

FLY's Executive Leaders

Christa Gannon, JD, Founder and Chief Executive Officer

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
- 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
- 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
- Fall 2018, Christa was one of 10 nonprofit executives in California to receive a 2018 Cal Wellness Sabbatical Award

Christa is a former member of Stanford’s National Haas Advisory Board. She sits on the Board of Directors of the Silicon Valley Council of Nonprofits (an alliance of nonprofits in Santa Clara County), and does guest lecturing at Stanford University. Christa is also a wife and the mother of two children.

Ali Knight, MPA, Chief Operating Officer

Ali Knight is the Chief Operating Officer at Fresh Lifelines for Youth, a San Francisco Bay Area- based organization that supports at-risk and justice system-involved youth to remain crime-free and safe in their communities while becoming catalysts for systems change.



Ali has 20 years of public service as a champion for change and a crusader for justice reforms. Earlier experiences include senior leadership roles at the Prisoner Reentry Institute (PRI) at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, and at the Vera Institute of Justice in NYC. Ali also taught courses in criminal and juvenile justice at the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service at NYU.

Ali has a Masters of Public Administration from NYU, and a Bachelor of Arts in Forensic Psychology from John Jay College of Criminal Justice. Ali and his wife Van live in the city of Alameda with their daughter, Iris, and son, Robin Maxwell.

Claudia Miller, Interim Chief Development Officer

Claudia Miller brings extensive experience and understanding of nonprofit fundraising, building successful fundraising teams, and strategic leadership to Venture Leadership Consulting. For more than 12 years, she worked in various fundraising roles on behalf of foster youth at First Place for Youth. During her tenure there, the organization grew from raising less than \$1 million to more than \$7 million annually. Her leadership has included developing the strategic vision for private fundraising, donor events, communications and branding as the organization grew



from a Bay Area-based nonprofit to a statewide organization, and now a network of national affiliates in four states.

Her work included launching the organization's first-ever Growth Campaign, which expanded from \$5 million to more than \$16 million in four years. Prior to her work at First Place, Claudia was a reporter and freelance writer with the San Francisco Chronicle, and various other publications. She has a BA in Latin American Studies and Political Science from Duke University. When she's not fundraising for issues she's passionate about, Claudia enjoys spending time with her family and walking her dog in the Oakland hills.

Carlos Garcia, MPA, Chief Financial Officer

Carlos received a B.S. in Managerial Economics from the University of California at Davis where he graduated with honors. After graduation, Carlos worked for a financial consulting firm that worked directly with the healthcare industry. Working as a consultant afforded him the opportunity to live in places such as Seattle, Los Angeles, Houston, and even Oklahoma. After taking some time to rediscover the values that were truly important to him, he decided to pursue a career in the nonprofit sector.



Carlos joined FLY in 2006 where he was initially part of the Community Resources and Development team working closely with our accountants and other external stakeholders. After nine years with FLY, Carlos became head of the Finance and Operations Department and oversaw a team of operations and administrative staff. During that time, he earned a Master of Public Administration degree from San Jose State University. He now serves as FLY's Chief Financial Officer.

Carlos says about FLY, "I work for FLY because of the clients that we serve. System-involved youth deserve a second chance to become more than their past mistakes. I find the work that our programs do inspirational."

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