

SUE SERINO'S WOMEN'S NETWORKING EVENT

The Faces of Resilience

THURSDAY, JULY 17, 2025 | 5:30-7PM

FEATURING SPEAKERS



Karmen Smallwood
Dutchess County Community
& Family Services



**Epiphanie
Musabyemariya**
Personal Care Assistant



Britney Ettinger
Bolger House Program
MHA of Dutchess County

Dear Friend:

I am thrilled to welcome you to our 9th annual Women's Networking Event, helping women in our community connect with one another to grow our professional and personal networks.

This year's dynamic speakers will each discuss the theme of **'The Faces of Resilience,'** sharing how they have found the strength to face incredible challenges, overcome obstacles, and how their resilience helped define their lives and careers.

Throughout my life, I have been reminded time and time again about how important it is to have a network you can count on. Since 2018, the women who have attended this event have been inspirations to me. It is your stories and shared experiences that make this event so special.

When women come together, we can accomplish anything, so I hope you will make your own connections tonight. Together, we can continue to make Dutchess County a stronger, more resilient place to live and work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sue".

Sue Serino

Dutchess County Executive

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS



Welcoming Remarks

Dutchess County Executive
Sue Serino

Karmen Smallwood

Dutchess County
Community & Family Services

Epiphanie Musabyemariya

Personal Care Assistant

Britney Ettinger

Bolger House Program
MHA of Dutchess County

KARMEN SMALLWOOD



Karmen Smallwood is Dutchess County's Assistant Commissioner for Youth Services charged with leading the Path To Promise initiative. She has more than 15 years' experience working in the non-profit sector as a program director, grant manager, and youth advocate. She currently works to enhance community assets by bridging research with practice and aligning efforts to provide the best array of resources, services and support for children, youth, and families.

Previously, as a law enforcement officer, Karmen initiated programs that increased justice-impacted individual's access to resources and opportunities. Her Interactive Journaling program and research study developed in partnership with Marist University was featured at the New York State Pretrial Services Conference and Siena College's Engage for Change Conference. Karmen is currently spearheading local initiatives to address violence in schools and communities through her involvement in the Dutchess County Youth and Police Initiative.

An active volunteer, Karmen is a trustee at Beulah Baptist Church and member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc. Iota Alpha Omega Chapter and the Mid-Hudson Ivy Foundation. Karmen received the Real Skills Network Inc.'s Community Icon Award in 2023 and, in 2024 received the Northern Dutchess NAACP Judge Jane Bolin Justice Award and was named The Art Effect's Community Honoree. Karmen holds a B.A. from Howard University and a M.A. in Counseling and Community Psychology from Marist University.

Karmen is a parent, visionary, and changemaker who strives to inspire and empower others with kindness, compassion, and humility.

EPIPHANIE MUSABYEMARIYA



Epiphanie Musabyemariya embodies the word “survivor.”

A native of Rwanda, she saw her friends and families savagely murdered during the genocide perpetrated in 1994 by the Hutu-led government against the Tutsi population. Despite the unfathomable loss of her dear father and siblings as well as her fiancé, she managed to make her way to America, working as a nanny for a diplomatic family.

Having secured her young son’s pathway to join her in her new country, she entered an abusive relationship with her new husband. Their baby was born with special abilities, which caused more stress in the marriage.

Finally, Epiphanie fled, fearing for her life and the life of her son. She made her way to Poughkeepsie where, with the grace of God and many real-life angels, she has created a new path full of love, hope and promise.

BRITNEY ETTINGER

CASAC-ADVANCED (G), CRPA, NYCPS



Britney Ettinger is a seasoned leader, peer advocate, and clinician with a fierce commitment to recovery, equity, and community healing. As the Program Director of Bolger House, a reintegration residential program of Mental Health America of Dutchess County, she champions person-centered, trauma-informed care for individuals navigating the complex intersections of substance use, mental health, and housing instability.

A board member of the MARC Foundation and a key community provider for numerous initiatives—including the Suicide and Overdose Fatality Review Committee, Dutchess County Treatment Court, Resiliency Council for Suicide Prevention, Opioid Task Force and more—Britney brings her voice, expertise, and lived experience to every table she sits at. She is also an active member of MHA’s Addiction Division Quality Improvement Team and Nuvance Health’s Greater Poughkeepsie Community Care Team.

With over 15 years in personal recovery and as a survivor of domestic violence and sexual assault, Britney embodies the theme of resilience through action. Her journey fuels her advocacy for whole health care and expanded access to treatment for underserved populations. Prior to leading Bolger House, she served as the Senior Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor (CASAC) at the Dutchess County Stabilization Center, providing frontline crisis response and compassionate care.

In 2012, Britney founded The Lola Project, an initiative that combined mental health education, substance use awareness, and the therapeutic power of service dogs—especially in support of military, police, and fire veterans.

She holds an A.A. in Liberal Arts and Sciences from Dutchess Community College, a B.A. in Community and Human Services from SUNY Empire, and is currently completing her Master of Social Work at Yeshiva University.

To Britney, resilience is not about bouncing back—it’s about building forward. With every program she develops, every system she challenges, and every client she supports, she reminds us: healing is possible, justice is necessary, and community is the heartbeat of recovery.

NOTES





Sue Serino
Dutchess County Executive

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