



## **FLY Key Leaders**

### **Christa Gannon, JD, Chief Executive Office and Founder**

Christa is an honors graduate from University of California Santa Barbara, where she earned a B.S. in Sociology and Law and Society and was a first-team Academic All-American basketball player. Christa continued on to Stanford Law School, graduating with honors, and is now a member of the State Bar of California. While at Stanford, she created a volunteer program using law students who taught basic law curriculum to incarcerated youth. The program received a California State Department of Education award for violence prevention, and the course and model became FLY's flagship program.

After completing a yearlong clerkship for Federal Judge Napoleon A. Jones, Jr. at the Southern District Court of California, Christa was selected as one of ten people in the United States to receive funding from the George Soros Foundation to develop an innovative criminal justice program. With this seed funding Christa launched FLY. In recognition of Christa's abilities, in the fall of 2000, she was selected by the National Law-Related Education Consortium (funded by the Federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention) to be California's State Coordinator of Law-Related Education. For several years in that role she supported individuals and organizations that wanted to start law-related education projects.

Christa has received numerous awards for her work at FLY, including:

- October 2001, City of San Jose Human Rights Commission, Human Rights Award for her work in creating FLY
- December 2002, Gentry Magazine Community Stars Award for her success in building FLY
- Spring 2003, Santa Clara Law School -Bay Area Woman of Distinction for her work in mentoring and nurturing public interest law students
- Fall 2003, Youth Advocate of the Year Award from Legal Advocates for Children and Youth
- Spring 2004, Mountain View-Los Altos Challenge Team - Champion for Youth Award
- Fall 2006, Stanford Law School - Inaugural Alumni Public Service Award
- Winter 2009, Jefferson Award from CBS 5 News
- Winter 2010, Named an Ashoka Fellow one of the first juvenile justice fellows in the country
- Winter 2011, James Irvine Leadership Award for efforts to implement innovative and effective solutions to a critical state issue
- Fall 2013, In Harmony with Hope Award, Social Entrepreneurs Who Change Young Lives

In addition to her full-time work at FLY, Christa sits on the Leadership Team of the Silicon Valley Council of Nonprofits (an alliance of nonprofits in Santa Clara County), serves as a strategic advisor to Thrive (an alliance of nonprofits in San Mateo County), was a recent member of Stanford's National Haas Advisory Board, and does guest lecturing at Stanford University. Christa is also a wife and mother of two children.

### **Ali Knight, Chief Operating Officer, MPA**

Ali has a Masters of Public Administration from New York University, and a Bachelor of Arts in Forensic Psychology from John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City. Ali has an integrated approach to youth leadership, systems change, and community transformation, grounded in more than 15 years of public service. Throughout his career, Ali has held increasingly impactful roles in policy, program administration, research evaluation, and organizational development. His commitment to developing our nation's opportunity youth (young people, ages 16-24 years, who are disconnected from school and work or are systems involved) into community leaders is spurred by his own childhood experience as a former foster care youth.

Most recently, Ali served as the Chief of Programs at Youth UpRising, an East Oakland nonprofit which provides services and programs to increase the physical and mental wellbeing, community connection, educational attainment, and career achievement among youth members. Prior, Ali served as the Chief Program Officer at Groundwork Inc., a non-profit that applies a family and community empowerment approach to help get youth through school and in college.

Earlier experiences include serving as the Interim Executive Director of the Prisoner Reentry Institute at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and working for the New York City Department of Small Business Services to design and develop criminal justice programs aimed at increasing employment opportunities for individuals with criminal records. He has also held program leadership roles at the Vera Institute of Justice. Ali lives in Alameda with his wife and daughter.

### **Lisa Breen Strickland, Chief Development Officer**

Lisa possesses 30 years of leadership and fundraising experience for organizations, foundations, and companies with offices throughout the Silicon Valley, including in San Jose, Redwood City, Cupertino, Milpitas, and Mountain View.

Her nonprofit expertise includes running her own consulting firm for the last seven years, hired by a dozen nonprofits to assist them in fulfilling their missions and developing their fundraising strategies. Lisa started working as a consultant to FLY in July 2015 and began her role as Chief Development Officer in 2016.

Lisa's focus has been on organizations that are focused on our Valley's most underserved populations – survivors of domestic violence, homeless individuals, those without regular access to food, and at-risk youth.

As an executive, Lisa has also served as the Chief Officer at two Bay Area nonprofit organizations – WATCH and Support Network for Battered Women – for a total of seven years. As a fundraiser, Lisa pioneered these organizations' efforts to diversify their funding sources, resulting in budget increases of 25% and 63% respectively. In addition, she has facilitated the development and implementation of a \$4.3 million donor advised fund in her career. She also has led a collaborative of seven nonprofit agencies that raised over \$13 million dollars while serving as its spokesperson.