



# SPEAKER BIOS

## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS (THURSDAY, MARCH 6)

### **Laura Higgins, Head of Diverse Businesses – JPMorgan Chase Pacific**

Laura Higgins leads the Diverse Businesses initiative at JP Morgan Chase on the west coast which is focused on mobilizing the resources of the bank, including programming, thought leadership, growth opportunities, our network, and capital, to help women and other underserved business owners start, grow, and scale their businesses.

Prior to her current role, she worked in the JP Morgan Chase Procurement organization for 9 years where she worked closely with our Supplier Diversity efforts. Laura joined the firm in 2015 and prior to that held several leadership positions in Procurement and Global Technology at other financial institutions.

Laura currently resides in San Francisco with her husband Brian, their 3 sons, and 2 dogs.

### **Lynn Casey, CEO/Founder – ShineScout Inc.**

Lynn Casey is a highly sought after thought leader, brand builder and futurist helping industry leading organizations make the biggest leaps possible. Lynn is known for her unique ability to spot patterns and connect the dots of emerging sociocultural, digital, economic, and behavioral trends and translate those into actionable strategies. Previously, an award-winning marketing executive at Paramount Pictures, Lynn has shifted her focus to the heartbeats behind the data points driving change. Her unique ability to unpack authentic human stories and use these for connection and creation has earned her renown as a channel for innovation.

Lynn has traveled the world to work with and guide companies as diverse as Mattel, Activision, Facebook, Instagram, Citibank, Estee Lauder, Shiseido and StockX. This past year, Lynn has keynoted Future Trends and Leadership conferences in Abu Dhabi, Oslo, Prague, San Francisco, and New York, shining a light on critical shifts in post pandemic behavior and desire and pull forward a new hunger for belonging. Her work has led to rebrands, rebuilds and regeneration for major household brands, as well as creating bold new thinking and energy for employee teams at YouTube, Shiseido, Care.org, Dannon, Target and more. Recently, she has led teams of executives from Fortune 100 companies into the field for embedded ethnographic work, creating new paths of understanding. Current projects include building a youth helmed portal for a major retail brand, deep rescaping and regeneration of a legacy non-profit institution, as well as mentoring young leaders for a number of institutions.

A sought-after master coach, lecturer and author, Lynn is currently based in Los Angeles, (with a generous sprinkling of New York) where she helms her trend and consumer insights consultancy, ShineScout, Inc.

## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS (THURSDAY, MARCH 6)

### **Kim Greene, Founder – Svalinn**

Kim Greene is the Founder and President of Svalinn (pronounced - Sfallin - like "I've Sfallin in love"), a Livingston-based company that breeds, raises and trains elite family protection dogs. The company was founded in 2005 in Nairobi, Kenya.

Prior to launching the company, Kim was a policy advisor supporting President Karzi in Afghanistan. Kim also served in leadership roles within the United Nations on reintegration of ex-combatants. She is a graduate of Princeton University with a MA in Public Policy and a graduate of Hamilton College with a BA in International Relations.

Kim's greatest joy comes from recreating in the mountains with her twin boys - who love to ski, bike, camp and paddle board almost as much as she does.'

## WORKSHOP HOSTS (FRIDAY, MARCH 7)

### **Sarah Elkins, Elkins Consulting, Author/Podcast Host**

A Montana-based small business owner, Gallup-certified StrengthsFinder coach, long-time podcast host, storyteller and professional musician, Sarah Elkins gives new meaning to the phrase "show - don't tell" through her focus on personal brand and authentic storytelling. Her enthusiasm, high energy, and engaging sessions are known to inspire and motivate her audience to take action - to sustain the momentum in collecting and sharing personal stories to truly connect with others and reducing miscommunication at work and at home.

### **Karen Grosz, President – Canvas Creek Team**

Karen Grosz, author of Quiet Leadership, and five other books, is the founder of Canvas Creek Teambuilding and the 2024 Small Business Association Small Business Champion of the Year. She has worked with companies from Alpha Overhead Doors in Billings to Walmart's home office and currently offers a product helping to change culture in schools.

### **Kassi Strong, Program Director – Rocky Mountain Women's Business Center**

Kassi Strong is a business strategist, entrepreneur, and advocate for women-owned businesses in Montana. As the director of the Rocky Mountain Women's Business Center, her and her team have helped countless Montanans launch and grow successful businesses that impact communities all over the state.

With a background in digital marketing and business development, Kassi specializes in developing creative strategies that drive growth and community impact. When she's not working with or advocating for women-owned businesses in Montana, she's likely spending time outside with her kids, strolling through an antique store, or in her studio with a paint brush in hand.

## PANELISTS (Listed alphabetically BY FIRST NAME)

### **Avery Patrick, VP & Marketing Director – Showdown Montana**

Avery Patrick is an Owner, Vice President & the Marketing Director at Showdown Montana. Avery received her degree from Carroll College in 2012 in History & Political Science for Secondary Education, and hit the ground running at Showdown upon graduation. Avery effectively utilizes an authentic, grounded branding strategy including tech and social media to drive consistent increases in revenue and skier visits year after year.

Avery played a key role in Showdown's acquisition of the Edith Hotel in White Sulphur Springs in 2022. And her influence expands beyond Showdown as she serves on both the Board of the Intermountain Ski Area Association (ISAA) and the National Ski Area Association (NSAA) Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI) Committee. Avery volunteers with the Meagher County Rodeo Club and assists on putting on the Labor Day Rodeo every year. Yeehaw! Avery manages to integrate work, family and fun into one big ball known as her life and can often be found chasing her kids, dogs, cows, elk, trout and her handsome husband, Shawn around the beautiful places she calls home.

### **Brocade Stops Black Eagle (Crow-Mandan Hidatsa) – Brocade Designs**

Taught by her Mother at a young age, Brocade has been beading and honing her craft for over 30 years. Brocades ready-to-wear apparel are a direct reflection of her beadwork and lifestyle. Brocades beadwork is inspired by old Crow geometric designs and color palate.

### **Carrie Krepps, Executive Director – Florence Crittenton**

Carrie Krepps is the Executive Director of Florence Crittenton Family Services in Helena, MT. She joined Florence Crittenton in March, 2010 as the Grants Officer and quickly fell in love with the work and the organization, moving to the role of Executive Director in July of 2019 after 8 years as the Development Director. Prior to her time here, Carrie was the Education Coordinator for the Montana Hospital Association, as well as the Assistant Director of Development and Director of Gameday Operations with the Montana State University Athletic Department in Bozeman from 2003-2005.

Over her 15 years, Carrie has gained extensive knowledge regarding the critical work of caring for families in an integrated family-centric treatment model, and has found a passion for combining business savvy and human services programming to create a powerful business model for serving families across Montana. Carrie is a Helena native and holds a Business Marketing degree and minor in Small Business & Entrepreneurship from Montana State University-Bozeman. She loves raising her two daughters, Ella and Sarah, with her husband, Fred Krepps, back in her hometown.

### **Catherine Bernhardt, GM Western Montana – Republic Services**

Catherine Bernhardt is the active General Manager of Republic Services in Western Montana, overseeing all business in the Bozeman, Missoula, and Whitefish markets. Originally from North Carolina, Catherine received both her Bachelor's and MBA degrees from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She started her career with Republic in Bend, OR, and then went on to enter the General Manager Accelerated Training Program in Boston, MA where she learned about the industry and drove business development in an extremely complex market. Catherine relocated to Montana in June where she is actively one of the youngest General Managers companywide.

## PANELISTS (Listed alphabetically BY FIRST NAME)

### **Dr. Chelsea Bodnar, Founder & CEO – Montana Pediatrics**

Chelsea Bodnar, MD, MPhil, FAAP, is a board-certified pediatrician, clinical informaticist, and Founder/CEO of Montana Pediatrics, a nonprofit dedicated to transforming healthcare access, equity, and delivery in rural communities. As a passionate advocate for pediatric care, she has spearheaded initiatives that integrate technology and innovation with the deep compassion and understanding that only comes from being closely connected to local communities and cultures.

Chelsea has held prominent positions such as health policy fellow at the Institute of Medicine and member of the executive committee of the American Academy of Pediatrics' section on telemedicine, uniquely contributing to her regarded role as a leader in healthcare innovation. A Rhodes Scholar, presidential scholar at Harvard, and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation fellow, she now balances her professional work with life in Missoula, enjoying time with her husband and three children.

### **Chelysa “Chief” Owens-Cyr (Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux, Pasqua First Nations Plains Cree and Saulteaux) – Chief’n Wear**

A visionary designer and artist from šųktógeja bahá, the Fort Peck Indian Reservation, Chelysa is the creative force behind the Holiday 2024 Nike N7 Collection, a project inspired by her connection to the “Big Blue Montana Skies,” her traditional upbringing, and her family’s artistry. Her designs celebrate Indigenous culture, drawing from Oceti Sakowin ledger art and La/Dakota beadwork, including the intricate work of her mother, whose creativity deeply influenced her path.

### **Christine Tennyson, VP of Business Development – Meaningful Ventures 2.0**

Christine Tennyson has decades of experience working inside family offices and global investment management firms where she has been responsible for all facets of daily operations. She serves as the Executive Director and VP of Business Development of a private single family office of an UHNW family and is the family’s lead business executive across their full spectrum of businesses, investment interests, political matters and philanthropic endeavors - including their alternative asset and idea accelerator platforms – Meaningful Ventures 2.0 LLC and Meaningful Ventures Montana.

By leveraging her unique private family office experience, she has developed networks and strategic partnerships to source and evaluate potential opportunities and investments to effectively achieve financial prosperity and extend generational family legacies through meaningful mission-aligned ventures and philanthropy. She specializes in fundraising advisory services including sourcing capital for impact investments and value-aligned capital projects, especially for younger generations desiring to develop new businesses.

## PANELISTS (Listed alphabetically BY FIRST NAME)

### **Colee Wingo, Senior Community Advisor - Billings Clinic Bozeman**

Colee and her husband, Jon, have been fortunate enough to live in the Gallatin Valley since the summer of 1995 when they relocated to Montana from South Carolina. She and her husband married at the Rainbow Ranch, in Big Sky, in 1997 and their son was born in Bozeman in August 2007.

Over the last 29 years in Bozeman, Colee has specifically worked in sales and marketing as well 18+ years in hospitality. A little over three years ago, Colee accepted a position with Billings Clinic Bozeman as their Senior Community Advisor integrating strategic marketing and business development both locally and within the western region.

### **Dana Cuccia, CEO - HealthGuard Systems**

Dana Cuccia co-founded HealthGuard Systems, LLC, a company dedicated to allergen detection through photonics. She oversees daily operations while ensuring an alignment between company vision and marketing strategy to deliver a user-centric product. HealthGuard Systems was born from her own recent diagnosis of Celiac Disease and discovered an unmet need in the market for gluten testing outside a gluten-controlled environment.

She earned a bachelor's degree in Business Management and Entrepreneurship from the University of Montana. She previously worked at Mountain Meadow Herbs, a manufacturing company, as a Jane of all trades; OSHA/FDA compliance chair, conference center coordinator, and AP/AR manager among other tasks.

### **Elle Gahl, Shadow Ridge Analytics (photonics); Board Member Montana Photonics & Quantum Alliance**

Elle Gahl is the CEO and President of Shadow Ridge Analytics, an innovation management firm right here in Bozeman. Shadow Ridge Analytics serves federal research organizations, research nonprofits, and the industrial base through technology transfer consulting, intellectual property management, and business development. Her company also manages two Regional Innovation Cluster programs for the Small Business Administration, one of them dedicated to serving Montana's robust and growing photonics industry. Through this partnership, her and her company have had the honor of assisting photonics companies on their go to market strategy, fundraising opportunities, government contracting, and so much more. She enjoys all of Montana's natural beauty with her husband, three kids, and trusty black lab.

### **Heather McDowell, VP Legal & External Affairs, Americas - Sibanye-Stillwater**

Heather McDowell is the SVP and General Counsel, Legal and External Affairs, for Sibanye-Stillwater in the Americas where she leads the company's legal and sustainability strategies, including the Good Neighbor Agreement, a collaborative venture with Northern Plains Resource Council that promotes responsible mining practices to protect the environment and the rural vitality of local communities.

Heather was raised on her family's ranch in Bridger, Montana and graduated summa cum laude from Gonzaga University School of Law. When not behind her computer or driving the beautiful vistas around Sibanye-Stillwater's Montana operations, she can be found watching her son on the basketball court and saddling her twin daughters' horses at local Little Britches rodeos. Heather is passionate about the responsible mining and recycling of domestic critical minerals and is working to create a fair global playing field for Sibanye-Stillwater's Montana-made metals.

## PANELISTS (Listed alphabetically BY FIRST NAME)

### **Dr. Heidi Duncan, FAAFP, MD - Billings Clinic**

Heidi Duncan, M.D., FAAFP, has worked at Billings Clinic since 1994. After completing medical school at the University of Washington and residency at the UW Family Medicine Residency, Dr. Duncan moved to Billings and joined Billings Clinic where she continues to practice Family Medicine. Her practice has included inpatient hospital work, obstetrical care, minor office procedures, and teaching medical students and residents in the office and hospital settings.

She added the role of Billings Clinic's Physician Director of Health Policy to her clinical work in 2014. She shares health policy work in a dyad with the Director of Reimbursement and Health Policy, JJ Carmody. Together, they work at the grassroots, state and federal levels with other physician leaders, legislators and policy makers to inform them on policy issues related to practicing medicine in an integrated clinical system that includes rural physician practices and critical access hospitals

### **Heidi Johnson, President - OpenBB**

Heidi is a C-suite executive specializing in AI-focused data and product management. She excels at implementing AI strategies in regulated industries like fintech and healthcare. She has successfully scaled AI product strategies, transformed technical teams, and built compliant AI infrastructure across organizations ranging from startups to multinationals (\$10M-\$750M ARR) in global markets including the US, UK, EU, India, China, and Australia. Her standout quality is aligning stakeholders and building high-performance teams to drive business outcomes through AI innovation. Heidi lives in Big Sky with her husband when she is not traveling to Boston for her MBA or visiting her children.

### **Jaclyn Marin Liebscher, Project Manager for One&Only - Golden Eagle**

I pride myself on being a versatile construction management professional with more than 20 years of experience in high-end residential, commercial, and heavy civil projects across the Western U.S. My passion lies in fostering collaboration among owners, architects, engineers, and tradespeople to achieve our project goals. I am dedicated to creating a rewarding and fulfilling work environment for my team, ensuring that every project is not just a task but a shared accomplishment.

### **Kallie Kujawa, MSN, RN, Chief Operating Officer - Bozeman Health**

Kallie Kujawa serves as Chief Operating Officer of Bozeman Health. Kallie has nearly 20 years of nursing and health care leadership experience. A multi-generational Montanan, and Bozeman Health employee of 18 years, she had previously served the health system as a bedside nurse, nurse educator, system director of quality and safety, and chief clinical transformation officer.

During her time in these leadership roles, Kallie and her team achieved multiple quality and safety awards. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Kallie led as Incident Commander for the health system's COVID-19 incident response, readiness and recovery efforts, partnering with national, state and local officials.

Kallie holds a master's degree in nursing from Montana State University and a Bachelor of Arts from Carroll College. She has served on the Gallatin College Advisory Board for nearly a decade and is a National Baldrige Examiner through the U.S. Department of Commerce. Kallie and her partner, Tom, live in Bozeman with their two children. They enjoy spending time as a family skiing at Bridger Bowl, camping across this great state and biking as many mountain trails as the seasons allow.

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### **Kassi Strong, Program Director - Rocky Mountain Women's Business Center**

Kassi Strong is a business strategist, entrepreneur, and advocate for women-owned businesses in Montana. As the director of the Rocky Mountain Women's Business Center, her and her team have helped countless Montanans launch and grow successful businesses that impact communities all over the state. With a background in digital marketing and business development, Kassi specializes in developing creative strategies that drive growth and community impact. When she's not working with or advocating for women-owned businesses in Montana, she's likely spending time outside with her husband and kids, strolling through an antique store, or in her studio with a paint brush in hand.

### **Kelly Schwager, VP Global Communications - Oracle; MHTBA Board Chair**

Dr. Kelly Schwager serves as Board Chair for the Montana High Tech Business Alliance and Vice President of Global Communications for Oracle. Since 2014, the Montana High Tech Business Alliance has supported the growth of high-tech jobs and skills development across the state.

Kelly is passionate about the education and economic opportunities afforded by technology and holds an EdD in Leadership and Learning in Organizations from Vanderbilt University where her research has focused on how to responsibly nurture the technology ecosystem in rural and small communities.

### **Kirsten Schaub, Chief Revenue Officer for AI healthcare startups; mpathic**

Kirsten Schaub is an accomplished strategic leader with extensive experience in sales, go-to-market strategies, and business development. She currently serves as a Fractional Chief Revenue Officer (CRO) and advisor for several organizations, including mpathic, a B2B SaaS company focused on science-backed AI solutions for the Healthcare and Life Sciences industries.

Previously, Kirsten held senior roles at DocuSign, including Vice President of Commercial Sales for Healthcare and Life Sciences, where she helped organizations utilize Electronic Signature for digital transformation initiatives. Kirsten is passionate about helping companies build successful sales motions and develop effective GTM strategies. Kirsten has two grown kids and lives with her husband in Seattle but grew up in Missoula and considers Montana home.

### **Latisha Yazzie - Buck Elk Thunder, Executive Director**

Diné and Amskapi Piikani, Latisha Yazzie - Buck Elk Thunder is the Program Director of Indigenous Programs and Outreach with Accelerate Montana, which includes Native Women Launch. An artist and business owner, she is passionate about centering and celebrating Indigenous voices while creating opportunities for personal and economic growth.

### **Lisa DeLuca, Senior Director Product & Engineers - Unstoppable Domains (formerly AI at IBM, Wayfair)**

Lisa Seacat DeLuca is a technology executive and the 2nd most prolific female inventor globally, currently leading engineering, design, and product management at Unstoppable Domains to innovate in the decentralized web. A former IBM Distinguished Engineer with 20 years of experience, Lisa has over 1,000 patent filings, with more than 700 granted, spanning technologies like AI, blockchain, IoT, and Web3. She holds a Master's in Technology Commercialization from UT Austin and a BS in Computer Science from Carnegie Mellon University. An inductee into the Women in Technology International Hall of Fame and an MIT 35 Under 35 honoree, Lisa is also a TED speaker, author, and advocate for innovation through roles like AAAS-Lemelson Inventor Ambassador.

## PANELISTS (Listed alphabetically BY FIRST NAME)

### **Lisa Wood, CEO - Analog Physics**

Lisa Wood, CEO of Montana-based Analog Physics Inc., leads the commercialization of QAI (Quantum Artificial Intelligence), a quantum AI system surpassing current ML/AI with explainable, self-improving reasoning capabilities. This hybrid system dynamically prevents quantum errors using a neuromorphic design to solve complex problems with unprecedented precision and scalability. With a background in big business media and tech innovation, Lisa began funding R&D and shaping QAI's evolution decades ago. Now, as AI and quantum computing converge, she is dedicated to delivering transformative, ethically-driven quantum AI solutions to global industries.

### **Lyndsay Gutierrez, Cooperative Specialist - Montana Women's Finance Cooperative - Montana Cooperative Development Center (MCDC)**

Lyndsay Gutierrez has worked for over a decade in gut health, nutrition, food and food systems as an entrepreneur. She used her experience and knowledge, with the support of the Montana Cooperative Development Center (MCDC), to design and start the first of its kind multi-stakeholder Montana Food Hub Co-Op. Lyndsay then brought that on the ground experience to the MCDC team, supporting their education, marketing and outreach, and their women's equity programs. As a female entrepreneur herself, she is passionate about access to capital for women and brings that passion to her work with the Women's Investment Co-Op steering committee. The opportunity to create community, connect people and foster cooperation is part of who she is.

### **Margaret Madrigal, Executive Director, Commercial Banking MT/WY - JPMorgan Chase**

Margaret serves as Executive Director for JP Morgan Chase Commercial Banking Group, for the States of Montana & Wyoming. She is responsible for providing financial solutions for companies across a broad spectrum of industries with revenues typically in the \$20 million to \$500 million range.

Born and raised in Denver, Colorado she graduated with her bachelor's degree from W.P. Carey School of Business at Arizona State University. She has over 15 years' experience with JP Morgan Chase and predecessors. She has had the opportunity working in multiple markets for JP Morgan Chase including Phoenix, Denver, and most currently Montana and Wyoming.

Margaret has been an active member in all the communities she has served in. Most recently serving on the boards for Denver Women's Foundation and Fresh Start Women's Foundation of Phoenix, as well as committee member for Montana State Chamber of Commerce Women in Business Summit in 2024. She has the pleasure of leading the expansion efforts in Montana and Wyoming for our firm. She looks forward to continuing building relationships in this new region. When she isn't working or serving the community, she enjoys spending time with her family and dogs, skiing, hiking, fishing, golfing...anything that involves being outdoors.

### **Mary Johnson, CEO - Wavelength Electronics**

After graduating from Montana State University with a BS in Electrical Engineering, Mary worked as an Electro-Optical Engineer at TMA Technologies developing laser-based instruments for Light Scatter sensors. She co-founded Wavelength Electronics in 1993 to serve the need for high performance electronics in the laser diode control industry. Since becoming CEO in 2002, she has led Wavelength in partnering with high tech system designers to bring many spectroscopy, medical, and industrial laser systems to market.

## PANELISTS (Listed alphabetically BY FIRST NAME)

### **Melanie Schwarz, CEO – UpStream Strategy Partners**

Melanie Schwarz is the current CEO of UpStream Strategy Partners, a collaborative company designed to educate communities and workplaces around the importance of mental health awareness. As part of this work her team designed a curriculum and in person and virtual learning platform for businesses titled Mind Wellness University. Melanie also established the “UpStream Leadership Model” for leaders to rethink their work cultures through the lens of empathy and a proactive or “UpStream” approach to better anticipate the needs of their company and its most valuable resource, the employee.

Melanie is a seasoned keynote and workshop speaker and enjoys assisting others with their speaking businesses through the Cadence Speaker Academy, where she helps fellow speakers find relevant stages to share their knowledge and experience. Melanie previously worked as the Chief Growth and Innovation Officer at a regional substance use and mental health treatment center in Montana, and before that was the Director of Business Development for the local economic development organization. Melanie has a long history of board service on local and regional non-profit boards and has been active in development and fundraising for many Montana projects.

Melanie is a published author. Her book LifeJackets, A Mother’s Journey through her Childs Addiction, has helped hundreds of families with their experience of substance use disorder in their family. Melanie lives in Billings, Montana and is married with three adult children. She has had a 25+ year career in marketing, public relations, and fundraising. She is a graduate of Montana State University.

### **Melissa Matassa-Stone, CEO – WGM Group**

Melissa Matassa-Stone, PE, LEED AP, has 21 years of experience in the civil and environmental engineering fields. Melissa is the Chief Executive Officer of WGM Group, Inc. She joined the engineering and consulting firm in 2005, spending her formative years designing subdivisions and providing construction observation. Melissa built much of her professional practice and expertise in environmental resource work for Montana Department of Transportation projects.

During her nearly 20-year career with WGM she has led the environmental team and managed numerous large, multi-disciplinary projects. She is known for her communication skills on project teams and her ability to convey technical information to audiences with varying levels of expertise. Melissa is a shareholder and serves on the Board of Directors at WGM; she also serves on the Boards of the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) of Montana as President, and Climate Smart Missoula as Treasurer. She has also served as past President of the United Way of Missoula County and Montana Chapter of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE).

She is a proud Yellow Jacket, having earned a B.S. in Civil Engineering from Georgia Tech; she also holds a Master’s degree in Project Engineering and Management from Montana Tech. In her free time, Melissa spends as much time as she can outdoors: running, skiing, kayaking, and playing soccer. She loves traveling with her family to explore new places and often can be found with a (digital) book in hand.

## PANELISTS (Listed alphabetically BY FIRST NAME)

### **Michelle Huie, Founder - ShopDot and Vim&Vigr**

Michelle Huie launched her first Montana-based company, VIM & VIGR, a stylish compression legwear brand in 2013 which has made the INC 5000 list of fastest growing companies as well as Best Places to Work. In 2024, Michelle launched her second company, ShopDot, a platform that makes it possible for service businesses to easily sell the products they recommend without inventory or operational barriers. ShopDot is the first retail solution built for service businesses and non-traditional retailer and enables them to participate in the \$5 trillion retail industry. Michelle has been featured on Forbes, Entrepreneur, INC, Thrive Global and CNN.

### **Paige Williams, Founder - Aud Pop**

Paige Williams is an award-winning filmmaker, entrepreneur, and speaker with over a decade of experience scaling innovative platforms that empower creators and drive investment opportunities. As the founder and CEO of AudPop, she leads a global community of 75,000 creators working with Fortune 500 brands and AI companies. Passionate about bridging gaps in leadership and funding, Paige focuses on creating equitable opportunities for women in business and investment.

### **Sara Andrews, Founder - BUMBLEROOT FOODS**

Sara is passionate about accelerating the pace of regenerative agriculture by contributing to a food system that works with nature instead of against it. She believes that a food system should be climate friendly (building organic matter and protecting biodiversity), equitable, and nourishing. The granddaughter of Montana ranchers, Sara has worked in various parts of the food ecosystem — including as an agricultural policy advisor to U.S. Senator Max Baucus and the U.S. Senate Finance Committee and as a consultant with the NGO TechnoServe in Zimbabwe. In addition, she has spent many years as a strategy consultant helping to grow and build emerging businesses within large organizations.

After spending time working in Zimbabwe, she realized that a new type of food company was needed to provide the type of products that customers want. She founded BUMBLEROOT to provide nutrient dense, delicious food and beverage products with full supply chain transparency to consumers and to celebrate the farmers, ranchers, and harvesters contributing to a regenerative food system. She is also the co-founder of The Grange, a multi-stakeholder founded company aggregating regenerative beef in Montana and providing the "messy middle" infrastructure needed to accelerate regenerative livestock production in the Mountain West.

Sara holds a bachelor's degree and a Masters of Business Administration from the University of Notre Dame.

### **Sarah Blechta, Chair, Big Sky Resort Area District Board & VP, Property Owners Associations - Lone Mountain Land Company**

Sarah spent her childhood calling Big Sky home, after earning her B.A. she returned to Big Sky to begin her career and her family. Sarah worked in the hospitality and property management industry with Big Sky Resort for eight years before returning to the Yellowstone Club in 2015 to become the Director of Property Owners Association. She transitioned to Lone Mountain Land Company in 2024 and oversees the Lone Mountain Management group with over 40 Property Owners Associations. Sarah, her husband Ryan and daughter Ella enjoy traveling the West for youth soccer, biking to town center activities, and hitting the slopes. She looks forward to continue helping to shape Big Sky as a sustainable community for all who make it home and the visitors who seek it out. She was elected to the Big Sky Resort Area District (BSRAD) in May 2018, and also serves on the Bozeman Health Planning and Finance Committee.

## PANELISTS (Listed alphabetically BY FIRST NAME)

### **Sara Urbanik, Executive Director – O.P. & W.E. Edwards Foundation**

Sara graduated with her B.A. in Early Childhood and Family Communication from the University of Alaska Fairbanks. For 25 years she has worked in the non-profit sector serving children, families, caregivers and their communities. This includes 10 years of experience with fundraising and grant writing. Sara enjoys the outdoors, especially activities that include spending time with her family and friends. It is Sara's mission to use her skills, talents and abilities to positively impact the communities she serves.

### **Shaye Metcalf, BillingsWorks Manager – Big Sky Economic Development**

Shaye's background is in public education. She was a Career and Technical Education teacher for the past twelve years. Specifically, Shaye taught Family and Consumer Sciences courses, helping students gain technical and soft skills for employability both now and in the future. It was during this time that she developed a passion for partnering education with industry to help fill the workforce pipeline in Montana.

### **Stacy Maloney, Founder & CEO - Elevate11 Consulting**

Stacy is a retail management and business transformation veteran. Through her diverse career, she has lead teams and created unique employee experiences that span six generations, from Gen Z to the Greatest Generation.

She spent five years in Grand Teton National Park as a Buying and Retail Operations Manager. And in 2005, she embarked on a 16-year career with Gap, Inc., where she led global Inventory Management and Buying teams, designing processes and tools to improve business decision-making. In her last five years, she created the Center of Excellence for Change Management at Gap, Inc., where she directed her team of Change professionals and led Change Management workstreams for global technology implementations.

In 2024, she founded Elevate 11 Consulting and continues to partner with and support leaders as they navigate change and create data-informed decision-making cultures. Stacy is a University of Montana alumna, and currently teaches MBA courses in Change Leadership and CFO Storytelling.

### **Stephanie McDowell, Executive Director - BridgerCare**

Stephanie McDowell is the Executive Director of Bridgercare and Montana Family Planning. Stephanie's passion for sexual and reproductive healthcare has rooted her 20+ year commitment to Bridgercare. Stephanie is a member the first generation to have parents who accessed safe, legal birth control and abortion 52 years ago. Stephanie carries the awareness that change can happen in a mere generation and works to support continued progress and reproductive freedom for future generations.

## PANELISTS (Listed alphabetically BY FIRST NAME)

### **Stephanie Pimmel, SVP & Chief People Officer - PacificSource**

Stephanie Pimmel is the Senior Vice President and Chief People Officer at PacificSource Health Plans, where she oversees human resources across Montana, Idaho, and Oregon. With more than 20 years of experience, Stephanie has led transformative initiatives in organizational culture and workforce strategy, supporting employee retention and adaptability to changing market demands. Prior to PacificSource, she served as the Chief Human Resources Officer at Lumeris and held senior HR roles with Alter Trading and Vi-Jon. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Human Resource Management from Lindenwood University.

### **Suzi Berget White, AVP/Commercial Lender - First Security Bank, Bozeman**

Suzi Berget White is an AVP / Commercial Lender at First Security Bank at the Downtown Bozeman branch. White is an experienced business consultant driving growth and results. She was formerly the Director of Business Development for Prospera Business Network and under her leadership, won the Small Business Administration's National Award for "2019 Women's Business Center" of the Year. She has counseled more than 1,500 Montana business owners and non-profits focusing on business strategy, financial planning, exit strategy, marketing and sales. As a small business owner she has successfully launched and brought to market three businesses and effectively expanded, and sold, a construction business.

Professional award highlights include winning the "Montana Ambassador of the Year" award in 2020 and the "20 under 40 years old" award in Southwest Montana. She is proud to serve on the Montana Ambassadors board and the City of Bozeman Downtown Urban Renewal District board.

### **Dr. Suzanne Tilleman, Dean - University of Montana College of Business**

Suzanne Tilleman is the Sprunk and Burnham Endowed Dean of the University of Montana's College of Business at the University of Montana, serving in this role since 2019.

She joined the College of Business in 2010 after earning her Ph.D. from the University of Oregon. Prior to pursuing her Ph.D. in Strategy, Suzanne earned her Bachelor's in Mechanical Engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology, and her MBA from Tulane University. Suzanne's industry experience includes working for some of the largest players in the natural resources arena: General Electric, Exxon, and Monsanto.

Suzanne's research focuses on firm performance and environmental sustainability issues. One of her publications, *Creating Economic and Environmental Value Through Industrial Symbiosis*, received the Impact on Practice Award from the Organizations and Environment Division of the Academy of Management. Another publication, *Institutional Logics and Technology Development: Evidence from the Wind and Solar Energy Industries*, examined the interaction of technological uncertainty and regional institutions. A dedicated educator, Suzanne has won the Outstanding Undergraduate Faculty in Management Award multiple times since joining UM. Originally, from Havre, MT, Suzanne is committed to the success of the students, College of Business, University of Montana, and the entire state.

## PANELISTS (Listed alphabetically BY FIRST NAME)

### **Tana Burke, Founder – Sky Cycle**

Tana Burke is an innovator, global traveler, and the founder of Sky Cycle. A Montana-based company with a solution to bring passenger wellness to airport terminals and lounges. In 2020, while traveling in Thailand with her husband and four children, her passion for travel and wellness collided and Sky Cycle was born! With dual degrees in finance and design, the first-time entrepreneur jumped into the unknown - designing from her own frustration as a traveler. From research to first sketches to hiring a team of engineers, she was determined to figure it out. As her start-up mentor says, “Show up. Do it scared. Build your muscle and watch your confidence and competence grow”.

A patent was awarded for her invention as her team completed several iterations of a prototype. Collaborating with UM (Mansfield Library 3D print lab) gave her a strategic advantage and Sky Cycle made it across the finish line, which was crucial for investment and demos with airport and lounge partners.

Sky Cycle aims to enhance passenger wellness with a modern cycling kiosk in airport terminals and lounges. Passengers choose their ride duration through the Sky Cycle app which allows them to de-stress and enjoy light cycling. Transform your wait time at airports and achieve your wellness goals in route. When Tana is not creating hospitality for airline passengers, she loves travelling and designing her home.

### **Ticia Cliff, Workforce Development Specialist, Accelerate MT**

Ticia Cliff is an enrolled member of the Aaniiih tribe of the Fort Belknap Indian Community. Ticia Cliff is the Workforce Development Program Specialist and a Microsoft TechSpark Fellow. Ticia's passion is to bring opportunities our Tribal Communities.