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2022-2023 WHITE HOUSE FELLOWS



Samuel Ayres is from Denver, Colorado. He recently earned a J.D. from Yale Law School, where he participated in the school's environmental protection clinic and Supreme Court advocacy clinic. He will clerk for Hon. Srikanth Srinivasan on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. Prior to law school, Sam served as an enlisted infantryman in the U.S. Army's 75th Ranger Regiment. As a non-commissioned officer (NCO), he trained and mentored a team and squad of soldiers. He completed three deployments to Afghanistan, where he led Rangers in combat on special operations. Before enlisting, Sam helped General (ret.) Stanley McChrystal compose his memoir, and served as a research assistant to Walter Russell Mead. Sam earned a B.A. in English and Political Science from Yale College, where he was a Truman Scholar. His writing has appeared in the *Yale Law Journal*, *The Atlantic*, and the *Los Angeles Times*.



Jacqueline Burgette is from Issaquah, Washington. She is a pediatric dentist, educator, and researcher dedicated to advancing dental health equity for all Americans. Jacqueline earned her DMD from the Harvard School of Dental Medicine as a Presidential Scholar and Ph.D. in Health Policy and Management from the University of North Carolina. She served as an Assistant Professor at the University of Pittsburgh where she mentored students as a clinician, researcher, and community-based practitioner. Jacqueline recently completed a multi-site community-based study that amplified the voices of vulnerable families to improve the dental health of their children. Her work spans the development and implementation of dental education 'video boxes' for communities with high rates of tooth decay to founding a dental clinic that serves children with HIV/AIDS in Haiti. Jacqueline spearheaded academic-community partnerships to conduct innovative dental research, established novel interprofessional health curricula, and published peer-reviewed multidisciplinary research in dentistry and public policy.



Makini Chisolm-Straker is from New York City, New York. Makini is an emergency medicine physician and a public health expert focused on social policies as determinants of wellbeing. She led the research teams that produced the first validated, comprehensive trafficking screening tools for use with undomiciled young adults and adult emergency department patients, co-founded the advocacy organization HEAL Trafficking, and has helped expand the anti-trafficking movement to value public health principles. She has worked in the Caribbean, Central America, Africa, and the Middle East in low-resource, disaster, and conflict settings. Makini co-edited two public

health textbooks and has written multiple chapters and academic articles on labor and sex trafficking, gender diverse emergency care, and unaccompanied/separated minors. Makini earned an A.B. in Religious Studies and an M.D. from Brown University, and an M.P.H. with a certificate in Public Health and Humanitarian Aid from Columbia University.



Vanessa Cobarrubias was born and raised in Harlingen, Texas. She received a Bachelor of Communication Arts from St. Mary's University and, prior to transitioning into the health care field, was an elementary school teacher and speech language pathology assistant. She obtained a Master of Physician Assistant Studies at the University of Texas - Rio Grande Valley and has worked tirelessly to serve the Rio Grande Valley, an area in which covid-related deaths were twice that of the rest of Texas, during the pandemic. In addition to overseeing antibody infusions for almost 8,000 patients since 2020, she has initiated a door-to-door vaccine awareness program in her region. Recently, she was named a Healthcare Hero in her community. The granddaughter of immigrant farm-workers,

Vanessa's thirst for knowledge is utilized for one purpose - to be a voice for the voiceless.



Kevin Flores is from Springdale, Arkansas. Kevin is an attorney and councilmember. Born in El Salvador, he and his family came to the U.S. upon fleeing the Salvadoran civil war. At seventeen, Kevin enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps and served for six years - deploying to Iraq in 2007 and then assigned to the State Department as an embassy security guard. Kevin later worked at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C., before returning to Arkansas. In 2020, he made history by becoming the first Hispanic and first immigrant elected to the Springdale City Council. Kevin serves on numerous non-profit boards and is a Rotarian. He has founded

various mentoring programs and bilingual professional programs for parent-teacher conferences in Springdale Public Schools, the largest school district in Arkansas. Kevin earned a B.A. in International Political Economics from Fordham University and a J.D. from the University of Arkansas, School of Law.



Maria Gilbert is from New York City, New York, where she is serving as a Lieutenant for the New York City Police Department (NYPD). Maria was charged with evaluating and assessing significant programs and policies that govern the performance of over 50,000 staff members and all organizational changes. She volunteers as a peer support member at the NYPD to provide critical mental health resources to employees who may be in need. Maria is also the founder of Beads of Hope, Incorporated – a non-profit organization focused on cancer awareness, prevention, and cure, emphasizing the mental well-being of those affected by cancer. Maria has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Computer Engineering and uses her skillset to merge technology with policy. Recently, she became the first black woman to be awarded a full scholarship from the NYPD to attend the Harvard Kennedy School, where she obtained her Masters in Public Administration.



Adan Gonzalez, the son of two immigrants, was born and raised in South Oak Cliff, an inner-city neighborhood in Dallas, Texas. Adan is a Gates Millennium and National Coca-Cola Scholar who graduated from Georgetown University, majoring in Government with a minor in Education, Inquiry and Justice. He earned his Masters in Education Leadership at Columbia University, and his Masters in Education Policy and Management from Harvard University. Adan has served his community as a teacher and Director of School & Family Partnerships. He is the Founder & Executive Director of Puede Network, a youth empowerment organization that provides comprehensive college access services, volunteer opportunities, and mentorship to hundreds of families. He has engaged with over 300,000 students and parents globally to advocate for the importance of higher education, parental support, and community involvement. Adan aspires to make his family proud – and to make a difference in the community.



Harrison Hines is from Carmel, Indiana, and is a neurologist and inaugural Chief Resident for Diversity at the University of California, San Francisco. Harrison's work leverages his background in medicine, theology, and policy to develop solutions to healthcare disparities afflicting vulnerable populations. He served as a legislative aide to Shirley Weber in the California State Assembly where he championed policy improving representation for marginalized groups. As a trustee for the California Medical Association and San Francisco Marin Medical Society, he advocated for equitable COVID-19 vaccine distribution and fair employment practices for trainees. Harrison has founded a volunteer service networking organization, directed community outreach at a free clinic, and conducted interfaith research on faith-based healthcare delivery. He earned an M.D. from Stanford University, an M.A. in Theological Studies from Duke Divinity School with a thesis articulating a Black Christian ethic of kidney donation, and a B.A. from Duke University as a Robertson Scholar.



William Jones is from Annapolis, Maryland, and currently resides in Virginia Beach. Will is a Lieutenant Commander in the United States Navy and has been a SEAL Officer for 12 years. During his career in Naval Special Warfare, he has deployed multiple times focused on combating terrorism in East and North Africa, and South America. Will currently serves as the Operations Officer for the Intelligence and Targeting organization within the SEAL Teams, managing the operational and logistic requirements for a 400-person command conducting sensitive operations. Will is a volunteer for the Naval Special Warfare diversity outreach program, focused on expanding diversity within maritime Special Operations through education and engagement across the civilian sector. Will is a graduate of Penn State University where he received a Bachelor of Science in Institutional Management and was captain of his NCAA Division 1 lacrosse program. He earned his Master of Arts in International Business and Policy from Georgetown University.



Jeffrey Nadel of Centennial, Colorado, is a resident neurosurgeon at the University of Utah, specializing in brain and spine surgery. He is passionately focused on eliminating health disparities in underserved communities. Jeff worked in Latin America and Africa researching mental health, coordinating a global surgery research collaboration, and building social infrastructure to reduce disparities. This included founding an adult literacy program in rural Costa Rica that now operates nationwide and facilitating bidirectional surgical education in Uganda. Domestically, Jeff co-directed a free clinic in a local homeless shelter and helped lead an effort to fund community health workers in underserved neighborhoods of Detroit. He previously conducted laboratory research at the National Institutes of Health and health policy research at The Brookings Institution. He published more than three dozen research papers, book chapters, and press articles. Jeff earned his M.D. and M.S. at the University of Michigan and B.A. at Colorado College.



Elizabeth Ragan from Beavercreek, Oregon, is a public health professional with a background in global health and infectious disease. In late 2019, she was permanently paralyzed and now pursues her work through the additional lens of being a person with a disability. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Lizzy led the design and launch of Boston Medical Center's (BMC) COVID-19 biorepository which was highlighted in a top medical journal as a model for pandemic response. She also managed a \$3M program to understand barriers and promote equitable access to COVID-19 vaccination and care. In her new senior management role, she supports the advancement of central research infrastructure to ensure BMC patients, many of whom are members of traditionally unserved populations, have access to cutting-edge research. She is a member of the Oregon Health Policy Board's Health Equity Committee and BMC's Accessibility Committee. Lizzy is a watercolor artist and an adaptive athlete.



Graham Van Hook is a fourth generation Naval Officer from Alexandria, Virginia. Currently serving as a liaison to the Congressional Appropriations Committees, he has deployed five times around the world. He most recently deployed as a Commanding Officer of USS Tornado in South America. While in command, his crew seized over 50 million dollars in narcotics, and earned the coveted Battle “E” award as the number one ship in her class. His leadership and policy articles have been featured in several professional publications. He served on the Board of the Surface Navy Association and is a Term Member on the Council on Foreign Relations. Graham dedicates his free time to three

main causes: United Through Reading, Service2School, and Oyster Recycling. Graham holds a Bachelor of Science from the U.S. Naval Academy, a Master of Science from the University of Arkansas, and a Master of Business Administration from Northwestern University’s Kellogg School of Management.



Lav Varshney is from Champaign, Illinois. He is a professor of engineering, computer science, and neuroscience at the University of Illinois, where he conducts scholarly research, technology innovation, teaching, and broad public engagement. He has published over 250 peer-reviewed papers in core areas of artificial intelligence (AI) and information theory, as well as applications in climate science and sustainability, agriculture and food, public health and medicine, creativity and innovation, telecommunications, semiconductors, and infrastructure. He is an entrepreneur, and is the chief scientist of three startup companies: one using AI to optimize wastewater treatment, another using

AI in social music co-creativity platforms to enhance human wellbeing, and a third making the food system more sustainable, equitable, and flavorful. He also works with Brookhaven National Laboratory on computing for national security. He holds a B.S. degree in electrical and computer engineering from Cornell and a Ph.D. in electrical engineering and computer science from MIT.



Vanessa Velasquez was born and raised in Vero Beach, Florida, and currently lives in Seattle, Washington. She works at Apple as a Global Supply Manager for the iPhone. Vanessa attended Mississippi State University where she obtained a Bachelor of Business Administration with a minor in Marketing and Bachelor of Arts (Chinese and Spanish) where she graduated Cum Laude. At her previous employer, Amazon, she led \$100+ million projects that involved anywhere between 5-50 stakeholders where she mastered delegating and communicating effectively. Vanessa catapulted her way up the corporate ladder at Amazon from a manager at the fulfillment center to a top leader at Amazon HQ. Vanessa was actively

involved in Glamazon (LGBTQ+ Employee Resource Group) where she served as Director of Fulfillment Center Engagement and Community Engagement. She has been involved with Women@Amazon and local nonprofits. She volunteers at the Hispanic Scholarship Fund as a mentor and speaker at conferences, and sits on the Seattle Advisory Council.



Joshua Woehr is from Clearwater-Largo, Florida. He is a Sergeant Major in the United States Army. Josh has over 20 years in the Special Operations Community as a Green Beret and Ranger, having deployed to combat over 15 times. He recently returned from Iraq, where he led the integration of next-generation technology onto the battlefield. A father of six children, Josh is passionate about serving military families. In 2014, he and his wife founded the Rick Herrema Foundation (RHF), establishing ‘Rick’s Place’ at Fort Bragg, NC. Rick’s Place is a 50-acre campus that provides a place of community and activity to over a thousand military family members every month. Josh is a first-generation college graduate.

He holds a B.A. in Arabic Studies from the California University of Pennsylvania and an M.A. in Social-Organizational Psychology from Teachers College, Columbia University, where he received the Mark C. Paine Servant Leader Award.