

RADICAL Optimist COLLECTIVE

Radical Optimist Collective deploys a consistent approach across all of its work – anchored in equity and inclusion. We acknowledge we do not have all of the answers and we believe that the most powerful results come from a co-developed process with the stakeholders that any initiative aims to serve and impact. We work hand-in-hand with internal teams to develop goals and agendas for each experience.



Shakita Brooks Jones is a Montgomery, AL native and a graduate of Troy State University with a B.S. in social work and a master's in social work from the University of Alabama. She also has a master's degree in public administration and a nonprofit management certification from Auburn University Montgomery.

Shakita's experience as a social worker serving low-income HIV patients and hospice clients led her to work for more humane state policies as a community organizer. She is the founder of Central Alabama Alliance Resource & Advocacy Center.

Shakita is an adjunct professor within Auburn University's social work program. Shakita's area of interests are understanding more about the root causes of poverty and the plight of the working poor; exploring increased HIV rates in Alabama; and applying practice knowledge to remove historical socioeconomic barriers that have disproportionately impacted Alabama's working poor in rural areas.

Shakita is the community engagement coordinator at Kress on Dexter in Montgomery, AL, a 25-million-dollar renovation project that was orchestrated by a philanthropic couple that lives in New, York and wanted to invest in the South.

Shakita focuses on intergenerational community conversations, storytelling and art projects in which the stories of African-American entrepreneurs, community members and little known contributors to our Civil Rights history are shared and highlighted.

Shakita's work has been featured in a local magazine, *RSVP Montgomery*. Additionally, RSVP gave Shakita the honor of being selected to their list of people in the community who were making significant contributions. In May 2019, Shakita was selected by the *Montgomery Advertiser*, the leading newspaper of the capital city in Alabama, as the community hero for the work that she is doing in the community.



Lisa Flick Wilson loves to help draw out and illuminate possibilities to address the most challenging of problems. Grounded in equity and inclusion, Lisa thrives on helping individuals, organizations and companies thrive. She does her best work when she gets to inject optimism into problem-solving, support culture change by maximizing strengths, make tables larger to include more voices, and arrange complex moving parts in ambiguous situations into a clear plan forward. Lisa does not shy away from putting race at the center of conversations, understands her place as a white woman in racial equity, and welcomes being in the struggle of interrupting racism.

In addition to applying these strengths to problems within nonprofits and companies, Lisa has a lifelong commitment to racial equity, and in 2018, this long-standing work drew Lisa to Montgomery, AL. In partnership with Equal Justice's Initiative's Legacy Museum and National Memorial for Peace and Justice, Lisa built a collective team of practitioners team that customizes 1-3-day experiences for groups to increase knowledge and understanding of the historic context of racial injustice afforded here. The team designs and leads learning journeys to help organization process the experience in relationship with their missions, cultures and leadership challenges.

In the past, Lisa has held senior leadership roles with a number of organizations including: Southeast Energy Efficiency Alliance, the Civic Accelerator at Points of Light, the Harwood Institute for Public Innovation, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and HandsOn Network.



Vanessa Jackson is a licensed clinical social worker, Soul Doula and owner of Healing Circles, Inc., a healing practice based in Atlanta, GA.

Vanessa earned a master's degree from Washington University-George Warren Brown School of Social Work.

Vanessa is the author of *In Our Own Voice: African-American Stories of Oppression, Survival and Recovery in Mental Health Systems* and *Separate and Unequal: The Legacy of Racially Segregated Psychiatric Hospitals*, monographs on the history of African-American psychiatric experiences and *Families of African Origin: An Overview with L. Black in Ethnicity and Family Therapy, 3 Edition* (Monica McGoldrick, et al, Eds.). She is co-editor of *Understanding Power: A Human Services Imperative* with Elaine Pinderhughes, MSW and Patricia Romney, Ph.D.

Vanessa is a nationally recognized speaker on mental health issues, with a focus on culturally conscious therapy and therapy with marginalized populations.

Vanessa's passion is supporting activists in creating healthy and balanced lives. She offers an Activists Assistance Program to provide politically conscious and clinically sound counseling and healing workshops to Atlanta-area feminist non-profit organizations.



Kenya Jackson-Saulters, MS, is a master workshop facilitator and twice published self-help author who is known for her unique brand of nontraditional self-help. To date, she has traveled to countless colleges and universities, including Georgia Tech, Xavier University and the University of Dayton to name a few. A known quarter life crisis expert, Kenya has also graced the main stage of TEDx Greenville as a featured presenter and is currently a speaker coach for TEDx Peachtree.

When Kenya is not consulting with The Radical Optimist Collective she is busy blending the health benefits of exercise, meditation and writing to form a custom personal development experience for women called The Outdoor Journal Tour. The Outdoor Journal Tour uses each of the aforementioned elements to provide clarity, healing, and connection for participants. Kenya has been an advocate for personal discovery through writing for over 10 years and is currently training to be a certified spiritual practitioner.

Kenya holds dual undergraduate degrees in Sociology and Psychology from Xavier University, and a master's degree in Policy Analysis with a concentration in Nonprofit Management from Georgia State University. Kenya has married her love for writing, spirituality, and mental health to help women pursue their passions in a healthy sustainable way.



Staci Lynch is a third generation, native Atlantan who is rooted in community. She is a leader with proven results in communications, relationship development, program design and implementation and coaching.

With a passion for racial equity and diversity, Staci has spent the last decade and a half working to elevate the quality of education accessible to all children.

Prior to becoming an Independent Consultant in early 2018, Staci was a Philanthropic Officer with the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta for 3.5 years. In this role, Staci broadened her philanthropic reach throughout Atlanta and successfully leveraged millions of dollars to help address some of the city's most complex issues. Building strategic partnerships across all sectors is one of Staci's most utilized strengths.

A German Marshall Memorial Fellow (2009), Staci truly sees the world through a global lens. Staci currently serves on the Board of Directors for redefinED atlanta, an education reform organization, and she also serves on the Board of Directors for the Atlanta Speech School as well as FORGE, a common ground gun safety organization. Staci is actively engaged with her children's education, serving on the Mission Committee at Charles R. Drew Charter School.



Corey Dobyms is a passionate entrepreneur with 14 years of small business ownership in the wellness industry. She is a spirited nurturer of work cultures that value strategic solutions to promote inclusive, diverse, and equitable environments. A proven leader and visionary, Corey has founded three companies and has served as a consultant on meaningful projects around wellness, DEI, and education.

Corey is a lifelong learner who has invested 20 years in continuing education on diversity, equity, and inclusion and how to best communicate compassionately for value driven results.

Corey comes from a background founded in service and connection. At the start of her journey, Corey served with The Corporation for National Service, where she learned the art of mobilizing community connections and resources to effect change. She has continued as an advocate, connector, and activist through the years serving in various organizations and community groups.

Corey has extensive training and experience in the areas of self-compassion, self-care, community building, trauma models, and recovery. Yet her main motivation and talent is connecting people-to-people to serve the greater good. She has trained with and facilitates with Life University's Compassionate Integrity and Secular Ethics program, the National Coalition Building Institutes Social Justice model, and is continuing training within the nonviolent restorative justice model with East Point Peace Academy. Corey blends her knowledge of individual healing with a broader perspective rooted in community and reconciliation of our collective celebrations and wounds.

