**Genesis LA Community Advisory Board (CAB)**

**Bios**

1. **Helen Leung (Director of Social Impact, LA Mas)**

Helen Leung lives is currently the Director of Social Impact for LA Mas. LA Mas is working to redefine the intersection of community development and social equity, with a focus in minimizing displacement in gentrifying neighborhoods. A native Angeleno and urban planner, Helen has extensive community-based experience working for former Los Angeles Council President Eric Garcetti. Recently, Ms. Leung managed transit-oriented development and asset build portfolios at Living Cities, a national funders collaborative. Helen holds a Masters in Public Policy and Urban Planning from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. On June 30, 2014, Helen was appointed to the Police Commission’s Permit Review Panel by Mayor Eric Garcetti.

1. **Luis Gutierrez (Senior Associate, Leadership for Urban Renewal Now)**

Luis Gutierrez is a senior associate at LURN, a nonprofit organization committed to redefining urban renewal and revitalization of low-income communities. LURN’s mission is to bring people together to design, build and promote sustainable communities that allow people to live their greatest potential. Prior to joining LURN, he was a program coordinator for Latino Public Broadcasting, a leader in the development, production, acquisition and distribution of non-commercial educational and cultural media representative of Latino people and produced for dissemination to public broadcasting and public telecommunication entities. Mr. Gutierrez holds a Masters in Public Administration from Cal State University, Los Angeles and a Bachelors in Sociology and Spanish Literature from Wesleyan University.

1. **Ben Polk (Board member, Groceryships)**

Benjamin Polk is on the Board of Directors of Groceryships, a nonprofit organization that provides scholarships for groceries to low-income families throughout South Los Angeles. Groceryships provides a comprehensive program of education and psycho-social support to empower families facing obesity to increase health by incorporating healthy foods into their diets. Families who are awarded Groceryships receive financial, medical, educational, emotional and referral services. Mr. Polk was recently Staff Attorney and Skadden Fellow at the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles where he provided transactional legal support to South Los Angeles community-based organizations and nonprofits that were launching social enterprises in low-income communities. Mr. Polk is a graduate of Harvard Law School, where he earned his J.D. and served low-income Boston residents as a member of the Harvard Legal Aid Bureau, and of the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, where he earned his Masters in Public Policy and was elected President of the student government. Prior to graduate school, Mr. Polk was a Senior Associate Consultant at the management consulting company Bain & Co., where he provided research, analysis, and project management to clients in London, Johannesburg, and Los Angeles.

1. **Max Podemsky (Planning Director, Pacoima Beautiful)**

Max Podemsky is the Planning Director at Pacoima Beautiful, a member-based environmental health and justice nonprofit working in the Northeast San Fernando Valley where he has led the organization’s efforts to improve mobility and open space in the Pacoima area. Mr. Podemsky co-authored the Pacoima Wash Vision Plan which calls for the conversion of the channelized Pacoima Wash into a multi-modal greenway and park. This plan has been incorporated into official planning documents for the City of Los Angeles and the first park along the Wash is set to open in the coming year. He holds a Bachelor’s degree in Urban and Environmental Policy from Occidental College and a Master of Urban Planning from Columbia University.

1. **Eric Ibarra (Executive Director and Founder, Las Fotos Project)**

Eric Ibarra is the Executive Director and Founder of Las Fotos Project (LFP), a nonprofit organization fiscal-sponsored by Community Partners. LFP’s mission is to bring about positive change for young Latinas facing adversity. His inspiration behind LFP arose from volunteering locally at a Los Angeles-based nonprofit and teaching five orphan girls about photography and creative writing in Guanajuato, Mexico as part of an international project. LFP provides photography training, assigned field projects, creative writing and critical thinking skills to girls ages 11-17 throughout Boyle Heights, East LA and South LA. For the past three years, LFP has served over 500 young Latinas and has created a network of empowered and confident teens able to express themselves and create social change through language and art. Mr. Ibarra holds a Bachelor’s Degree from Cal State Fullerton.

1. **Mike Blockstein (Principal, Public Matters)** Mike Blockstein is a visual artist and educator and the Principal of Public Matters, a social enterprise that develops and implements long-term neighborhood-based media, education and civic engagement projects. Mike has created and led projects nationally, working with youth, community leaders and organizations to reflect on, understand and shape their physical, social and political geographies including Market Makeovers, work on healthy food access, and PDub in Los Angeles’ Historic Filipinotown and a current project with the Legacy Foundation in South L.A. Mike holds a Masters in Public Administration from Harvard’s Kennedy School.
2. **Filiberto Gonzalez (Principal, Social Impact Consulting)**

Mr. Gonzalez has served the people of Los Angeles for over 13 years, beginning with his work as a student teacher/tutor for juvenile courts throughout Southern California. As a teacher, Mr. Gonzalez duties consisted of educating and providing job training to incarcerated youth. Mr. Gonzalez was a program coordinator for North Valley Caring Services (NVCS) which provided services in the poorest communities in the San Fernando Valley.  He has served on the CAB since 2007.

1. **Veronica Saldana (Business Development Manager, Emerging Markets, Inc.)**

Ms. Saldana is the California FreshWorks Fund Business Development Manager for Emerging Markets, Inc. The California FreshWorks Fund is a $264 million dollar investment fund created to finance new and upgraded grocery stores in California's underserved communities. Veronica is responsible for managing the Fund’s statewide outreach initiatives, marketing, deal sourcing, evaluating loan requests, and assisting applicants through the application process. In her role, Veronica interfaces with public agencies, grocery store operators, commercial developers, small business owners, and lending institutions. Prior to joining the Emerging Markets, Inc. team, Veronica was Vice President of Real Estate for Genesis LA, where she managed the organization’s loan funds and client relations. Veronica also has prior experience working in affordable housing. Veronica holds a Master’s degree in Urban Planning from the University of California, Los Angeles and Bachelor degrees from the University of California, Santa Barbara. She is passionate about working on high impact projects in rural and urban communities that improve the quality of life for disadvantaged populations. She has served on the CAB since 2011.

1. **Juan Aquino (Program Director, LIFT)**

Mr. Aquino is currently Los Angeles Program Director for LIFT, a national nonprofit that is establishing a new standard for holistic and enduring solutions in our country’s fight against poverty. Prior to LIFT-LA, Juan served as a Program Officer for First 5 LA, managing an $8 million portfolio of community investments. Previously, Juan contributed to the work of Emerging Markets, Inc. as an Associate for five years. At EMI, Juan’s work involved providing strategic recommendations for economic development in two of the firm’s key neighborhood initiatives. His responsibilities included conducting primary, secondary, and nontraditional market research, analyzing that research and bringing investment recommendations to clients, creating partnerships between financial institutions and community organizations as part of a neighborhood delivery system, delivering financial literacy programs through nontraditional channels, and facilitating socially responsible land development.

Juan has also worked in the field of environmental justice – both for the California Climate Action Registry, drafting industry-specific protocols relating to greenhouse gas emissions, and for the California Environmental Protection Agency (CAL/EPA) in the Environmental Justice Unit. Juan has also worked in the financial sector as a loan administrator for a Los Angeles finance company. Previously, Juan was President of the South Los Angeles Planning Commission and board member of the South Central Family Health Center.  Juan holds a dual Bachelor’s degree in Spanish and Sociology from the University of California, Santa Barbara and a Master’s degree in Urban Planning from UCLA. He has served on the CAB since 2010.

1. **Zoe Ellas (Executive Director, Deep Green Housing Community, Inc.)**

Ms. Ellas has worked in Los Angeles’ low-income communities and nonprofit sector for 15 years. She is currently Executive Director of Deep Green Housing Community Development, formerly known as Beyond Shelter Housing Development Corporation. She manages projects throughout Los Angeles, Kern County and Imperial and San Bernardino counties that serve low-income residents. Deep Green has developed a systematic approach to combat poverty and homelessness among families with children and enhance family security and well-being. Deep Green accomplishes its goals through responsive service delivery, people-centered community development and the creation of knowledge for social change. More than 50% of Deep Green’s activities and services are directed toward low-income community residents. Prior to working at Deep Green, Ms. Ellas worked as an instructor for the Los Angeles Trade Technical College (LATTC), the oldest of nine, public two-year colleges in the Los Angeles Community College District. Ms. Ellas managed LATTC’s Community Development Technologies Center and launched the Wealth and Home Ownership (WHO) course. In 1998, WHO was created to target local manufacturing businesses to enroll more than 350 low-income workers into the course to learn financial literacy, financial planning, and homeownership opportunities. Prior to working at LATTC, Ms. Ellas worked in the housing counseling services field with HUD-approved housing counseling agencies to counsel homebuyers and tenants under HUD programs and conventional mortgages. Ms. Ellas’ deep understanding of the housing needs facing low-income people in Los Angeles, as her experience in combating poverty are an asset to the Applicant. She has served on the CAB since 2007.

1. **Anne MacAulay (Board of Directors, LA Commons)**

Ms. McAulay is a board member of LA Commons, an organization that engages communities in artistic and cultural expression that tells their unique stories and serves as a basis for dialogue, interaction and a better understanding of Los Angeles. LA Commons collects neighborhood stories as inspiration to create temporary works of public art that add to the beautification of each community. Artists and communities collaborate through to design and create temporary works such as murals, light pole banners, utility box art, and installations that make a strong visual impact in public relations. Through her work at LA Commons, Ms. McAulay understands the interconnectedness of art, culture and economics. She has served on the CAB since 2010.