

Building A Strong Infrastructure For Black Civic Engagement & Political Giving

Speaker Bios | May 19, 2016

CIETTA KIANDOLI, a trusted civic engagement strategist for over 15 years, is the newly appointed Director of the Black Civic Engagement Fund responsible for directing all strategy and growth of the Funds. Kiandoli got her start working on Capitol Hill for the Congressional Black Caucus, then continued on to work with labor unions, political campaigns, and state-based community organizations. Her work has ranged from campaign finance reform to building multi-state civic engagement programs. She gained her political experience working on campaigns that ranged from presidential to county executive races, running everything from voter registration programs to large scale GOTV programs. In 2004, she helped run America's Families United (AFU), the first multi-organizational voter registration program for the 501c3 sector. Over 20 national organizations helped to register over 1 million voters with a focus on communities of color. Most recently, as the National Program Director at State Voices, she helped build the non-partisan civic engagement network from 15 state tables to 20, with reach in all 50 states. She managed State Voices' multi-state voter registration work in 2012 and oversaw the development of their national voter registration working group in 2013. Kiandoli is a Boston College graduate and is originally from the DC metropolitan area.

ERIN DALE BYRD, Executive Director, is responsible for fundraising, compliance, managing staff and driving Blueprint's vision for collective impact. Her expertise is in campaign planning, coalition building and community organizing. For two decades, Erin has helped guide civic campaigns to increase the minimum wage, publicly fund judicial elections and implement same-day voter registration. She is Board Chair of Southern Partners Fund, and a founding member of the Fertile Ground Food Cooperative in Southeast Raleigh. She has received awards from the Youth Organizing Institute, Women AdvANCe, National Coalition on Black Civic Participation and most recently received the William C. Friday Fellowship for Human Relations. She has a degree in Sociology from the College of William and Mary.

LUDOVIC BLAIN is a racial justice entrepreneur, and has worked on three continents. He directs the Progressive Era Project and the Color of Democracy Fund, California donor tables building state infrastructure to win bold social justice policies by investing in voter engagement, leadership pipelines, candidate and initiative campaigns and policy advocacy by and for people of color. He is also a co-founder of the CA Civic Participation Funders Table. He has held leadership positions at Closing the Racial Wealth Gap, Demos, NYC Environmental Justice Alliance, Equal Voice Campaign and the Center for Social Inclusion. He's led campaigns inserting racial justice into economics, democracy and environment for 25 years. He's also worked in Haiti, The Gambia, Northern Ireland, Denmark and Canada. Ludovic was one of the first college graduates in his family when he received a BA in Political Science from City College of New York, while working full-time. He's a Bronx native, the son of an immigrant, and lives in Berkeley with his wife and son.

ANTHONY THIGPENN, a Los Angeles-based community organizer for more than 30 years, heads California Calls, a powerful alliance of 31 organizations in 12 counties around the state. The centerpiece of California Calls is to achieve progressive, long-term tax and fiscal policy reform by engaging underrepresented, low-income voters in state public policy decision-making. Mr. Thigpenn is widely recognized as a leading expert in grassroots, civic engagement technology and programs. He ran successful field campaigns for Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Congresswoman Karen Bass, State Senator Kevin de León, and former City Councilmember Martin Ludlow, among others. Mr. Thigpenn is also the founder and president of Strategic Concepts in Organizing & Policy Education (SCOPE), a grassroots organization formed in South Los Angeles shortly after the 1992 uprising in the city. It was formerly known as AGENDA.

CHARLENE A. CARRUTHERS is a Black, queer feminist community organizer and writer with over 10 years of experience in racial justice, feminist and youth leadership development movement work. She currently serves as the national director of the Black Youth Project 100 (BYP100), an activist member-led organization of Black 18-35 year olds dedicated to creating justice and freedom for all Black people. First politicized as an 18 year old while studying abroad in South Africa, her passion for developing young leaders to build capacity within marginalized communities has led her to work on immigrant rights, economic justice and civil rights campaigns nationwide. With a focus on intersectional liberation, Charlene's organizing capacities span across a broad range of topics and she currently serves as a board member of SisterSong, a reproductive justice organization that promotes solidarity among women of color. She is an Arcus Leadership Fellow and Front Line Leadership Academy graduate who has led grassroots and digital strategy campaigns for national organizations including the Center for Community Change, the Women's Media Center, ColorOfChange.org and National People's Action, as well as being a member of a historic delegation of young activists in Palestine in 2015 to build solidarity between Black and Palestinian liberation movements.