

CURRICULUM VITAE

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EXPERIENCE

CARA COLLECTIVE, Chicago, IL

President & CEO July 2021 – present

- Lead and execute the strategic vision for a \$16M employment social enterprise, overseeing three entities—Cara, Cleanslate, and Cara Plus.
- Drive organizational growth, financial sustainability, and impact by expanding transitional job opportunities, employer partnerships, and workforce development programs.
- Develop and strengthen key relationships with corporate partners, funders, policymakers, and community stakeholders to advance workforce inclusion.
- Manage executive team, ensuring operational excellence, program innovation, and mission alignment.
- Champion organizational culture, fostering an environment of equity, accountability, and transformational leadership.

THE ACADEMY GROUP, Chicago, IL

Chief Learning and Design Officer September 2017 – June 2021

- Led design and execution of The Academy Group's 14-year student journey, including innovative, equity-driven experiences rooted in solving real problems
- Oversaw the collection, analysis, and use of data; built team's capacity to use data and data tools
- Created and cultivated a portfolio of partnerships in corporate, civic, community, and education sectors
- Built world-class, high-performing team and created high quality professional development strategy to support them
- Represented AG at local and national conferences, events, and policy conversations to advance mission
- Managed multiple teams to implement organizational program design

IMPACT: Grew program from 35 students to over 400 in four years; Developed first-ever corporate engagement partnership with Hollister Co., integrating employees into numerous aspects of programming, launching student-designed products featured in retail stores and online, and securing over \$300k in financial investments

SPARK PROGRAM, Chicago, IL

Interim Co-President, National March 2017 – July 2017

Chief Program Officer, National July 2016 – July 2017

Executive Director, Chicago January 2013 – July 2017

- Designed, developed, and implemented Spark's vision and growth/scale strategy; execute Spark's mission
- Shaped policy and influence broader discussions around youth development and transition
- Cultivated partnerships with major corporations, schools, and organizations

- Set programmatic vision, delivery parameters, and priorities for the organization
- Managed board relationships, including Program Committee of National Board
- Represented Spark at local/national conferences, events, and local media to advance mission
- Enhanced and led Spark's fundraising strategy for Chicago, developed and executed annual fundraising plan, and ensured scalability and sustainability of Spark's programs
- Led portfolio expansion and sustainable partnerships through alliances in the for-profit, government, and non-profit sectors; oversaw Spark's school partners; cultivated corporate partnerships
- Oversaw local implementation of evaluation strategy; utilize data for assessment and management

IMPACT: Increased revenue by over 120% (\$387k to \$1M) and corporate investment by nearly 300% (\$55k to \$197k); secured largest multi-year commitment (Zell Foundation, \$100k/year); quadrupled number of workplaces providing four or more apprenticeships; secured first ever district and multi-year city funding; created local program that scaled nationally with Dell Foundation support; successfully served as interim co-president, stabilizing the organization during critical CEO transition

INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT, November 2012 – January 2013

Provided project management and strategic support to nationally renowned clients on various initiatives, including teacher evaluation, implementation strategy, and assessment design. Clients included Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning; Education First; Project Exploration.

PROJECT EXPLORATION, Chicago, IL

Chief Program Officer July 2012 – September 2012

Senior Director of Programs March 2011 – June 2012

- Directed program implementation, expansion strategy, and strategic planning
- Led annual planning and managed \$300k budget for program department
- Managed development and implementation of youth-science matrix assessment tools
- Managed external partnerships, including Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and City Colleges of Chicago
- Served as lead staff for board program committee; managed six program department team members
- Represented Project Exploration at partner meetings, public presentations, community events

IMPACT: Exceeded youth target goals by nearly 12%; in partnership with the University of Chicago, implemented first-ever boys-only afterschool program in three neighborhood schools

THE CHICAGO PUBLIC EDUCATION FUND, Chicago, IL

Director, Program Investments November 2010 – March 2011

Manager, Program Investments October 2008 – October 2010

Senior Advisor September 2006 – September 2008

- Set and executed strategic organizational priorities as a member of the executive team
- Managed portfolio of investments related to "Evaluate Talent" strategy area, focusing on principal and teacher evaluation and compensation, including \$1 million investment to develop and implement National Board for Professional Teaching Standard's new principal certificate
- Provided strategic management and operational assistance to program management teams
- Responsible for identifying and championing investment opportunities with board of directors
- Managed program manager, senior associate, analyst, and summer fellows

IMPACT: Led largest CPS grant application (\$34.1 million Department of Education Teacher Incentive Fund) to develop and implement performance-based compensation system; developed teacher and principal turnaround competencies and selection process currently used in CPS and District of Columbia Public Schools

THE GROW NETWORK/MCGRAW-HILL, New York, NY; Chicago, IL

Senior Professional Development and Community Outreach Coordinator September 2002 – August 2006

- Designed, developed, and implemented comprehensive, customized strategies for customer outreach, product/program training, and professional development
- Provided strategic client management to key leaders in national markets: AZ, IL, LA, OH, NYC
- Led development and implementation of all parent and community programs, creating partnerships with CPS, Chicago Public Libraries, and other community-based organizations

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION – *Teacher* New York, NY 1999 – 2002

TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY – *Senior Research Assistant* New York, NY 1998 – 2002

MCKINSEY & CO. – *Client Team Assistant* New York, NY 1996 – 1998

THE NEW YORK HOSPITAL – *Laboratory Technician, Clinical Immunopathology* New York, NY 1995 – 1996

EDUCATION

GIES COLLEGE OF BUSINESS, UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Master of Business Administration (MBA), December 2024

Entrepreneurship & Strategic Innovation; Global Challenges in Business

Forté Fellowship Award Recipient

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY, KELLOGG SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

The Allstate Foundation Executive Leadership Program, May 2024

CIVIC LEADERSHIP ACADEMY, UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Certificate in Civic Leadership, Chicago Harris School of Public Policy, June 2017

Capstone Project: Navigating Successful Co-leadership During Leadership Transitions

Global Practicum: New Delhi, India

TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), Secondary Science Education, October 2010

Master of Philosophy (MPhil), Secondary Science Education, 2006

Master of Arts (MA), Science Teacher Education/General Science Teacher Education, May 1999

STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY

Bachelor's Degree, Psychology (major), Biology (minor), May 1995

BOARD LEADERSHIP AND MEMBERSHIPS

NEAR NORTH MONTESSORI SCHOOL – Board Member, 2024–present
ADLER UNIVERSITY – Board of Trustees, Vice Chair, 2021–present
LEADERSHIP GREATER CHICAGO – 2020 Fellow, LFA Board Member, 2020–present
HOLLISTER CONFIDENCE PROJECT – Advisory Board Member, 2020–present
COOK COUNTY COMMISSION ON SOCIAL INNOVATION – Commissioner, 2022–present
THE EXECUTIVES' CLUB OF CHICAGO – Member, 2023–present
THE ECONOMIC CLUB OF CHICAGO – Member, 2022–present
SKENDER FOUNDATION – Board of Directors, 2020–2021
826CHI – Board of Directors, Vice Chair, 2018–2021
CHICAGO IDEAS WEEK – Member/Radical Creator, 2014–2020
UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO CONSORTIUM ON SCHOOL RESEARCH – Steering Committee Member, Co-chair (2013-2015), 2010–2019
EPIC CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL – Founding Board Member, Academic Committee Chair, 2008–2013
FOREFRONT (Formerly Donors Forum) – Member, Education Funders Co-chair, 2006–2010

SELECT PUBLICATIONS

- Fabes, B., Caliento, K. S., Bruce, M., & Altenburg, B. (2024, April). Opinion: Here's a big opportunity to tackle the labor shortage. Crain's Chicago Business. <https://www.chicagobusiness.com/opinion/labor-shortage-benefits-fair-chance-hiring-opinion>.
- Caliento, K. (2022, December 19). Commentary: A major step toward closing the racial wealth gap. Crain's Chicago Business. <https://www.chicagobusiness.com/equity/major-step-toward-closing-racial-wealth-gap>.
- Caliento, K.S. (2022, May 3). Here Are Some Ways We Can Build a More Equitable Future for Workers. Retrieved from <https://wheretonext.org/2022/05/03/here-are-some-ways-we-can-build-a-more-equitable-future-for-workers/>.
- Caliento, K.S. (2016, September 29). Successful Career-Focused Mentoring for Middle School Students. Retrieved from <http://www.nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/index.php/nmrc-blog/201-successful-career-focused-mentoring-for-middle-school-students.html>.
- Lyon, G.H., Jafri, J., & St. Louis, K. (Fall 2012) Beyond the Pipeline: STEM Pathways for Youth Development. *Afterschool Matters*, 16, 48-57.
- Barton, A.C., Drake, C., Perez, J.P., St. Louis, K., & George, M. (2004) Ecologies of parental engagement in urban education. *Educational Researcher* 33 (4), 3-12.
- St. Louis, K. & Calabrese Barton, A. (2002, September). Tales from the Science Education Crypt: A Critical Reflection of Positionality, Subjectivity, and Reflexivity in Research. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 3(3).
- St. Louis, K., Barton, A.C., & Burkett, T. (2001). Teaching in the Interface: Reflections on urban science teaching. In A.C. Barton & M. Osbourne (Eds.), *Marginalized Discourses in Science Education: Case Studies from Classroom Practice*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

SELECT PRESENTATIONS & MEDIA

- Chicago Speaks. iHeart Media, August 2025.
- Erasing Criminal Records – What’s New in Policy and Practice – Student and Alumni Track. National Fair Chance Hiring Conference, October 2024.
- The Power and Purpose of Employment. The Conference Board, October 2024.
- So What Podcast. BCG, July 2024.
- MIT Sloan Second Chance Hiring Conference, April 2024.
- Equity in Hiring: Unlocking Untapped Talent. Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce, February 2024.
- Working with Individuals, Employers to Unlock Purpose, Potential, Passion, and Success. The Future of Education, 2023.
- How to Put Purpose Back into Work and Learning. ASU + GSV, 2023.
- Here are some ways we can build a more equitable future for workers. Acumen America, May 2022.
- Episode 68. Unbossed, March 2022.
- Shaping The Future of Work: A Conversation About Women and Work Post-Covid. WTTW/PBS, October 2021.
- Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Set to End, Organizations Work to Bridge Employment Gap. WTTW-TV, September 2021.
- Cara Collective CEO Talks State of The Labor Market. TD Ameritrade Network, September 2021.
- From Career to College: Early Internships to Drive College Persistence. A Dream Deferred and HBCU Conference, Chicago, IL, March 2020.
- It Takes a Village to Build Vibranium: How the Academy Group Leverages the Collective Power of Community and Corporations to Build Belief, Build Wealth, and Build Change. Wakandacon, Chicago, IL, July 2019.
- Flipping the Table: Entrepreneurs Who Do More than Bring a Seat to the Table. Wakandacon, Chicago, IL, August 2018.
- Volunteer from Your Desk – The Role of Mentoring in Some of the Top 50 Best Places to Work. National Mentoring Summit, Washington, D.C., February 2017.
- Commencement Speech. Ludwig Van Beethoven Elementary School, Chicago, IL, June 2018.

AWARDS, GRANTS & FELLOWSHIPS

- Forté Fellowship, University of Illinois, 2021-2024.
- Graduate Research Assistantship, Urban Science Education Center, Teachers College, Columbia University, 2001-2003.
- Graduate Research Assistantship, Urban Science Education and Integrated Technology (USE-IT), University of Texas, Austin, 1999-2001.
- Addison Lee Fellowship, Science Education Award, University of Texas, Austin, 1999-2000.
- Graduate Research Assistantship, Center for Urban Science Education (CUSE), Teachers College, Columbia University, 1998-1999.
- Science Education Scholarship, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1998-1999.

LANGUAGES

Conversant in French, Haitian Creole; some Spanish fluency.