



Schedule and Program



Monday, May 18, 2026

American Museum of Natural History

77th Street Entrance

200 Central Park West

#NYCMER2026

This conference is being supported by the NYC Dept of Cultural Affairs' Cultural Development Fund

Take any photos? Tag us @nycmer

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Schedule

Registration, Coffee & Pastries, 8:30 am–9:15 am

Ellen V. Futter Gallery- Inside the 77th Street Entrance ([map link](#))

Welcome & Keynote, 9:30 am–10:30 am

Kaufmann Theater, Floor 1

Please note no food or drink is allowed in the Kaufmann theater

- Leah Golubchick (she/her), President, NYCMER
- Jonathan Milard (he/him), Vice President, NYCMER
- Keynote: Ayesha Williams (she/her), Dr. Raymond Codrington (he/him), Dr. Ilk Yasha (he/him)

Block I, 10:45 am–11:45 am

Art, Learning, and Action for a Safe and Just Future: Insights from the Climate Museum	The Den, Floor 2
Fostering Hope in a Changing Climate: Elevating Action in Children and Youth Science Programming	HHO Lab, Floor 1
Supporting the Needs of Museum Educators through a Labor and Social Justice Lens	Linder, Floor 1
Working Together: Developing Partnerships and Providing Career Pathways to Support Girls	Studio 1, Floor 4
Project Reset: Art as a Tool for Restorative Justice	Studio 2, Floor 4
Accessibility in Action – How Frustration and Feedback Can Lead to Continuous and Inclusive Collaboration	Studio 3, Floor 4
Nurturing Diverse, Inclusive Education Volunteer Programs: Case Studies from AMNH & BBG	Wetlab, Floor 3
Stop, Collaborate, and Listen: Leveraging Interdepartmental Relationships to Further Funding	Learning with Data Lab, Floor 3

Lunch, 11:45 am–1:00 pm

Offsite

Outdoor seating is available outside 77th street entrance and Terrace (on Floor 2 [map link](#))

Networking Lunch Groups

Meet in the Futter Gallery (where breakfast took place) at 12pm to find a group to get lunch with. Conference Committee members and Board members will hold signs to identify each group. Groups will leave promptly at 12:05pm. Networking Lunch Groups will include the following areas of interest: BIPOC Educators,

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Dining Near American Museum of Natural History

Latin American Cuisine

Lyla's Bodega
Latin American food, (No seating)
177 W 83rd St, New York, NY 10024

Tacombi
Mexican food
377 Amsterdam Ave, New York, NY 10024

American/Fast Food

Shake Shack
Hamburgers and Hot Dogs
366 Columbus Ave, New York, NY 10024

LENWICH
Sandwich
469 Columbus Ave, New York, NY 10024

Salad

Sweetgreen
Salads, Vegan/Vegetarian
311 Amsterdam Ave, New York, NY 10023

Chopt Creative Salad Co
Salads, Vegan/Vegetarian
341 Amsterdam Ave, New York, NY 10024

Pizza

Made In New York Pizza
421 Amsterdam Ave, New York, NY 10024

Famous Original Ray's Pizza
462 Columbus Ave, New York, NY 10024

Mediterranean/North African Cuisine

Moshe's Falafel
Kosher
142w W 83rd St, New York, NY 10024

Mamoun's Falafel
Mediterranean, Halal
508 Columbus Ave, New York, NY 10024

Asian Cuisine

Vanessa's Dumpling House
Dumplings, Chinese
452 Amsterdam Ave, New York, NY 10024

Joe's Steam Rice Roll
Hong Kong style fast food
422 Amsterdam Ave, New York, NY 10024

Two Wheels
Vietnamese
426 Amsterdam Ave, New York, NY 10024

Xi'an Famous Foods
Xi'an style chinese food
309 Amsterdam Ave, New York, NY 10023

Poster Sessions, 1:00 pm–1:45 pm

Poster Sessions: Davis East, Davis West, Floor 2

Resume Review Sessions: Den, RCC2, Floor 2

Bridging Disciplines at the American Museum of Natural History: The Science Elementary Teaching Collaborative	Davis Classrooms
Seeds to Solutions: How Microgrants Spark Staff-Led Action at NYBG	Davis Classrooms
Assembling Worlds: Collage-Based Storytelling for Community Contexts	Davis Classrooms
How to Engage the Whole Neighborhood: Participatory Resilience	Davis Classrooms
Taking Flight: When Museum Preschool Programs Leave the “Hive”	Davis Classrooms
Advocacy on the Waterfront: Site-Based Programming with Impact	Davis Classrooms
Exhibiting as a Call for Action: Public-facing assessments in teacher-education	Davis Classrooms
Inquiry in Action: Mentoring STEM Undergraduates Through Animal Behavior Research	Davis Classrooms
Met Expert Talks-- compelling storytelling that sparks excitement and curiosity	Davis Classrooms
Resume Review Sessions	RCC2, the Den
NYCMER Peer Groups	Davis Classrooms

Block II, 2:00 pm–3:00 pm

Action Through Youth: Teen Programs as Sites of Equity and Change	RCC2, Floor 2
Tour of AMNH Spaces	Meeting at Linder, Floor 1 Leaving at 2:05pm
Curators & Teen Voice: Designing a Teen Curators Program at The New York Public Library	Studio 1, Floor 4
Grow Down: Taking Action With Children as Co-Creators	Studio 3, Floor 4
Nature Journaling and Art: tools for understanding climate emotions and inspiring action through connection	The Den, Floor 2
Organizing Museum Workers with the NY Transit Museum Collective	Studio 2, Floor 4
From the Ground Up: Everyday Action as a Museum Professional	Wetlab, Floor 3
Whose Tour is it Anyway? Experiments in Visitor Engagement	Learning with Data Lab, Floor 3

Block III, 3:15 pm–4:15 pm

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Coordinating Programs Roundtable	The Den, Floor 2
Engaging Students in Civic Learning through Museums and Historic Sites	Linder, Floor 1
Educators as Advocates: Integrating Accessibility for Neurodiverse Learners	Studio 1, Floor 4
Healing through Art: Trauma-informed Collaboration between a Museum and a Recovery Program	Learning with Data Lab, Floor 3
Data-driven youth recruitment practices: a collaboration across four NYC institutions	Studio 3, Floor 4
Activating Museum Assets to Design Climate-Focused Learning Experiences	Wetlab, Floor 3
“No Food in the Museum!”: Actionable Food Pedagogies to Engage Community Voices and Uplift Culture	HHO Lab, Floor 1
From Compliance to Care: Access Workers	Studio 2, Floor 4

Closing Remarks, 4:15 pm–4:45 pm

Kaufmann Auditorium, Floor 1

- Leah Golubchick, President, NYCMER
- Jonathan Milard, Vice President, NYCMER

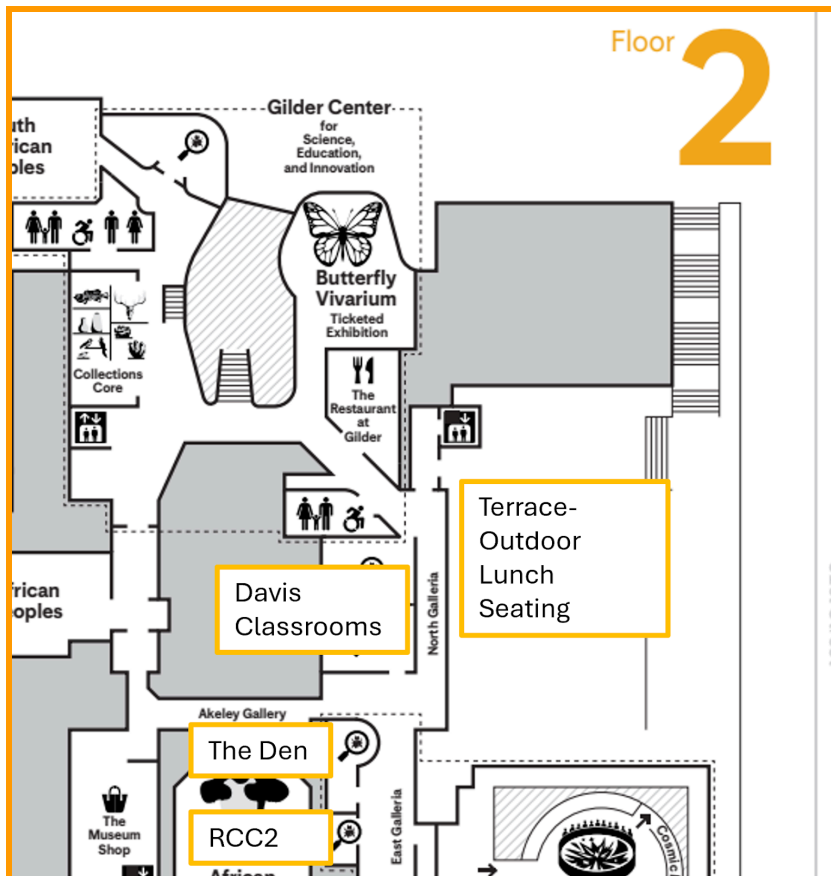
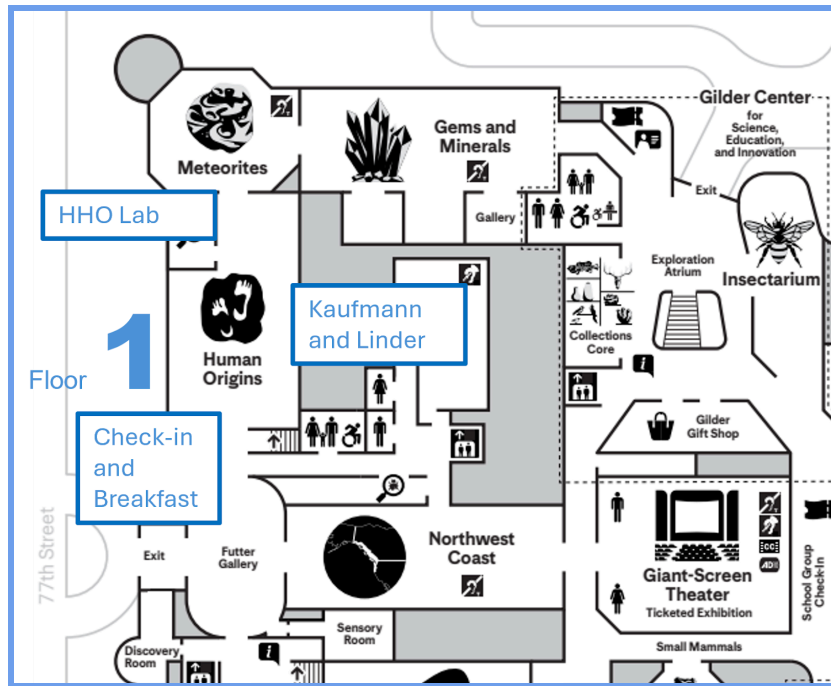
Afterparty, 5 pm–7 pm

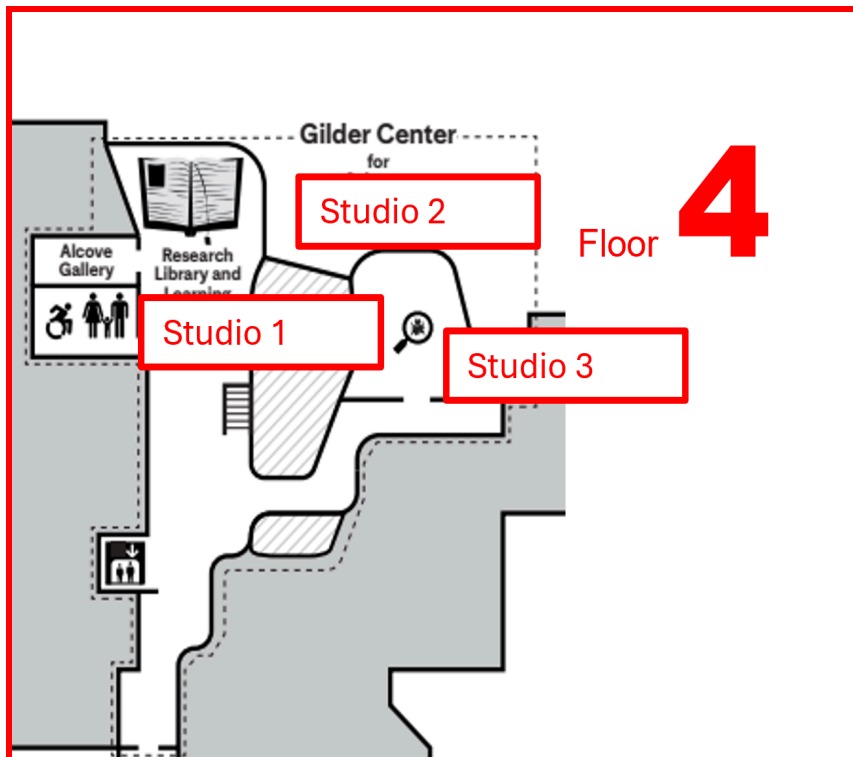
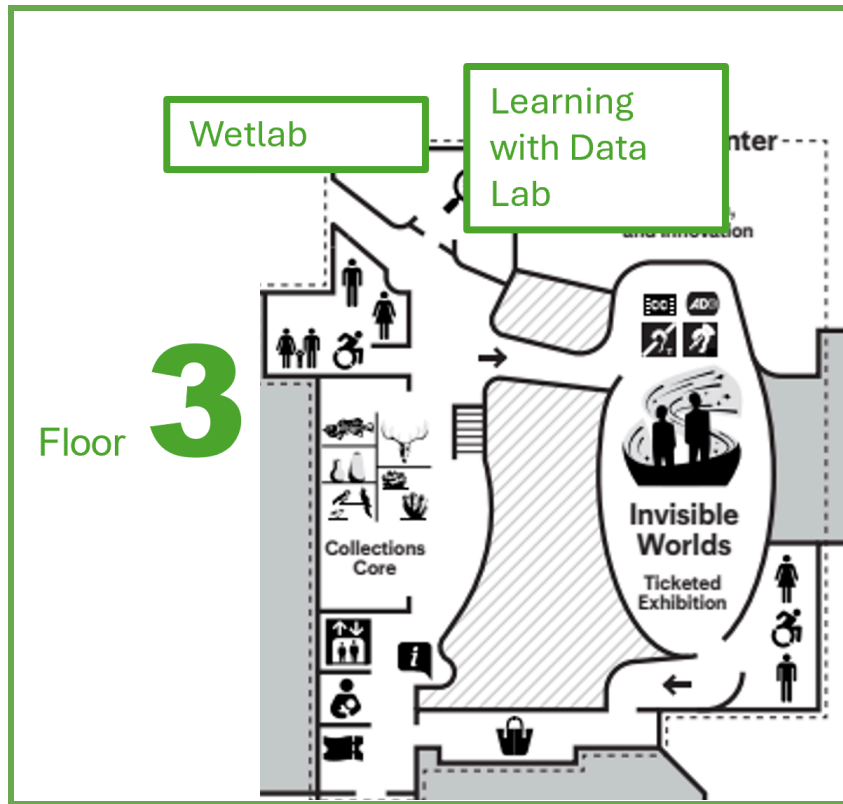
[Jake’s Dilemma](#)

430 Amsterdam Avenue
New York, NY 10024

Join us at Jake’s Dilemma, where you can continue mingling with peers. Please wear your nametag so we know who you are! It is a 5-10 minute walk.

Conference Map at a Glance





Please enter using the 77th street entrance on 77th Street between Central Park West and Columbus Avenue.

[AMNH Interactive Map](#) - All Gender Restrooms and Lactation Rooms are marked
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Session Descriptions & Presenter Bios

Welcome & Keynote with Q&A, 9:30 am–10:30 am

Kaufmann Auditorium, Floor 1



Ayesha Williams is the executive director of The Laundromat Project (The LP), a Bed-Stuy-based, New York City community-based arts organization dedicated to making sustained investments in growing a community of multiracial, multigenerational, and multidisciplinary artists and neighbors committed to societal change. She is an arts professional with two decades of experience working with visual artists, presenting programs, and generating funding for commercial galleries and nonprofit institutions. Prior to The LP, she managed Visual Arts at Lincoln Center and served as the Director of Kent Gallery, New York. In addition to her professional experience, Ayesha is on the board of Rivers Institute for Contemporary Art & Thought and The Black School, and a member of Independent Curators International Independents. She completed the Stanford Impact Program for Arts Leaders and served as a Steering Committee member of the UN Women's Conference (2016). She received her Master's degree in Visual Arts Administration from New York University and Bachelor's degree in Political Science from University of Southern California, Los Angeles.



Dr. Raymond Codrington is the President and CEO of Weeksville Heritage Center (WHC). WHC is a cultural institution and historic site that amplifies the past and present legacy of historic Weeksville, the nation’s second largest free black community in the pre-civil war era. He is a cultural anthropologist with substantive experience in creating intersections between museums and public engagement, policy analysis, and applied research. Before joining WHC, Raymond was the Executive Director of Hi-ARTS (formerly known as the Hip-Hop Theater Festival). He has also held senior-level roles at institutions as Senior Research Associate at the Aspen Institute's Roundtable on Community Change. His love of museums and cultural institutions began as the Sandy Boyd Postdoctoral Fellow at the Field Museum's Center for Cultural Understanding and Change. He lives with his family in Brooklyn.



Dr. Ilk Yasha is an educator, multidisciplinary facilitator, and independent curator. He is the Studio Museum Institute Director at the Studio Museum in Harlem. He has organized and shepherded programs that support emerging to mid-career leaders in the arts and museum sectors, particularly those from historically marginalized backgrounds, including scholars, curators, and educators. In addition to his museum career, he is as an Adjunct Assistant Professor in Museum Studies at New York University. His research and public speaking engage horizontal collaborative approaches to history and cultural production, often foregrounding politically and socially progressive frameworks that challenge traditional institutional hierarchies. He wants to be a public intellectual when he grows up.

Block I, 10:45 am–11:45 am

Session 1

Art, Learning, and Action for a Safe and Just Future: Insights from the Climate Museum (Room: The Den)

How can exhibitions and public programs empower our audiences to take action? The Climate Museum has used the arts to connect visitors to tangible actions that help address climate change and its systemic roots. In this roundtable discussion, we will explore how museums can teach visitors that they can play a role in bringing about positive change in their communities -- in the process, transforming visitors from feeling shut down, alone, and unsure of what to do about social issues, to feeling informed, connected, and motivated to act. We will foster conversation about the public's trust in museums and the responsibility museums have to harness that trust for community empowerment.

- **Anais Reyes** (she/her) is the deputy director of the Climate Museum, an institution dedicated to inspiring collective climate action through interdisciplinary arts and cultural programs. Over the course of eight years with the organization, she has witnessed the profound power museums have to help visitors feel a sense of empowerment and agency. Before joining the Climate Museum, Reyes worked at the American Museum of Natural History, the New Museum of Contemporary Art, and the Whitney Museum of American Art. She received her BFA from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a post-baccalaureate certificate in interdisciplinary climate and environmental studies from Columbia University.

Session 2

Fostering Hope in a Changing Climate: Elevating Action in Children and Youth Science Programming (Room: HHO Lab)

How do we approach anxiety about climate change with our audiences? ACTION! In this session, hear from two informal institutions that have designed hopeful climate change programming for children and youth audiences using age-appropriate action and community-based solutions. Presenters will share the philosophy and evaluation tools that guided the development of these programs, along with key findings, challenges, and next steps. Whether you have already developed your own programming or are curious about starting the process, attendees will have the opportunity to share

questions, successes, and barriers involved in creating and implementing hopeful climate change programming.

- **Kristen Olson** (she/her) is the Senior Manager of Curriculum and the Living Collection in the Children and Family Learning Department at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH). With extensive experience in early childhood and childhood science education, she has been teaching and developing science curricula since 2006. In her current role, she oversees the curriculum for programs serving pre-K through 5th grade students and families, as well as manages the husbandry and use of the living animal collection in the Museum's education programs. She holds a Master of Arts in Teaching Biological Sciences and a Bachelor's degree in Biological Anthropology.
 - kkolson@amnh.org
- **Leah Golubchick** (she/her) began her career as an unpaid college intern at the Brooklyn Museum, where she caught the museum education bug. After graduating from CUNY, she worked as a freelance educator across New York City museums before joining the American Museum of Natural History full time, where she spent 11 years. Leah later joined the Brooklyn Public Library, running the Brooklyn Cultural Adventures Program and supporting youth learning systemwide. She is a graduate of the Bank Street Leadership in Museum Education program and is grateful to NYCMER for helping her build the professional network she relies on today.
 - leah.golubchick@gmail.com
- **Kylie Gehringer** (she/her) is a science educator with thirteen years of experience in environmental education. Trained as an elementary teacher, Kylie has taught children and families at renowned informal science learning centers along the East Coast. She received her Master of Arts in Teaching Biology through Project Dragonfly and the Wildlife Conservation Society at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. She currently teaches children and families at the American Museum of Natural History and is actively involved in developing and evaluating climate change programming in the Museum's Science and Nature Program.
 - kwash@amnh.org
- **Alexis Mayfield** (she/her) is a Manager of Evaluation and Data Collection at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH). She focuses on equitable educational research by studying different programs at AMNH and visitor learning. Before AMNH, Alexis managed several large-scale public health-based research projects across the US that focused on solutions to major problems in schools and communities. These projects included research studies on a teenage pregnancy prevention program in schools, a mentorship program aimed at raising graduation rates for at-risk youth, and a science-education enrichment program that aimed to raise self-efficacy in STEM for minority students.
 - amayfield@amnh.org

Session 3

Supporting the Needs of Museum Educators through a Labor and Social Justice Lens (Room: Linder)

Museum educators in a variety of positions have faced challenges in having their work respected, receiving fair compensation, and fighting for safe and fair work conditions. Museum educators across New York City have unionized in efforts to take action and make changes within their institutions. In this panel, representatives from DC37 and UAW, alongside workers, discuss common and structural issues that impact and at times impede the mission-oriented work of museums, and answer questions participants may have about improving their workplaces.

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- **Maida Rosenstein** (she/her) has been a union member of UAW Local 2110 for over forty years since she helped organize her own workplace as a clerical worker at Columbia University. She served as the president of the local for many years and is currently the Director of Organizing. She has assisted thousands of workers in negotiations for their union contracts and for the last decade has focused on organizing new workers into the union, especially in museums and cultural institutions. Most recently, she was worked with 900 staff at the Metropolitan Museum of Art who won a union election in January 2026 by a decisive 74% margin.
 - maidarosenstein@2110uaw.org
- **Henry A. Garrido** (he/him) is the executive director of District Council 37, New York City's largest public employee union, representing 150,000 members and 89,000 retirees. On Nov. 26, 2024, Garrido was reelected to a fourth term effective January 2025. Since becoming executive director in 2015, Garrido has focused on encouraging greater member participation, initiating the DC 37 Union Strong organizing campaign. The campaign has led to the highest union membership in DC 37's 80 year history.
 - AHernandez@dc37.net
- **Roberto Chavez** (he/him) is an educator for Children and Family Learning and a proud member of DC 37 Local 1559. He has been a NYCMER member since 2015. Roberto has previously taught at the Intrepid Museum, King Manor Museum, The New York Historical, the New York Transit Museum, and the Tenement Museum. Until the pandemic-related layoffs in 2021, he was part of the prior unionizing campaign at the Transit Museum. Notably, Roberto was the recipient of the Nancy Hanks Memorial Award for Rising Stars by the American Alliance of Museums in 2024.
 - robertochavezparedes@gmail.com
- **Drew Reynolds** (they/them) is a museum educator and community-based artist at the Guggenheim Museum whose work centers on access, public engagement, and arts education for diverse audiences. They serve as Unit Chair for UAW Local 2110 at the museum, organizing alongside coworkers to build collective power and fight for equity within cultural institutions.
 - dreynolds@guggenheim.org

Session 4

Working Together: Developing Partnerships and Providing Career Pathways to Support Girls

(Room: Studio 1)

In a time when DEAI work is facing backlash, how do institutions continue the work of supporting the most excluded audiences? Learn how the Intrepid Museum partnered with the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development to develop a program that meets the needs of young people while striving to narrow the gender gap in the aerospace and engineering fields. Learn how they continue to support girls in STEM in response to attacks on that very endeavor, hear alumni testimony on why that work is vital, and brainstorm ways you can do the same in your programming.

- **Jennifer Elliott** (she/her) has been at the Intrepid Museum for over a decade now working in various education roles with K-12 students and teachers, and most recently working with teens. Born and raised in Florida she has Bachelor's degrees in both theater and astronomy from the University of Florida (Go gators!) and a Master's in Museum Professions from Seton Hall University.
 - jelliott@intrepidmuseum.org
- **Sarah Whitney** (she/her) is the Assistant Commissioner of Employer Engagement and Partnerships at the NYC Department of Youth & Community Development, where she leads strategic workforce

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development partnerships and cultivates relationships with industry leaders to expand career pathways for New Yorkers. With nearly two decades of experience in program management, partnership development, marketing, and event services, Sarah began her career in nonprofit roles with the Buffelshoek Trust in South Africa and the Clinton Foundation in New York. She holds an MA in Education Policy from Teachers College at Columbia University and a BA in International Affairs from George Washington University.

- swhitney@dycd.nyc.gov
- **Eli Fisher** (they/them) has been at the Intrepid Museum since December 2021. They worked first as a per diem educator before they joined the Youth Leadership team in 2023 as a full-time educator. In addition to engaging youth with STEM content and careers, Eli loves to do independent research about the history of physics, astronomy, and technology. They have a B.A. in Physics and Astronomy from Bryn Mawr College and an M.A. in Museum Studies from New York University.
 - efisher1@intrepidmuseum.org

Session 5

Project Reset: Art as a Tool for Restorative Justice (Room: Studio 2)

This session connects to the theme *Action!* by centering a program that moves cultural institutions into direct partnership with the NYC court system to create real, community-based alternatives to court involvement. Through Project Reset, cultural institutions are active participants in civic engagement and social response. Panelists will share concrete pedagogical approaches (dialogue, inquiry, and art-making) that empower participants and foster belonging. The session emphasizes actionable models museum educators can adapt to advance justice-centered, community-responsive work beyond the gallery.

- **Noé Gaytán** (he/him) is an educator, artist, and activist. As Associate Manager of Art-Making at the Brooklyn Museum he supervises art classes for all ages, oversees a teen program, and coordinates Project Reset. Previously he was a member of art collectives Admin and Michelada Think Tank, addressing issues of cultural equity in the arts. He holds a BA in Studio Art from University of California, Irvine and an MFA in Public Practice from Otis College of Art and Design.
 - noe.gaytan@brooklynmuseum.org
- **Victoria Hristoff, LCAT, ATR-BC**, (she/her) is an art therapist working and living in New York City. She has worked with Artistic Noise for seven years and currently works as their Director of Art Therapy and Youth Services. In 2020 she completed her MPS in Art Therapy at the School of Visual Arts. Victoria's art therapy practice focuses on the intersections of mental health, visual art, social justice, and abolition. In said practice, Victoria prioritizes folks' lived experiences, and integrates attachment theory with trauma-informed approaches. She deeply believes in the power of art and artmaking to foster empowerment, relieve stress, promote relaxation, and release tension. She has a background working with adolescents in the community, justice system, and foster care system, and is keenly aware of power dynamics within larger systems.
 - victoria@artisticnoise.org
- **Saadiq Newton-Boyd** (he/him) is the Deputy Project Director of Brooklyn Justice Initiatives, leading alternative to incarceration and diversion programs with a sharp eye for strategy and a deep commitment to equity. Brooklyn-born and raised, he feels intrinsically connected to this work as a Black man, understanding both the systemic challenges and the power of community-driven solutions. He seamlessly shifts from big-picture vision to on-the-ground operations, ensuring that meaningful change isn't just imagined—it's implemented.

- sboyd@nycourts.gov
- **Carlos Nunez** (he/him) is a Venezuelan artist and educator living in New York City. He is interested in museums as places of dialogue and art as a conversation-starter. He has held teaching roles at the Brooklyn Museum, Guggenheim Museum, International Center of Photography and others.
 - nunezcarlos0634@gmail.com
- **Jordan Otis** is Deputy Project Director at the Midtown Community Justice Center. At the Center, Jordan has also served as an Associate Director of Community Programs (MCJC), a Planner on the Criminal Justice Operations team (CJI), and a Planner at Newark Community Solutions. Jordan's work has included broadening access to pre-arraignment diversion programs, leading fatherhood programming, launching youth development and enrichment programs, coordinating feasibility studies, and captaining community service/engagement efforts. Prior to his time at the Center, Jordan worked with students at the Middletown Youth Services Bureau and coached football at Wesleyan University, where he holds a B.A. and M.A.
 - otisc@innovatingjustice.org

Session 6

Accessibility in Action – How Frustration and Feedback Can Lead to Continuous and Inclusive Collaboration (Room: Studio 3)

Sometimes a negative experience leads to positive change. At Brooklyn Botanic Garden, many barriers to accessibility are rooted in the landscape, though that doesn't mean we aren't continuously working to make the Garden a more welcoming and inclusive space. Feedback from visitors and contributions from our "Best Practices Working Group" made up of accessibility advisors steer this work. Collaborating with accessibility advocates to design our programs and develop staff trainings improves visitor experience. Join a panel of Brooklyn Botanic Garden's accessibility advisors and collaborators in conversation about what makes an accessible, welcoming visitor experience.

- **Bailey Binke** (she/her) is an educator and access professional whose work spans diverse audiences, institutions and subject matter. Her work is centered on creating accessible and inclusive experiences for audiences of all abilities through access intimacy and multi-modal means of engagement. In her current role at Brooklyn Botanic Garden, she collaborates with colleagues and disability communities to create and facilitate trainings, resources and programmatic offerings.
 - bbinke@bbg.org
- **Xian Horn** (she/her) is a joyful half-Asian woman with Cerebral Palsy and the founder of the nonprofit Give Beauty Wings. She is an advocate, speaker, and freelance journalist whose work has appeared in Forbes, Architectural Digest, Thrive Global, Allure, and PBS Independent Lens. A former Exemplar for the AT&T NYU Connect Ability Challenge, Xian advises corporations and cultural institutions on accessibility, inclusion, and innovation. She currently serves as Board Chair of NY Tech Alliance & Civic Hall, on the advisory and selection committees of ReelAbilities Film Festival, the UN NGO Committee on Education, and the accessibility advisory for Brooklyn Botanic Garden. She has spoken and has consulted for Microsoft, Target, NBCUniversal, and many more.
 - xianhorn@gmail.com
- **Nefertiti Matos Olivares** (she/her) is an award-winning blind, bilingual Latina voice talent and access professional. As Workflow Manager at Descriptive Video Works, she expands professional pathways for blind talent in the AD industry. A core member of SADC, she leads projects and narrates in English and

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Spanish. Her work for institutions like MoMA, Lincoln Center, and MOMI ensures accessibility and creative integrity go hand in hand. With deep expertise in Assistive Technology, Nefertiti's practice centers on amplifying disability and global majority voices, shaping equitable participation and advancing the future of sustainable, culturally competent inclusion.

- nefmatoli@gmail.com
- **Lakshmee Lachhman-Persad** (she/her) is an award-winning marketer and educator with 25 years of experience in travel, tourism, and cultural destinations. She is the founder of Accessible Travel NYC, where she partners with museums, gardens, and visitor-facing organizations to integrate accessibility and disability inclusion into communications, programming, and visitor experience. Her work has supported institutions including Brooklyn Botanic Garden, New York Botanical Garden, Lincoln Center, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, helping organizations move from compliance to meaningful, trust-building access. Her work is grounded in the Disability Pride, Disability Joy Exists framework, centering equity, representation, and inclusive public experiences.
 - accessibletravelnyc@gmail.com
- **Virginia Shou** (she/her) is a strategic interdisciplinary designer and activist who loves community gardening and urban farming. Based in New York City, Shou is a Certified Brooklyn Urban Gardener, has led plant workshops for the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, and serves on the organization's Best Practices Working Group that aims to provide more inclusive experiences for all visitors. She holds an MFA in Visual Arts from Virginia Commonwealth University and a BFA in Graphic Design from the School of Visual Arts.
 - virginiashou@gmail.com

Session 7

Nurturing Diverse, Inclusive Education Volunteer Programs: Case Studies from AMNH & BBG (Room: Wetlab)

Representatives from two institutions, the American Museum of Natural History and the Brooklyn Botanical Garden, discuss the ins and outs of their work with volunteers delivering educational programs. We'll talk about how to grow, diversify, and train a volunteer base sustainably and effectively; how to nurture and develop existing volunteers' cultural competency, inclusivity, and informal teaching skills; how the work itself shifts as the work expands; as well as setbacks we've faced & strategies we've implemented in our programs.

- **Karen Wylie** (she/her) is the Discovery Garden & Family Programs Manager at Brooklyn Botanic Garden. She is an educator with experience teaching in the classroom, in a children's museum, in caves, in gardens... and everywhere in between! In the Discovery Garden, Karen is part of a team that recruits, trains, and builds community within a group of 50 education volunteers called Discovery Docents.
 - kwylie@bbg.org
- **Brianna Harlan** (she/her) has been published in several forms as a voice in cultural activism nationally and internationally, including in ArtNews for her 80 page assessment of equity in Louisville, KY. She completed her MFA in Art and Social Action at Queens College and was named a Young Distinguished Alumni by her alma mater, Hanover College. She takes an asset-based approach to teaching and loves to help teams grow through participatory research and purposeful action. Brianna also worked as a creative, community organizer and strategist for several community initiatives around the country including City University of New York's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Incubator; the Center for Ethnic,

Religious, and Racial Understanding; and the Studio Museum in Harlem as well as MoMA's public programs fellowship. She has worked with countless partners to fulfill visions for public experiences. Now, she supports and trains Teaching Volunteers at the American Museum of Natural History.

- bharlan@amnh.org

Session 8

Stop, Collaborate, and Listen: Leveraging Interdepartmental Relationships to Further Funding Goals (Room: Learning with Data Lab)

Join Teatown Lake Reservation Director of Education Emily Edmonds-Langham, Tate Americas Foundation Director of Development Kristel Kempin, and New 42 Director of Institutional and Endowment Giving Meredith Lee for a hands-on workshop on where the power of relationships and the power of the purse intersect. In this challenging funding environment, how can interdepartmental collaboration within your institution help you take ACTION! to secure financial support from new and diverse sources? This session will stress the importance of key partnerships between educators, administrators, and development professionals; share examples of the value of relationship building within the context of major fundraising types (grants, fundraising events, and transformative major gifts); and include concrete pathways to success.

- **Emily Edmonds-Langham** (she/her) is Teatown Lake Reservation's Director of Education. She has worked in environmental education for many years at organizations including the American Museum of Natural History, the New York Botanical Garden, and the Native Plant Trust. She is passionate about hands-on science learning, conservation education, and getting dirty. Emily is a graduate of the Environmental Conservation Education masters program at NYU Steinhardt and Smith College, where she studied English Language and Literature as well as Environmental Science and Policy.
 - eedmonds@teatown.org
- **Kristel Kempin** (she/her) is a fundraiser with over 10 years of experience working in the non-profit cultural arena. After completing undergraduate degrees in both History and Music at Binghamton University, her education continued with an MA in Culture, Policy and Management from City University London and a certificate from University of Pennsylvania's Executive Program in Social Impact. Kristel's career has taken her from the Royal College of Music in London, to Lincoln Center, the Brooklyn Museum, New York Public Radio, and most recently, Tate Americas Foundation. She remains inspired by her audience and enjoys ruminating on the intersections between philanthropy and social change.
 - kkempin@tateamericas.org
- **Meredith Lee** (she/her) specializes in institutional fundraising for arts institutions. She joined New 42 in 2025 as Director of Institutional and Endowment Giving, leading efforts to grow foundation and government support for the organization's theater season for young audiences, arts education programs, and other activities. A New York University graduate, Meredith worked in journalism, publishing, and theater before starting her fundraising career at San Francisco's New Conservatory Theatre Center. She later held positions in New York at Lincoln Center, Harlem School of the Arts, and Kaufman Music Center and led the School of American Ballet's institutional giving department for nine years.
 - mlee@new42.org

Poster Sessions, 1:00 pm–1:45 pm

Bridging Disciplines at the American Museum of Natural History: The Science Elementary Teaching Collaborative (Room: Davis Classrooms)

The American Museum of Natural History piloted a year-long Community of Practice to support upper elementary teachers in using field trips to teach science in an interdisciplinary way. In this workshop, we will consider how teachers use Museum spaces, resources and scientists as a foundation for this work. We will be joined by participating elementary school teachers who will share their experience as mentors and mentees in this brand new program.

- **Ben Taylor** (he/him) is the Program Manager of School Groups at the American Museum of Natural History. He has a degree in Entomology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and has 14 years of experience working in informal science spaces.
 - btaylor@amnh.org
- **Naina Abowd** (she/her), the Assistant Director of Professional Learning in the Education Department at the American Museum of Natural History, manages the planning, implementation and evaluation of professional learning opportunities for teachers, as well as the development of elementary school group programs such as the BEES Elementary Residency and the Seeds to Stories program. She serves on the faculty of the Museum's Masters of Arts in Teaching (Earth Science) program, and is a former high school science teacher herself. She is also a doctoral candidate at Teachers College, Columbia University, focused on research around interdisciplinary science teaching in natural history museums.
 - nabowd@amnh.org

Seeds to Solutions: How Microgrants Spark Staff-Led Action at NYBG (Room: Davis Classrooms)

Seeds of Growth is the New York Botanical Garden's staff microgrant model, designed to turn professional learning needs into concrete, testable action. In this poster session, NYBG Learning and Development and NYBG staff will share how small, low-barrier awards, typically ranging from \$500 to \$2,000, support staff in piloting ideas, building skills, and strengthening cross-department collaboration. The poster will highlight the structure of the program, examples of funded projects, and reflections on what participants learned through the process. It will also offer practical takeaways for museum and cultural professionals interested in adapting a microgrant model within their own institutions.

- **Sujay Pandit**, Ph.D., (he/him) is Senior Director of Learning Operations and Strategy at New York Botanical Garden, where he designs staff-centered learning systems that strengthen collaboration, leadership, and organizational capacity. He developed Seeds of Growth, NYBG's microgrant program that funds small, high-impact professional learning projects across divisions. His work focuses on practical learning design, culture-building, and turning strategy into staff action through scalable programs, toolkits, and facilitation.
 - spandit@nybg.org
- **Sophia Peluso** (she/her) is Registration Coordinator for Children's Education at New York Botanical Garden, where she works with schools, teachers, and NYBG staff to assist student visits to the gardens and ensure a positive experience. Her position requires inter-departmental coordination,

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communication, and organization. Through her graduate studies at Hunter College, CUNY in Educational Psychology, Sophia solidified her passion for accessible and equitable outdoor education for young learners.

- speluso@nybg.org
- **Charlotte Smith** (she/her) is the Explainer Program Coordinator at the New York Botanical Garden's Everett Children's Adventure Garden, where she leads a hands-on, tiered internship program for high school and early college students focused on plant science, ecology, and education. Her work centers on helping teens build confidence, strengthen communication skills, and develop as environmental educators and stewards through meaningful connections with nature and community.
 - csmith@nybg.org

Assembling Worlds: Collage-Based Storytelling for Community Contexts (Room: Davis Classrooms)

This session frames action as a participatory, creative practice rather than a single outcome. Through collage-based making and emergent storytelling, participants engage in small, immediate acts of creative action—composing, sharing, listening, and responding together. This interactive poster station models how accessible storytelling tools can activate community voice, build relational understanding, and foster care. The Community Game Development Toolkit offers museum educators an adaptable approach for supporting dialogue, empathy, and collective meaning-making within their own organizations and communities.

- **Daniel Lichtman** (he/him) is an artist, researcher and community practitioner based in NYC. Lichtman's work explores how communities can use the tools of game design and visual art to tell stories about their culture and heritage, and imagine possible futures. Lichtman's framework for interactive storytelling, the Community Game Development Toolkit, is used by community members, artists and researchers internationally. Exhibitions and publications include Oral.Pub; ICA, London; Ammerman Center for Art and Technology; BRIC, The Bronx Museum and The Queens Museum. Lichtman is Assistant Professor, and Program Coordinator, of Game Development and Emerging Media at St. John's University, New York.
 - lichtmad@stjohns.edu
- **Meral Agish** (she/her) directs the Queens Memory Project at Queens Public Library, a community-engaged archiving program and oral history collection covering the borough of Queens, New York. She oversees a collection of 1,300 interviews, leads community and academic collaborations, and hosts monthly public workshops. She has presented at events convened by the Oral History Association, the Public Library Association, the National Council on Public History, and the Archivists Round Table of Metropolitan New York, and hosted the award-winning second season of Queens Memory's podcast, "The Borough We Became: Queens Residents on Life during COVID-19."
 - meral.agish@queenslibrary.org

How to Engage the Whole Neighborhood: Participatory Resilience (Room: Davis Classrooms)

Learn how to get the "whole block" involved in projects and programs happening in their neighborhood through citizen science, urban design, and old fashioned "sweat equity" (AKA, manual labor!). First, we'll outline how we offer the community paid opportunities to make their neighborhoods more resilient through environmental restoration projects. Then, we invite fellow environmental and cultural professionals to workshop challenges they've encountered in making

projects and programming accessible and relevant to their communities' needs. Leave with an action plan for inclusive community engagement!

- **Christina Weiler** (she/her) is passionate about community engagement and education tools for community power and participation. At Groundwork, she leads four resident Working Groups each focused on co-creating solutions to different climate risks affecting the neighborhood, from extreme heat to flooding. Across the groups, there are 70+ working group members, all compensated for their time. Before Groundwork, she was a community educator designing and leading intercultural and trilingual activities in public schools in Spain under a Fulbright grant. Christina graduated from Colgate University with a degree in Environmental Studies, minors in Economics and Latin American Studies.
 - christina@groundworkhv.org
- **Brianna Rodriguez** (she/her) graduated from SUNY New Paltz with her Bachelor's in Environmental Studies with a double minor in Urban Planning and Black Studies. She enjoys hiking, taking walks with her dogs, listening to music, and horror movies. She found her passion for the environment after spending nearly three years on the Groundwork Green Team as a Yonkers High School student. She hopes to create greater access to nature for people in disadvantaged communities and shape a world where everyone's voices are not only acknowledged and heard, but they are also valued and respected.
 - brianna@groundworkhv.org

Taking Flight: When Museum Preschool Programs Leave the "Hive" (Room: Davis Classrooms)

For nearly 10 years, Macculloch Hall Historical Museum has worked in close collaboration with community partners to become a trusted source for preschool programming. Learn the origins of the partnerships, and how this free program has evolved in response to changes in funding and museum staffing to continue adapting to partner needs.

- **Cynthia Winslow** (she/her) has worked at Macculloch Hall Historical Museum (MHHM) for 15 years. Her role has evolved from researching and developing programs for younger audiences to serving as Senior Researcher and Interpreter. In 2023 her work was key to MHHM earning national accreditation by the American Alliance of Museums, NJ's tenth accredited museum. Prior to MHHM, Cynthia worked at South Street Seaport Museum and the Community Children's Museum. She holds an MSc in Leadership in Museum Education from Bank Street College of Education and an MA in Museum Studies from the University of Leicester, England.
 - cwinslow@maccullochhall.org
- **Karina Filipowski** (she/her) is the Curator of Education & Community Engagement at Macculloch Hall Historical Museum (MHHM), where she is inspired daily by the history, art, and garden at this historic house in Morristown, NJ, to spark discovery and exploration with all learners and visitors. She works with teachers and community partners to create hands-on programming and educational content onsite at the Museum and offsite. She has an MA in Museum Studies from the Cooperstown Graduate Program and, prior to working at MHHM, was at Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle in PA.
 - kfilipowski@maccullochhall.org

Advocacy on the Waterfront: Site-Based Programming with Impact (Room: Davis Classrooms)

Learn about how we connect our waterfront programs to civic education. By engaging students with their immediate environment, we foster new connections between history, conservation, and stewardship. Site-specific programming encourages students to see themselves in their environment and advocate for their place in it.

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- **Camryn Bell** (she/her) is a museum and marine educator at the South Street Seaport Museum. She has a background in history and informal education, and previously worked for the National Park Service as an Education Fellow and Park Ranger.
 - cbell@seany.org
- **Ian Goza** (he/him) is an environmental educator and history teacher with over 5 years of experience teaching New York students inside and outside the classroom. Ian is an advocate for experiential and interdisciplinary learning opportunities to foster civic engagement among New York youth.
 - iangoza@gmail.com

Exhibiting as a Call for Action: Public-facing assessments in teacher-education (Room: Davis Classrooms)

This poster focuses on calling students to action to share their work with the campus community as non-traditional end-of-semester assessments.

- **mARTa Cabral** (she/her) works with people of all ages exploring play & art materials, processes, and ideas in diverse settings. Before joining the City University of New York as Assistant Professor, Marta was Visiting Assistant Professor at Penn State University (School of Visual Arts); artist-in-residence at the Rita Gold Early Childhood Center (Columbia University); and Adjunct Professor at Columbia University Teacher College. Marta's 20+ years of teaching young children inspire her work in teacher-education and research on ownership of learning, pedagogies of listening, and art-based learning. As speaker and consultant, Marta works with organizations to create and strengthen artistic engagement worldwide.
 - marta.cabral@csi.cuny.edu

Inquiry in Action: Mentoring STEM Undergraduates Through Animal Behavior Research (Room: Davis Classrooms)

Since 2020, WCS Professional Development (PD) has partnered with New Jersey and CUNY colleges and universities to support underrepresented and minority community college students to develop interest in STEM careers and science skills to make them competitive at four year universities. WCS leads a Winter Animal Behavior Workshop in which animal behavior research and methodology is taught through inquiry, exhibit visits, animal encounters, asynchronous assignments and a group project focused on an animal behavior research question. Participants who complete the workshop have an opportunity to apply to conduct observational animal behavior research throughout the summer at the Bronx Zoo as well as receive mentorship as a WCS Career Lattice intern. This poster presentation will provide an overview of the program, best practices for implementation and mentorship, and demonstrate how the program takes action to increase diversity in STEM careers while allowing participants to engage in meaningful, hands-on action as researchers.

- **Christopher MacKay** (he/him) first joined WCS in 2004 as a member of the Bronx Zoo Education Dept and has been working in informal science education ever since! He has a BS in Environmental Forest Biology from SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry and an MS in Secondary Science Education from CUNY Queens College. Since 2020 he has worked as a Coordinator of Professional Development within WCS Education, providing a variety of learning experiences for teachers, undergraduate students and informal science educators. Chris is always excited to share with others how they can utilize zoos and aquariums as a resource to make learning come alive, promote STEM and encourage conservation action!

- cmackay@wcs.org

Met Expert Talks-- compelling storytelling that sparks excitement and curiosity (Room: Davis Classrooms)

Met Expert Talks is a series of in-gallery talks designed to offer customized experiences for the public. These experiences are designed to foster a meaningful relationship and provide visitors with unique insights into the museum's collection and exhibitions. These special encounters are personalized, focused, and narrative-driven. Met Expert Talks hosts an array of experts, including curators, conservators, scientists, and scholars, for a deep dive into a selection of objects in the galleries. Developed in 2022, following the pandemic, Met Expert Talks prioritize connections, offering new and meaningful ways to understand. In 2024, we welcomed Expert Talks en Español into the museum's program rotation to broaden access to programming for New York City's multilingual communities.

- **Francesca D'Alessio** (she/her) worked in San Francisco for over a decade, managing educational museum programs, and in 2020 returned home to New York. Her career began in museums as an intern and eventually led to her supervising the Public Programs department at FAMSF. She has held every role in between. Francesca brings a deep understanding of museum work at multiple levels and a unique perspective as a professional on the West Coast with New York City sensibilities. Currently, Francesca is the Associate Educator of Public Programs at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.
 - francesca.dalessio@metmuseum.org
- **Victoria Campa** is currently a Programs Coordinator on the Community Partnerships & Initiatives team at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where she leads Spanish-language programming and the Vacheron Constantin Artisan Residency. Her work centers on expanding access to the arts and creating meaningful opportunities for artists to connect with diverse audiences. Her cross-disciplinary background in education, technology, and grassroots arts informs her work across institutional and community contexts.
 - Victoria.Campa@metmuseum.org
- **Dénia Lara** (she/her) is the Assistant Educator at The Met Cloisters; the medieval branch of The Metropolitan Museum of Art located in northern Manhattan. She creates and organizes programs for adult and intergenerational audiences, with a focus on making medieval art approachable to the general public through material-based learning and community building. Dénia's background is in studio art, museum studies, and medieval art history.
 - Denia.Lara@metmuseum.org

Resume Review Sessions (Rooms: RCC2, The Den)

Join us for a resume review session designed for early-mid career professionals in the museum and cultural sector. During this workshop, attendees will have the opportunity to receive one-on-one feedback from experienced hiring professionals in 15-minute sessions. Reviewers will share observations and recommendations to help you strengthen your resume and present your experience with clarity. Please only register for one timeslot via Calendly and bring 3 copies of your resume in order to be fully prepared.

*Please note that reviewers are not actively hiring.

Space is limited — **register in advance by emailing vicepresident@nycmer.org** by May 16.

Resume Reviewers:

- **Adriana Burkins**
Education Manager, Lewis Latimer House
- **Charlotte Martin**
Director of Access Initiatives, Intrepid Museum
- **Christine Peralta**
Manager of Education, Prospect Park Zoo, Wildlife Conservation Society.
- **David Rios**
Director of Young Learners (Learning & Engagement - MoMA), MoMA
- **Erin Eck**
Director of Continuing Education, Brooklyn Botanic Garden
- **Leah Golubchick**
BCAP Camp Director and Youth Education Initiatives Coordinator, Brooklyn Public Library
- **Leigh Wells**
Senior Manager of Youth Programs, International Center for Photography
- **Max Falkenberg**
Program Coordinator, Bronx Zoo, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)
- **Natalie Aguilar**
Associate Manager of Internships at the Brooklyn Museum
- **Noé Gaytan**
Associate Manager of Art-Making at the Brooklyn Museum
- **Shana Fung**
Assistant Director, DiMenna Children's History Museum at The New York Historical Society
- **Shihadah Saleem**
Director of Youth Programs & Pathways, New York Hall of Science

Block II, 2:00 pm–3:00 pm

Session 1

Action Through Youth: Teen Programs as Sites of Equity and Change (Room: RCC2)

Teen museum programs can serve as incubators for social justice when institutions act with intention. This session explores how equity-centered teen engagement plants the seeds of activism and

institutional critique—both in gallery experiences and in teen-designed events for their peers. Grounded in program practice and research, the session highlights strategies for centering underrepresented experiences while supporting teens as thoughtful interpreters, planners, and cultural organizers. Participants will gain practical approaches for designing programs that encourage critical inquiry, collective care, and youth-led action within and beyond museum walls.

- **Valentin Concha-Nunez** (he/him) is an art historian with extensive knowledge of Latin America and its visual history. Through his research, he clarifies the blending of Indigenous and European styles, subjects, and motifs from the Spanish-speaking Americas, making them accessible to a broad audience, from scholars to diverse students. As a museum educator, he has spent a decade connecting the Latinx community with various museum and cultural settings where he has worked, including MoMA, The Museum of the City of New York, The Brooklyn Museum, The High Line, and El Museo del Barrio. He has studied and worked in the United States, Spain, Mexico, Peru, France, and Russia. He holds a B.A. in Art History from SUNY Purchase and an M.A. in Hispanic Studies from the Universidad de Burgos, Spain.
 - valentin_concha-nunez@whitney.org
- **Davi Sapiro-Gheiler** (she/her) is a transdisciplinary artist and educator based in Brooklyn, working across experimental writing, design, and film. Her practice includes leatherwork, poetry, production design, and screenwriting, often engaging questions of embodiment, transformation, and the making of the self. Davi completed her undergraduate degree at Brown University, where she designed an independent concentration in trans studies and creative practice while facilitating peer education programs across campus health and identity centers. This work shaped her approach to education as a collaborative, embodied, and community-based practice. She is completing a Master's degree in Experimental Humanities and Social Engagement at NYU, where her work explores intersections of trans studies and media. Alongside her artistic practice, Davi works as an Assistant to Youth Learning at the Whitney Museum of American Art, supporting Teen Programs and contributing to the museum's Social Impact initiatives. Across her work, Davi moves between educational cultural institutions and creative production, building spaces for experimentation and collective learning.
 - Davi_Sapiro-Gheiler@whitney.org
- **Ciara Ward** (she/her) is an arts educator, leader, and arts-lover born and raised in Brooklyn. Ciara serves as the Associate Director of Youth Corps at the Park Avenue Armory. She manages and oversees internship programming that includes multidisciplinary artmaking, artistic exploration, and professional development for young creatives ages 16-26. She holds a master's in Applied Theatre from the CUNY School of Professional Studies. As an arts educator she believes that arts education is a great medium for dialogue, confidence-building, community-building, and social justice.
 - cward@armoryonpark.org

Session 2

Tour of AMNH Spaces (Meeting at Linder, leaving promptly at 2:05pm)

Join members of the American Museum of Natural History Education team on a tour of various spaces at AMNH, including but not limited to the Museum's Sensory Room and Discovery Room. The Museum's Sensory Room is a space designed to support many types of sensory needs for visitors of all ages and is available to visitors who feel overstimulated or who need a break from the Museum's halls or crowds. The Discovery Room is an engaging, hands-on learning space for children that offers an introduction to the Museum's science and a gateway to its exhibition galleries. From anthropology to zoology, every major field of Museum science and research is represented.

Session 3

Curators & Teen Voice: Designing a Teen Curators Program at The New York Public Library

(Room: Studio 1)

Imagine a program where teens are not just participants, but researchers, creators, and curators. This year, NYPL hosted a stipend-based fellowship for 11th and 12th graders. Teens in the program worked directly with the curatorial and research teams behind two major exhibitions—¡Wepa! Puerto Ricans in the World of Comics and Niyū Yürk: Middle Eastern and North African Lives in the City—and created companion exhibitions featuring personal comics and historical artifacts. Learn about the Teen Curators program and how to bring teen voices to exhibitions, from collaborating with curators and librarians to designing meaningful interpretive collateral.

- **Arielle Saber** (she/her) is the Manager of Teen Voice & Leadership at The New York Public Library, where she supports all aspects of Young Adult programming to enrich teens' experiences, amplify their voices, and showcase their creative work. Arielle manages the publication of teen writing and art in both print and digital formats. She has previously taught middle school English and supported NYPL's teen employment programs, furthering her commitment to providing meaningful and empowering opportunities for youth.
 - ariellesaber@nypl.org
- **Liz Billy** (she/her) launched the exhibition field trip program for the main branch of The New York Public Library in 2022. She has worked at the Library for over 12 years, primarily connecting educators and K-12 students with the research collections. She has a graduate degree from Bank Street College's museum education program.
 - elizabethbilly@nypl.org

Session 4

Grow Down: Taking Action With Children as Co-Creators (Room: Studio 3)

How do we design with children, not just for them? Five Brooklyn children, ages 6–9, worked as co-researchers with doctoral candidate and former museum educator Val Weisler to answer this question through a child-led pilot at Brooklyn Children's Museum as its research site. In this session, participants will step inside that process—examining how play, imagination, and emotional resonance function as research tools, and how children's insights can meaningfully shape institutional practice. Grounded in real NYC examples, this workshop offers concrete strategies for taking action toward more collaborative, child-centered museum work. This workshop is applicable whether or not you specialize in working with children.

- **Valerie Weisler** (she/her) is a Brooklyn College professor and the anticipated first American PhD in Children's Rights. Her work centers on treating children as collaborators rather than beneficiaries. She leads youth-led research at the intersection of museums, public systems, and civic life, most recently through Grow Down, a child-led research initiative piloted at Brooklyn Children's Museum. Val regularly convenes leaders across government, arts, and advocacy, presents nationally and internationally, and consults on child-centered design, including as a children's rights consultant to Ms. Rachel and through work with the Michigan Department of Education, Harvard, and UC Berkeley School of Law.
 - valerieweisler@gmail.com

Session 5

Nature Journaling and Art: tools for understanding climate emotions and inspiring action through connection (Room: The Den)

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing our world. No matter the subject or education setting, the latest news about climate change can leave learners feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or fearful. How can we as educators make room for various climate emotions? Nature journaling is a multi-disciplinary STEAM and mindfulness practice that nurtures a sense of place and provides space to work with paralyzing emotions while prompting motivating ones. In this session, participants will

learn about climate emotions and engage in the practice of artistic nature journaling as a tool for exploring one's feelings around climate change.

- **Camila Guzmán Nuñez** (she/her) is an Environmental Educator at Brooklyn Bridge Park. She works to nurture a long-lasting connection to nature through hands-on experiences for people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities. Prior to BBP, Camila worked in waste management and sustainability education in schools across all five boroughs. She holds a B.S in Environmental Science with a focus on Global Engagement and has more than 7 years of experience in community mobilization and youth-led advocacy.
 - cguzman@bbp.nyc
- **Uri Sarig** (he/him) is an Environmental Educator at Brooklyn Bridge Park, where he leads programs that engage communities with the ecological and human history of the East River, and NYC's natural world. Prior to joining BBP, Uri taught at Westchester County Parks and the New York Botanical Garden.
 - usarig@bbp.nyc

Session 6

Organizing Museum Workers with the NY Transit Museum Collective (Room: Studio 2)

In early February, workers at the New York Transit Museum publicly announced their campaign to organize The Transit Museum Collective with DC37. As a museum dedicated to preserving and uplifting the history of transit workers, the educators, visitor experience associates, and collections staff and more who work in the decommissioned train station are now fighting for transparency, pay equity, and a democratic workplace.

- **June Lei** (she/her) is a poet, cultural producer, museum worker, and the secretary of DC37 Local 1502. In the MA program at the CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies, June studies the history of cultural and public sector workers in New York City. She is a born and raised New Yorker.
 - junelei1502@gmail.com
- **Melissa Bautista** (she/her) is a born and raised New Yorker and a labor organizer at District Council 37. A Family Worker for the Department of Education, she was a member of DC37 Local 372 for two years before pursuing a Master's degree at the CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies. In the MA program, Melissa studied labor history, labor law, and wrote her thesis on perceptions of police unions as a labor issue. At DC37, Melissa developed and trained the Organizing Committee for the New York Transit Museum Collective. She is passionate about organizing cultural workers into the city's largest public sector union.
 - mbautista@dc37.net
- **Patricia Janick** (she/her) has been working at the NY Transit Museum for over 2 years, in both part-time and full-time positions. She is passionate about inquiry-based, student-focused, and accessible learning in museums. She is particularly interested in labor history as it relates to NYC public transportation, and has developed a labor history highlights tour of the museum. She is also a member of the Organizing Committee for the Transit Museum Collective and a board member of the Young Femme Cultural Workers organization, where she coordinates events and programming.
 - patriciajanick@gmail.com
- **Ava Dennis** (she/her) is a born and raised New Yorker and subway rider. She has been working in museums for over 3 years and has been a museum educator at the New York Transit Museum since 2023. She is passionate about delivering high quality educational programs for students and families to deepen understanding of New York's past, present and future. She is currently a member of the Organizing Committee for the Transit Museum Collective and is pursuing a certificate in Labor Studies at the CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies. Previous presentation experience (in the last 5 years), if any: Panel discussion for alums of the American Folk Art Museums Museum Career Internship Program (MCIP) in May 2025.
 - ava.dennis104@gmail.com

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- **Kristi LiCausi** (she/her) is a licensed master social work (LMSW) with six years of experience in museum education and public programming. She is passionate about accessible museum engagement, cultivating supportive third spaces within museums, and centering community-led voices in museum programming. At the New York Transit Museum, Kristi is the Family and Access Programs Assistant Manager; this role includes the development of inclusive programming for families and the evaluation and refinement of existing programs for family and access audiences at the museum.
 - kristillicausi@gmail.com

Session 7

From the Ground Up: Everyday Action as a Museum Professional (Room: Wetlab)

This workshop will focus on everyday action and non-traditional forms of advocacy within museum work through a Queer theoretical framework. The organizers regularly encounter the question, “What action can I take?” from emerging museum professionals (EMPs), volunteers, interns, front-line staff, and even currently unemployed museum professionals—many of whom are navigating advocacy not only within their professional roles but also in their daily lives as members of LGBTQ+ and other marginalized communities.

- **Jane Sheedy** (she/her) has been an Educator at various museums in New York City including the Children’s Museum of Manhattan, New York Historical Society, the Intrepid Museum, and the Japan Society. She most recently was a Program Coordinator for teen after-school programs for Harlem Children’s Zone. Now she works at DOROT as the GENUine Connections Program Coordinator.
 - janesheedy98@gmail.com
- **Maria Wood** (she/her) recently graduated with an MS/MA in Library & Information Science and Public History at St. John’s University, where she built a strong foundation in research, public engagement, and storytelling. She has worked with amazing organizations like the Intrepid Museum, The National Park Service Ellis Island National Immigration Museum and Stonewall National Monument, and The New York City Department of Environmental Protection Archives. Each experience has deepened my passion for sharing history in ways that are accessible and meaningful to all kinds of audiences.
 - mariaswood2019@gmail.com
- **Margaret Sheble** (she/they) is an ACLS Leading Edge Fellow who holds a Ph.D. and M.A. in English Literature from Purdue University, as well as an Honors B.A. in Art History from Northern Arizona University. She has worked across libraries, museums, and grassroots LGBTQIA+ archives, bridging digital engagement, public humanities, and archival practice with a focus on accessibility and community-centered storytelling. An active leader in the museum and humanities fields, Margaret currently serves as the Vice President of the National Emerging Museum Professional Network advocating for GLAM workers’ rights.
 - mlsheble@gmail.com

Session 8

Whose Tour is it Anyway? Experiments in Visitor Engagement (Room: Learning with Data Lab)

It’s been 10 years since The Anarchist’s Guide to Historic House Museums, yet many institutions still offer a tour that emphasizes facts and figures and leaves little room for visitor voices. Historic Hudson Valley has been experimenting with a new tour model at its historic sites and will share strategies for building visitor-centered engagement. Participants will learn specifics such as how HHV changed its interview format to address engagement skills, which five engagement techniques HHV focused on, and which policies were adapted to reflect this new emphasis on visitor-centered engagement.

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- **Julia Butterfield** (she/her) serves as the K-12 Program Manager at Historic Hudson Valley, planning and leading educational initiatives at the organization's four historic sites that support students and their teachers. She has worked on inquiry-based programs for all ages at The Allen Memorial Art Museum, The Gilder Lehrman Institute, The Museum of the City of New York, The Morris-Jumel Mansion, and the Frick Collection. She has a master's degree in Archives and Public History from NYU, where her capstone focused on efforts to build a memorial to the enslaved community in Irvington, NY and the historical imagery of suburban Main Street.
 - jbutterfield@hudsonvalley.org
- **Nicole Wallace** (she/her) is the Director of Education at Historic Hudson Valley, where she oversees both public and school programming at all four sites. She has a Master's degree in Education from the Museum Leadership program at Bank Street College, and over fifteen years of museum experience from her time at the Bronx Children's Museum, American Museum of Natural History, and Natural History Museum of Los Angeles.
 - nwallace@hudsonvalley.org
- **Robert Yasinsac** (he/him) works for Historic Hudson Valley. For over 25 years there he has been a Museum Educator, Site Manager for the Union Church of Pocantico Hills, and currently is the Program Manager for the Philipsburg Manor and Sunnyside historic sites. He is a graduate of SUNY Oswego and he resides in Westchester County.
 - ryasinsac@hudsonvalley.org

Block III, 3:15 pm–4:15 pm

Session 1

Coordinating Programs Roundtable (Room: The Den)

This session is a space for those coordinating programs to share strategies for successfully booking programs. Structured as an open discussion, participants should bring questions they have and ideas to share. We will discuss all aspects of coordinating, including outreach, booking platforms, accessibility, payments, waivers, buses, and follow-ups. Together, we can identify common issues we experience and iterate solutions.

- **Elliot Hass** (he/they) works as an Education Coordinator at Brooklyn Bridge Park. They are passionate about creating access to environmental education programs as meaningful spaces for community and connection.
 - ehass@bbp.nyc
- **Ben Taylor** (he/him) is the Program Manager of School Groups at the American Museum of Natural History. He has a degree in Entomology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and has 14 years of experience working in informal science spaces.
 - btaylor@amnh.org

Session 2

Engaging Students in Civic Learning through Museums and Historic Sites (Room: Linder)

As trusted spaces, museums and historic sites are uniquely positioned to strengthen civic education. These institutions can cultivate the "civic mindset and action" necessary for an informed citizenry. This session explores how museums cultivate civic skills and responsibility through immersive, hands-on learning that fills gaps in formal education. Three institutions will present models for engagement, showcasing both school-based and site-specific methods. Attendees will discuss practical strategies for using collections to encourage civic action, engagement and active civic participation.

- **Gerrie Bay Hall** (she/her) is the Assistant Vice President of Education at the Intrepid Museum. With more than two decades of experience in humanities education, museum learning, and public history, she plays a central role in developing inclusive, content-rich learning experiences for K12 school and teacher, community and family programs. Ms. Hall holds an MA in Museum Studies from New York University and has served in educational roles across major New York City cultural institutions.
 - ghall@intrepidmuseum.org
- **Hannah Gaston** (she/her), the Director of Education at Liberty Hall Museum & Arboretum, leads a team of a dozen museum educators who bring the historic home and grounds to life for over 10,000 school children each year. She is passionate about making small historic house museums relevant and compelling to modern audiences. She recently spoke about managing logistics for field trips in small museums at the Small Museum Association Annual Conference. She holds a B.A. in History from Elmira College and an M.A. in Museum Education from Seton Hall University.
 - hannah.gaston@kean.edu
- **Karina Filipowski** (she/her) is the Curator of Education & Community Engagement at Macculloch Hall Historical Museum, where she is inspired daily by the history, art, and garden at this historic house in Morristown, NJ to spark discovery and exploration with all learners and visitors. She works with teachers and community partners to create hands-on programming and educational content onsite at the Museum and offsite. She has a master's degree from the Cooperstown Graduate Program, and before working at MHHM, she was at Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle in PA.
 - kfilipowski@maccullochhall.org

Session 3

Educators as Advocates: Integrating Accessibility for Neurodiverse Learners (Room: Studio 1)

This session highlights the importance of teaching all students in an inclusive manner because accessibility is an inherent right. We will explore how museum educators can embed concrete actions into K-12 programs to make learning more accessible for neurodiverse students. Together, we will consider how to move towards a proactive design for art and museum education. We will engage participants in sensory experiences, multimodal learning, and pedagogical strategies. Participants will leave the workshop with resources and strategies for intentionally designing tours, activities, and art projects that actively support neurodiverse students' full participation, agency, and belonging in the museum.

- **Jesse Brown** (they/them) is a Learning Specialist at The Museum of Modern Art, where they develop and facilitate multi-modal gallery programs for K-12 students. During their ten years as a museum educator, Jesse has also worked on school and access programs at the Flint Institute of Arts and the Intrepid Museum. Jesse holds an MA in art education and is completing an advanced certificate in disability studies this spring. As a neurodivergent adult, Jesse is passionate about making museum spaces more accessible for young people with neurodevelopmental disabilities.

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- jesse_brown@moma.org
- **Emma Waldman** (she/her) is a Learning Specialist at The Museum of Modern Art where she researches, develops, and leads programs for K-12 students. In her 10 years of art and museum education experience, she has also held roles at the Children’s Museum for the Arts (CMA) and the Children’s Museum of Manhattan (CMOM), among others. Emma’s teaching pedagogy is grounded in training in Universal Design for Learning (UDL), visual literacy strategies, and inquiry-based teaching, with a sustained dedication to inclusive museum education. Emma is committed to advancing inclusive museum practices that support neurodiverse learners through collaborative, sensory-enriched, and multi-modal experiences.
 - emma_waldman@moma.org
- **Dawn Ruhren** (she/her) is a Learning Specialist at The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), where she designs and leads K–12 school tours. Building on a career that includes roles at the Brooklyn Museum and Dia Beacon, Dawn is a dedicated advocate for inclusive museum education. This will mark Dawn’s second NYCMER conference. She previously presented “Notes from a Brooklyn Museum Fellow,” highlighting her research in supporting neurodivergent families during a typical self-guided museum visit. Today, she transitioned her research to MoMA, focusing on how universal pedagogies can enhance guided gallery experience for K-12 audiences.
 - dawn_ruhren@moma.org

Session 4

Healing through Art: Trauma-informed Collaboration between a Museum and a Recovery Program (Room: Learning with Data Lab)

This workshop presents a collaboration between Luned Palmer, Museum Educator at The Noguchi Museum, and Zoë Fitzpatrick Rogers, Programs Manager of Brooklyn Community Recovery Center at Phoenix Houses of New York | Long Island. Phoenix House and The Noguchi Museum are neighbors and recently co-created a series of inclusive programs for NYC’s most underserved populations, exploring how museums can serve as spaces for recovery-oriented engagement. We invite you to examine what a partnership between a museum and an addiction recovery program can look like in practice. We will discuss how trauma-informed care principles can be modeled within an art institution and how museum-based programs can effectively engage participants who may have little to no prior experience with museums or who have historically been excluded from large cultural institutions.

- **Luned Palmer** (she/her) joined The Noguchi Museum in 2010. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Studio Art from Swarthmore College and a Master of Science in Museum Education from Bank Street College. She currently facilitates all types of programs for all people at The Jewish Museum, The Noguchi Museum and with Arts and Minds. She has worked as a high school and elementary school teacher, graphic designer and curriculum designer. She lives in Brooklyn with her husband, two daughters, and cat and by Noguchi’s words: “Art is everywhere. The whole world is art. The only thing is, some people see it and some people don’t. If one is really awake, he will see that the whole world is a symphony.”
 - luned.palmer@gmail.com
- **Zoë Fitzpatrick Rogers** (she/her) is a New York City based interdisciplinary artist whose work has been exhibited internationally. She has worked at Brooklyn Community Recovery Center for the past two years, where she has led the Art of Advocacy program. Recent residencies include the Woodward Artist Residency (2023) and the Saas-Fee Summer Institute of Art’s Deep Ecology in the Cognitive

Capitalocene and Beyond (2022). Rogers was an Artist in Residence at Birmingham City University (2018–19). She received her MFA in Fine Art from Parsons School of Design in 2022 and her BA (Hons) from The Glasgow School of Art in 2016.

- ZRogers@phoenixhouseny.org

Session 5

Data-driven youth recruitment practices: a collaboration across four NYC institutions (Room: Studio 3)

Mission-driven recruitment for youth programs requires continuous thought and action. Four institutions have been working together closely in the “Innovation Hub” of the NYC Science Research Mentoring Consortium to develop and implement new, actionable approaches to their student recruitment practices with a focus on their mentored research programs for high school students. In this session, we will share insights from these recruitment efforts including strategies for building intentional relationships with school partners, designing accessible applications, and creating sustainable and scalable recruitment processes.

- **Arden Feil** (she/her) manages the NYC Science Research Mentoring Consortium at the American Museum of Natural History. In that role she oversees a network of academic, research, and cultural institutions that provide 500+ high school students access to mentored research experiences and support the development of the next generation of STEM professionals. She also teaches hands-on molecular biology workshops for learners of all backgrounds at Genspace, a community lab based in Brooklyn. She has a M.A. in Biology from Wesleyan University and over 6 years of molecular genetics research experience. Arden believes that the power of science comes from sharing it with others and is dedicated to making science education accessible to everyone.
 - afeil@amnh.org
- **Maria Strangas** (she/her) joined the team at the American Museum of Natural History in early 2018 when she came to Youth Initiatives in the Education Division as Manager of the Science Research Mentoring Program. Since then, she has led the Science Research Mentoring Program, the Lang Science Program, the Science Research Mentoring Consortium, and is now the Assistant Director of Science Research Experiences. Maria grew up in Michigan (and a little in Greece) and moved to New York state for college at the University of Rochester and then to New York City after college. Maria received her doctorate in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at CUNY based at City College with research on how environments shape where particular species can and can't live, focused on lizards in Brazil.
 - mstrangas@amnh.org
- **Fernando Melendez Vazquez** (he/him) is a marine biologist and manager of the Science Research Mentorship Program (SRMP) at the American Museum of Natural History. He earned his B.S. and M.S. in Marine Biology from the University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez, studying ecological assessments of marine protected areas, and completed his Ph.D. at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, where he researched the evolution of warm-blooded traits in fishes such as tunas, swordfishes, and sharks. At SRMP, Fernando combines his research expertise with a passion for science communication and mentorship, helping students engage with real-world science and discover their own paths in STEM.
 - fmelendezvazquez@amnh.org
- **LuAnn Williams** (she/her) is Assistant Director of K12 STEM Education at NYU Tandon School of Engineering and oversees ARISE (Applied Research Investigations in Systems and Engineering). ARISE is dedicated to redefining who belongs in the research lab. By offering a tuition-free,

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stipend-supported summer research experience, ARISE removes financial barriers to elite STEM education for New York City's most promising young minds. Participants engage in college-level seminars and lab work, developing a robust professional identity under the guidance of expert mentors. ARISE doesn't just teach science and engineering; it cultivates the social capital and academic resilience necessary for students to thrive in higher education and beyond.

- lw2850@nyu.edu
- **Jessi Hersh** (she/her) supports high school and undergraduate trainee programs at RockEDU Science Outreach at The Rockefeller University. In this role, she contributes to both informal and formal learning environments that help participants develop research skills, build confidence, and strengthen their identities in STEM. She holds a PhD in Biochemistry from the University of Miami and a BS in Materials Engineering from Cornell University, and has been actively involved in science education initiatives throughout her training. Jessi is committed to lowering barriers to STEM education and expanding access for all students interested in science.
 - jhersh01@rockefeller.edu

Session 6

Activating Museum Assets to Design Climate-Focused Learning Experiences (Room: Wetlab)

How can we leverage museum assets to create climate-focused learning experiences that are inquiry-based, meaningful, and engaging? In this session, join AMNH educators to discuss impactful ways to address climate change and promote climate action through engagement with exhibits, objects, hands-on experiences, and public-facing museum resources. Participants will have the opportunity to engage in activities that can be adopted for various settings and audiences. The session will conclude with participants taking inventory of the assets and resources they have in their own institutions to design opportunities for activating museum assets to promote climate change understanding and action.

- **John Sapida** (he/him) is currently the Manager of Digital Initiatives for the Urban Advantage program at the American Museum of Natural History. His professional experience spans higher education administration, digital and social media, media education and advocacy, human rights education, documentary film production, and museum education. He holds a BA in International Studies from Ramapo College of New Jersey and an MA in Museum Studies from CUNY School of Professional Studies. He is also a part-time educator with The Citizenship Project at The New York Historical and a recipient of the New Leaders Fellowship from Association for Science and Technology Centers (ASTC).
 - jsapida@amnh.org
- **Devin D'Agostino** (he/him) is the Learning Labs Project Manager at the American Museum of Natural History, overseeing the development and operation of the Museum's hands-on, public-facing education spaces. Devin has also served as a classroom teacher, museum educator, and lab researcher. He holds a Master of Arts in Teaching, as well as bachelors' degrees in Neuroscience and Philosophy. Outside his work in education, Devin is pursuing a graduate degree in paleontology.
 - ddagostino@amnh.org

Session 7

"No Food in the Museum!": Actionable Food Pedagogies to Engage Community Voices and Uplift Culture (Room: HHO Lab)

How do you introduce food in the museum, where it isn't allowed? What are the real challenges of incorporating food? And yet, what possibilities does it hold, given the excitement it spurs in communities and visitors? This session invites participants through freewriting, conversation, and hands-on activities to explore the challenges and potential food holds as a learning tool within museums. The session presents educational strategies and a concrete model for a cross-departmental co-design initiative rooted in food pedagogy that can be adapted across various museum types to elicit youth and community caregivers' voices in museum experiences.

- **Dr. Phebe Chew** (she/her) studies informal learning through food and culture. In her research, she engages in partnerships across museum departments and community-based partners to create learning experiences that invite and uplift voices and assets not traditionally invited as expertise in museum spaces. She is currently a Postdoctoral Fellow in Informal STEM at the New York Hall of Science, where she leads a collaborative design-based research project with cross-departmental museum staff around the creation of a new community-based STEM demonstration around stuffed foods like dumplings and empanadas.
 - pchew@nysci.org
- **Delia Meza** (she/her/ella) is a leader in community-driven STEM education for over 20 years, dedicated to fostering meaningful connections between museums and diverse families. As Director of Family Learning and Community Partnerships at the New York Hall of Science, she leads inclusive, culturally responsive initiatives that empower families to co-create impactful learning experiences. A recognized advocate for equity in informal learning, she is an ACM Diversity in Action Fellow and an ASTC Diversity and Leadership Fellow. Delia holds an MA in Leadership in Museum Education from Bank Street College of Education.
 - dmeza@nysci.org
- **Truck McDonald** (he/him) leads the development of Explainer training, exhibit interpretation, and public demonstrations at NYSCI. He began in the NYSCI Science Career Ladder as a high school student, eventually leading him to earn a B.S. in Forensic Science. Truck's background combines laboratory experience with a passion for youth development and science communication. In his current role, he bridges the gap between complex scientific phenomena and the curiosity of the current and future scientists that make up the New York Hall of Science staff and guests. Constantly iterating on ways of learning, the development of new demos, activities (most of which are successful, and a few of which have become cautionary tales).
 - tmcdonald@nysci.org

Session 8

From Compliance to Care: Access Workers (Room: Studio 2)

Learn how to build capacity for Access Workers—disabled practitioners who support inclusive, care-centered programming in cultural institutions. This hands-on session introduces the concept's disability justice roots and guides participants through activities to identify access gaps, design Access Worker roles, and advocate for institutional support. Attendees will leave with practical tools and strategies to implement Access Workers in their own work.

- **Emma Jaromin** (she/her) is an access worker and the Manager of Visitor Accessibility and Programs at Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum. She has extensive experience designing and implementing disability justice-informed programming in cultural institutions and independent events co-created with her community. Emma is a Certified Professional in Accessibility Core

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Competencies (CPACC) and has served as an Access Doula for multiple museums and arts organizations, including The Phillips Collection, The Shed, and the Museum of Modern Art. Her work focuses on relational access, cross-disability solidarity, and building institutional capacity for care-based access roles. Emma holds a Master's in Public Anthropology with certificates in Disability Studies and Community-Based Research. She brings both lived experience and professional expertise to her work, and thanks all those who have formally and informally taught her throughout her life.

- jaromine@si.edu
- **Lily Lipman** (all the pronouns!) is a queer, autistic, multi-disabled activist who creates disabled centered access in cultural spaces. They center co-creation, organizing, relationship building, and access dreaming in their practice. Lily's goal is to make access work a more artistic and intentional experience created by and for disabled folks. They've worked with institutions such as The Public Theatre, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Kinetic Light, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, the Whitney Museum, the Museum Access Consortium, Green-Wood Cemetery, and more! For more information, visit their website at www.LilyLipman.com
 - LilyALipman@gmail.com
- **Sarit Cahana** (she/her) is currently the Associate Educator in Accessibility at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Prior to this, Sarit worked at Poster House as their inaugural Accessibility Coordinator. Over her career, she has worked in the disability field in a variety of capacities, including nonprofit work at Disability Support Services Administrator for Jewish Family and Child Service and Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon (PPAO). She had worked various museums and cultural institutions, such as Arts and Industries Building (AIB) Smithsonian Museum, Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education (OJMCHE). She holds a Masters in Disability Studies from City University of New York (CUNY). Sarit additionally holds Disability Advocacy Certificate from American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) with American University.
 - sarit.cahana@metmuseum.org
- **Madison Zalopany** (they/them) is an access worker, artist, and cultural critic. In these roles, they foster cross-disability solidarity, support access logistics, and operate from an anti-ableist framework. They have worked with institutions such as The Guggenheim Museum, The Museum of Modern Art, Laundromat Project, Storm King Art Center, and United States Artists. Their work experience includes acting as The Whitney Museum's Coordinator of Access and Community Programs; the Director of Community Programs and Partnerships at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art; and most recently, the Lead Access Coordinator for the beloved disability culture event series I Wanna Be with You Everywhere.
 - mzalopany@gmail.com

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Intern

Laila AnnMarie Stevens, Freelance Photojournalist

2025-2026 Conference Committee

NYCMER would like to thank the following individuals for participating in this year's conference committee. Thank you for dedicating your time, insights, and passion!

Chair & VP: Jonathan Milard, Manager of School Programs, Residencies and Teacher Learning, *American Museum of Natural History*

Intern: Laila AnnMarie Stevens, Freelance Photojournalist

Adelyn Castro Stratulat, Sr. Citizenship Educator, *The New York Historical*

Alex Perez, Manager of Education Initiatives: Data Science and Computational Thinking, *American Museum of Natural History*

Alexia Wang, *Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust*

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Ellen Peiser, Senior Museum Educator for Access Programs, *Intrepid Museum*

Emily Edmonds-Langham, Director of Education, *Teatown Lake Reservation*

Hilary Goldstein, Public Program Coordinator, *New York Transit Museum*

Jane Sheedy, Teen Program Coordinator/ per diem educator

Jessica Bryant, Coordinator of Family Programs, *The New York Historical*

Jiyeon Lee, Museum Educator, Doctoral Student, *Teachers College, Columbia University*

Joanna Seifter, Museum public programmer, arts writer

Kristopher Dean, Director of Education and Visitor Experience, *South Street Seaport Museum*

Madison Smith, Access and Community Programs Manager, *The Studio Museum in Harlem*

Margaret Hoffman, Manager of School Groups, Residencies, and Teacher Learning, *American Museum of Natural History*

Maria Wood, STEAM Educator, *Lewis Latimer House*

Maya Pincus, Specialist in Science & Teacher Education, *American Museum of Natural History*

Michael Stevens, Manager of Interpretation & Engagement, *Intrepid Museum*

Noe Gaytan, Associate Manager of Artmaking, *Brooklyn Museum*

Olivia Kielczewski, Public Programs Supervisor, *Children's Museum of Manhattan*

Pamela Lucero, Executive Assistant, *Robert A.M. Stern Architects.*

Rebecca Clark, *Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust*

Sarah Ketani, Museum Educator

William (Bill) Elliston, Curator of Education, *Prospect Park Zoo*

Yǔníng Gāo, Instructional Design, *Hunter College*

About the Conference Committee

The Conference Committee provides a great opportunity to connect with colleagues, network, discuss best practices in the field, and, most importantly, help plan the Annual Conference. At the end of each summer, we

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put out a call for NYCMER members at all career levels to contribute their knowledge, experience, and time to this important professional development event.

Conference Committee members:

- identify and discuss key issues and trends in the field
- participate in one conference sub-committee (i.e. design, evaluation, editorial)
- review and select proposals
- liaise with conference session chairs
- ensure that the conference runs smoothly

Interested in being on the 2027 committee? Have questions?

Email vicepresident@nycmer.org

2025-26 NYCMER Peer Group Leaders

Peer Groups are a NYCMER membership benefit and meet throughout the year. We invite non-members to attend one peer group meeting to learn more about NYCMER. A schedule of upcoming meetings can be found on our event calendar on our website. To find out more information about peer groups or to join their email lists, log into the member zone and select "Peer Groups." To propose a new group, email the Secretary and Peer Groups Liaison at info@nycmer.org.

Book Club

Alicia Juliet

Digital Media and Technologies

John Sapida

Docent, Intern, and Volunteer Supervisors

Barbara Cohen-Stratynner & Jade Johnson

Early Childhood

Laura Kujo and Kristen Scarola

Exhibitions and Interpretation

Christa May

K-12 and Family Programming

Julia Butterfield

Neurodivergent Educators

Christine Quigley

Queer Peers

Maria Wood & Jane Sheedy

Looking for an opportunity to get involved with the Peer Groups?

We are looking for interested NYCMER members to fill these roles.

Peer Groups Seeking New Leadership

- Access
- Adult Programs
- English Language Learners & Cultural Diversity
- Evaluation
- Managers
- Historic Sites
- Outdoor Education
- Teen Programs

Regional Meet Up Coordinators

We are seeking interested members to create informal gatherings for networking and exploration of cultural institutions in the NYC

Metro Area in:

Queens

Brooklyn

Bronx

Manhattan

Staten Island

New Jersey



**Thinking about a NYC MER Membership?
Here's what to expect:**

Deepen Your Scholarship and Refine Your Practice

- Attend **Monthly Professional Development events**, free to NYC MER members, that promote best practices and innovative strategies
- Receive **Discounted Attendance to the Annual Conference** with keynote conversations led by leaders in the field, practical workshops and informative panels, poster sessions, and a networking reception
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- Access to our **Online Resources Archive** with best practices for serving diverse audiences, evaluation, pedagogy, career management, and more

Expand Your Professional Network

- Connect with **Peer Groups** for deeper conversation, support, and collaboration
- Attend **Annual Networking Events** including the **Meet & Greet** and **Holiday Party**
- Utilize our **Membership Directory** to connect with over 1,000 mentors and colleagues
- Engage in city-wide and national conversations through **Social Media**

Invest in Your Career Development

- Receive exclusive **Job E-Blasts** as soon as jobs are posted to the NYC MER website
- Serve as a **Paid Intern on the Board of Trustees**
- Receive an **Annual Conference Scholarship**
- Develop as a leader through serving on the **Conference Committee**, coordinating a **Peer Group**, or being nominated to shape the future of NYC MER as a **Board Trustee**

Want to get more involved in NYC MER, let us know HERE: <https://forms.gle/xUxyL7NzwYc3cU5WA>