles about the multiple generations and has been interviewed for many publications and audio programs. She has been quoted in The Chicago Tribune, CNNMoney.com, US News & World Report and many other publications. She wrote the Generational chapter in the book Success is a Team Effort. Meagan and her Baby Boomer father, Larry Johnson are the authors of Generations, Inc - From Boomers to Linksters, Managing the Friction Between Generations at Work. Nothing changes perceptions more than a passion for life, work and success. To complicate matters, each generation has a different perception of what motivates them. Meagan says, "Every generation gets a negative label when it enters the workforce. For example Baby Boomers were called trouble-making hippies when they first went to work. Once we take time to understand the motivations and mind-set of each generation, working with them, communicating with them and managing them becomes a more successful effort". What seemed like a perfect solution yesterday is the source of tomorrow's problem. Learn from Meagan what you can do now to make the most of each generation in your workplace!

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**Mary Kimmel** has extensive experience providing Employee Assistance Program services, Human Resource consulting and Organizational Development consulting and training. Her areas of expertise include transition management, harassment prevention, and stress management. She is a Senior Partner with MKS Performance Solutions, LLC, a Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor, and a Kripalu Certified Yoga Teacher.

**Travis Mills'** keynote speech teaches and inspires audiences nationwide to "Never Give Up. Never Quit," no matter the obstacles or circumstances. Travis' larger-than-life personality, sense of humor and incredible spirit for life engages audiences from the moment he takes center stage. Travis' story has been featured on local and national news including Fox News' Happening Now with Jenna Lee, The O'Reilly Factor with Bill O'Reilly, and CNN with Barbara Starr. ON April 10, 2012, United States Army Staff Sergeant Travis Mills of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne was critically injured on his third tour of duty in Afghanistan by an IED while on patrol, losing portions of both legs and both arms. He is 1 of only 5 quadruple amputees from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to survive such extensive injuries. Thanks to his amazing strength, courage, and incredible will to live, the heroic actions of the men in his unit, the prayers of thousands, and all the healthcare providers at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Travis continues to overcome the obstacles of living life as a quadruple amputee. Every day is a battle, but Travis continues to astound everyone with his progress and with his amazing spirit. SSG Travis Mills is a genuine American hero, and for his incredible sacrifice, we are forever in his debt. Travis' story inspired the creation of the award-winning documentary film, Travis: A Soldier's Story, which after a nationwide theatrical run is now available at [www.travisthemovie.com](http://www.travisthemovie.com). Travis has also written a New York Times bestselling memoir, Tough As They Come, chronicling his courageous journey. In September 2013, Travis founded the Travis Mills Foundation, a nonprofit organization, formed to benefit and assist wounded and injured veterans. Travis' foundation is building a first class, fully-accessible "smart home" facility dedicated to the recreational and reintegration needs of recalibrated veterans and their families in Rome, Maine.

**Jo Moncher** serves as the Bureau Chief for Community Based Military Programs at New Hampshire's Department of Health and Human Services. She is responsible for developing military-civilian partnerships that improve education, outreach, and services. Ms. Moncher represents the Department in working with VA Medical Centers, NH National Guard, Vet Centers as well as other military and civilian provider agencies. She has held numerous leadership positions on NH's Legislative Suicide Prevention Council, and was responsible for oversight to the State's Deployment Cycle Support Care Coordination Program – a military-civilian partnership that provided care coordination to over 3,000 post 9/11 military families. Ms. Moncher also serves as Statewide Facilitator of the NH Justice Involved Veterans Task Force and has served as Chair of the Legislative Commission on PTSD and TBI, which served as a catalyst for bringing close to \$3M in new military-civilian initiatives to the State in the past 2 years. A few of those initiatives include imbedding a military liaison within each of the community mental health centers, developing a statewide military culture training initiative, as well as developing the "Ask the Question" Campaign – an aggressive outreach campaign to inspire and empower providers across all sectors to better serve NH veterans by asking the question, "have you or a family member ever served in the military." Ms. Moncher served in the United States Air Force and comes from a family with a strong military background.

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**Dianne Nelder**, LCSW is originally from Northern Maine and has been practicing Social Work for over 30 years. She earned her baccalaureate from the University of Maine at Farmington, with a major in Psychology and a minor in Education. Dianne went on to earn her Master of Social Work from the University of New England at Biddeford. She has worked in locked psychiatric facilities, residential, adult, children's services, out-patient and community based practices. She has held director positions in crisis services, children's residential, special education and transitional programs, children's out patient, school based counseling, and adult community based services. Currently, she holds the position of Director of Children's Services at Community Concepts, Inc. and resides in Lewiston, Maine with her wife, cat and two dogs.

**Dana Nute** coordinates technical and construction measures for deep-energy retrofit and high-performance buildings and is majority owner of Resilient Buildings Group in Concord, NH. He has been an intervener with the New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission on Energy Efficiency Programs, a member of the New Hampshire Climate Collaborative, and as a voting member of the Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Energy Board. He started Resilient Buildings Group after twelve years as the Director of Housing Rehabilitation and Energy Conservation for the Community Action Program Belknap-Merrimack Counties, Inc. Prior to his work with the CAPs, he managed and developed large commercial construction projects throughout the Northeast and overseas. He is a State-certified energy auditor with the New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning, formerly on the Board of Directors of the Residential Energy Performance Association, on the Advisory Board for the State of New Hampshire Weatherization Assistance Program, a member of the Statewide Steering Committee for Healthy Homes, and a member of the National Weatherization Plus 2015 Committee in Washington, DC. Dana is serving his second appointment to the Advisory Board of the Residential Ratepayers for the Office of Consumer Advocate. Dana is a graduate of Northeastern University with a civil engineering degree working in construction management and development. He received the 2009 U.S. Department of Energy Management and Administration Award.

**David O'Leary** is a Housing Retention Specialist with the Burlington Housing Authority who specializes in hoarding and squalor cases. David joined BHA in 2015 after two years of domestic violence advocacy at STEPS to End Domestic Violence (Formerly Women Helping Battered Women). David also serves as co-coordinator of the Chittenden County Hoarding Task Force, the first of its kind in Vermont. David attends the Clinical Psychology Graduate Program at Saint Michael's College and will graduate with his Master's Degree in Clinical Psychology in May, 2018. David offers an approach to hoarding and squalor intervention based on evidence-based techniques, but believes that a humanistic and compassionate foundation lies at the heart of his work."

**Andrew Stephenson** is Vice President of North America for HBD International. He has over a decade of experience in designing and implementing workplace health and safety behavior change programs across multiple industries and countries. This broad experience across cultures has provided clarity on what works and what doesn't. As a published writer and frequent speaker, Andrew consistently tries to advance the field by continually challenging the traditional approaches of both vendors and buyers. By doing so, he hopes to improve the credibility and effectiveness of the wellness industry, and thereby positively impact more people's quality of life. Andrew has a MBA and a degree in Exercise Science.

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**Lee Ann Szelog**, Professional speaker, photographer, award-winning author, and former lighthouse keeper, Lee Ann Szelog is grateful for the opportunity to help others maximize the power they have within. At the age of 7 Lee had her first serendipity, although she didn't realize it at the time. She was extremely shy and decided she wanted to overcome her fear of communicating. Since then she has challenged herself every day to speak up, write and conduct presentations and overcome her fears. Her persistence paid off; After enjoying a successful 28-year career as a marketing and training executive, she has been President of her Company, Simply Put, LLC, for the last 9 years, specializing in presentations to help people, organizations and companies nurture growth, change and prosperity. Many clients have said, "*Lee is the best speaker we've ever had!*" She is known for bringing out the best in people by combining real-life stories, vivid imagery, and conversational techniques that connect with the audience in a meaningful and productive manner, and help them maximize their happiness and capacity, personally and professionally. Striving to achieve her maximum capacity, Lee also works with her husband, Tom using their words and photographs to inspire people. They have documented life, human and wild, in two quintessential Maine homes, a lighthouse on the coast and a log cabin in the forest, resulting in the publication of two books. The first, a multi-award winning book is titled, *Our Point of View-Fourteen Years at a Maine Lighthouse*, featuring Marshall Point Lighthouse in Port Clyde, and the second is *By a Maine River – A Year of Looking Closely*, which explores the natural beauty found in the backyard of their log cabin in the woods. Lee credits Tom for opening her eyes to the natural world; Mother Nature opened her heart. For 26 years Lee has been inspired by Tom's art as a professional wildlife and nature photographer, and now shares the art of photography and love of the natural world with him. She finds much joy and peace in capturing and sharing Maine's exquisite beauty in her *Simply Maine* series. In addition to using her photography in presentations, she also has a series of note cards and posters that are appropriate for workplace inspiration, all of which help inspire people to achieve contentment.

**David Tucker**, MPA has over 40 years of experience working in non-profit and public organizations; virtually all of those organizations were Community Action Agencies or agencies working with Community Action. He has held leadership positions in local, regional, and statewide human service agencies. As the former Director of the Vermont Office of Economic Opportunity (the State's CSBG office), he has worked in partnership with over 40 community-based organizations throughout Vermont on a variety of poverty-related issues. He has been a CAA Executive Director, Deputy Director, and began his career in Community Action as a VISTA volunteer in 1974. David's areas of expertise include: conducting community needs and organizational assessments, facilitating strategic planning processes, establishing and monitoring measurable outcomes (certified ROMA master trainer); designing and implementing policies; as well as developing workable action plans for programs and agencies to ensure quality service delivery.

**Rob Waters** is the Coordinated Entry Manager and Homeless Outreach for Sullivan, Cheshire and Western Hillsboro counties for (SCS) Southwestern Community Services, Inc. He lives in Surry, NH with his wife and 4 children. Rob came to SCS after spending 12 years in the sales world, at the urging of his family to follow his passion and dream of helping others. Rob is one of the head coaches for the Keene Gladiators wrestling team that focuses on K-5 students. When Rob is not working or coaching, he enjoys time with his family, the beach, and playing 2<sup>nd</sup> base and pitcher for local softball teams.

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**Heather Wheaton** has been a Licensed Social Worker for the State of Maine for over 15 years and with Penquis for the last 12, providing both direct service and management oversight to several programs. Heather's career has been providing services to children and families with a focus on children diagnosed with Autism and families with DHHS involvement. Heather graduated from the University of Maine in Orono with a B.S. in Child Development and Family Relations and a Minor in Psychology. Her work with these vulnerable populations has required her to maintain a strong understanding of confidentiality practices, understanding why maintaining confidentiality is vital, and how to implement these practices into everyday work without creating barriers for the consumers being served.

**Kristen Welch**, CFRE, is the Director of Advancement at Community Action Partnership of Strafford County, a position she has held since July 2016. Prior to her employment with CAPSC, Kristen oversaw philanthropy, marketing, communications, and public relations for two community mental health centers in New Hampshire, serving as Director of Development at Genesis Behavioral Health for 8 years and as Grant Writer and Development Coordinator at Community Partners for 5 years. Kristen is an active Rotarian, having served as President of Laconia Rotary Club and member of the Laconia Rotary Club Board of Directors for 5 years. She is currently a member of Rochester Rotary Club. Kristen is a Certified Fund Raising Executive, and is the Vice-President of Marketing and Board Member for the Association of Fundraising Professionals – Northern New England Chapter.

**Parvanah Withee** is a resident of Stetson, Me where she lives with her husband and children. Parvanah began her career with Penquis C.A.P. in March of 2005 in their Head Start program. Throughout her tenure at the agency, Parvanah has worked with multiple programs and now holds the title of Division Manager within the Family Enrichment Services Department. Parvanah currently oversees the Piscataquis Safe Havens (supervised visitation) Center, the Penquis Family Visit Program, the Community Partnerships for Protecting Children program, Transitional Housing Services, the Children's Advocacy Center and Rape Response Services (a subsidiary of Penquis). Through her work with children and families, Parvanah became a strong advocate for the privacy and protection of those clients and their rights to confidentiality.