

*Welcome!*



*Girls Leading Our World*

**WHERE CAREERS SPARK &  
DREAMS SOAR**



**community®  
bridges** Empowering Girls,  
Building Leaders for the Community

**April 5, 2025 | 11am-3:30pm**

Montgomery College Takoma Park/Silver Spring  
Campus | Catherine F. Scott Commons

# WELCOME LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Welcome to the 10th Annual Community Bridges Career Summit, GLOW “Girls Leading Our World”! On behalf of Community Bridges, I am thrilled to extend a warm welcome to each of you. Today marks a milestone as we celebrate a decade of bringing together young women to explore diverse career paths through engaging workshops and activities. At Community Bridges, our mission remains steadfast: to empower girls from all backgrounds to excel academically, lead with confidence, and embrace wellness.

This summit provides a nurturing environment where every girl is encouraged to learn, grow, and embrace leadership. I urge you to make the most of today by participating in workshops, seizing networking opportunities, and utilizing the valuable resources available to you. You'll have the chance to hear from inspiring women and connect with peers from across Montgomery County. Remember, active participation is key to making this experience truly enriching. Dive into the program, ask questions, take notes, connect with others, and discover the passions that ignite your desire to contribute meaningfully to today's events.

Wishing you a day filled with learning, inspiration, and empowerment!

Sincerely,

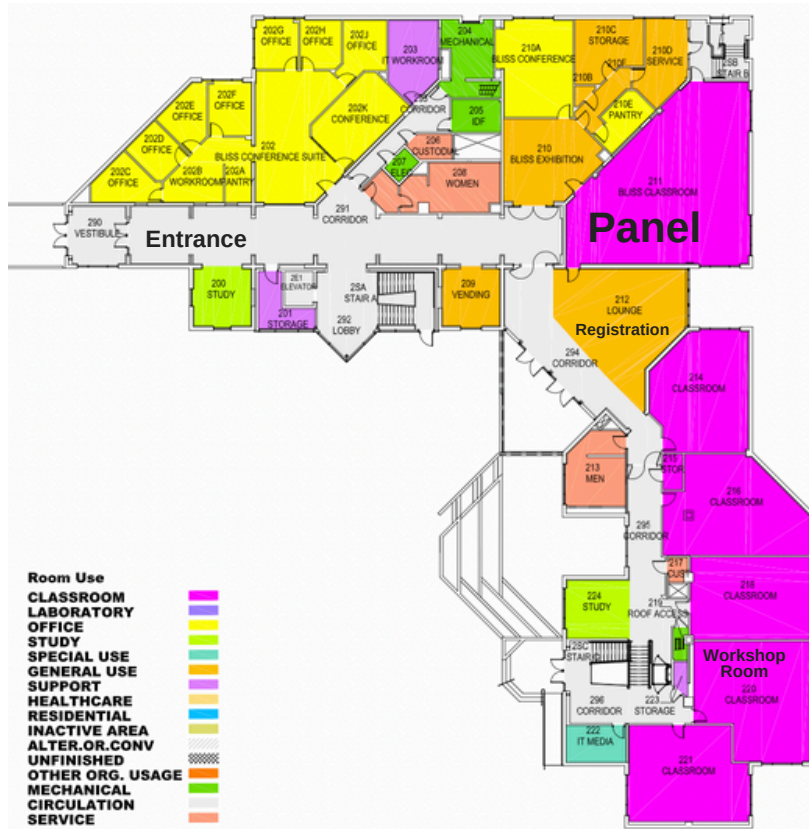
Shannon Babe-Thomas  
Executive Director, Community Bridges, Inc.



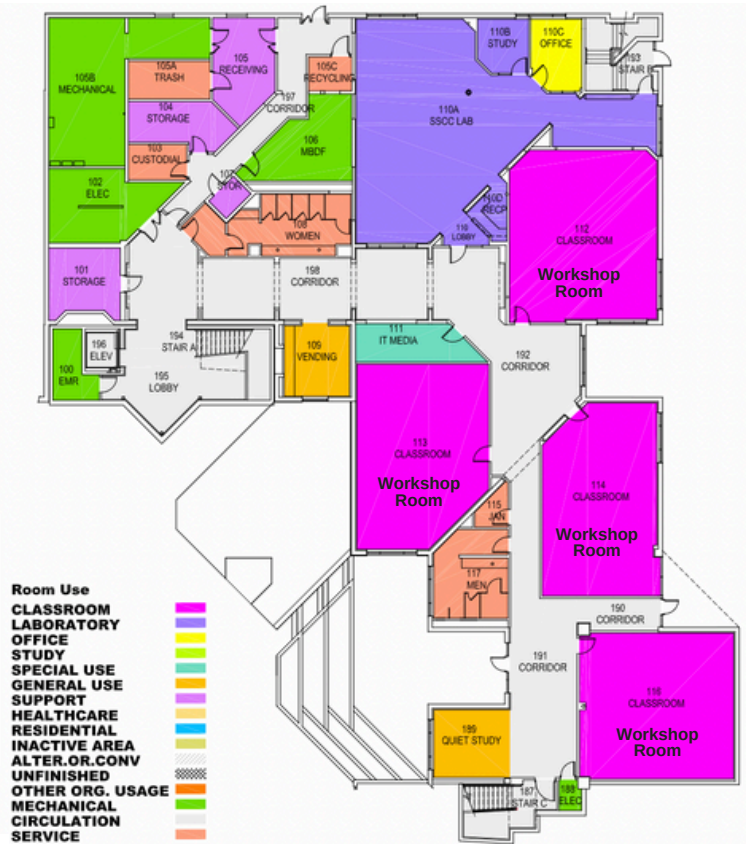
*Shannon Babe-Thomas joined Community Bridges as the Executive Director on June 7, 2016. Shannon is an incredibly loyal nonprofit leader with over 25 years nonprofit experience. Shannon is a civic leader and believes in being involved in her community. Shannon serves on the Nonprofit Montgomery Board, the Committee for Montgomery Board, and the Montgomery Women Board where she is currently secretary. Shannon is the Immediate Past President of the Rotary Club of Downtown Silver Spring, graduate of the Leadership Montgomery 2018 Core Class, and served on the transition team for County Executive Elrich. Shannon graduated from Towson University in 2002 with a BS in Communications and a participant of the Stanford Executive Program for Nonprofit Leaders in 2023.*

# CONFERENCE MAP

## MAIN FLOOR



## BASEMENT FLOOR



### WORKSHOP BLOCK 1 • 1:10PM - 2:10PM

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>Polished and Professional: Keys to Workplace Success • Christina Taylor</b>                       | Room 112 |
| <b>You Can Have a Seat at the Table • Ijeoma Enendu</b>  | Room 113 |
| <b>Rooted in Excellence: Growing Your Network Through Community Care • Aishia Manley</b>             | Room 114 |
| <b>Hey Now, What's That Sound? Discovering Acoustics All Around • T.J. Flunn and Bernice Kubicek</b> | Room 116 |
| <b>The Beauty of the STEM World • Dr. Qingyang Xiao</b>  | Room 220 |
| <b>Circuit Studio: Dream. Design. Build • Monique Kirkman-Bey</b>                                    | Room 211 |

### WORKSHOP BLOCK 2 • 2:15PM - 3:15PM

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>Against the Odds - My Path to Tech &amp; Leadership • Shannon Gueringer</b>  | Room 112 |
| <b>Future Vets: Hands-On Animal Care &amp; Careers • Dr. Anna Matheny</b>   | Room 113 |
| <b>EmpowerHER: Building Strong Relationships and Communication Skills • Shlley Karriem</b>                            | Room 114 |
| <b>A Future in Tech: Studying Computer Science &amp; Career Opportunities • Beamlak Bekele</b>                        | Room 116 |
| <b>Empowering Your Future with AI, Crafting Your Personalized Life, Career and Education Roadmap • Zeena Anderson</b> | Room 220 |
| <b>How to Use What You Already Know and Like to Get the Job and School You Want • Dr. Kristen Morgan</b>              | Room 211 |

**LUNCH and RESOURCE FAIR will be in the Student Services Center**

## SCHEDULE

|                 |                                     |             |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| 10am - 11am     | Registration / Photos               | Lobby       |
| 11am - 11:15am  | Welcome & Introduction              | Room 211    |
| 11:15am - 12pm  | Panel                               | Room 211    |
| 12pm - 1pm      | Lunch & Resource Fair               | Cafeteria   |
| 1:10pm - 2:10pm | Workshop Block 1                    | Check pg. 4 |
| 2:10pm - 2:15pm | Transition                          |             |
| 2:15pm - 3:15pm | Workshop Block 2                    | Check pg. 4 |
| 3:15pm - 3:30pm | Awards, Raffles and Closing Remarks | Room 211    |





# WORKSHOPS AT A GLANCE

## WORKSHOP BLOCK 1 • 1:10PM - 2:10PM

### Polished & Professional: Keys to Workplace Success Christina Taylor, TaylorMade Experience

Room 112

From mastering first impressions to workplace etiquette, this workshop will give you the confidence and skills to shine in any professional setting. Get ready to network, communicate, and show up like a boss!

### You Can Have a Seat at The Table Ijeoma Enendu, Montgomery County Police

Room 113

Who told you "you can't sit with them"? Yes, you can! You have something to offer and you can join them. This seminar focuses on encouraging young women to aim big and learn to see themselves doing things others could not. Ijeoma Enendu will share her story and tips for being uniquely you and making a difference no matter where you go.

### Rooted In Excellence: Growing Your Network Through Community Care Aishia Manley, Co-Founder It Takes A Village

Room 114

This workshop is focused on the Myers-Briggs Assessments for teens exploring careers. This workshop will provide valuable insights into self-awareness and help participants make informed decisions about their future career paths.

### Hey Now, What's That Sound? Discovering Acoustics All Around T.J. Flynn and Bernice Kubicek Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Lab

Room 116

In this workshop we're going to learn all about acoustics – the science of sound. Through a number of demonstrations and hands-on activities we're going to better understand how sound works, discover how it often shows up in surprising ways, visualize sound through some unique demonstrations, and learn how engineers and scientists leverage sound in the technology we use every day.

### The Beauty of the STEM World (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Dr. Qingyang Xiao Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Lab

Room 220

This workshop offers an engaging introduction to STEM majors, highlighting the exciting activities, events, and personal experiences of the presenter throughout his academic journey in STEM. It will explore how the beauty of STEM shapes our lives and transforms the world around us. The session will also cover key milestones, brief overviews, and future directions of various STEM fields.

### Circuit Studio: Dream. Design. Build Monique Kirkman-Bey Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Lab

Room 211

Curious minds and creative thinkers—this workshop is for you! You'll start by learning how to build a working circuit using LittleBits. Then, you'll team up to take on a design challenge where you'll dream up, prototype, and build something original that brings your circuit to life. This is your chance to think like an engineer, solve real-world problems, and create something totally your own. No experience required—just bring your creativity and let's get building!

## WORKSHOP BLOCK 2 • 2:15PM - 3:15PM

### Against the Odds - My Path to Tech & Leadership Shannon Gueringer, Senior Program Manager, Skyward IT Solutions

Room 112

Less than 2% of tech leadership roles are held by Black women. In this dynamic and interactive workshop, Shannon shares her real-life journey from bartending to leading AI transformation programs in the federal government. Through honest storytelling and a hands-on activity, participants will explore how to navigate challenges, build confidence, and envision bold career paths in tech and beyond. This session is designed to spark inspiration and remind every girl: you belong in the room, and your story is your superpower.

### Future Vets: Hands-On Animal Care & Careers! Dr. Anna Matheny

Room 113

This interactive workshop introduces students to the world of veterinary medicine through hands-on activities and engaging discussions. Students will analyze real animal X-rays, assemble their own pet first-aid kits, and explore different veterinary career paths. A Q&A session with a veterinarian and a "Day in the Life" simulation will provide insight into the challenges and rewards of this field. Perfect for aspiring animal lovers who want to learn what it takes to become a vet!

### EmpowerHER: Building Strong Relationships and Communication Skills Shelly Karriem, Talent Acquisition & Retention Specialist, Donohoe Hospitality Services

Room 114

A workshop on Healthy Relationships and Communication where you'll learn why healthy relationships are key to happiness and personal growth. Through open discussion and role-play we'll cover how to communicate effectively by really listening, sharing your thoughts clearly, and understanding body language. Plus, you'll discover positive ways to solve disagreements by understanding different viewpoints and working together. By the end, you'll be empowered to build strong, supportive relationships and communicate confidently.

### A Future in Tech: Studying Computer Science & Career Opportunities Beamlak Bekele, Computer Science Major, UMBC

Room 116

In this workshop you will be introduced to the world of Computer Science—what it is, what careers you can pursue, and how to get started, including scholarships and college opportunities. We'll explore how simple commands build up into powerful technology, from apps to AI. Plus, I'll share my own journey in CS, projects I've worked on, and tips for choosing a college."

### Empowering Your Future with AI, Crafting Your Personalized Life, Career & Education Roadmap Zeenashah Anderson, Associate Scientist, AstraZeneca

Room 220

In this interactive session, I will guide participants through a unique, hands-on exploration of AI-powered career planning. Using tools such as ChatGPT (or Perplexity), attendees will learn to harness the power of prompt writing to design a roadmap that outlines their goals and steps for the next 3, 5, 7, 10, 15, and 20 years.

### How to Use What You Already Know and Like to Get the Job and School You Want! Dr. Kirsten Morgan

Room 211

We will spend time exploring our interests and skills to think about future career options. This interactive workshop will walk through a variety of activities to explore the skills you already have and how to choose jobs and activities to get you moving in the right direction of where you want to go!

## KATE STEWART | Montgomery County Council President | MODERATOR



Kate Stewart was elected to serve Montgomery County's fourth council district in November 2022, representing North Bethesda, Kensington, Garrett Park, Takoma Park, Silver Spring, and parts of Chevy Chase. She was elected by her peers to serve as the President of the Council through December 2025 and is the chair of the Government Operations and Fiscal Policy and Audit committees. Kate also serves on the Council's Transportation and Environment committee. Kate also held the position of Chair of the Board of Directors for the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) for 2023.

On the Council, Kate has led efforts on pivotal issues such as housing affordability, economic development, and ensuring healthcare access for the LGBTQ+ community. She has long been an advocate for youth in both current and past positions — in the nonprofit world working on reproductive care and youth rights, and as Mayor in Takoma Park with the establishment of the Takoma Park Youth Council following the City lowering their voting age to 16.

## MARGARITA WOMACK, PhD, MBA | Founder and CEO at MasPanadas | PANELIST



Margarita Womack, a scientist turned entrepreneur, holds a Bachelor of Science from Tulane University, a Doctorate from Princeton University, and an Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA) from Georgetown University. She is the founder of Latin Goodness Foods, a company striving to make South American street foods more accessible for those with busy lifestyles. Margarita is also the driving force behind the "Latin Goodness Foundation", a non-profit organization dedicated to empowering vulnerable women and fostering stronger communities. Prior to her entrepreneurial journey, Margarita actively contributed to science education and research. Her experiences include teaching at the K-12 level, leading a non-profit organization promoting science in her home country, Colombia, and conducting primary research at Princeton University.

## FARAH TOWFIC, PharmD, MBA, RPh | Senior Director of the USP Healthcare Quality and Safety Center of Excellence | PANELIST



Farah Towfic, PharmD, MBA, RPh is Senior Director of the USP Healthcare Quality and Safety Center of Excellence. USP is an independent, scientific nonprofit organization focused on building trust in the supply of safe, quality medicines. In her role, she shapes the strategic direction for the Healthcare Quality and Safety Center of Excellence. This team creates global solutions for the healthcare practitioner community that expand patient access to quality medicines. Powered by more than 50 volunteer experts, HQS standards strengthen health literacy, facilitate the safe, quality preparation of personalized medicine (including compounding, digital therapeutics, and pharmacogenomics), and streamline digital solutions through interoperability of health records for practitioners.

Dr. Towfic is active in several national pharmacy associations, serving as Chair of the American Pharmacists Association Foundation Women in Pharmacy Committee. She also serves as Chair of the University of Iowa College of Pharmacy Genesis Board that works to expand opportunities and mentorship for student pharmacists. She is a board member of SafeNetRx, an Iowa-based nonprofit that provides affordable medication access to patients in need. She is a graduate of the University of Iowa College of Pharmacy and received her MBA from the University of Wisconsin MBA Consortium. She has completed a residency program in Association Management and Leadership at the American Pharmacists Association. She is a resident of Montgomery County, Maryland and enjoys spending her free time outdoors with her husband, Brandon, and son Michael.



## **Tonia Bui | Founder and Managing Partner, PWP Strategies | PANELIST**

PWP Strategies, a political communications firm dedicated to making sure the voices of underrepresented communities are heard in politics. She helps political candidates and organizations connect with diverse voters, particularly Asian American & Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities.

Tonia's passion for politics began when she worked on her first campaign in Washington state. From there, she landed a job in the U.S. House of Representatives, where she helped members of Congress reach out to Asian American, Black, and Latino communities. Since then, she has managed political campaigns and led voter outreach efforts in Maryland and Virginia. Beyond politics, Tonia is committed to empowering her community. She co-hosts The Blue Dumpling Podcast, which highlights the importance of AAPI political engagement and has also served as a commissioner on the Montgomery County Commission for Women, advocating for women's rights. Prior to founding PWP Strategies, Tonia has held communications roles managing online media content for Montgomery County Public Schools' Television (MCPS-TV), federal government agencies, and Equal Justice Works (a national non-profit organization). Tonia holds a Master in Public Policy degree from American University and a dual Bachelor's degree in Mass Communications and Gender & Women's Studies from the University of California, Berkeley.



## **Shoareged Phillpotts | Co-Founder, It Takes a Village | PANELIST**

Shoareged Phillpotts is a Licensed Public Health Social Worker and Wellness Practitioner with over a decade of experience in racial justice, policy advocacy, and the public health sector. Known for her expertise in public speaking, project management, leadership development, community wellness initiatives, and facilitation, she is committed to creating positive change in her community.

As the co-founder of It Takes A Village Collaborative, a DMV-based nonprofit, she approaches her work with a culturally competent, community-centered mindset, focusing on trauma, systemic inequities, and reintegration to help historically resilient communities thrive.

Shoareged is also deeply engaged in volunteering and advocating for racial equity across the DC metropolitan area, serving as a member of several community coalitions. Her work spans local, national, and international organizations, all dedicated to improving systems and creating sustainable social change.



## **Adore Corina Bagasao | Clinical Research Coordinator, George Washington University | PANELIST**

Adore Corina Bagasao is a proud graduate of Howard University, where she earned a Bachelor of Science in Biology with minors in Chemistry and Spanish. With a passion for health equity and providing high-quality healthcare to medically underserved communities, she has dedicated her career to making a difference in the field of medicine. Currently, Adore serves as a Clinical Research Coordinator at George Washington University, where she works on dermatology clinical trials, building on her previous experience in diabetes clinical trials. She is also an incoming Physician Assistant student at the University of Southern California's Primary Care PA Program, where she looks forward to continuing her education and furthering her impact in the healthcare field. Adore is committed to empowering others, particularly young girls, to pursue careers in medicine and science. She believes in the power of leadership, self-belief, and working together to reach your goals. When she's not working or studying, Adore enjoys practicing yoga, hiking, trying new recipes, and taking walks with her adorable 7-year-old golden retriever, Philippe (pronounced Fe-leep)."



## **Sarah Craven | Chief, North American Representation Office, UNFPA | PANELIST**

Sarah Craven is a policy advocate and attorney with extensive experience in global health and human rights. She currently serves as the Chief of the North American Representation Office of UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund. In this role, she represents UNFPA in its engagement with the U.S. and Canadian governments, as well as with the media, private sector, and civil society.

Prior to joining UNFPA, Ms. Craven held positions at the U.S. Department of State and served as legislative staff to U.S. Senators Tim Wirth of Colorado and Spark Matsunaga of Hawaii. She also acted as a policy advisor to CEDPA during the 1994 International Conference on Population and the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China.

Ms. Craven is a founding board member of Kakenya's Dream, an innovative girls' leadership academy in Ensoonen, Kenya. In her free time, she enjoys reading novels, attending theater performances, and walking along the C&O Canal with her rescue beagle, Eddie.

She holds a B.A. from Macalester College, an M.Phil from Cambridge University (UK), and a J.D. from Georgetown University Law Center, where she was a Public Interest Law Scholar. In 2020, she was named one of Apolitical's Most Influential Leaders in Gender Policy.





**CHRISTINA SERRANO TAYLOR | Founder, President, and CEO of TaylorMade Experience (TME)**

***"Polished & Professional: Keys to Workplace Success" - Room 112***

With over 25 years of expertise in event production, fundraising, and business management, Christina has earned a reputation for delivering exceptional value to both nonprofit and corporate clients. Her passion lies in helping organizations develop strategies, execute impactful events, and achieve memorable, remarkable success. Known for her ability to build and lead a high-performing team of "Wonder Women," Christina instills a culture of integrity, innovation, excellence, and fun at TME. She believes every event—regardless of size or budget—deserves the same level of dedication and professionalism. Under her leadership, the TME team consistently embraces challenges and opportunities, pushing boundaries to achieve new standards of performance.

Christina's commitment to community extends beyond her business. In 2017, she joined the Board of Directors for Community Bridges, a Maryland-based nonprofit dedicated to mentoring young girls to become future leaders. Each year, the TME team proudly volunteers their time and expertise to support The Girl Legacy Gala, benefiting Community Bridges. When she's not orchestrating events or empowering her team, Christina treasures time with her family.



**IJEOMA ENENDU | District Community Operations Supervisor, Montgomery County Police Department**

***"You Can Have a Seat at The Table" - Room 113***

Ijeoma is currently employed with the Montgomery County Police Department, where she is the District Community Operations Supervisor for the Wheaton District. In addition to her role as the District Community Operations Supervisor, she is also an adjunct instructor at the Police Services Training Academy. When she is not working, she continues to serve her community through various service projects and organizations including as the Program Chair of the Montgomery County Commission for Women, the Vice President of the John F. Kennedy High School PTSA, a Board Member of the Montgomery County Girls on the Run Council, a Board Member of the University of Maryland Alumni Association (Montgomery County Chapter), a co-Troop Leader for Girl Scout Troop #5401, and the proud President of Montgomery Women. Ijeoma earned both her Bachelor's and Master's Degrees from the University of Maryland. She is originally from Iowa City, Iowa, and though she considers herself a Hawkeye for life, she embraces the Terrapin within her. For fun, she enjoys completing the Bay Bridge Run every year with her daughter.



**Aishia Manley | Co-Founder It Takes a Village, Director of Wellness Initiatives**  
***"Rooted In Excellence: Growing Your Network Through Community Care." - Room 114***

With over 20 years in education, a Master's in Psychology, and certification as an Ayurvedic practitioner, Aishia is deeply passionate about supporting others holistically. As a mother and wellness advocate, she leads community-centered initiatives that nurture the whole person and guide others on their wellness journey. Being the Healer and the Healed.



**T.J. Flynn | Research Scientist, Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Lab**  
***"Hey Now, What's That Sound? Discovering Acoustics All Around" - Room 116***

T.J. Flynn is a research scientist at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Lab developing new techniques and technologies leveraging sound to better understand the ocean. T.J. Flynn earned a Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Michigan preceded by a dual B.S. in Mechanical Engineering & Physics from the University of Kentucky. In his free time T.J. enjoys riding bikes, playing disc golf, and (trying to) make music.



**Bernice Kubicek | Acoustic Sounds, Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Lab**  
***"Hey Now, What's That Sound? Discovering Acoustics All Around" - Room 116***

Bernice Kubicek works in the Acoustic Systems Group at Johns Hopkins University - Applied Physics Lab. She develops classification algorithms for underwater acoustics applications (basically a fancy dolphin). Bernice received her doctorate from the University of Iowa in 2023, her Master's in 2021, and her Bachelor's in 2019. Bernice enjoys backpacking, snowboarding, and hanging out with her cats.



## SPEAKERS 1:10PM-2:10PM



**Monique Kirkman-Bey | Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Lab**

***"Circuit Studio: Dream. Design. Build" - Room 211***

PhD Fellow who possesses a passion for machine/deep learning, reconfigurable computing, and hardware engineering. Current research focuses on the application of machine learning algorithms and automation techniques to the design of CMOS circuits operating in the 90-100 GHz frequency range.



**Dr. Qingyang Xiao | Research Scientist, Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Lab**

***"The Beauty of the STEM World - Room 220***

Dr. Qingyang Xiao is an experienced applied mathematician and research scientist with a strong background in applied mathematics, artificial intelligence, and data science. He currently serves as a research scientist at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory. Prior to this role, he was a postdoctoral research fellow at the University of Houston. Dr. Xiao earned his Ph.D. in Applied Mathematics from the State University of New York at Buffalo, and holds a master's degree in engineering from Concordia University. He is currently pursuing a second master's degree in Data Science and AI from Harvard University.

## SPEAKERS 2:15PM-3:15PM



**Shannon Gueringer | Senior Program Manager at Skyward IT Solutions**

***"Against the Odds - My Path to Tech & Leadership" - Room 112***

Shannon Gueringer is a dynamic technology and transformation leader with over 18 years of experience driving large-scale software development and AI innovation across the federal landscape. Her career path—from bartending and open mic nights to managing multimillion-dollar government tech programs—reflects her grit, adaptability, and passion for uplifting others through opportunity. Shannon currently serves as a Senior Program Manager at Skyward IT Solutions, where she leads a 30-person cross-functional team on transformative AI/ML initiatives. These include the successful enterprise launch of ChatGPT at CMS and oversight of a \$50M federal modernization portfolio. She has also held key leadership roles at IBM, Booz Allen Hamilton, and General Dynamics IT, delivering mission-critical solutions for agencies including CMS, HHS, and DHS.

Shannon's journey is a powerful example of defying the odds. As one of the less than 2% of Black women leaders in the tech industry, she brings not only expertise but lived experience to the table. She is a passionate advocate for equity and inclusion, mentoring survivors of human trafficking and domestic violence to help them break into tech and reclaim their futures. She also serves as a Committee Lead for the Burtonsville Elementary School PTA, championing school technology and beautification projects.

But her most important role is being a proud mom of two amazing boys and a devoted wife. Spending time with her family is her greatest joy and the heartbeat behind everything she does.

Shannon brings heart, strategy, and resilience to every space she enters—whether managing federal programs, mentoring future leaders, or showing up for her community and family.



**Anna Matheny (Jacob), DVM, cVMA, CCRP | Veterinarian**

***"Future Vets: Hands-On Animal Care & Careers!" - Room 113***

Dr. Matheny grew up in Rockville, Maryland. She attended Penn State University for undergraduate degrees in Toxicology and Global Health. During her time at Penn State, she began working for a well-known horse trainer. She spent several years training horses professionally before attending veterinary school at Virginia Tech. After, Dr. Matheny accepted a position as a junior associate at Virginia Equine Imaging in Middleburg, Virginia to specialize in sports medicine for horses. A move back to the DC allowed her the opportunity to transition her passion for individualized, high quality medicine to the small animal realm. Dr. Matheny worked in general practice full time until 2022 when she created her mobile practice, Paws The Pain, which specializes in home pain management for animals. She is currently building her second business, Aspire Veterinary Hospital, which is set to open fall 2025 in Darnestown, MD and will be a combined general practice and sports medicine facility focusing on the needs of working dogs and service animals in addition to companion dogs and cats.

Dr. Matheny is a lifelong learner and continues to seek ways to further assist her patients. She completed her veterinary acupuncture training through CuraCore led by one of the world's leading acupuncturists, Dr. Narda Robinson. She completed her rehabilitation certification through the University of Tennessee and is currently completing certification as a Working Dog Professional through the University of Pennsylvania.

Outside of work, Dr. Matheny enjoys spending time with family, hiking with her dogs, and riding her horse.



## **Zeenashah Anderson | Associate Scientist, AstraZeneca**

***"Empowering Your Future with AI, Crafting Your Personalized Life, Career & Education Roadmap"- Room 220***

Zeena's journey showcases extraordinary resilience, adaptability, and determination in overcoming personal and academic challenges. While navigating significant life setbacks, she has remained committed to personal growth and professional excellence. Her academic journey began at Montgomery College, where she earned an associate degree before transferring to the University of Maryland, completing a Bachelor of Science in Family Science and Public Health. She pursued additional educational opportunities at Frederick Community College and returned to Montgomery College, engaging simultaneously in rigorous programs in Biotechnology and Sleep Technology. While balancing demanding overnight shifts as a Registered Polysomnographic Technologist, she earned her Master's Degree in Immunology, Microbiology, and Virology from Hood College and successfully completed her biotechnology certification. Zeena has flourished in roles that span from being a life long volunteer, AHA and American Red Cross CPR instructor and Manager, Workforce Development Admin at Montgomery College, a Standardized patient, a clerk at a clothing store at Montgomery Mall, Certified Geriatric Nursing Assistant, medical scribe, to a young entrepreneur at just 18, eventually transitioning into a thriving scientific career at AstraZeneca. Her multifaceted experiences taught her invaluable lessons in grit, empathy, adaptability, and perseverance.



## **Shelly Karriem | Talent Acquisition & Retention Specialist, Donohoe Hospitality Services**

***"EmpowerHER: Building Strong Relationships and Communication Skills"- Room 114***

Shelly Karriem plays a vital role in Donohoe Hospitality as their Talent Acquisition and Retention Specialist. As she often says, she "finds them and keeps them!" Shelly collaborates with all 15 hotels managed by Donohoe, leading initiatives to attract new talent and enhance associate engagement through training, access to benefits, and promotion opportunities. Before joining Donohoe, Shelly dedicated 18 years as the Director of the DC Students Construction Trades Foundation's Academy of Construction and Design. Under her leadership, the academy welcomed an average of 100 students each year and earned recognition from government officials, industry leaders, and educational administrators. Shelly's innovative approach to teaching and learning in the building trades, along with successful student-built construction projects, contributed to impressive post-secondary career placements and college admissions. With her extensive experience and passion for talent development, Shelly is committed to fostering a thriving workforce at Donohoe Hospitality.



## **Beamlak Bekele | Computer Science Major UMBC**

***"A Future in Tech: Studying Computer Science & Career Opportunities"- Room 116***

Beamlak Bekele is a Computer Science student at UMBC with a minor in Mathematics. She is a 2021 CB Alumni. She has worked with AI, coding, and computer systems through internships and research. Passionate about technology and diversity in technology. She enjoys solving problems and creating useful programming tools.



## **Beamlak Bekele | Computer Science Major UMBC**

***"How to Use What You Already Know and Like to Get the Job and School You Want!" - Room 211***

Kristen Morgan received her BA in Psychology from Cornell University and her PhD in Neuroscience from Brown University. She has spent the past 20 years educating students in a variety of roles. She enjoys helping students think about their educational and career goals and apply to college, graduate, and medical and professional school.

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**Community Bridges would like to thank our 2024 Career Summit participants from the following schools:**

Albert Einstein High School  
Charles Herbert Flowers High School  
Clarksburg High School  
Francis Scott Key Middle School  
Gaithersburg High School  
James Hubert Blake High School  
John F. Kennedy High School  
Montgomery Blair High School  
Northwood High School  
Paint Branch High School  
Richard Montgomery High School  
Rosa Parks Middle School  
Silver Spring International Middle School  
Springbrook High School  
Takoma Park Middle School  
Thomas Wootton High School  
Walter Johnson High School  
Wheaton High School  
Washington Latin Public Charter School

**Thank you to our sponsor:**

