



PRESENTERS' BIOGRAPHIES
Entrepreneurship Transformation Forum
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Gary Shaheen, M.P.A.

Gary E. Shaheen, M.P.A. is Managing Director for Program Development at The Burton Blatt Institute at Syracuse University, and is a nationally recognized expert in the field of mental health rehabilitation, homelessness and systems change. For over twenty- six years in both the public and private sector he has been instrumental in shaping policy and programs at both the state and federal levels that help people with mental illnesses, co-occurring substance abuse disorders and

those who are homeless fully integrate into their communities. He has worked with HUD, SAMHSA, U.S. Department of Labor and other federal agencies on increasing employment for these populations throughout the United States and its Territories.

He has provided his expertise as a trainer and technical assistance resource to state mental health authorities throughout the country seeking to transform their mental health systems through policy and program development and a workforce trained in recovery and rehabilitation principles and practices. As a principal staff to the joint USDOL/HUD Ending Chronic Homelessness initiative and to the NYS Department of Labor as one of their Workforce Development Consultants, he has helped facilitate systems integration as a necessary component for employing people with serious disabilities.

He is the author of numerous publications and curricula including SAMHSA's "Work as a Priority: A Training Program for Employing People with Psychiatric Disabilities who are Homeless" and is currently working on a series of HUD Guidebooks and Lectures on employing people with disabilities who are homeless. Mr. Shaheen often provides training and technical assistance on mental health rehabilitation, systems transformation and recovery-based employment internationally that has included work in the Netherlands, Russia, St. Maarten, Bermuda, Ireland and the U.S. Pacific Territories.

Gary is an alumni of the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University (M.P.A. '87).

Beth Keeton, M.S.

Beth Keeton is Senior Consultant with Griffin-Hammis Associates, LLC. In her work with Griffin-Hammis (GHA), Beth has worked closely with the state of Florida's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) to coordinate the development and implementation of a Self-Employment Certification curriculum. Beth has served as the point-person for this effort and has been actively involved in all aspects of implementation including: developing the training curriculum; training VR vendors; and providing ongoing technical assistance to VR staff (both state and local), vendors, and customers. She has also been actively involved in transitioning this self-employment certification coursework into an online program administered collaboratively with Virginia Commonwealth University. Additionally, Beth works with GHA on several other national self-employment projects, including: the Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities, the Iowa Medicaid Infrastructure Grant, the Texas Division of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services, and the New York Medicaid Infrastructure Grant, all of which are geared towards increasing the quantity and quality of self-employment outcomes. Prior to her time with GHA, Beth managed the development and implementation of several statewide employment projects for the University of South Florida, including the Micro-Enterprise Training and Technical Assistance Project (METTA), Start-Up Florida, and the Supported Competitive Integrated Employment Training Teams (SCIETT) project.

During her time on the various self-employment projects, she has developed expertise in all aspects of business plan development and has discovered a particular affinity for financial planning and Social Security benefits analysis. In 2007, Beth completed the Community Work Incentives Coordinator (CWIC) coursework through Cornell University. Under subcontract with Virginia Commonwealth University, she subsequently developed the national CWIC self-employment training curriculum along with additional materials on the incorporation of government funding sources into business financials. Additionally, she was contracted by Florida's Agency for Persons with Disabilities to write extensive supplementary materials covering the development of business financials and Social Security benefits analysis for BOSS, the state's self-employment manual.

Beth earned a B.S. in Psychology from Clemson University and a M.S. in Special Education from the University of Oregon in 1996.

W. Grant Revell, Jr., M.S., M.Ed. Mr. Revell serves as a research associate at the Virginia Commonwealth University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center. He has extensive experience in the areas of policy analysis state systems development, and funding related to state level and national implementation of employment supports for individuals with significant disabilities. He has served as project director and project associate for a variety of national technical assistance and research projects. He is recently conducted a variety of research studies in the area of self-employment and also coordinated technical assistance for the START UP USA project. Prior to coming to the VCU RRTC, he worked as a program specialist in supported employment and as a vocational rehabilitation counselor at the Virginia Department of Rehabilitation Services.



Mary Blake

Mary Blake currently serves as a Public Health Advisor at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Assigned to the Community Support Programs Branch, Mary provides management and technical assistance for recovery-oriented and mental health support service programs for adult consumers with mental illness. Mary serves as a Government Project Officer for several grant programs, including the Mental Health Transformation State Incentive Grant, the Healthy Transitions Initiative for transition-age youth, the Statewide Consumer Network Grant Program, and the new Mental Health Transformation Grant Program. She is actively involved in two Federal Partners workgroups, one regarding employment and people with mental illness, and the other focusing on women and trauma. Mary is also program manager with SAMHSA's National Center for Trauma-Informed Care, among her other duties.

Prior to joining SAMHSA, Mary was Co-Founder, President, and Deputy Director of Training and Development for Consumer Action Network (CAN) in Washington, DC. Under her leadership, CAN received the 2005 and the 2006 Timothy Coakley Leadership Award from the American College for Mental Health Administration for its Entrepreneurship and Mental Health Recovery Initiative.

Mary's areas of activity in the promoting the employment of people with mental illness includes consultation to the DC Client Assistance Program and the development and publication of a workbook titled: "Advance Planning for Mental Health in Employment." She also provided technical assistance to emerging consumer-operated services in the area of business planning and board development. Mary also provided consultation to the DC Department of Mental Health on the development of their Supported Employment Program, on the use of Supported Employment to encourage and support entrepreneurship, and on the development of Peer Specialist training, certification, and placement in community mental health service agencies.

Among her professional development accomplishments, Mary received a Certificate of Achievement from the Mayor of the District of Columbia for her participation in the Strengthening Partners Initiative, a business mentoring program for executives of emerging non-profit organizations, sponsored by the DC Mayor's Office of Partnerships and Grants Development. She also has been certified through training in Performance Improvement and as a Community Services Review auditor for assessing system-wide mental health practice performance according to Dixon Plan exit criteria. In addition to her leadership in non-profit development, she also has worked in the for-profit arena as a senior consultant in the field of communications, where she managed numerous Federal and private sector contracts. Mary has completed graduate coursework in German literature and linguistics at Georgetown University and the Catholic University of America. She graduated from Catholic University summa cum laude with a B.A. in German and an honor's diploma in Classical Philosophy.

Christopher Button, Ph.D.

Christopher Button is a Supervisory Policy Advisor for the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) at the US Department of Labor, where she focuses on Workforce Systems Policy and serves as one of ODEP's Senior Management staff. The Workforce Systems Policy area focuses on removal of structural, policy and other workforce barriers to increase employment for youth and adults with disabilities. Dr. Button leads team activities in policy analysis, research, and program design and implementation in order to identify and develop policy recommendations, develop and expand best practices and secure stakeholder investment. Particular areas of focus include leveraging partnership across multiple generic and disability-specific systems as part of the workforce investment system, including through self employment, workplace flexibility, including flexibility around job tasks (customized employment), and enhancing employment profitability to "make work pay" through various asset development strategies for workers with disabilities.

Nate Arnold

Nathan (Nate) Arnold is a Senior Advisor in Social Security's Office of Employment Support Programs. During his career, Nate has worked in a wide variety of technical, analytical and managerial positions throughout SSA. In his current assignment, he is primarily responsible for working with organizations throughout the nation to increase employment opportunities for SSA's beneficiaries with disabilities. This is actually Nate's "second career" with SSA, having left the agency for seven years to serve as Program Director of

a Statewide disability advocacy program in Maryland. Nate has a B.A. from the University of Pittsburgh and a Masters in Public Administration from Johns Hopkins University.



Mary Killeen, M.A.

Mary Killeen has worked in the field of disability research for the past ten years and is a Senior Research Associate at the Burton Blatt Institute.

She has special expertise in qualitative methods and data analysis with years of experience conducting in-depth interviews, focus groups, and online data collection. She is a trained expert in the use of qualitative data analysis software to analyze, synthesize, and interpret large amounts of qualitative data efficiently. She has an extensive research background in disability issues with an emphasis in disability employment, entrepreneurship, psychiatric disability, access to primary care, and access to assistive technology.

Prior to her work with BBI, Ms. Killeen was Senior Research Associate at CESSI and then New Editions, Inc. There she served as Principal Investigator of a NIDRR-funded three year Field Initiated Research grant on the strategies people with psychiatric disabilities use to maintain employment and build careers. This study built on a previous three-year NIDRR-funded grant on the policy barriers people with psychiatric disabilities face in finding and keeping work. Prior to that, she was Research Analyst at NRH Center for Health and Disability Research.

She has conducted qualitative projects for the Interagency Committee on Disability Research, the Office of Disability Employment Policy, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, the National Institutes of Health, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Rehabilitation Services Administration, and the Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers, among others. She has published numerous research articles in peer-reviewed journals and has been a frequent speaker at national and international conferences on disability studies.



Patricia C. Higgins

Patricia Higgins (Pat) is the Regional Director of the Onondaga Small Business Development Center (SBDC). Pat has over 20 years of experience as a professional manager at Onondaga Community College. She has served in many capacities, including Director of *JOBSplus!*, Acting Vice President and Associate Vice President of Student Services and currently is Regional Director of the Small Business Development Center at Onondaga Community College.

Pat has been honored with the "Women in Business" award, the W2W SBA Associate of the Year" award, the YWCA Academy of Diversity Achievers" award, and also the SUNY "Chancellor's Award for Professional Service."

Pat supports and has been a member of many community boards and organizations including the "Make a Wish Foundation of Central New York", the "Greater Syracuse Business Development Corporation" and the "Friends of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo". Pat received a B.A. in Human Development from the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Nancy Ansteth, M.Ed.

Nancy Ansteth is a Certified Business Advisor with the Onondaga Small Business Development Center (SBDC) located on the Onondaga Community College campus, in Syracuse, NY. Nancy has been able to combine supervisory and training skills from the corporate world with her teaching experience to become an empathetic and objective business advisor. Her recent assignments are focused on assisting persons with developmental disabilities create business plans toward entrepreneurship. The programs forming

the structure for this initiative are Start-Up New York and PRIME, both overseen by Burton Blatt Institute and the South Side Innovation Center.

Ms. Ansteth holds an undergraduate degree in languages from D'Youville College in Buffalo, NY, and a M.Ed. HR (training and development) from Boston University. She has developed numerous training seminars and courses within a corporate structure, for Cornell Cooperative Extension, and at SBDC. In addition to her duties at SBDC, Ms. Ansteth has her own small business in the nutrition and wellness arena.

Family defines Nancy Ansteth through her husband, children, grandchildren and, of course, pets. Friends offer extended ties with the past and the promise of memorable occasions yet to be shared. Kayaking, reading, knitting, chair caning and traveling ensure Nancy's continued education.

Rebecca Rodriguez

Rebecca Rodriguez is Regional Director for the Columbia-Harlem Small Business Development Center (CHSBDC). The Center is part of the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences at Columbia University. Under Rebecca's leadership, entrepreneurship and the Center's programs have launched to be one of the most high-profile programs at Columbia. Under this role, she manages the use of Columbia resources for economic development within the entrepreneurial community, with a focus on the local areas of Harlem and Washington Heights. She also serves as an advisor to student entrepreneurial groups.

Along with her experience at Columbia, her professional background includes strategic planning, budget and events management, program design and administration. Rebecca has served on the executive team of her own small business enterprise. She devotes time to community engagement through a multitude of organizations and serves as a mentor to underrepresented high school students. Rebecca attended Long Island University for a Bachelor's in International Studies, with a concentration in cross-cultural management.

Alex Yepes, M.A.

Alex Yepes currently works as Managing Director of The Columbia-Harlem Small Business Development Center (CHSBDC). The CHSBDC provides free technical assistance to entrepreneurs in New York State. He is an advisor to many undergraduate organizations as well as an operations consultant for many non-profit groups. Some of the workshop specializations include SWOT analysis, sustainability practices, cost analysis, marketing, research and branding. Alex has used his experiences to develop workshops that educate and empower 21st century leaders. He has held workshops across the country at some of the largest universities. His focus has been to teach our next generation of leaders how they can positively impact the community they live in. He feels entrepreneurs are in a unique position to impact the new century by adapting and implementing sustainable protocols in their business operations thereby practicing cost saving measures and prudent growth strategies.

Born and raised in Queens, New York, Alex Yepes attended Long Island University, CW Post Campus for a B.A. in International Studies and an M.A. in Political Science, with a concentration in International Marketing. Alex is co-owner of Canela Spa & Salon and is the principal in his own multimedia company PRNY, Inc.



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