

**Emerging Leaders Session 1:** Middle School 1: Speak Up! Building Confidence, Communication, and Leadership

**Emerging Leaders Session 2:** Middle School 2: Speak Up! From Learning to Leading



# Gabe Albornoz

Gabe was appointed Director of Montgomery County Recreation by County Executive Marc Elrich in December 2025, marking his return to the role after serving seven years on the County Council. A lifelong resident of the County, Albornoz has more than two decades of experience in public service, policy leadership and operational management. He previously led Montgomery County Recreation from 2007 to 2018, becoming the youngest person in County history to hold the position.

Under his leadership, the department earned 83 national and state awards for excellence. He also oversaw 11 capital projects totaling more than \$280 million, including the construction of five new community recreation centers and the renovation of six others. From 2018 to 2025, Gabe served as an at-Large County Councilmember. He served as Council President in 2021 and chaired the Health and Human Services Committee. His legislative accomplishments include establishing the Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Commission, helping launch the MoCo BOOST Guaranteed Income Program, and spearheading efforts to achieve high vaccination rates in the Latino community during the COVID-19 pandemic through the creation of Por Nuestra Salud y Bienestar.

Gabe is bilingual in English and Spanish. A graduate of Montgomery County Public Schools (Walt Whitman High School), Albornoz has earned a Bachelor of Arts in Communication from the University of Maryland and an MBA from Johns Hopkins University. He resides in Kensington with his wife and four children.

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# Isabel Argoti

Isabel Argoti is a nonprofit leader & first-generation professional with proud roots from Ecuador. Isabel holds a passion for developing community programs, helping first-generation youth, advocating for women and girls, and continuing her local involvement in Montgomery County, Maryland. She has held impactful roles at the National Park Service managing the Every Kid in a Park Program, and at Collegiate Directions, where she established the Career Mentoring Initiative. She has also held strong leadership through community programs such as LADYS-CVILLE and the Hispanic College Institute.

Isabel served for five years on the Montgomery County Commission for Women, chairing notable committees and leading the 44th Women's Legislative Briefing. Recognized with several awards, including the Presidential Lifetime Achievement Award in 2024, Isabel is currently the Deputy Director at Community Bridges where she leads program strategy to empower girls in grades 4-12 throughout Montgomery County. She is also a board member for AMP Global Youth and Creative Wheaton. As a family endeavor, she helps her sister with the small business, FlanCake by Gaby.

Drawing on her architecture background, Isabel also offers design services for nonprofits and small businesses seeking thoughtful, mission-aligned visual solutions. Learn more about Isabel's work and design at [www.Isabelargoti.com](http://www.Isabelargoti.com)

Isabel holds a B.S. in Architecture from the University of Virginia and a Nonprofit Management Executive Certificate from Georgetown University.

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# Sheryl Freedman

Sheryl Freedman is a dedicated educator with over 20 years of experience teaching at Walt Whitman High School. As the Lead Teacher of the Leadership Academy for Social Justice, she has played a pivotal role in fostering a culture of equity and inclusion within the school community. Sheryl also contributed significantly to the development of the OneWhitman program, a schoolwide anti-bias initiative designed to promote understanding and respect among students and staff. Balancing her professional commitments, Sheryl is also a proud mother of two, bringing her passion for nurturing growth and development into both her family and professional life.

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# Isabella Wise

LMSW

Isabella is a community advocate, mentor, and leader who is deeply committed to supporting young people through mentorship, education, and community engagement. She works closely with youth to create safe, supportive spaces where they feel heard, valued, and empowered to be themselves. Isabella works with the Street Outreach Network to help young people navigate challenges, build confidence, and grow into leaders within their communities. She is passionate about helping youth recognize their strengths, make positive choices, and feel empowered to shape their own futures.