

*Layla*

**new growth**  
**A SEASON**  
**OF PLANTING**  
**WOMEN**

**WOMEN'S HEALTH &  
WELLNESS RETREAT**

**MARCH 5-6, 2022  
CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL**

**WELCOME PACK**

# BIOS + DIRECTORY

## LAYLA AMBASSADORS



### ASHLEY HOMER

Ashley Homer is a social work graduate student at Syracuse University and works as a student intern at the Allyn Family Foundation. Ashley also serves as an ambassador for Layla's Got You, a movement that empowers Black and Brown women aged 16 to 25 to take control of their life and achieve their goals. Ashley's work entails collaborating with a group of local Syracuse organizations to help minimize unwanted pregnancies in Onondaga County, empower Black and Brown women, and to promote Black health. In general, Ashley is dedicated to assisting underserved members of her community in obtaining the resources they need to thrive in life.

Contact info: [ashleyhomer88@gmail.com](mailto:ashleyhomer88@gmail.com)



### JAIYAH PIERCE

Jaiyah is an 18 year old Ambassador with the Layla Lifestyle. Jaiyah is Freshman at OCC with a dual major in Communications and American Sign Language.

Contact info: [Jaiyahdpierce@yahoo.com](mailto:Jaiyahdpierce@yahoo.com)



### JA'RHEA DIXON

I love to design and make clothes as well as read and write. I love the outdoors and going for hikes. Working to empower other women and help them set up their futures is one of my most favorite things to do. Learning something new each day helps support my students and build healthy relationships with them as well, as be the best asset to my team that I can be. Faith doesn't make things EASY it makes them POSSIBLE.

Contact Info: [@RheaDixon](#) on FB, [@thepressureproject](#) on IG

# BIOS + DIRECTORY

## PLANNING SUPPORT TEAM



### **DR. KANDIS BACKUS**

Dr. Backus serves as a Medical Scientist at Gilead Sciences. She relocated from a faculty position as Assistant Professor of Population Health Sciences at the University of MS Medical Center. During her time there she served as a preceptor for pharmacy students and residents. She served as faculty for the Southeast AIDS Education Training Center.

Contact info: [KandisBackus@Gilead.com](mailto:KandisBackus@Gilead.com)



### **RACHEL JOHNSON**

Rachel is a doula, holistic practitioner and mental health therapist, who works with Black families to facilitate communities of healing. More importantly, Rachel is a daughter, sister and friend—walking through her own healing journey. Rachel is a certified full-spectrum, sex & fertility doula, herbalist, reiki practitioner, steam facilitator and licensed mental health therapist in the state of NY. Rachel holds two master's degrees in Marriage and Family Therapy and Social Work and a Certificate of Advanced Study in Trauma-Informed Studies from Syracuse University.

Contact info: [RJohnson@Dunbarsyr.org](mailto:RJohnson@Dunbarsyr.org)



### **TIFFANY LLOYD**

Tiffany Lloyd serves as Director of Women's Health and Empowerment at the Allyn Foundation. A Syracuse native, Tiffany is a longtime champion of women's health and empowerment, she is committed to building our local capacity to address the reproductive needs of all individuals in our community.

Contact info: [Tlloyd@allynfoundation.org](mailto:Tlloyd@allynfoundation.org)

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**A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR PRESENTERS,  
PANELISTS AND VOLUNTEERS!**



## **MARIAMA MCCLAIN**

Mariama McClain earned her bachelor's degree in Business Administration, with a concentration in Finance and Management, from SUNY Albany. She worked in the corporate world before going to work in the not-for-profit industry to support our youth. After seeing the need to help people and give them financial education during the pandemic, she rejoined the financial industry. As a licensed financial consultant her focus is on helping her community learn how to achieve financial wholeness and build generational wealth.

Email: [MariamaMcClain@outlook.com](mailto:MariamaMcClain@outlook.com)

LinkedIn + Facebook: Mariama McClain



## **KAMIYA MCGOWAN**

Hi, my name is Kamiya McGowan, I'm 27 years old I have two wonderful little boys a 6-year-old & a 3-year-old. I recently started my own business making homemade candles. My candles are relaxing and calming & definitely cozy. Making candles is something I love to do. it relaxes my mind when I'm feeling a little stressed. I have so much in mind with this Journey & I'm so glad to share it with you guys

Email: [kamiyahuggings@yahoo.com](mailto:kamiyahuggings@yahoo.com)



## **SHAWNTÉ BLYSS BARR**

Shawnté Blyss Barr is a writer, poet, and a womanpreneur. She is an ordained minister, a celibacy coach, and a mindset coach. She manages Flyy Girl Zone, a bi-monthly magazine and a YouTube channel. She also runs two small businesses, Amenya Journée, LLC and Designs By Blyss (now known as Neema Noire). Her first poetry book, Stained Glass Windows for Butterflies, will be published this summer. She currently lives in Auburn, New York.

Contact Info : [Shawnte@amenya.co](mailto:Shawnte@amenya.co).

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## **SHANAY BRADLEY**

Shanay Bradley is a Bronx, NY native, who's turned her pain into joy and accomplishments. Being the only person in her immediate family to gain two degrees, played 2 sports in college becoming a hall a famer in one sport while working 3 jobs. She is currently the CEO of her photography business called "Light to the Darkness" and she serves as the Syracuse Metro area director for a nonprofit called the Fellowship of Christian Athletes where she works with HS & MS coaches and student-athletes on Character development, teamwork, and faith. Shanay loves Jesus, reading, food, working with youth, and traveling.

Email: [sbradley@fca.org](mailto:sbradley@fca.org)



## **DENISE WELCH**

Associate Program Manager- National Black Leadership Commission on Health (Black Health)  
Community raised, community orientated, and dedicated to advocating for our communities of color for equal access to health care.

Email: [dwelch@nblch.org](mailto:dwelch@nblch.org)



## **ARLAINA HARRIS, MSW**

Arlaina Harris MSW, is a wellness advocate, survivor and thought leader with a background in macro social work, trauma-informed care and DEI work. Her mission is to advocate for wellness and healing, particularly among youth and communities of color while reducing the societal stigma of mental illness. She currently works at Blueprint 15 as the Director for Community Partnerships is the President of Cafe Sankofa Cooperative and is working on building two business ventures. She hopes to combine her passions of culture, equity, fashion and wellness to build a brand/movement that people can identify with and be uplifted by.

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## **DR. SHA-PHAWN WILLIAMS**

Dr. Williams is an assistant professor with St. John Fisher Wegmans School of Pharmacy and Upstate Medical University Department of Medicine in Syracuse, NY. She currently practices within the Internal Medicine Ambulatory Care clinics at State University of New York (SUNY) Upstate Hospital. Dr. Williams is all about health, wealth, beauty, and positivity. In her free time she enjoys making videos about beauty, fashion, health, and lifestyle.

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## **CYNTHIA DAVIS**

Cynthia Davis attended SUNY College at Brockport where she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in African American Studies and Sociology. She has worked in the field of education for over 18 years and was voted Teacher of the Year on two separate occasions. Her dedication to the advancement and education of At-Risk youth can be seen in and outside of the classroom with various community involvement and volunteer activities. Cynthia Davis currently teaches Career and Technical Education at Lincoln Middle School where she invites a variety of guest speakers such as Mayor Ben Walsh to help expose students to multiple career opportunities.

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## **JIMELLE RICHARDSON**

Jimelle has experience in budgeting and finance and has a special affinity for spreadsheets (Wild! I know!). Special interests include event planning and crafting. Jimelle holds an Associates degree in Occupational Studies with Information Technology.

Contact information: [Godivarich@gmail.com](mailto:Godivarich@gmail.com)

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## **TORYONA HODGE**

My name is Toryona Hodge But most know me as Herizon. Herizon the rapper, model, hustler, entrepreneur but mostly known for being a Boss. Becoming I boss allows me to put other women in position to win and to change their lives. This type of Women Empowerment is so rewarding & fulfilling it allowed me to create the movement most know as Upstate Boss chicks. Creating a calendar with 12 beautiful ladies gives strength & power and creativity which gives women the power they need if life to succeed and conquer the world. Confidence can be so powerful to one's life we all need this in life to be successful. I have the gift of making women feel confident and I plan to share this with the world.



## **STACIE BAILEY**

Touched by Honey was created to introduce you to a new and refreshing look at Holistic Health! To create a safe place for mending of the MIND, BODY & SOUL, by supplying thru Herbal Teas, Aromatherapy, Healing Oils and Energy Exchanges, the tools to navigate between the Spiritual and Physical Realms with Ease.

Contact: [Stacie54@gmail.com](mailto:Stacie54@gmail.com)



## **INDARIA JONES**

Indaria knows all about business and has the credentials to back it up. From managing multi-million dollar economic projects and marketing campaigns, Jones has worked with top brands to executive level government.

She is most passionate about creating opportunities for minorities and women at the Creators Lounge, which she founded, a co-working space based in Syracuse, New York.

# WOMEN'S HEALTH & EMPOWERMENT

## STRATEGY ONE

### Community Education & Social Norms Campaign

Layla's Got You is a campaign for young Black and Latinx women ages 16-25 in Syracuse, with judgement-free and tailored information about birth control, sex and relationships. The tech-driven campaign provides a chat bot named Layla as a safe and anonymous place for young women to ask questions, and ongoing social media content and two new video series, "Layla @ Home" and "The Morning After Show" to start conversations and empower Black and Latinx women to make informed, independent decisions about sex, birth control, and their future.



Learn more here: [www.Laylasgotyou.com](http://www.Laylasgotyou.com)

## STRATEGY TWO

### Engagement & Capacity Building

The team has built a network of partners across multiple sectors, including medical and health providers, the faith community, the court and justice systems, and community members. We assess capacity, provide support, and expand opportunities for both our partners and young women to participate in community dialogue, services, and power-building activities. Syracuse was selected to participate in Power to Decide's national learning community for the next three years, which will further our efforts to ensure people have equitable access to the support they need to make their own decisions related to sexuality and reproduction throughout their lives.



the campaign to prevent unplanned pregnancy

## STRATEGY THREE

### Empowerment & Mobilization

The team and our partners have also developed a supportive group of local women focused on power-building and leadership. We provide opportunities for young women to develop and practice leadership and self-efficacy skills and amplify their voice through community events and partner engagement, an ambassador program, and developing content for the Layla's Got You campaign. We also engage older Black women in storytelling and sharing wisdom. These "Jewels" are providing insights, mentorship, and overall strategic guidance to the initiative overall.