



Family and Community Math: An Essential Part of an Early Learning Strategy

CGLR Funder to Funder Conversation With the Heising-Simons Foundation

July 21, 12:30–2:00 pm ET



Liz Simons
Board Chair
Heising-Simons Foundation

Liz Simons is chair of the board of the Heising-Simons Foundation. A former teacher, Liz worked in Spanish-bilingual and English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms, and subsequently founded Stretch to Kindergarten, a spring-summer early childhood education program. She currently serves on the advisory council for Stanford University's Graduate School of Education, and on the advisory board of the Stanford Center for Philanthropy and Civil Society, as well as on several boards including The Marshall Project, The Foundation for a Just Society, Math for America, Smart Justice California and the Learning Policy Institute. She volunteers at The Beat Within (a magazine by and for incarcerated youth) and as a storyteller in a transitional kindergarten class. Liz earned a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of California, Berkeley, and a master's in education from Stanford University.

Liz Simons and Mark Heising founded the Foundation in 2007 and joined the Giving Pledge in 2016, publicly committing the majority of their wealth to philanthropic causes.



Kimberly Brenneman, Ph.D.
Education Program Officer
Heising-Simons Foundation
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Kimberly Brenneman is a program officer for early mathematics at the Heising-Simons Foundation. Prior to joining the Foundation in 2015, Kimberly was research faculty at Rutgers University's National Institute for Early Education Research, where she led projects focused on curricular and instructional practices to foster science, technology, engineering, and mathematics learning for young children in school and home settings. As an educational consultant, Kimberly has contributed to the development of educational media resources to support preschool-aged math and science learners. She earned a Ph.D. in developmental psychology from UCLA and completed her undergraduate work in psychology and Spanish at Bucknell University.



Omo Moses
Founder and CEO
MathTalk
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Omo Moses was born in Tanzania, East Africa in 1972. He is the former Executive Director and founding member of the Young People's Project (YPP), a national non-profit organization with programs in over ten US cities that utilize mathematics to prepare students to succeed in school and in life. YPP evolved out of the Algebra Project, which grew out of the Civil Rights activism of the Algebra Project's founder and MacArthur Genius Grant winner Bob Moses, Omo's father.

Omo founded MathTalk, a community based ed tech start up, in 2015. MathTalk products help adults and kids enjoy math everywhere! One of four siblings, Omo grew up in Cambridge, Massachusetts, attended the University of Pittsburgh and George Washington University on basketball scholarships, where he majored in mathematics and minored in creative writing. He received the Black Issues in Higher Education Sports-Scholar Award as well as the school's Creative Writing Award. Omo is the producer of *Finding Our Folk*, an award-winning student-filmed documentary featuring the Grammy nominated Hot 8 Brass Band that tells the story of members of YPP who organized themselves and others to respond to the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Omo is a member of the MSNBC Griot 100, a Huffington Post Person of the Day, a Barr Foundation Fellow and father of two precocious little ones, Johari who is 7, and Kamara who is 5.



Geeta Pradhan
President
Cambridge Community Foundation
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Geeta draws on her deep experience in philanthropy, urban planning, and economic development to address the needs of Cambridge through the Foundation's work. She has transformed a local grantmaking organization into *the* local giving platform that supports Cambridge's shared prosperity, social equity, and cultural richness. The Foundation has been an effective and high-impact grantmaker for 103 years; today, it supports approximately 150 nonprofits annually. The organization has become an influential civic leader, serving as a neutral, civic voice on issues Cambridge faces, and a collaborative philanthropic partner, working with donors, businesses, nonprofits, universities, and engaged citizens to address residents' needs.

Geeta previously worked for The Boston Foundation, where she oversaw the development of strategic initiatives. She studied architecture in India and holds an MA in Urban Design from the Harvard Graduate School of Design.



David Parker, Ph.D.

V.P. of Research and Development

ServeMinnesota

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David's background is in educational psychology, where he honed a passion for supporting students in developing essential academic skills. He has conducted and published research on a wide variety of topics related to literacy and numeracy. In his role at ServeMinnesota, he ensures AmeriCorps members have the skills and tools to improve student lives through the joy of learning.



Kate Kelly

President and EVP – Minnesota

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Kate Kelly is executive vice president and regional president of PNC Bank, Minnesota. Kelly is responsible for PNC's overall market expansion and leads a culture of teamwork, client advocacy and community leadership. Kelly has more than 30 years of experience in the banking industry. Prior to joining PNC in January 2017, she served as president and CEO of Minnesota Bank & Trust. In 2008, Kelly, along with Heartland Financial and a group of local bankers and investors, founded Minnesota Bank & Trust. Prior to founding that bank, she was a regional president of Bremer Financial. She also worked at U.S. Bank for 18 years, most recently as district manager in corporate banking. Active in the community, Kelly is the board chair of ServeMinnesota and received the 2018 Outstanding Commissioner national award. She is also a board member with the Minnesota Orchestra Association, The Children's Theatre Company, Reading & Math, Inc., Science Museum of Minnesota and Economic Club of Minnesota. In addition, Kelly is a member of Chapter One, Minnesota Women's Presidents Organization and Minnesota Chapter of Women Corporate Directors. She recently served as a member of the board of directors and the past chair of the Audit Committee of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis. In recognition of her professional and community accomplishments, Kelly received the Twin Cities Business Women's Leadership Award. She has been recognized as one of the Top Women in Finance and is included in the Circle of Excellence by Finance and Commerce and was named an Industry Leader by the Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal. In addition, she also received the Minnesota Women Achievement Award and Innovation in Finance Award from the National Women Business Owners (NAWBO). Kelly delivered St. Catherine University's commencement address and has spoken at St. Thomas University's First Friday Luncheon along with a variety of industry and educational venues. Kelly holds a master's degree in business administration with a concentration in finance from the University of Minnesota Carlson School of Management and a bachelor's degree in economics and humanities from the St. Catherine University in St. Paul.



Nikki Shearman, Ph.D.

Chief Strategic Officer

Reach Out and Read

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Nikki Shearman is responsible for guiding the planning process to build out Reach Out and Read's strategic road map, Next Chapter, and for taking the lead in implementing the plan around Reach Out and Read's leadership role in shaping pediatric primary care to promote nurturing family-child relationships. She also coordinates the strategy for research and evaluation that demonstrates Reach Out and Read's impact. Nikki brings a combined experience of research, operational strategy, and communications to this position, starting with 10 years' experience in medical research in laboratories in the UK, Japan and Germany, and publication of her work in international journals. Subsequently, Shearman has worked within the management of a variety of non-profit organizations in the UK and the US. Shearman earned her Ph.D in cancer research from the University of Southampton, UK.