

## **Speaker Biographies**

### **Erin Hames, ReformEd**

Erin Hames is the President of ReformEd, a firm focused on improving educational opportunities and outcomes for children and students. Prior to launching ReformEd, Erin served as Governor Deal's Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy and, prior to that, as Governor Perdue's Policy Director and Chief of Staff at the Georgia Department of Education. Erin started her career as a public school classroom teacher where she was named as her school's First Year Teacher of the Year.

She received her undergraduate degree from the University of Georgia and a law degree from Georgia State University College of Law. Erin is a member of the State Bar of Georgia, the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, the Southern Regional Education Board, the GeorgiaCAN Advisory Board, the American Enterprise Institute Enterprise Club and the State Charter Schools Commission Foundation Board. She also serves as a Commissioner for Education Commission of the States. She received the 2016 Professional Achievement Award from the University of Georgia's College of Education, was a member of the 2013 40 Under 40 Class by the University of Georgia's Alumni Association and was selected as a 2010 Henry Toll Fellow by the Council of State Governments. She and her husband, Ben, natives of Clarksville, Georgia live in Atlanta with their two young children, Isaac and Rachel.

### **Dr. Yasmin Tyler Hill, Morehouse School of Medicine**

Dr. Yasmin Tyler-Hill was born and raised in South Carolina, but attended school at the Holton- Arms School in Bethesda, Md. She remembers Holton as the place where she developed much of her philosophy about work ethic and life's goals. To this day, she lives her life by the Holton's motto: "Inveniam Viam Avet faciam" - "I shall find a way or make one."

In 2001, she joined the Morehouse School of Medicine (MSM) faculty as an assistant professor of clinical pediatrics, eventually becoming an associate professor in 2009. In 2010, Dr. Tyler-Hill was asked to serve as the acting chairperson for the DOP. Shortly after, in 2012, the dean and executive vice president appointed her interim chairperson, officially promoting her to chairperson in July 2014. During her time as interim chairperson, she continued to excel and worked to place the department amongst the top at MSM. Under her, the department remains one of the most competitive and highly sought-after for perspective residents.

Outside of medicine, Dr. Tyler-Hill's passion is centered around working with underserved families through her work with community-based organizations. With programs such as the Reach Out and Read and the YMCA, they have established partnerships geared towards providing tools needed for success and to enhance the quality of life for families and their children. Dr. Tyler-Hill continues to use her reach, influence and support to promote excellence and equity through medicine and her love of community.

### **Donna Davidson, Easter Seals**

Donna Davidson is President/CEO of Easter Seals North Georgia (ESNG), one of Georgia's largest nonprofit organizations dedicated to ensuring that children of all abilities can reach for and realize their full potential.

Mention children and Donna's eyes light up as she sees the possibilities of the future. Her inspiration as a leader in children's issues began at a young age as she dreamed of a career involving children. She actualized her dream when she first became a Speech and Language Pathologist, evaluating, diagnosing and treating children with communication disorders. From her first employment, Donna demonstrated skills in the area of program development and innovation; working on the team to create the first Preschool Program for children with special needs in Massachusetts.

Donna's expertise and leadership brought her to Georgia in 1992 to take the helm as ESNG's CEO. As an expert and advocate in early education and early intervention, Donna knows first-hand the importance of quality early education for young children and that early identification and treatment is critical to the future success of a child with a disability. Under Donna's leadership, ESNG opened the first inclusive Child Care Program in Georgia. This program has expanded to provide comprehensive early education and care services to 1,500 children daily in 12 locations in metro Atlanta and North Georgia. ESNG is also Georgia's largest provider of Early Intervention Services. Donna's many accomplishments include speaking on Capitol Hill at House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's National Summit on Children and becoming the National Easter Seals Spokesperson on Autism and the early intervention program "Make the First Five Count", 2015 Easter Seals Medders Award Winner, and 2015 Atlanta Business Chronicle Top 40 Nonprofit CEOs.

### **Michelle Hill, Kidazzle**

Michelle is the President and CEO of Kidazzle, Inc. She and her husband, Ben, founded Kidazzle in 1994. Kidazzle is an independent, dynamic childcare provider dedicated to pursuing excellence by promoting quality through developmentally- and age-appropriate childcare programs. Recognized for its entrepreneurial spirit, innovation, professionalism and in-depth knowledge of children's needs, Kidazzle strives to deliver the highest level of performance and quality.

### **Tiffany Hill, YMCA of Metro Atlanta**

Tiffany Hill is the Director of Quality Assurance in the Early Learning Division of the YMCA of Metro Atlanta. She is a native of Birmingham Alabama, and she started her career as a Social Services Truancy officer in the Huntsville City Schools and in the Department of Children and Family Services as a Social Services Case Manager.

She has over 10 years of experience in social services and education and early childhood development. Her passion and mantra that “all children can learn” drives her work on behalf of very young children. This passion led her to seek employment with a local Head/Early Head Start program. While in Head Start, she served in various positions including Family Advocate, Center Director, and Center Operations Manager.

Mrs. Hill has developed a reputation for building results-oriented processes and facilitating early educational experiences for children and families in under-served populations. She has worked with diverse communities in implementing systems-oriented methodologies and promoting positive work environments with emphasis on quality compliance measures. She has demonstrated effective leadership skills and performance-based practices. Mrs. Hill has expertise in human resource management, facility operations, and school/community partnerships.

Mrs. Hill holds a Master’s degree in Public Administration from Capella University, a bachelor’s degree in Social Work from Alabama Agricultural & Mechanical University and a Child Development Associate credential with a preschool endorsement.

### **Blythe Robinson, Sheltering Arms**

Blythe Keeler Robinson is president and CEO of Atlanta’s Sheltering Arms Early Education and Family Centers, which serves nearly 2,500 children daily, ages six weeks to five years old, in 16 centers across the metro area.

She previously served as senior vice president and chief programs officer of the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe, where she managed and implemented early care and education programs, providing services to more than 50,000 children and their families annually.

Robinson is an innovative leader with 20 years of non-profit management experience and expertise in educational programming, early childhood education, program design and implementation, grant writing and contract review and negotiation. She graduated from the University of Maryland at College Park and holds a juris doctorate from the Georgetown University Law Center.

### **Susan Bertonaschi, United Way of Greater Atlanta**

Susan Bertonaschi serves as the Director of Health Promotion for the United Way of Greater Atlanta. In this role, she oversees a health promotion platform, including a system of care approach that integrates early care and learning and child health for young children and their families in Atlanta. Susan has experience in philanthropy where she managed initiatives and investments related to early childhood, social and emotional development, and child health, both at the Annie E. Casey Foundation-Atlanta Civic Site and the Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation. Prior to those roles, Susan led efforts to integrate child development supports into the state of Georgia’s public health system as a public health administrator. She also helped to improve data collection as a method of strengthening program performance for infants and children within the public health system. She holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Social Work and Master’s Degree in Child Development.

### **Nurse Johnnie Thomas, Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta**

Johnnie Thomas is a registered nurse with Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta (CHOA) where she is a member of the Population Health team. Her work is based in the community serving as the Healthy Beginnings System of Care (SOC) Health Navigator at Sheltering Arms/Educare Atlanta. As a Health Navigator, Ms. Thomas works directly with families to ensure that all children enrolled in the SOC are healthy, developing on track, thriving socially and emotionally and on the path to academic success.

Before joining Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta and Healthy Beginnings, Ms. Thomas served as a Nurse Case Manager with Emory University’s School of Public Health. In that role, she worked to improve access to care for adults with severe and persistent mental illnesses.

Ms. Thomas’ previous professional experience included innovative nursing work with St Jude’s Recovery Center and Georgia Regional Hospital where she worked with women in a substance abuse recovery program with their children and pediatric psychiatric patients respectively. She has over 20 years of nursing experience with a focus on patient-centered care for at-risk populations. Her volunteer involvement with several community agencies and faith-based organizations mirrors her professional dedication to caring for the under-served.