

Meet the members

of Team Alia



Tanya Anderson
Senior Director of Learning

Tanya works with individuals, communities, and organizations to advance DEIB and shared power. Her drive stems from her own history navigating life as a Korean American, adopted into a white family, and an identity she would describe as “third culture.” Personal experiences with “I see no color”, invisibility, and the intersectionality of social class, gender, religion, and ability have led Tanya to advanced initiatives and conversations to increase awareness and drive change as the main goal of a 25+ year career centering marginalized voices. She is a Qualified Administrator of the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) and Bridges Out of Poverty trainer. Tanya lives in St. Paul with her husband, girls and two rescue dogs.



Isabel Blanco
Managing Director of Transformational Change

Isabel is an experienced leader and results oriented innovator with a recognized track record for bold value based shifts. With over 40 years of experience in various human services sectors she is considered a highly effective change catalyst experienced in the art of influencing, motivating and coaxing new potentialities in controversial and high risk environments. Prior to joining Alia, Isabel spent times as a Senior Director with Casey Family Programs; Deputy State Director for South Carolina; and Child Welfare Director in Georgia. Isabel loves her 5 grandchildren, 3 sons, wife and old sports car with a racing engine.



Avivah Brown
Senior Project Manager

Avivah has a professional background in project management and philanthropy with her most recent role being a Director of Development. In previous roles she has also worked in project and program management. Her entire career has been in the nonprofit sphere, and she is thankful to continue her journey with Alia. She is a trauma informed foster and adoptive parent with a front row seat to the complicated world of Child Protection. Avivah and her husband live in the Twin Cities with their two children and enjoy all the city has to offer. She loves discovering new local festivals, trying a newly opened restaurant, or relaxing in her backyard.



Christi Carmouze
Associate Director of Learning

Christi has over 15 years of experience in foster care, child protective services, and family group conferencing in Virginia jurisdictions. Christi has worked with families and youth facilitating strengths-based, family-focused meetings. She has trained foster parents in pain-based behaviors and assessed for children's safety and risk. Christi has been an advocate for worker wellbeing with an emphasis on connectedness. On Thursday evenings, Christi can be caught in Zumba class with true dancing queens; and the rest of the week, romance books and self-help podcasts keep her anxiety at bay while riding around town with her son and his newly minted driver's permit.



Amelia Franck Meyer
Chief Executive Officer

Amelia has spent her more than 30-year career dedicated to serving children and families in the areas of out-of-home care, family-based services, and disability services. Amelia was named as one of People Magazine's "25 Women Changing the World" in 2018, and in 2020, Amelia was named by AARP MN and Pollen Midwest as a 50over50 Honoree—System Reformer in the Disruptor Category. Before Alia, Amelia was the CEO of a treatment foster care agency serving 90 counties in Wisconsin and Minnesota. During her 16-year tenure, Amelia and her team produced nationally recognized child permanence and placement stability outcomes for children in out-of-home care and was on the leading edge of promoting and measuring wellbeing for youth and the child welfare workforce and were the winners of many local, regional, and national innovation awards.



Debi Grebenik
Managing Director of Healing and Belonging

Debi is a nationally and internationally renowned educator and trainer, and is known for her expertise in healing childhood trauma. She is known for her engaging and enthusiastic presentations on healing for children, youth, families, teams, and systems. Prior to Alia, Debi served as the Executive Director of Maple Star Colorado, a child welfare agency providing foster care, domestic violence advocacy, human trafficking services, clinical services, autism supports, placement prevention, and other innovative programming. Her mission is for everyone to have the "aha" moment of the impact of trauma on their personal and professional lives. Living in Colorado, Debi enjoys running, hiking, baking, reading, and traveling. Possibly what she is best known for is her 7 grandchildren, love of all things pink, daily visits to Starbucks, and her love of adventure.



Jasmine Grika
Senior Associate Director of Learning

Jasmine has nine years of professional experience with Indian Child Welfare, and four years of personal experience with child protection and the foster care system including three years of working with a county system to help decrease disparities seen among American Indian families at risk or involved with child protection. She was inspired to pursue her Doctor of Social Work at University of Southern California, focused on social innovation and design, and anti-racism, which is where you will most likely find her in her free time—nose deep in a book, or having captivating conversations with other change agents, learning and growing with and from them. Other times, you'll find her hiking with her dog, enjoying family and friends or in the community.



Chelsea Heath
Chief Strategy Officer

Chelsea Heath has more than 13 years of experience in the fields of health and human services, with a commitment to growing and advancing evidence-based policies and practices that improve the lives of vulnerable populations. With the Nurse-Family Partnership, she led and directed regional operations of a 7-person team charged with ensuring business growth and development in 23 states and four Tribal nations through sustained political and financial support at the national, state and local levels.



Rebecca Hintzman
Senior Accountant

Rebecca was born and raised in the Twin Cities. She has worked in accounting since 2010 and joined Alia in 2021. Rebecca has a wide range of accounting and human resource administration experience in both nonprofit and for-profit companies. Her off the job interests include cooking, ATV riding, puzzles, attending live music concerts, biking, skiing, trying new vacation spots and spending time with family.



Nerée Jackson
Senior Associate Director of Learning

Nerée brings a deep passion to her 20 years of work in child advocacy. As a licensed foster parent, combined with work in school-based mental health and child protection, she has a deep understanding of child welfare organizations from both inside and outside those systems. Nerée is an adoptive and biological parent, and parent mentor to former foster children as they raise their families. She is currently working towards her Masters Degree in Leadership and Management through Concordia University. In her free time, Nerée enjoys interacting with her children and grandson, reading, gardening, and pursuing artistic endeavors.



Margo Kemp Johnson
Chief Operating Officer

Margo has 25 years of experience leading nonprofit organizations and in many aspects of nonprofit leadership including operations, community outreach, program development, IT and systems management, development, and as liaison to the Board of Directors. She brings 20 years of experience providing technical assistance and guidance on strategic implementation, organizational change, or systemic intervention to provide high-quality service delivery. As the 6th of 12 kids in a large, close-knit extended family, Margo is keenly aware of how those relationships shaped her life and brought her to where she is today. She is deeply committed to ensuring every child knows what it feels like to be loved as part of a family.



Anna Kytönen-Coffman
Senior Project Manager

Anna is in the beginning of her professional career, coming to this work with a self-designed Bachelor of Science Thematic degree in Health and Wellness, along with an Applied Business Certificate and a minor in Leadership. In her current role, she is a digital marketing and communications specialist, leads the organization's IT infrastructure, and supports work in innovation. Outside of Alia, Anna enjoys spending time with her family and 1 year old pup, Charlie, cozying up to a good movie or enjoying sunny days outside on long walks. She is a big fan of iced, oat milk lattes and since she is always cold in Minnesota, hopes one day to live in a warmer climate.



Rachelle March
Executive Assistant

Rachelle comes to Alia with a degree in business administration from the University of Wisconsin, River Falls and has years of experience in project management, marketing, communications and consumer support. In her current role, she provides support to the CEO, the Board and the administrative team and manages accounts receivable and contracts. When not working, Rachelle spends her time with family and friends either biking, cross country skiing, canoeing or camping. She also loves to watch her kids laugh at funny family movies and dance like nobody is watching.



Michelle Martin
Senior Director of Learning

Michelle brings over 25 years of innovative, community-engaged change experience in the Twin Cities. Working with a lifelong commitment to racial justice, she began her career as a social worker and shifted to community organizing and systems change work to focus more upstream. She spent 16 years in North Minneapolis initiating, following and accelerating a community-driven thread of change which resulted in the development of the Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ). Michelle is a mother of two young adults who are just starting out on their own unique journeys. She can't wait to see where life takes them! She loves spending time with her family, her two dogs, and getting out into nature. Yoga and meditation fill her up and help her find balance.



Kate Mejicano
HR/Benefits Coordinator

Kate comes to this work with a degree in Family Social Science, with minors in Family Violence Prevention and Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies from the University of Minnesota. She has extensive nonprofit experience, including direct service with families and youth involved in the child welfare system. In her current role, she strives to merge strategic analysis with unconditional positive regard to bring a human-centered approach to HR. In her free time, Kate enjoys camping, reading, and spending time with her many pets. She lives in St. Paul, MN, with her partner and stepchild.



Tiffany Meredith
Rock County Project Director

Tiffany is a dedicated social work professional passionate about supporting children and families impacted by child welfare. For more than two decades, she has worked to protect children and support families through case management, leadership, team facilitation, and curriculum development. In addition, Tiffany specializes in training child welfare staff on the topics of safety intervention standards, child safety decision-making and safety planning. She is a Wisconsin native with a personal connection to relative caregiving. Ultimately, she believes strengthening and empowering parents is key to protecting children. Tiffany loves spending time creating, whether it is crafting, gardening, or cooking. Taking raw materials and making something beautiful brings her so much joy.



Katie Miller
Managing Director of Innovation and Connections

Katie brings an international perspective and a social work approach to creating new networks and communities, exploring opportunities, and navigating entrepreneurship. In 2009 she moved to the Netherlands and started an online retail business, while building a professional network for women entrepreneurs. She earned a Master's degree in social work from the University of Minnesota. Katie lives with two of her spiritual teachers, disguised as her school-aged sons. From them she learns to play, be clear with her words, and live in the moment. She loves quiet, idle time alone to create or snuggle with her aging pug. She has lived on three continents and would really just like to spend her whole life laughing.



Tyler Reitzner
Senior Associate Director of Learning

Tyler advocates and co-creates community-based solutions to provide families and children with the support they need to feel safe and thrive, working with organizations and systems to build their own trauma-responsive and anti-racist cultures from the inside out. In long-term recovery from Developmental Trauma, that includes PTSD and substance use disorder, Tyler has put his experience in community capacity building to use in the field of behavioral health. Ingrained in all of his work is the understanding that racism is trauma and active work in anti-racism is a key component to becoming a trauma-responsive organization. Tyler and his wife Bethany are happy parents to two boys, Logan, and Lucas.



Amber Ross
Chief Learning Officer

Amber has over 17 years of experience in the social services field. Throughout her career, she used a trauma informed lens to provide therapeutic and social services with adults, youth, and families in community, in-home, outpatient and inpatient settings. Amber's experience is in a variety of roles including therapy, case management, supervision, program directing, and teaching. She worked with families involved in the child protection system, treatment foster care, adults with serious and persistent mental illness, as well as suicidal and self-harming adolescents. Outside of Alia, Amber enjoys spending time with family and friends, dancing, and going for walks. She likes to split her TV time between documentaries and juicy reality tv.



Eliza Severson
Associate Director of Philanthropy

Eliza brings over 25 years of nonprofit experience to her role as Associate Director of Philanthropy. Upon graduating from Mills College with a BA in Ethnic Studies, she has worked in Boston and the Twin Cities, serving community-based organizations rooted in social justice. Directly related to fundraising, she has contributed to supporting missions through grant writing, relationship-building, and listening. Her life is full, centered in a daily rhythm rooted in family.



Fay Smith
HR/Finance Assistant

Fay studied at Waikato University in New Zealand towards a Bachelor of Social Sciences (BSocSci). Outside of Alia, she likes to travel, garden and cruise in her little Fiat convertible in the summer to play mini golf at various venues. A fun fact is that as a New Zealander, she calls herself a Kiwi – after the bird, not the fruit!



Prem Suppogu
Chief Financial Officer

Prem has served in the CFO role managing the financial and administrative operations of several nonprofits that serve youth and children, with 10+ years' experience in finance/accounting functions. He earned an MBA in accounting from the University of St. Thomas and a Master of Divinity from Bethel Seminary. Prem has a CPA and began his accounting career with a big four public accounting firm, auditing a fortune 500 company before moving into nonprofit services. Prem feels very grateful to be a part of what Alia is doing and the work of Alia has not only helped Prem grow as a professional but has impacted him personally in ways he never could have imagined.



Kim Van Auken
Senior Director of Learning

Kim has dedicated over 24 years serving children and families involved in residential treatment, group homes, foster care, youth corrections, and community mental health. She also has experience with school social work and adoption. Prior to joining Alia, Kim worked for over eight years serving as Clinical Director for a Colorado nonprofit agency, providing intensive home-based clinical services. Kim enjoys spending time with her husband, son, and two dogs. She is living the life of a pioneer in the beautiful mountains of Colorado-off grid. Kim enjoys gardening, canning, painting, her chickens, and everything outdoors, but mostly fishing.



Laura Witham
Associate Director of Learning

Laura holds a BA in Communications from Colorado Christian University, where she worked in finance and accounting before spending over a decade focused on raising her three children. Also in that time, she helped start a church with her husband, became certified to teach yoga, and spent many hours volunteering in her children's schools. Back in the workforce, Laura has enjoyed the opportunity for ongoing learning about child welfare, anti-racism/social justice practices, and Alia's approach to wellbeing. Ever seeking that work/life balance, Laura also enjoys being outside, playing volleyball, cross-country skiing or doing yoga (but not teaching it!). She has a red lab named River and four hens that fit right in with the rest of her family.



Lun Wang
Senior Director of Learning

Lun is a licensed clinical social worker and graduated with her MSW from San Jose State University. She has over ten years of experience leading and driving change in the child welfare system in California, serving in various roles as a direct child welfare practitioner, county child welfare leader, and consultant. Lun continues to serve as a consultant to California counties in the areas of implementing Safety Organized Practice, the California Core Practice Model, Child and Family Teaming, and Structured Decision Making (SDM). Prior to joining Alia, Lun worked in behavioral healthcare leadership at the largest non-profit in Santa Cruz County, providing behavioral healthcare and case management services to individuals struggling with homelessness, criminal justice involvement, substance use and mental health. On a personal note, Lun's community describes her as compassionate, a systems thinker, and always approaching life's challenges with an adventurous spirit, full of grit and laughter. Lun lives in Santa Cruz, California with her partner and two kitties, Nela and Jasper.