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October 27, 2023 • Best Buy HQ

KEYNOTE PRESENTERS



WILLIE JETT

Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Education

Willie Jett understands the challenges and strengths of all communities, and his career is characterized by a commitment to raising student achievement and closing opportunity gaps. He is committed to preparing our future citizens, growing Minnesota's workforce and supporting professional educators. Prior to his appointment as commissioner, Jett served as an

instructor in the Education Administration Licensure program in the Department of Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development at the University of Minnesota. He has also taught and led in urban, suburban and greater Minnesota School districts for more than three decades. He earned his master's degree from the University of Pittsburg and his bachelor's degree from the University of Illinois at Chicago.



RENEE EDWARDS

VP, Technical Product Management, Optum

Renee Edwards is the VP of Technology Product Management at UnitedHealthcare Technology. With 17 years of experience at UnitedHealth Group and prior roles in healthcare and consulting, she's a seasoned leader in product development, analytics, and technology modernization. She holds an MBA from the New York Institute of Technology and a Bachelor of Science in

Computer Science from the University of Wisconsin, River Falls. Outside of her work, Renee enjoys time with her family and three beloved cats. She's passionate about fostering kittens, gardening, biking, and exploring new destinations through travel.



BRAD THOMPSON

Senior Vice President of Data Sciences, Target

For the last 19 years, Brad has been leading teams in Technology at Target that have built infrastructure, software, and tools used in retail operations for Target stores and headquarters. He currently leads Data Sciences at Target. This includes teams responsible for Target's big data analytical platform and the deployment of scaled AI in pricing, promotions, assortment, supply chain,

e-commerce, ad tech, forecasting, and marketing. He is passionate about the responsible adoption of algorithmic decision-making in driving business outcomes at Target.



MARC MAJORS

Deputy Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)

Marc Majors was named DEED's Deputy Commissioner of Workforce Development in March 2022. In this role, Majors oversees

Employment and Training programs, Careerforce, and the Governor's Workforce Development Board. Before being named Deputy Commissioner, Majors was DEED's Director of Employment and Training Programs – the group at DEED that runs grantmaking for workforce development. Additionally, he held responsibility for the agency's Workforce Innovative and Opportunity Act-Title I programs, Trade Adjustment Assistance programs, State-funded Workforce Development Grants, and a new public-private initiative with Xcel Energy.

Majors has been a key leader in advocating for and securing over \$130M in net new workforce dollars for Minnesota's workforce development system through federal and state sources. He also helped pioneer a new community review process that has engaged over 75 outside reviewers of DEED grant applications. These innovations and others have led to \$18M more in workforce grants going to equity-centered nonprofits.

Before joining DEED, Majors was a Workforce Development Manager with the San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development. He also spent seven years in the New York City Government – managing workforce development programs at the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation, the largest public health care system in the country – and worked at the New York City Department of Employment, where he served as a program manager and oversaw Job Training Partnership Act programs.

Majors was born in Minneapolis. He holds a Juris Doctorate from Vermont Law School, a Master of Public Administration from New York University, and a Bachelor of Arts from the University of San Francisco. In 2021, Majors was named by Twin Cities Business Magazine as one of the notable BIPOC executives of the year.

BREAKOUT SESSION PRESENTERS



DAN MCCREARY

AI Evangelist

Dan is a solution architect with a focus on strategic consulting in AI technologies. In the past, he worked at Bell Labs with the creators of the UNIX operating system, with Steve Jobs at NeXT Computer, and founded his own consulting firm with over 75 employees. His background includes topics such as scale-out enterprise knowledge graphs, high-performance computing, and NoSQL databases. He is the co-author of the book "Making Sense of NoSQL" and is a frequent blogger on AI strategy. He has been closely following the growth of knowledge graphs and generative AI. He is a huge fan of ChatGPT.



FRANCISCO CERVANTES

Director of Creative Learning, Scratch Foundation

Francisco is focused on developing and promoting equitable computer science and engineering educational programs that celebrate students' diverse passions as well as inclusive of young people's cultural backgrounds. He has served as New York City Department of Education's Director of Computer Science Academics and worked as researcher for Education Development Center on evaluating the use of technology for teaching and learning and further evaluated STEM content for CPB/PBS Kids, Sesame Workshop, Scratch.MIT.edu and NASA. He holds a B.S. in Electrical Engineering from the University of California Santa Barbara and an M.A. in Educational Leadership, Politics, and Advocacy from New York University. His research interests include assessing computational thinking skills, knowledge, abilities, as well as attitudes towards computer science and engineering professions.



JEN ROSATO

CSforAll-MN and University of Minnesota

Jennifer Rosato is the director of a new University of Minnesota center focused on inclusive computing education implementation, research, and policy. She has been supporting educators in K-12 and higher education in efforts to broaden participation in computing for over 20 years. She is passionate about collaborating with partners across systems and stakeholders to increase equity. She has led multiple grants and projects that provide curriculum and professional development for teachers and districts, is a CSforAll-MN steering committee member working on educational policy in Minnesota, and was chair of the CSTA Board of Directors.



SARAH CARTER

STEM/Computer Science Integration Specialist, MN Department of Education

Sarah Carter is the STEM and Computer Science Integration Specialist at the Minnesota Department of Education, providing technical assistance to districts and teachers to support integrated STEM and the integration of computer science into Minnesota's Academic Standards. Sarah has 20+ years' experience in education, as a science producer and outreach manager for SciGirls (a gender-equitable STEM program and tv show), professional development specialist and librarian at Science House, and an elementary school teacher. Sarah has a B.A. in elementary education with a concentration in science and math from the University of St. Thomas and a MLIS from St. Catherine University.



ANDREA WILSON VASQUEZ

Computer Science Specialist, Minnesota Department of Education

Andrea Wilson Vazquez is the Computer Science Specialist at the Minnesota Department of Education. She leads collaborative statewide initiatives that strengthen the capacity of Minnesota schools to provide high quality Computer Science education so that students are prepared with knowledge and skills for postsecondary and career success. She is a Computer Science Teaching Association Equity Fellow alum, a partner on the NSF Coaching for Equity project, and course facilitator on the Strategies for Effective and Inclusive CS Pedagogy Course with UT Austin. Andrea was formerly Deputy Director of the Expanding Computing Education Pathways (ECEP) Alliance. She founded and led the MNCodes educator training programs at Code Savvy for 8 years, and also has experience as an innovative instructional coach, makerEd and computer science educator, and a teacher of English learners.



IEESHA MCKINZIE COLLINS

Managing Director, ConnexMSP

Ieesha McKinzie Collins is the Managing Director of ConnexMSP, GREATER MSP's newest strategic initiative focused on ensuring young BIPOC professionals are recruited, hired, and supported by local employers as they enter the workforce. Prior to joining GREATER MSP, Ieesha served as Managing Director of External Relations for Breakthrough Collaborative, a national education nonprofit based in Oakland, CA. Other career highlights include leading strategic communications for a large charter school network in Texas and working in brand marketing & communications at General Mills. Ieesha also served as the education grants portfolio manager for the General Mills Foundation and has volunteered on several nonprofit boards which align with her deep commitment to educational equity.



BILAL MAMDANI

Director, Daugherty Business Solutions

Bilal is a director within Daugherty's Delivery Leadership practice, based out of their Minneapolis office. With 15 years of consulting experience, Bilal provides clients with delivery excellence for complex digital and technology programs. He is also active in the company's DEI efforts and leads the Access Point Twin Cities program. Bilal lives in Maple Grove and enjoys watching and playing soccer in his free time.



VICTOR BARGE

Enterprise Solutions Director, Daugherty Business Solutions

Victor is an Enterprise Solution Director at Daugherty and is based out of their Minneapolis office. In his role, he builds solutions, capabilities, and provides thought leadership for clients in the delivery leadership domain. He is also a DEI leader across Daugherty and he heads up Community Partnerships for the Access Point Twin Cities program. Additionally, Victor serves on the board

of BDPA - Twin Cities in the role of VP - Member Services and co-hosts the organization's bi-monthly Tech Talk. Victor's passions include travel and supporting Minnesota sports teams.



ALLISON BARMANN

Executive Director, Genesys Works - Twin Cities

Allison Barmann started as the Executive Director of Genesys Works Twin Cities in January 2021. Previously, she was the Strategy & Learning Vice President at the Bush Foundation where she oversaw grantmaking in education, native nation building and social business. Previously, Allison was a strategy consultant with McKinsey & Company and directed the Itasca Project, an alliance of CEO's and civic leaders addressing economic competitiveness in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area. She also worked at a technology start-up in San Francisco and as a Plant Engineer at 3M. She earned her MBA from the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University and her B.S. in Mechanical Engineering from MIT, where she was an all-American gymnast. Allison loves to bike and ski, with her husband and her three children. She has participated in eight WorldLoppet cross country ski events and has ridden her bike across several states. She also loves to read and is a devoted member to two book clubs.



TORREY LAU

Director of Academic Excellence, Rêve Academy

Torrey serves as the Director of Academic Excellence at Rêve Academy in Minneapolis, a nationally accredited non-profit organization dedicated to advancing upward mobility for youth into digital and business-focused career pathways through innovative school partnerships and student internships.

Creating innovative and impactful career pathway experiences to engage and support youth in their educational and career pursuits is a life-long passion. Torrey has been a classroom teacher, program coordinator, mentor, and academic director with schools and organizations invested in youth STEM education and Career and Technical Education for 20+ years. She served as a Science and Work Experience Teacher and a STEM and Advanced Academics Coordinator for most of her career in the Minneapolis Public Schools. Torrey currently serves as the Director of Academic Excellence at Rêve Academy in Minneapolis



JEREMIAH BROWN

VP of Partnerships & Internships, AchieveMpls

Jeremiah Brown is Vice President of Partnerships & Internships at Achieve Twin Cities where he leads the organization's breadth of internship programming from high school to college and cultivates partnerships in support of students' career readiness and success. Jeremiah has led college access and career readiness programs for young people in the Twin Cities

since 2006. He directed the Step Up Youth Employment Program at Achieve Twin Cities from 2011-2018, expanding this nationally-recognized youth employment program to include school year internships and establishing a series of career pipeline initiatives in high-demand industries. In 2020, he developed Achieve College Internships to better support alumni of Achieve's high school programs and provide employer partners with a direct-line to well-qualified and diverse local talent who are nearing completion of their college degrees and ready to launch their professional career in the Twin Cities. Jeremiah is a former program coordinator for College Possible and also directed the Wellness and Youth Employment Programs at Pillsbury United Communities. He has served as a mentor and classroom teacher in Minneapolis and Santiago, Chile and has collaborated closely with the public school system throughout his career. A proud graduate of Minneapolis Public Schools, Jeremiah holds a bachelors degree from the University of California at Santa Cruz.



BRAD VON BANK

Co-Founder, Rêve Consulting

Brad started his career at GE as a Quality Analyst and gained increasing responsibility through roles in product management, marketing, e-commerce, and technology before ultimately being named Vice President, Product and Technology Sales. After GE, Brad moved to Target to lead the Marketing Technology team responsible for all guest-facing technology. He was promoted to Marketing Director where he led the business in shaping the strategy and design for the new Target.com experience. Brad holds a MBA in strategic management and technology from the University of Minnesota and a BA from the University of St. Thomas in international business – marketing and German. He is a graduate of the Humphrey Policy Fellows program and co-founder of Rêve Academy. He is PMI and Six Sigma Black Belt certified and was named to the 2012 40 under 40 list. People and the potential for radical change inspire Brad. This shines through in the manifestation of Rêve Academy, an innovative out-of-school program focused on providing a pathway to careers in digital marketing.



HEIDI JOHNSON

SVP, Chief of Staff, ECMC Group

Heidi Johnson is the senior vice president, chief of staff (COS) and works with the executive officer team in the planning and coordination of strategic, highly complex activities across the organization. In addition to her COS role, she leads the Records and Information Management Committee and manages ECMC Group's enterprise disaster recovery and business continuity efforts.

Ms. Johnson has 25 years of experience in higher education finance and software development—23 of which have been in a variety of positions within ECMC Group and its affiliates. She has managed every aspect of the information technology (IT) department. Prior to joining ECMC, she was an IT consultant, managing large-scale development efforts for health care insurance companies.



JERE' BREWSTER

Business Operations Manager, ECMC Group

Jere' Brewster is a business operations manager at ECMC, a nonprofit with a mission to help students succeed. In her current role, Ms. Brewster oversees the successful management of account servicing teams and focuses on delivering strong results through coaching and employee development. Ms. Brewster began her career at ECMC as an account specialist and was promoted to her current manager role after four years. She is currently enrolled at Bethel University (St. Paul, MN), working toward a degree in business administration, management and operational leadership, with a minor in accounting. She is passionate about growth and development and working with underserved youth. Ms. Brewster has co-lead the Black/African American employee network group for two years. This group provides a space for Black/African American employees to share experiences and thoughts, educate themselves and others, and produce solutions to challenges related to race and ethnicity in the United States and the workplace. She also has been part of the employee volunteering committee for two years; the committee provides opportunities for employees to serve their communities.



PAUL DEBETTIGNIES

Founder, Minnesota Talent Leaders

Paul DeBettignies is better known online as Minnesota Headhunter. Recognized as a Talent Leader, depending on the project he is working on, titles like Senior Tech Recruiter, Senior People Operations Consultant, Principal Talent Advisor are frequently used. For 25+ years Paul has built software, tech, product and digital teams with startups and tech companies throughout the country with a focus on Minnesota and the Midwest and creates recruiting strategies for Fortune 500 clients. Paul is the author of "Minnesota Headhunter" (the longest running regional recruiter blog) and the recently debuted bi-weekly newsletter "Recruiter Life". He is a regional and national speaker, trainer, subject matter expert and trusted media source on recruiter, HR, career, job search, networking and social media topics. Born and raised in Minneapolis, Paul despises bios and does not take himself as serious as this all sounds. He loves sunsets, fishing, gardening and still believes that one day the Gophers will go to the Rose Bowl.



DAVE ELLISTON

Lead Recruiter, SPS Commerce

Dave is a self-professed geek and enthusiastic fan of the technology ecosystem in the twin cities. With more than a decade of experience connecting tech professionals with rewarding career opportunities he has developed a deep understanding of the ever-changing employment landscape. He currently serves as a tech recruiter for SPS Commerce, a Minneapolis based software company leading the way in retail EDI that takes great pride in delivering a challenging yet rewarding workplace where their employees feel inspired, motivated and most importantly, valued.



BECKY LAUSENG

VP of People Operations, Onsites.io

Becky Lauseng is a technology startup people leader with over 15 years of experience. For most of her career, she's built and implemented HR foundations for fast growing global startups. Everything she does encompasses the philosophy that "your people are your greatest asset." She leads with authenticity, empathy and likes to have fun along the way! Outside

of work, Becky enjoys spending time with her family in the great outdoors. She also enjoys reading, gardening, cooking, hunting and playing a variety of sports.



PIPER CLEVELAND

Director, SciTech Internship Program

Piper Cleaveland manages the SciTech Program. She comes to MnTech with a background in corporate PR and freelance journalism. In 2016, Piper graduated Cum Laude from Mankato State University with a bachelor's degree in Mass Communications. When she's not blogging and Tweeting for SciTech, Piper is likely illustrating, watching and discussing cinema or writing creatively in hopes of completing a novel.



INGRID SCHNETTLER

HR Manager, Ecolab

Ingrid Schnettler is currently the HR Manager for Enterprise Technology Solutions at Ecolab. She provides strategic talent solutions to attract, develop, grow, and retain critical technology and digital talent. She has held previous Talent Acquisition & HR roles supporting Field Sales & Service, Supply Chain and Construction Management. Ingrid is passionate about early career

development and serves as the program manager for the Technology Leadership Development Program. In the community, Ingrid has volunteered with BestPrep since 2019 including roles as a Resident Business Leader and Chair of the Minnesota Business Venture Advisory Board. Ingrid attended the University of Minnesota and graduated with a BS in Human Resources and Marketing. She is pursuing her MBA at the University of St. Thomas. In her free time, Ingrid loves to travel and support her local library.



DAVE SWENSON

VP of Technology Services, US Bank

Dave Swenson has been with U.S. Bank for 28 years, mostly managing application development groups. Currently, he has particular focus on early careers programs. He worked at IBM for 11 years prior in technical sales and consulting roles.

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KAYLA HEINZ

Principal HR Business Partner, CHS

Kayla Heinz is a principal HR business partner at CHS, the largest farmer-owned cooperative in the United States. In her role, Heinz is responsible for strategic HR leadership and support to the executive vice president, enterprise transformation, and chief information officer. Heinz focuses on driving and executing the talent strategy and talent programs, while providing HR consultation.



MAI YOUA MOUA

Organizational Development Consultant & Executive Coach,
University of Minnesota

Mai Youa is a mission-driven professional dedicated to organizational excellence and health; experienced manager passionate about developing top performing individuals and teams; practitioner committed to creating and sustaining impactful human-centric solutions; and executive coach eager to help leaders, managers, and teams maximize their potential and solve their biggest challenges. She currently serves as an Organizational Development Consultant in the Office of Information Technology at the University of Minnesota. Mai Youa has a B.A. in Psychology, Asian Studies, and Chinese from Macalester College and a M.A. in Organization Development and Change Management from the University of St. Thomas - Opus College of Business.



JADE DENSON

Senior Manager, Tech Talent Programs, Target

Jade Denson is Senior Manager of the Tech Talent Programs Team at Target. Jade is a passionate leader committed to developing equitable programs and tech talent pipelines as well as building authentic relationships in the community. Jade prides herself on being a connector of people, ideas, and solutions and she is lucky she gets to bring that energy and drive everyday into her role at Target.



SUSAN BROWER

State Demographer, State of Minnesota

Susan Brower is the Minnesota State Demographer and directs the MN State Demographic Center. Susan became the State Demographer in February 2012. In that capacity, she travels the state talking with Minnesotans about the new social and economic realities that are brought about by recent demographic shifts. Susan's work applies an understanding of demographic trends to changes in a range of areas including the state's economy and workforce, education, health, immigration and rural population changes. Susan joined the State Demographic Center after working as a researcher on the Minnesota Compass project at Wilder Research in St. Paul. Prior to that, she worked at the Population Studies Center at the University of Michigan. Susan earned her Ph.D. in sociology at the University of Michigan, specializing in demography and family sociology. She also holds a master's degree in public policy from Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota.



JAIME WASCALUS

CIO & Director of Technology & Communications, City of St. Paul

Jaime Wascalus has been the CIO and Director of Technology and Communications at the City of Saint Paul since November 2022, where she guides and develops teams of talented technologists who support a City that works for all. She is passionate about making technology inclusive and welcoming for those who haven't been historically represented in the field and is on the Full Stack Saint Paul Steering Committee and Smart North Advisory Board. Jaime started her career in technology application development and spent over a decade in technology leadership at the University of Minnesota. Jaime lives in Minneapolis with her husband and their two children and enjoys biking around both cities with her family, assistant coaching her daughter's volleyball team, and watching her son play soccer.



JAKE KRINGS

VP of Technology

Jake Krings is Target's Vice President of Engineering, supporting Target's Digital business which includes target.com, flagship mobile apps and supporting services. Since joining Target in 2011, he has held a variety of engineering leadership positions enabling Merchandising, Marketing, and Supply Chain capabilities. He received his BS from University of St Cloud with a degree in Business Computer Information Systems and MBA from University of St Thomas – Opus College of Business. In his free time you can find Jake cheering on his kids at their swim meets and sitting on various boards, including Minnesota Technology Association.



JEFF RIEGLE

Wealth Strategist, Green Guardian Wealth Management

Jeff Riegle has spent much of his career making connections. His journey started in rural Michigan, a little town called Bad Axe (yep, real place). There he met, and then married, his high school sweetheart (Fun fact: They met in a tap-dancing class.). He studied environmental engineering at Michigan Tech, then was commissioned in the United States Air Force. After the birth of his one and only daughter, he started consulting around the world, building multi-million-dollar construction projects like wind turbines in Wyoming and creating small sun in Japan! Now, he owns a growing independent financial planning practice, Green Guardian Wealth Management, backed by one of MnTech's premier sponsors, Principal Financial. The common theme has always been Integrity First, Service Before Self, and Excellence in all he does



ROSIE NESTINGEN

Marketing Professional & Consultant

Rosie Nestingen is a Fargo, ND native and South Minneapolis resident. Her experience focuses on workforce and program transformation across technology, marketing, management consulting, nonprofit, and hospitality spaces. Rosie represented her home state of North Dakota at the Miss America Competition where she received the top score talent award. Her duties included delivering presentations and training on DEI which continues to fuel her passion to be an inclusive leader. Rosie has been highlighted in Fast Company, Twin Cities Business Magazine, Wall Street Journal, and Cosmopolitan, and has been a featured speaker for The Knot, and on the podcast Terrible, Thanks for Asking. In 2016, Rosie debuted a new work musical as the composer-lyricist, co-creator, and co-producer of a show titled Right, Wrong or Bomb: A Dating Musical! and is always looking for her next creative project. In her spare time, Rosie volunteers for The Link, a nonprofit in North Minneapolis, and spends time around Lake Harriet with her husband Hans, their daughter, Raine Moses, and dog, Oakland.



JOEL CRANDALL

Vice President of Talent, MnTech

Joel leads programming for the Minnesota Technology Association. His passion is harnessing meaningful relationships and technical solutions to solve intractable challenges. Prior to joining MnTech, Joel held many roles over nearly 12 years at Genesys Works in the Twin Cities—a talent pipeline for students in underserved communities pursuing careers in business technology. He helped provide 2,300 year-long high school and college internships and \$31 million in student wages during this time. Joel and his wife, Lorie, live in north Minneapolis with their three kids. Family, coffee, soccer, coaching, beer, public speaking, and church are passions that make his life good.