



Speaker Bios

Jamie Escoto

California State Lead Ambassador



Jamie Escoto is a Technology Strategy Consultant for Enterprise Business Systems at Apple. Previously, she served as Vice President of Program Management for Disney Media Entertainment & Distribution, and she led technical teams across FOX, Sony Pictures, & NBC Universal. She has championed Diversity, Equity & Inclusion initiatives throughout her career. She is an Advisory Board Member for A Window Between Worlds, utilizing art as a healing tool for victims of trauma, and currently serves as the California State Lead Ambassador for the American Cancer

Society Cancer Action Network. Jamie holds a Bachelor of Science in Engineering from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her most important role and proudest accomplishment is being a mom to two boys, Lorenzo & Moisés.

State Senator Scott Wiener

Representing California Senate District 11



Senator Scott Wiener represents San Francisco and northern San Mateo County in the California State Senate. Elected in 2016, Senator Wiener focuses extensively on housing, transportation, civil rights, criminal justice reform, clean energy, and alleviating poverty. He chairs the Senate Housing Committee and is Co-Chair of the California Legislative Jewish Caucus. He is a past Chair of the California Legislative LGBTQ Caucus. Before his election to the Senate, Senator Wiener served as a member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, representing the district previously represented by Harvey Milk. He

also chaired the San Francisco County Transportation Authority. Before taking public office, Senator Wiener practiced law for fifteen years, including nearly a decade as a Deputy City Attorney in the San Francisco City Attorney's Office. He also served in a number of community leadership roles, including co-chair of the San Francisco LGBT Community Center and on the national Board of Directors of the Human Rights Campaign. Senator Wiener has lived in San Francisco's Castro neighborhood since 1997. He received degrees from Duke University and Harvard Law School and was a Fulbright Scholar in Santiago, Chile.



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Michael Balaoing, Esq

Founder and CEO
Candlelion LLC



Michael Balaoing, Esq. drives leaders to define who they are, what they stand for, and how to lift others as you rise. He is Founder and CEO of Candlelion LLC, a global consulting firm that advises the world's largest companies, iconic brands, startups, investors, philanthropists, next-gen entrepreneurs, nonprofits and foundations. For 25 years, he has been an expert in strategic communications, leadership development, philanthropy and corporate responsibility. He has personally coached and trained more than 25,000 people across 100 companies and 500 nonprofits. Trained as a public interest attorney, he has been adjunct faculty at Johns Hopkins University and New York University.

He has awarded over \$500 million in grants and played key leadership roles in philanthropy: Entertainment Industry Foundation (Senior Vice President), Philippine Development Foundation (Board Secretary), California Volunteers (Chairperson), Liberty Hill Foundation (Board Chairperson), Women's Philanthropy Institute (Advisory Council). He served as Board Secretary of the Council on Foundations and chaired the Diversity Committee, where he co-founded and launched in 2010 the flagship leadership program, Career Pathways.

Michael is a lifelong advocate of racial and gender equity and social justice. Born in Manila and raised in Los Angeles, he enrolled at Princeton University at age 16 and has taught students, faculty, and staff at a dozen campuses from Harvard and MIT to historically black colleges and universities. With a BA in International Relations from Princeton and JD from UCLA, his career and volunteer service have taken him to 300 cities, 50 countries, 40 U.S. states on 6 continents. He lives in Manhattan and may someday be the parent of a puppy or llama.

Dr. Erqi Pollom

Associate Professor of Radiation Oncology (Radiation Therapy) and by courtesy, of Neurosurgery
Stanford Health Care



Dr. Pollom specializes in the radiation treatment of central nervous system and gastrointestinal malignancies. She serves as Associate Chair of Clinical Operations of radiation oncology at Stanford. Her research is focused in advancing multidisciplinary therapeutic approaches to improve patient-centered outcomes.



Speaker Bios

Gladys Arias, MPA

Principal for Health Equity Policy Analysis and Legislative Support
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network



Gladys Arias, MPA is a Principal for Health Equity Policy Analysis and Legislative Support at the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), the American Cancer Society's nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate. In this role she works to advance public policy that will advance health equity across the cancer care continuum. Prior to ACS CAN, Gladys served as a Policy Advisor for the Mayor's Office of NYC where she led and supported various citywide programs in partnership with the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYC DOHMH), which serves 8 million New Yorkers, as well as the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation (H+H), the largest public hospital system in the U.S. In this role, Gladys worked to improve health care delivery systems and implement governmental programs and initiatives with a focus on community-based care, health equity and behavioral health. Gladys has also previously worked in global health in Sub-Saharan Africa, coordinated health education programs in NYC schools, and advised healthcare clients across the U.S. Gladys received a Master of Public Administration from New York University as well as a Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Arts from the University of Pittsburgh.

Kira Sano

Executive Chair, California Emerging Leaders Council
University of Southern California, Los Angeles



Hi everyone! My name is Kira and I'm the founder and executive chair of the California Society of Emerging Leaders. Currently, I'm a senior at the University of Southern California double majoring in Environmental Studies and NGOs and Social Change and minoring in Data Analytics...so I basically just love school :) Previously, I've served on the National Campus and Youth Engagement Team as Youth Chair, working to build ACS On Campus Youth. I've also worked in Climate Venture Capital, Environmental Non-Profits, Writing/Education Centers, and more—I'm happy to talk about anything and everything related to these topics!

I still remember when I heard this dreaded "c" word for the first time. Cancer.

Although I was a third-grader and didn't understand what the word meant, I knew my mom's life was at stake. The next day, I went to my teacher and asked her for some paper to start writing letters with my classmates to show her she wasn't battling it alone. I enthusiastically brought home the most heartfelt letters from my class, resulting in her first smile since the diagnosis. Even though her breast cancer spread to her brain and lungs, me and my family were able to keep our smiling faces on for her.



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However, in my freshman year of high school, when my grandma Kathy passed away from lung cancer and my mom was diagnosed with brain cancer for the second time, I felt utterly hopeless. It felt like no matter what I did, my loved ones would still wake up in pain everyday and I wanted to do more than just be a supportive daughter.

That year, one of my classmates invited me to join my school's American Cancer Society fundraising event. I found an inspiring community of allies in the fight against cancer and I also found something I hadn't felt in a long time: hope.

Over the past 8 years, I've continued volunteering with the ACS—developing leadership and technical skills, and finding my calling. My goal has shifted as well; I work to empower elementary to college aged students in almost every volunteer program.

Throughout my time, I've seen the power of youth...spending their countless weekends getting out of their comfort zone and creating innovative projects. Despite their knowledge and contributions, these students are often dismissed. Moreover, a survey of 186 countries by the UN reports that young adults feel that they have "limited opportunities for effective participation in decision-making processes." As a result, young people are discouraged from political participation or activism because they don't feel they have a real opportunity for their voices to be heard.

That's why I wanted to create a space for students to find their voice and become activists. The California Society of Emerging Leaders is an advocacy and education program to empower youth across CA to make sure the fight against cancer is a local, state, and nationwide priority. Even though we started less than a year ago, we've been able to make great strides. Some of our highlights include raising thousands of dollars for the ACS, sending students to Washington D.C. and Sacramento for lobby days and leadership training, and developing campaigns in our local communities to research and take action in health equity.

My hope is that our group will support the future leaders of the fight against cancer—so that other 3rd grade students don't have to hear the dreaded "c" word ever again.

Leslie Ferreira, MPA (she/ella)

Associate Director, Grassroots Alliance – Health Equity
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network



Leslie Ferreira (she/ella) serves as the Director, Grassroots Alliances – Health Equity for the American Cancer Society Cancer Actin Network. She works to enhance and expand partnerships with groups and organizations that are rooted in diverse communities. Leslie serves as the national staff partner many of the diverse volunteer Affinity Groups, who are giving voice to the unequal burden of cancer in their communities. Leslie has a long career in advancing health equity for underserved communities through tobacco control and substance misuse prevention programs, advocacy and policy initiatives, and working with youth and young adult advocates. She began her tobacco control work as a youth advocate volunteer during California's Prop-99 efforts, where as a teenager she learned the importance of using your voice to make change. This led to professional time spent with the American Lung Association/Breathe California of Sacramento, the



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Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, and ETR. Leslie also served as the Chief of Health Equity for the California Tobacco Control Program. In this role she managed and facilitated partnerships with state agencies, community-based organizations, and traditional and non-traditional partners to develop and advance an evidence-based health equity plan. Leslie holds a BA in Sociology from Sonoma State University and a Master's in Public Administration from Golden Gate University. Leslie lives in Lathrop, CA with her husband, Carlos, and children, Mateas, and Maya. She is a lifelong, faithful 49ers fan.

Jim Knox

Managing Director California/Hawaii

[American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network](#)



Jim Knox has served as the Managing Director for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), which is the advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society, since 2004. In that capacity he is responsible for directing the organization's federal, state and local advocacy efforts in California and Hawaii. He has more than 40 years of experience in non-profit public interest advocacy in California. Previously he served eight years as the Executive Director of the political reform group, California Common Cause. Prior to that he worked for the Planning and Conservation League, a statewide environmental lobbying group.

Knox has been a registered lobbyist at the state capitol for 30 years and has directed numerous statewide ballot measure campaigns. He has an undergraduate degree from Stanford University, is a graduate of the Coro Fellows Program in Public Affairs, and has a Masters Degree in Public Policy from the Claremont Graduate School. A New Jersey native, Jim has a grown daughter and son and resides in Sacramento.

Mary Kemp

Director, Grassroots Organizing

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network



Mary Kemp is the Director of Grassroots Organizing- California, Guam and Hawaii- for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network. She is engaged in shaping federal and state policies that impact cancer patients and local public health policies that create healthier communities. Prior to her work with ACS and ACS CAN, she was a high school Biology teacher.

Mary serves on the International DKI Health Patient and Caregiver Advisory Council and, previously, the Executive Boards of the Comprehensive Cancer Alliance for Idaho and the Tucson Interfaith HIV and AIDS Network. As a member of the Close the Gap Steering Committee, she helped expand health care coverage to over 75,000 Idahoans.

Mary served on the Southern Illinois Positive Youth Development Committee, as a Boise State Community Advisor, has coached numerous high school track and field and cross-country state championship teams and received Congressional Recognition for her success in an underprivileged school district. Mary holds a BA in Biological Anthropology and Archaeology from Arizona State University.