

Meet Your CEA!

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GET TO KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ASSOCIATES!



Austin Cathey
Midwest Region
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Austin is the Community Engagement Associate for the Midwest region. He holds a Bachelor's in Health Science from the University of Missouri and a Master in Public Health from Loyola University Chicago. Austin's commitment to youth advocacy and health promotion began during his undergraduate studies, particularly through a study abroad program in Pune and Mumbai, India where he led a youth-focused health campaign to raise awareness about infectious diseases. At Loyola University Chicago, Austin's research on implementing children's parliaments in Chicagoland municipalities deepened his passion for youth empowerment. Austin's professional background includes roles at Rush University Medical Center and Sinai Urban Health Institute, where he gained expertise in grant writing, policy analysis, and program evaluation. At Rush, he led recruitment, retention, community engagement, and evaluation efforts for various projects, including Alzheimer's Disease studies and community-based participatory research. In his current role, Austin fosters meaningful connections and amplifies youth voices through initiatives like high school and college UNICEF USA clubs, the youth representative program, and Child Friendly Cities. He creates spaces where young people feel empowered to engage, learn, and advocate for change. Outside of work, Austin is a passionate movie buff, avid reader, and music enthusiast. Known to his friends as a kind-hearted Taurus and proud Hufflepuff!



Daisy Cardenas

Northeast Region

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Daisy is the Community Engagement Associate for the Northeast region. As an alumna of Indiana University, she has worked in segments of community development through public policy and health program development. During her undergraduate studies, Daisy interned for a global emergency relief organization, Americares. She worked in the monitoring and evaluation of remote health programs in El Salvador and Honduras and assisted in the development of the Strategic Plan for the organization. Following her internship, she mobilized and led volunteers from her institutions' cultural club, Hispanos Unidos, to participate in mission work in Costa Rica. Shortly after her return, she traveled to Mazatlán Mexico to aid in house building for low resourced communities through a volunteer project. After completing her Bachelors, she moved to New York and worked for Montefiore Health System, in their School Health Program. During her time at Montefiore, she implemented teen-pregnancy prevention, STI testing, and reproductive education initiatives for young students in the Bronx. Her interests lie in challenging racial disparities to allow children and youth to develop and obtain greater opportunities in life. She is currently working on completing her MPH and is eager to continue her efforts with communities through UNICEF USA work.



Ebony Fountain

Southeast Region

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Ebony is a Senior Community Engagement Associate in Atlanta, GA. She is a graduate from Clayton State University where she obtained her Bachelor's in Healthcare Management with a minor in Psychology and Business. Having served three contract terms in AmeriCorps tutoring in Clayton County High Schools, she noticed the gap in education and real-life experiences and became passionate about educating the youth on the tools needed to thrive in society and become the best version of themselves. She went on to coordinate a conflict resolution training called "Stay Woke Mediator Academy" to equip her peers and community with the knowledge on how to mediate conflict in any setting. With a background in multiculturalism and diversity inclusion training, she utilized those skills to engage, manage, and recruit volunteers in the city of Atlanta for an organization centered around hunger and homelessness. There she was able to assist with creating service-learning programs for children, implement new volunteer initiatives, and create strategies for engaging volunteers. She believes that children are our future. She looks forward to helping destigmatize mental health and encourage the community to invest in resources through the Child Friendly City Initiative focusing on mental health.



Lyric Vigil

Great Plains and Mid-Atlantic
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Lyric joins UNICEF USA as the Community Engagement Associate for the Great Plains region, as well as for the Mid-Atlantic region. Lyric is based in Denver, CO, and has spent the past several years in different community engagement roles throughout the nonprofit and education sectors. While studying for her undergraduate degree, she took on her first community engagement role as an intern for the nonprofit Laramie Main Street in 2019. She later graduated from the University of Wyoming in 2020 with a bachelor's degree in International Studies, as well as American Studies. For both majors, she built a concentration on social and cultural issues, as she loves working with people. She has been in Denver for the past 3 years, doing community advocacy and organizing in both Denver and Aurora's K-12 public education spaces. She also served as an Americorps VISTA for the nonprofit Feeding Laramie Valley before relocating to Denver in 2021. Lyric is excited to continue working with (and for) the youth of her community. In her free time, Lyric enjoys roller skating, attending concerts, hiking, and spending time with her cat, Ramona Flowers.



Maryann Wanjau

Southwest Region

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Maryann is the Senior Community Engagement Associate for the Southwest region, based in Houston, Texas. Having volunteered with UNICEF USA in 2017-2019, she enjoys engaging with youth from local communities across the Southwest to advocate for the rights of every child. Maryann also supports UNICEF USA's partnership with the city of Houston, named a UNICEF Child Friendly City in 2023, to engage youth, volunteers, and other local stakeholders to put forth youth led programming in Houston. In 2016, she graduated from Baylor University with a BSFCS in Child & Family Studies. Her coursework focused on child development, early childhood education, and international relations. After graduating, she became a preschool teacher in the Houston area and then moved on to work as administrative support for a virtual school while volunteering with UNICEF USA. Her volunteer work inspired her to continue her studies at Vanderbilt University where she graduated with an M.Ed. in International Education Policy & Management and a certificate in African American & Diaspora Studies in 2021. While studying at Vanderbilt, she was fortunate to support education organizations in Kenya (Kidogo and Elimu Fanaka) through remote internships while working as a research assistant and an after-school teacher for refugee children in Nashville. Maryann is thrilled to be working alongside local advocates to champion UNICEF USA's mission to pursue an equitable world for every child.



Radha Dahanukar

Southern California Region

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Radha joins UNICEF USA as a Community Engagement Associate for the Southern California region based in Los Angeles. She studied Political Science at Rutgers University, where she was involved in Model United Nations and fieldwork on political campaigns. She has a background in youth civic engagement, volunteer management, and community engagement. In her previous roles, she served as the Volunteer Services Coordinator at Hollywood Presbyterian Medical Center where she gained experience in building a brand-new volunteer program. Radha also has a passion for National Service projects, as she served as an Americorps VISTA member in Salinas, California, engaging in youth development and volunteer recruitment. She is deeply interested in issues focused on sustainable development, civic engagement, and access to education. In her free time, she enjoys attending live music shows, spending time outdoors, and exploring new restaurants and cuisines.



Rachelle Raudes

Northwest Region

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Rachelle is the Community Engagement Associate for the Northwest Region. She is a Bay Area native and graduate of San Jose State University where she earned her Bachelor's in Sociology with a concentration in Community Change. Following San Jose State, Rachelle attended the University of California, Hastings College of the Law where she received her Master's in Legal Studies. While working on her Master's, Rachelle was part of a team that created health policy recommendations on COVID-19 Health Data (pre-vaccine) for the California State Senate, to improve and streamline health security data to help legislators understand the implications of a national health crisis which led her to her interest of working with advocacy and legislative policy. She brought this experience to The EveryLife Foundation for Rare Diseases in Washington, D.C. where she partnered with state and regional rare disease organizations to raise awareness about state and federal policy issues that affect rare disease patients. Engaging with volunteers and advocates is always a plus and Rachelle looks for any opportunity to hear someone's story and understand how her work can make an impact. Rachelle is excited to be working so closely with the community that she grew up with and she is proud to be able to serve UNICEF's mission in the Northwest Region.