



## Our Management Team

The Institute's Platform team has a combined experience of over **50 years** of multi-cultural, leadership and development experience working in various fields of discipline and communities around the globe.



**Marianne Larned,**  
Executive Director

**Marianne Larned** is the Founding Director of the Stone Soup Leadership Institute and author of educational series, *Stone Soup for the World: Life-Changing Stories of Everyday Heroes*. Marianne is a pioneer in designing transformational leadership initiatives and multi-cultural educational curriculum to prepare the next generation of leaders to address the economic, environmental and social challenges of the 21st century. From the inner cities of Boston, Cincinnati, Holyoke, Oakland to the islands in Hawaii, Martha's Vineyard, Vieques, Puerto Rico, Virgin Gorda BVI she developed workforce development programs with companies, Chambers of Commerce, schools, and organizations. She received her MBA in Organizational Development at Boston University she designed corporate social responsibility for major corporations that led to public-private partnerships in education, health and community development. Working with the next generation of leaders gives her hope for our collective future.

**Video:** <http://www.touchstoneleaders.com/video/>



**Nane Alejandrez, Barrios Unidos**

**Nane Alejandrez** is the founding director of Barrios Unidos and the Cesar Chavez Education Center which celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary providing youth-positive programs and spiritual-cultural movement. Nane is a national leader working with Harry Belafonte to reduce black-brown violence; with Governor Jerry Brown on prison reform, with Santa Cruz Mayor for tiny houses initiatives, Fair-Trade Movement for Indigenous coffee growers in Central America and African countries to educate the public on Fair Trade and farmer's sustainability. Nane is featured in the book *Stone Soup for the World: Life-Changing Stories of Everyday Heroes* and is a founding board member of the Stone Soup Leadership Institute, featured on the Institute's video with Walter Cronkite.

**Video:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1k2MdVmDugg&t=7s>



**Kutasha Bryan Silva,**  
Vieques, Puerto Rico,  
Chicago, Illinois

Kutasha is The Institute's Cohort Project Coordinator for the TouchStone Leaders Platform where she trains new college graduates to use the Institute's learning tools to inspire young people to realize their dreams. Kutasha first served in 2004 as the Institute's Project Coordinator for the Vieques Youth Leadership Initiative: [www.vyli.com](http://www.vyli.com). She championed VYLI's year-round program, especially Cultural Arts and Entrepreneurship Initiatives. An educator, musician, and scholar who is passionate about innovative forms of education for K-12 students, Kutasha is a Ph. D. candidate at the University of Illinois Urbana in Curriculum Design & Development. Kutasha serves as Co-Director of the Institute's Sustainability Summits on Martha's Vineyard and Newport, Rhode Island:

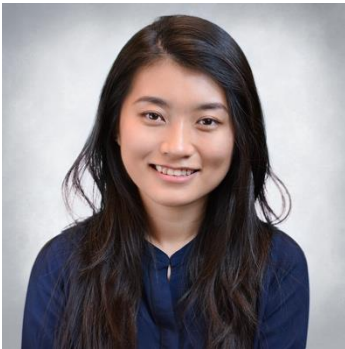
**VIDEO:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fbEZyJ9EIlg>

## Our Tech Team



**Chris Brown**  
Project Manager  
TouchStone Leaders Platform  
California

Chris is an experienced designer and product professional that creates compelling user experiences for consumers and business audiences alike. Specializing in early stage software initiatives of any kind, he brings a thoughtful and collaborative approach to problem solving. The mission of Touchstone resonated instantly with him - why *not* bring awareness, opportunity and a sense of purpose about climate change to the very generation that will be confronting it head on their lifetimes. Chris has lead a design teams at multiple startups focusing on consumer lending. At BillFloat, he created online and retail experiences that provide lending alternatives to the 60 million Americans without access to affordable credit. At Pillow Homes, Chris led the creation of a tech-driven marketplace which allowed renters, land lords and property owners manage short-term rentals with transparency. He believes user empathy is at the core of every successful product. Chris has helped every company engage & understand their users by contributing to or leading design thinking and research initiatives. With degrees in Instructional Technology and a Master in Fine Arts, he can acknowledge technology trends while incorporating creativity and human factors into product development teams. Chris built online classrooms & educational media for university professors and K-12 educators in Illinois.



**Namgyal Gyaltsen**  
Cohort Facilitator  
Bhutan

Namgyal is The Institute's TouchStone Leaders Platform's Cohort Facilitator. Working with multicultural high school youth, she interfaces with the Tech Team to ensure the Learning Tools are user-friendly to diverse ages, cultures, and experiences. She collaborates with the Institute's Sustainability Team on the research and development of the sites: Sustainability is Fun and the TouchStone Leaders Sustainable Jobs Network. Namgyal grew up in Bhutan, where the King developed the Gross Happiness Index in the 1970's to measure the country's success. Namgyal presented this innovative model at The Institute's 2018 Sustainability Summit. She interwove it into the Institute's Leadership Assessment. A Brown University graduate, Namgyal has a double degree in Economics and Environmental Studies. She served as a Renewable Energy intern at Bhutan's Ministry of Economic Affairs. At the World Wildlife Fund, she worked with Bhutan experts on bird conservation. While at Brown, she worked with Environment America to advocate for RGGI (Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative) and renewable energy in Rhode Island.



**Chris Aring**  
Emerging Leader  
TouchStone Tech Team  
Martha's Vineyard

Chris is a junior at Olin College of Engineering, majoring in Computer & Electrical Engineering on a full scholarship. Chris served as a youth delegate to the Institute's 2015 Youth Leadership Summit where he was inspired by Gandhi's grandson to ground his ideals in serving humanity. For his Senior Project, Chris helped created a Hack-a-Thon for the Stone Soup Leadership Institute's TouchStone Leaders Platform. For this "Design Weekend", we brought together college students from Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mt. Holyoke College and University of Massachusetts Lowell. With the team, they created a presentation deck and video. An active member in the Martha's Vineyard Youth Leadership Initiative, Chris worked on Institute's Platform's Leadership Course BETA to use the stories and curriculum from *Stone Soup for the World: Life-Changing Stories of Everyday Heroes* to teach the 21st century skills. As his online Sustainability-In-Action Project, Chris designed an online system to match youth with volunteer opportunities with local non-profit organizations.

## Our Sustainability Team



**Trevor Tanaka**  
Sustainable Business Coordinator  
California/Hawaii

Trevor is the Sustainability Project Coordinator for the design of the sites Sustainability is Fun and TouchStone Leaders Blue-Green Jobs Network. He was the Project Coordinator for the Sustainable Hawaii Toolkit, a global model to connect youth, educators, business and community to build a sustainable world. Trevor is a founding member of the Sustainable Hawaii Youth Leadership Initiative. He first served as a youth delegate to the Institute's Youth Leadership Summit for Sustainable Development in 2011. He then envisioned the Sustainable Education Resolution and championed it through passage. Trevor graduated from Chapman University. Trevor now serves as an emerging leader for the Institute's initiatives and annual Sustainability Summit, where he youth to realize their dreams and develop sustainability-in-action projects to help their communities.

**Video:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E6JFbqCYbWM&feature=youtu.be>



**Emily Garland**  
Sustainability Research  
Development Coordinator  
Hawaii

Emily is The Institute's Sustainability and Development Research Coordinator. She first served as the writer/researcher for The Institute's Sustainable Hawaii Toolkit. A dedicated environmentalist, Emily is passionate about living simply and sustainably and helping others do the same. She graduated from Linfield College with a Bachelor's Degree in Mass Communication and Creative Writing. Emily is a writer and teacher living in Hilo, Hawaii. She is on the Executive Committee of the Sierra Club Moku Loa Group. Emily is an active member of the Citizens' Climate Lobby Hawai'i Chapter. Emily lived in Cambodia for 4 years, where she worked as a teacher trainer for the Peace Corps and as a grant writer for Cambodian Children's Fund. After Cambodia, Emily worked as an education specialist, grant writer and communications manager for an assortment of environmental and youth education nonprofits in Hawai'i and California.



**Illai Kenney,**  
Sustainable Business Coordinator  
Washington D.C.

**Illai Kenney** is the co-founder with her mother, Felicia Davis of the **HBCU Green Fund, Inc.**, a 501c3 organization curating green infrastructure and renewable energy projects at Historically Black Colleges and Universities. She serves as its National Partnership Director and works with HBCU students to develop pipelines for educational and employment resources in the green economy. Illai is an internationally recognized environmental and social justice activist. At age 9, she gave her first public speech at the Million Youth Movement Rally. At age 12 she co-founded the Georgia Kids Against Pollution. In 2003 at age 14, she received the prestigious Brower Award. Her inspiring speech attracted global media attention for challenging Coca-Cola over water practices in India. She served as the U.S. Delegate to the United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa where she spoke about poverty. Illai served a Green Ambassador with the Toyota Green Initiative and Green for All where she advocates for an intersectional approach to building a sustainable world. Illai has traveled to Senegal, Malawi, Europe, Venezuela as well as Ghana with Morehouse College's Pan-African Global Experience (MPAGE) Program to work on sustainable development projects. A Howard University with a bachelor's degree in telecommunications management and a minor in economics. For the last 8 years Illai has served as Howard's Office of Sustainability's Program Manager where she coordinates events and trainings and tracked the university's waste diversion rate.

**VIDEO:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k2G0I7VWBCY>

## Our Emerging Leaders



**Josué Cruz Morales JD**  
**Immigration Lawyer**  
**Vieques, Puerto Rico/Houston, TX**

Josué is dedicated Immigration Lawyer with his own firm in Houston, Texas. Josué first served as youth delegate to the Institute's first Sustainability Summit in 2004. He was a founding member of the Vieques Youth Leadership Initiative (VYLI). Josué served as Co-Director of the Institute's Sustainability Summits on Martha's Vineyard where he inspired youth from around the world to envision their dreams, overcome challenges and stay true to their dreams for their lives, their communities and the world. Josue is passionate about challenging youth to develop their 5 Year Plan to navigate. In 2010, Josué received the Institute's first Walter Cronkite Award. In 2014, Josué achieved his childhood dream of becoming a lawyer, graduating with honors from University of Puerto Rico's Law School, where he received a prestigious Award for founding VYLI and his dedication to his Vieques community. He first passed the Bar and practiced law in Puerto Rico and in Texas.

**Video:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUyfAO5DJV&feature=share>



**Kassandra Castillo**  
**Entrepreneur**  
**New York City**  
**Vieques, Puerto Rico**

Kassandra is a successful entrepreneur who loves to inspire young people to pursue their dreams. When she was 14-years-old, served as youth delegate to the Institute's first Sustainability Summit and was a founding member of the Vieques Youth Leadership Initiative (VYLI). Kassandra helped develop VYLI's Entrepreneurship Initiative. After a successful modeling career and graduating from business school, Kassandra became the first employee for the startup company Trendlee.com. She moved with the company to New York City in 2014, where it is now a \$5 million enterprise. Kassandra is now Head of Operations at Trendlee.com and Rebagg.com, where she leads a team of 20 people. Kassandra served as faculty for Institute's Summit and the Hawaii and Holyoke Initiatives. Video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qe\\_hHiUrGAo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qe_hHiUrGAo)



**Taynara Goncalves**  
**Project Coordinator**  
**Martha's Vineyard Youth Leadership Initiative**

Taynara is a rising junior at Gordon State College. Her dream is to become the first Brazilian doctor on Martha's Vineyard. Taynara served on the first Brazilian delegation to MVYLI's Youth Leadership Summit in 2013; and then as a MVYLI Visioneer for the 2014 Summit. For MVYLI's Multicultural Project Taynara spoke to younger students to inspire them. While in college Taynara served as an Emerging Leader at the 2015, 2016 and 2017 Summits working with Brazilian youth to envision and develop their dreams. Having benefited from MVYLI's Career Mentor & Job Shadow Day Program (2013-2015), she was uniquely qualified to serve as Project Coordinator for this comprehensive program supporting first generation multicultural youth to pursue their dreams by going to college and College Field Trips. While in college, she travels during the holidays and school vacations to work with local youth to inspire them to stay true to their dreams. She graduated from Martha's Vineyard Regional High School where she was on the Honor Roll and soccer team.

## Our Support Team



**Elena Kissel**  
Development Coordinator  
Newport, RI

Elena is The Institute's Development Coordinator. She is experienced Development Director with a legal background and demonstrated history of working in the non-profit organization management industry. Strong business development professional skilled in Nonprofit Organizations, Policy Analysis, Event Planning, Sustainability, and Strategic Planning. Elena has worked with the Clinton Global Initiative, Clean Ocean Access and others. She served as EPA's Assistant Regional Counsel. She serves on the board of the Green Schools Alliance.



**Robin Harper**  
Webmaster  
Martha's Vineyard

Since 2011 Robin has been the Institute's webmaster overseeing six sites to showcase the progress and success of young people in these communities. A University of Maryland, College Park graduate she's lived on Martha's Vineyard since 1997. She began her career working for an internet bookstore in Vineyard Haven, then SEO/web marketing firm in 2007. She lives in Edgartown with her husband and two daughters. *"Over this seven years, I have been privileged to witness both the Institute's growth and positive impact on young people's lives. From helping them prepare to enter college and the workforce to encouraging them to recognize their potential as leaders in making positive change -- for the environment, their local communities and beyond - SSLI is an organization that has shown great success in helping the voices of our youth be heard and make a difference. I am continually blown away how they guide these kids into taking charge in their local community and beyond to effect positive change."*



**Berta Paleaz**  
Summit Logistics Coordinator  
Providence, Rhode Island

Berta graduated from Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) in 2018 as a Medical Administrator Assistant. She immigrated to the U.S. with her mother from her homeland in Guatemala when she was 13 years old. Berta graduated from Central High School in Providence, RI. Her intention was to continue her education, however due to her immigration status, she was not accepted to college. Berta was persistent and never gave up her dream of learning. When Berta turned 31 she became a legal resident of USA. She immediately signed up for college. During the interim period, she joined many groups at her church and became a CCD teacher and a youth group leader. At age 22, Berta married and is the mother of two wonderful children. Marlon is a high school junior and soccer player and Leslie is a cheerful dancer in middle school. As a PTO member, Berta enjoys helping at her children's school. Berta joyfully oversees the Logistics Team for the Institute's Sustainability Summit and the annual Dr. King Community Service Project.

- Financial Accountant: Jayme Gallenson, Gallenson/McDaneld
- Business Advisor: Andrew Bellack, Stakeholders Capitol
- Legal: Simon E. Carlo Valentin, JD