



## 2026 Women Making History Honorees



**Mindy Badin**  
*Transportation Committee Chair, Greater Olney Civic Association*

Mindy is a dedicated advocate for pedestrian safety and safer streets in Montgomery County, providing testimony on key legislation and helping pass the Safe Streets Act and the Sargent Patrick Kepp Act to address reckless driving. She works with Families for Safe Streets, mentors Vision Zero ambassadors, and partners with county leaders to strengthen safety infrastructure and public transportation. As Transportation Committee Chair for the Greater Olney Civic Association, she created the “Road Report” resource page to help residents report roadway concerns. Motivated by personal tragedy, Mindy has turned loss into meaningful advocacy to prevent future road fatalities and build a safer community.



**Stephanie Berk**  
*CEO at Tikkun Olam Farm & Executive Director at PACA Education*

Shortly after moving to Montgomery County, Dr. Stephanie Berk learned about the depth of local food insecurity and transformed her six-acre property into Tikkun Olam Farm to support the community through regenerative agriculture and education. She donates 18–26 dozen eggs each month and hundreds of pounds of culturally responsive produce to Manna Food Center, runs small food drives,

mentors aspiring farmers, and hosts free monthly craft nights. Through her nonprofit, PACA Education, she develops curriculum and leads programs that connect people to food, farming, and service. Stephanie has reshaped her life to serve others, quietly but powerfully strengthening her community.



**Ana Bonilla**  
**Casey Community Center Program Supervisor, City of Gaithersburg**

Ana Bonilla is a dedicated leader whose commitment to service creates spaces where people feel welcomed and seen. As Program Supervisor at the Casey Community Center for the City of Gaithersburg, she led the largest National Night Out in the city's history, serving more than 800 participants. She also serves as Part-Time ESOL Program Coordinator at Seneca Creek Community Church, supporting over 200 adult learners each session, and

contributes to Operation Christmas Child and Comfort Cases. After immigrating to the United States in 2011 and graduating from Gaithersburg High School as an ESOL student, Ana turned personal challenges into purpose, using her lived experience to lead with empathy and strengthen her community.



**Adrienne Clancy , Ph.D.**  
**Founder & Artistic Director, ClancyWorks Dance Company**

Adrienne Clancy has dedicated her career to expanding access to high-quality dance and arts education in Montgomery County. As Founder and Artistic Director of ClancyWorks Dance Company, she brings innovative, community-centered programs to schools, senior centers, and local organizations, ensuring residents of all ages can engage with the arts. Her work has earned numerous honors, including the Maryland Council for Dance Award

for Outstanding Service Contributions and the Montgomery County Executive's Award for Excellence in the Arts and Humanities. Through creative partnerships, mentorship, and inclusive programming, Adrienne has made a lasting impact on the county's cultural landscape.



**Nyah Imani Collier**  
**Clinical Research Nurse/ Associate Investigator**  
**National Institutes of Health (NIH)**

Nyah is a Clinical Research Nurse and Associate Investigator at the NIH, where she advances infectious disease research and ensures studies are conducted safely, ethically, and accurately. Her work has strengthened workflow efficiency, data integrity, and participant experience, contributing to national and international research on Lyme disease and food allergies.

Beyond NIH, she serves with the Maryland Responds Medical Reserve Corps, volunteers with Be My Eyes to support individuals with low vision, serves as leadership at Alfred Street Baptist Church, and mentors aspiring health professionals. Raised in a military family and shaped by a life of service and adaptability, Nyah brings compassion, resilience, and curiosity to both her profession and her community.



**Beth Cooler**  
**Lead ESOL Instructor & Head Instructor Supervisor,**  
**Islamic Society of Washington Area (ISWA)**

For the past three years, Beth has served as an ESOL instructor at ISWA, impacting more than 150 refugee and immigrant women. Her students have advanced in English and gone on to become teacher assistants, educators, childcare professionals, and Montgomery College students—gaining confidence to advocate for themselves in daily life. Often the only non-Muslim in the classroom, Beth leads with humility, respect, and genuine allyship, building trust across cultural and religious differences. Beyond language instruction, she empowers women to

understand their rights, strengthen their voices, and see new possibilities, while mentoring fellow instructors and enhancing skill-based courses. ISWA and its community are stronger because of her steady, compassionate leadership.



**Kathleen Coates**  
**Founder & Lead Volunteer, Scrap Happy Thrift, Blackrock**  
**Center for the Arts**

Kate Coates founded Scrap Happy, an art-supply thrift store in partnership with the BlackRock Center for the Arts, creating an affordable, sustainable resource for local artists. Through a “pay what you can” model and the creative reuse of donated and repurposed materials—including fixtures from recently closed JOANN stores—she has expanded access to the arts while supporting BlackRock’s programming through popular themed sales.

A volunteer herself, Kate has built a multigenerational volunteer community and helped divert more than 13,000 pounds of art supplies from landfills. An avid crafter who launched the shop using materials collected over 20 years, she exemplifies practical, community-driven leadership with lasting environmental and cultural impact.



**Kristy Daphnis**

***Chief Operating Officer, Maryland Hospital Association***

Kristy serves as CEO of the Maryland Hospital Association, overseeing daily operations to ensure hospitals across the state receive strong support in advancing healthy communities. In addition, she is deeply engaged in service as a Girl Scout troop leader, Commissioner on the Montgomery County Advisory Commission on Policing, member of the Maryland Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee, PTSA volunteer, Co-Founder of Montgomery County Families for Safe Streets, and advisory board member for both the Society of Health

Policy Young Professionals and the University of Michigan School of Public Health Griffith Leadership Center. Dedicated to strengthening her community, Kristy is also a committed mentor—especially to young women and early-career professionals—while balancing her career with devotion to her family.



**Cecilia Emmanuel**

***Head of Compliance, AALTO Haps LLC***

Cecilia Emmanuel is a principled and impactful leader whose work spans corporate, entrepreneurial, and civic spaces. As Head of Compliance at AALTO Haps LLC, she strengthens critical regulatory and operational systems with integrity, accountability, and steady leadership. Beyond her corporate role, she founded The Kloset Space, an eco-conscious storage business that promotes sustainability while empowering fellow women entrepreneurs through mentorship and support. Deeply

connected to her roots in Sierra Leone, she actively supports alumni initiatives, fundraising efforts for those facing economic hardship, and democratic engagement within her community. Through integrity, resilience, and a commitment to lifting others, Cecilia leads with purpose and creates meaningful, far-reaching impact.



**Milagro Flores**

***Founder & Executive Director, Mujer Fuerza Y Coraje***

Milagro “Mily” Flores is the Executive Director & founder of Mujer Fuerza y Coraje, which she built from the ground up to empower Latina women and their families in Montgomery County. She manages daily operations with a volunteer team, often contributing her own time and resources, all while balancing family and work. For more than 15 years, she has led with compassion and action—organizing English classes, the Welcome Baby program for pregnant mothers, senior and youth initiatives, summer arts programs, educational programs for immigrant parents, and community cleanups. Her leadership is rooted in lived experience and a deep commitment to ensuring women feel seen, supported, and capable of achieving their dreams. Mily is a community pillar who empowers Latina women and families to achieve stability & opportunity.



**Sheryl Freedman**

***Leadership Academy for Social Justice, Lead Teacher, MCPS***

Ms. Freedman leads the Leadership Academy for Social Justice at Walt Whitman High School, teaching courses including LGBTQ+ Studies, AP African American Studies, and Environmental Justice while organizing town halls, guest speakers, and the annual Social Justice Fair. She also coordinates the schoolwide OneWhitman program, training student facilitators and guiding biweekly lessons on diversity and community for all students and staff. As co-sponsor of Pride Alliance, she serves as a trusted ally to LGBTQIA+ students—advocating for inclusion, facilitating dialogue with administration, and supporting student-led change. Known for leading thoughtful, balanced discussions on identity and current events, Ms. Freedman creates classrooms rooted in empathy, critical thinking, and student voice.



**Teresa Gasaway-Gleaton**

***Co-Founder, Minds in Motion Childcare  
Historic Scotland Community Champion***

Teresa Gasaway-Gleaton is a strategic leader in a multigenerational effort to preserve Black history and advance equity in Montgomery County’s historic Scotland community. As the architect behind the Gasaway Sisters’ most impactful initiatives, she ensures that bold vision translates into sustainable action. Teresa brings disciplined strategy to complex ventures, including

directing the county's largest Black-owned childcare enterprise and co-organizing Montgomery County's largest Juneteenth festival. She also helped convene the first Kinship Communities Dinner, uniting historic Black communities facing displacement. Through strategic leadership and generational commitment, Teresa is creating a sustainable model for restoration, cultural preservation, and community equity—laying the foundation for future generations to remain rooted where her family's legacy began.



**LaTrice Gasaway-Johnson**  
***Co-Founder, Minds in Motion Childcare***  
***Historic Scotland Community Champion***

LaTrice Gasaway-Johnson is the creative force behind the Gasaway Sisters' impactful work, bringing intention, atmosphere, and emotional resonance to every space she creates. She helps direct the County's largest Black-owned childcare enterprise. A chief organizer of the County's largest Juneteenth festival, LaTrice has transformed the event into a powerful platform for cultural preservation

and civic engagement. She also plays a central leadership role in ongoing efforts to reclaim portions of her family's ancestral land, advancing a vision that includes affordable housing, community gardens, early learning facilities, and a heritage center. She helped organize the first Kinship Communities Dinner, uniting historic Black communities confronting displacement. Through creativity, strategy, and generational commitment, LaTrice is building a sustainable model for cultural preservation, land restoration, and community equity.



**Kimberly Glassman**  
***Special Education Attorney, Law Offices Brian K. Gruber***

Kimberly Glassman is a Special Education Attorney and provides compassionate and strategic representation to families navigating complex educational challenges. Known for her thoroughness and unwavering advocacy, Kimberly empowers families who often feel unheard, bringing clarity, dignity, and justice to life-changing situations. She serves as PTSA President at Magruder

High School, where she has led school safety advocacy efforts. She also volunteers with 3GDC, supporting families and connecting them to vital resources. What sets her apart is her rare combination of fierce advocacy and genuine compassion. She leads with integrity, listens deeply, and stands firmly beside families in their most challenging moments. Through her quiet but powerful leadership, Kimberly transforms advocacy into empowerment and lasting community impact.



**Dr. Sheri L. Hamersley**  
***Obstetrician/Gynecologist, Maternal-Fetal Medicine***  
***Associates of Maryland***

Dr. Sheri Hamersley is a board-certified perinatologist and founder of Maternal-Fetal Medicine Associates of Maryland, specializing in high-risk pregnancies. During some of the most vulnerable moments in a family's life, she provides expert medical care paired with compassion, clarity, and unwavering support. Through academic partnerships across the Mid-Atlantic, she mentors students in medicine, nursing, genetic counseling, and sonography—helping shape the next generation of healthcare professionals. Dr. Hamersley is Vice President and President-Elect (2026–2027) of the Montgomery County Medical Society, where she advances healthcare policy and patient access initiatives. Known for her warmth and authenticity, she is not only a trusted physician but a steady, reassuring presence for families when they need it most.



**Adama Moussa Harouna**  
***Community Organizer***

Adama Moussa Harouna is a dedicated community leader and organizer in Montgomery County. As the HOA leader for the Cider Mill Apartments, she advocates for safe housing conditions, strengthens communication between residents and management, and works to build a more connected community. She is the Parent Coordinator for the 480 Club soccer program, supporting youth athletes and their families by organizing communication and encouraging inclusive participation. Adama is an active member of Action in Montgomery (AIM), where she helps mobilize residents on issues such as housing, access to education, transportation safety, and immigrant rights. Known for her ability to bring people together across cultures and languages, Adama is often the first person families turn to for guidance and support. A parent of three MCPS students, she leads with humility, compassion, and a deep commitment to uplifting families and strengthening her community.



**Anabelle Anulika Harry**  
**12<sup>th</sup> Grade Student, The Field School**

Anabelle Anulika Harry is a young leader whose service, creativity, and commitment to equity are already making an impact. She volunteers weekly at the Capital Area Food Bank, dedicating more than five hours each week to support families experiencing food insecurity, and raises additional funds by creating and auctioning her ceramic artwork. Anabelle is also civically engaged, phone banking hundreds of voters during the 2024 general election. As a TeenSharp Scholar and A Better Chance Scholar, she participates in leadership programs that promote educational opportunity and mentorship. She founded her school's Debate Club and serves as captain of the varsity volleyball team. A student glider pilot and U.S. Air Force Aim High Flight Academy participant, Anabelle is also pursuing her passion for aviation while inspiring other young women to explore STEM and aerospace fields.



**Amy Javid**  
**President & CEO, A Wider Circle**

As President & CEO of A Wider Circle, Amy Javid leads the organization's vision and strategy to reduce poverty and expand opportunity across the region. She brings a deep, firsthand understanding of the organization's work and the communities it serves. Under Amy's leadership, A Wider Circle has experienced renewed growth and strengthened partnerships across public, private, and nonprofit sectors. She launched the Partnership to Independence (P2I), a five-year wraparound program supporting families transitioning out of poverty toward long-term stability. With a background in workforce development and public health, Amy takes a holistic approach to addressing poverty. A multilingual leader with extensive international nonprofit experience, she is widely respected for her compassionate, community-centered leadership and commitment to lasting social change.



**Anna Jhon**  
**12<sup>th</sup> Grade Student, Walter Johnson High School**  
**VP of Communications, OCA-DC**

Anna is a dedicated youth leader and advocate whose work centers on civic engagement, education, and empowering young people. Since joining OCA-DC, she's collaborated on key legislative efforts, including advocating for the inclusion of Asian American history in Maryland's curriculum and partnering with Montgomery County Public Schools to help lead student workshops on AAPI history and bystander intervention, reaching more than 400 students. Anna is active in civic engagement and

community service, volunteering during election cycles, mentoring students through debate and Girl Scouts, and supporting environmental and food security initiatives. As a first-generation immigrant, Anna is deeply committed to amplifying youth voices and ensuring students from all backgrounds have opportunities to lead and advocate for their communities.



**Tracy-Ann Kingcade**  
***School Director, Saint Luke Christian Day School***

As School Director of Saint Luke Christian Day School, Tracy-Ann Kingcade oversees daily operations, staff leadership, curriculum development, and family engagement. Tracy has strengthened the school's culture by prioritizing diversity, equity, and inclusion, and by creating meaningful community traditions, including the school's first Trunk-or-Treat event and memorable graduation celebrations for four-year-old students and their families. Beyond the classroom, Tracy has co-authored a children's book focused on anti-bullying and kindness, coordinated holiday family-adoption programs for families in need, and helped launch a partnership with Northwest University that provides underserved high school graduates opportunities to pursue college education while developing their athletic potential. Through compassionate leadership and a strong sense of community responsibility, Tracy-Ann continues to expand access to education and uplift the families she serves.



**Lili Khozeimeh**  
***Family Division Magistrate, Montgomery County Circuit Court***

Lili serves as a Family Division Magistrate for the Montgomery County Circuit Court, presiding over cases involving divorce, custody, alimony, and child support. She is known for her trauma-informed approach that helps families navigate difficult circumstances with dignity while ensuring fairness and justice. Lili contributes to judicial committees, helping strengthen policies that improve equity and access to justice. She also mentors attorneys and court staff, fostering professional growth within the legal community. She serves as Community Service Chair for the Montgomery County Women's Bar Association and is a member of the Board of Advisors for the Iranian American Bar Association. Notably, Lili is the first Iranian American appointed to a judicial position in Maryland, expanding diversity in the legal profession and inspiring future generations.



**Mariela León**  
***Hispanic Community Liaison, Montgomery County Police Department***

Mariela León serves as the Hispanic Community Liaison for MCPD, acting as a vital bridge between the department and the Latino community. Through culturally informed outreach and bilingual communication, she helps ensure Latino families feel seen, supported, and safe. Much of her work focuses on supporting Latina survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, often accompanying them through the difficult process of reporting crimes, navigating the court system, and accessing resources. Mariela also organizes community events, school outreach, and bilingual workshops focused on safety, empowerment, and awareness. As a survivor herself, she brings authenticity, compassion, and strength to her work. Her dedication has helped build trust, empower women, and strengthen the relationship between the Latino community and Montgomery County institutions.



**Oorja Munot**  
***Senior, Richard Montgomery High School Youth Advisory Council, PERIOD***

Oorja Munot is a national youth leader advancing menstrual equity, education, and civic engagement. As a member of the PERIOD Youth Advisory Council, she contributes to national advocacy campaigns and program development, working to end period poverty and stigma. She has helped organize global Period Action Day campaigns, mobilizing more than 200 chapters and supporting the collection of over one million menstrual products. Oorja is also the founder of Equality Through Education, an international youth-led nonprofit with chapters in seven countries that has reached more than 25,000 students. She leads the Asian American Progressive Student Union, mentoring student advocates and expanding Asian American studies in public schools. She has also spoken at the United Nations Economic and Social Council Youth Forum, empowering young people to address inequities and drive change.



**Kelsey Nicole Nelson**  
***CEO, President, and Founder, KryptiaNN***

Kelsey Nicole Nelson is a multifaceted broadcast journalist, communications strategist, entrepreneur, and mentor. As founder and CEO of KryptiaNN, she leads storytelling campaigns for nonprofits, corporations, and professional athletes, including those in the NFL, NBA, and WNBA. Her firm has partnered with organizations such as the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Washington, Special

Olympics, and the Center for Black Education Development. Kelsey also founded Books Breaking Borders, mentors student-athletes and journalism students through multiple programs, and participates in career days and community initiatives. Her impact has been recognized with awards including the University of Maryland Hometown Hero Award, DC Chamber of Commerce Young Entrepreneur of the Year, and The Daily Record's Top 100 Women in Maryland and Leading Women Under 40.



**Nicole Andrea Porcaro**  
***President, No Anxiety Prep***  
***English Professor, Montgomery College***

Nicole Porcaro is the founder and president of No Anxiety Prep, a woman- and disabled-owned tutoring and college counseling company, serving students across 24 states and 11 countries. She personally tutors over 100 students annually, manages a team of 10 tutors, and runs the Back 2 School Supply Drive for The Treehouse of Montgomery County, raising over \$12,000 in materials and funds for children affected by abuse and neglect. Nicole is also an award-winning professor at Montgomery College, recently named Outstanding Part-Time Faculty of the Year, and a COIL Global and Erik Grosse Fellow. Her expertise has been featured on NBC 4 Washington and multiple podcasts, and she is a finalist for the Shoenberg Fellowship. Beyond academia, Nicole has volunteered with Comfort Cases, Potomac Family Planning Clinic, and the Baltimore Abortion Fund, and is a two-time Jeopardy contestant.



**Arianna Ross**  
***CEO, Story Tapestries, Inc.***

Arianna founded Story Tapestries in 2010 to bring the arts to schools and communities that lacked resources. What began as helping sites secure grants and sponsorships grew into a nonprofit that uses arts-based programs to address complex challenges, offering free services online, via public-access TV, and in person. Story Tapestries has impacted more than 4 million people, nearly 1 million in 2024 alone. Arianna is a gifted storyteller who draws on experiences teaching and performing in India and Brazil to respectfully share cultural and historical narratives. She mentors artists, integrates arts across academic subjects, and fosters community collaboration. Beyond her CEO role, she serves on multiple boards, participates in civic initiatives, and balances her work with family and local community involvement, exemplifying leadership through action.



**Deborah Sahlin**  
**CEO, Ryan's Place Health Services**  
**Founder, Ryan's Place Foundation**

Debbie Sahlin is the founder and executive leader of Ryan's Place Foundation, where she oversees programs supporting children, young adults, and families affected by physical and developmental disabilities. Debbie has designed and launched cornerstone programs, including MD's first DME reuse clinic, a seating and mobility clinic, and an inclusive social hub, addressing critical gaps in mobility, healthcare, and community connection. Beyond direct service, Debbie advocates for policy improvements in healthcare transition and equitable access to primary care and mobility resources. A mentor, mother, and visionary leader, her tireless dedication has transformed the landscape of support for individuals with disabilities and their families, making her a trusted and inspiring figure across Montgomery County and beyond.



**Tiffany Ward**  
**Chief Equity Officer**  
**Montgomery County Government**

Tiffany Ward is Montgomery County's inaugural Chief Equity Officer, confirmed in 2020 after helping implement the County's groundbreaking Racial Equity and Social Justice Act. She built the office from the ground up, creating workforce training, infrastructure, and processes to ensure racial equity is embedded in County policymaking. Before this role, she served as the County's Racial Equity Program Manager, Senior Legislative Aide to then-Councilmember Elrich, Workforce Investment Program Manager at Friendship House, and Voting Rights Fellow at the AFL-CIO. She also led program services at Mentors, Inc. and founded the Kingman Teen program. Tiffany extends her leadership to the community as Board Chair of DC Action and a Kingman Boys and Girls Club Board Member. Her commitment to equity, mentorship, and social justice is unwavering both professionally and personally, making her a true trailblazer.



**Michelle Whittaker**  
***Executive Director***  
***Ranked Choice Voting Maryland***

Michelle is the founding executive director of Ranked Choice Voting Maryland, where she leads fundraising, outreach, organizing, and communications to expand fair and representative elections. Since joining the coalition, she has built grassroots power, cultivated deep partnerships with advocates, legislators, and civic leaders, and led the voter referendum in Greenbelt to adopt ranked-choice voting. She has served on the Montgomery County Democratic Central Committee and is the Board Chair for RepresentWomen, a national organization advancing gender parity in elected office. Michelle is an active community member—volunteering with her daughter’s school, coaching Girls on the Run, participating in the PTA, while bringing her passion for inclusive, community-rooted governance to every initiative. Her commitment to empowering historically underrepresented voices makes her a driving force for a more representative Maryland.



**Charlotte Williams**  
***Education Resource Specialist; Child and Family Services Agency***  
***Government of the District of Columbia***

Charlotte Williams serves as an Education Resource Specialist with the Child and Family Services Agency, where she has spent nearly a decade ensuring that youth in foster care receive the educational stability, support, and advocacy they need to succeed. She works closely with students, families, social workers, and schools across the District to remove barriers, maintain enrollment, and help youth thrive academically. She also contributes to her faith community through teaching Sunday School, serving on the Church Council, and advancing social justice initiatives. She also participates in the Montgomery County Chorus, sharing her love of the arts and community engagement. Charlotte’s compassion, fairness, and long-term commitment have positively shaped countless lives in foster care and the wider community, making her an invaluable advocate, mentor, and leader.



**Chelsea Zhu**  
**Senior, Richard Montgomery High School**  
**Co-Founder, The Empathy Collective**

Chelsea is a 2025 Maryland Youth Poet Laureate and U.S. Delegate to the Department of State TechGirls program. She co-founded the Empathy Collective, a community initiative addressing cultural bias and social isolation through storytelling, mentorship, and a digital archive showcasing heritage from 40+ countries. As President of Richard Montgomery High School's Student Equity

Committee, Chelsea organizes town halls, advisory lessons, voter registration drives, and programs to strengthen student-administration collaboration. She has received the Zonta International Young Women in Leadership Award and the Princeton Prize in Race Relations Certificate. A passionate poet, Chelsea advocates for climate sustainability, global peace, refugee rights, and disability awareness, performing at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, contributing to national anthologies, and reaching thousands through her writing and public engagement.