

*Compassionate  
Academic Success  
Respect  
Empathy*



# Women Walking West

Advancing education for women from across the globe

## Mission

*W3's mission is to remove language, social, cultural, academic, and financial barriers that foreign-born adult women experience in the U.S. This mission helps instill an environment of connections that creates a base of support to provide opportunities for women to overcome difficulties and therefore achieve their lifelong professional and personal goals.*

## Values

*To create a culture that includes our core values: Compassion, Academic Success, Respect and Empathy (CARE).*

## A Message from the Board Chair

Dear W3 Family,

It is with immense gratitude I share that since the inception of W3, we have successfully mentored 150 mentees. This is a testament to the positive change we are collectively making in the lives of women within our community.

I want to thank our dedicated board members, whose tireless efforts and commitment are the driving force behind our achievements. Their passion for the W3 mission is inspiring. This year, we welcome three exceptional new members to our board: Ivy Banks, Cathy Bishop-Clark, and Dan Kommeth. Their diverse backgrounds and wealth of experience will provide welcome contributions to the growth and success of W3.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to our volunteers, sponsors, partners, and mentors who have generously given their time, resources, and expertise to support our cause. Your selflessness has made a significant impact on the success of W3, and we are profoundly grateful for your unwavering commitment.

As we embark on the new year, I invite each of you to consider participating in our RISE to 100 fundraising campaign. Your contribution will directly impact our ability to expand our reach and empower even more women on their journey towards success.

Together, we are making a meaningful difference, **One woman at a time**



*Dr. George Sehi, Board Chair*



*Dr. Jonathan Cooper,  
Superintendent/CEO Mason City Schools*

## Caring Community Partner

### Dr. Jonathan Cooper, Superintendent/CEO Mason City Schools

Dr. Jonathan Cooper is no ordinary resident of Mason, Ohio. He is well known to more than 10,000 students at Mason City Schools. With a friendly smile and cheerful demeanor he greets students in the hallways and works with colleagues at one of the largest school districts in Ohio.

When asked what part of his job he enjoyed most, Dr. Cooper's reply was simple: He loves working with the people in Mason. "I get to serve a beautiful community of diverse people with rich stories that make Mason a special place." He loves serving as the Superintendent of Mason City Schools because as he says: "every day is different. There is not really a typical day in this role." Dr. Cooper has a variety of responsibilities like ensuring student achievement, student and staff safety and wellness, to financial forecasting and facilities master-planning, and he is quick to acknowledge that it is a team effort. "I am blessed to serve with outstanding people who believe in our work and bring a diverse set of talents to the table to help create momentum toward our vision." *Cont. on pg. 2*

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# W3 Newsletter

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Dr. Cooper is a firm believer of approaching his leadership within the Mason community with authenticity. He prides himself on working hard to invest in relationships, and build trust and engagement with staff and families. He believes that sourcing ideas and solutions from the people that learn, live, and work in the Mason community allows people to feel valued and included.

Mason City Schools has a vision to create a learning community where all students have the tools and strategies to discover their purpose and potential through authentic learning experiences and extraordinary opportunities. Dr. Cooper believes that if they can create a learning environment that positively impacts their students' ability to discover purpose and potential in their learning and life, then they are creating healthy, happy citizens who will make a positive impact on their communities and the world.

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*Dr. Cooper believes that Mason City Schools plays an important role in Women Walking West's mission to help foreign-born women with their educational goals.*

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Dr. Cooper believes that Mason City Schools plays an important role in Women Walking West's mission to help foreign-born women with their educational goals. In his own words: "Mason City Schools is truly an international destination district. Families from all over the world move to Mason to give their children an excellent educational experience that comes with extraordinary opportunities and an international network of leaders. Mason is one of the most linguistically diverse learning communities in our country with almost 100 different languages spoken throughout our hallways. We are a learning community that truly embraces inclusive excellence as one of our foundational values."



Women Walking West is honored to have a strong partnership with Dr. Jonathan Cooper and Mason City Schools. We are looking forward to continuing our symbiotic relationship to further our mutual goals for years to come.



## W3 4th Annual RISE Gala

Women Walking West hosted its 4th Annual RISE Gala on November 9th, 2023 at the Manor House.

With 450 guests in attendance, it was a night celebrating the achievements of mentees, appreciating donors and supporters, and bringing the community together around the education and empowerment of foreign-born women.

Rhonda Whittikar Hurtt, Vice-President of Community Relations at Duke Energy was the Keynote Speaker. She presented a \$10,000 donation check to Dr. Sehi, Founder and Board Chair.



Scan to watch the video of W3 Mentees.





# Board Member Spotlight - Women Walking West is pleased to welcome the following new board members:

## Ivy K. Banks, M.Ed., J.D.

Juris Doctor (JD), University of Akron School of Law, Master of Education (MEd) in Educational Leadership-Community College/Higher Education, Northern Arizona University, Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Political Science, Cleveland State University

Dr. Banks is currently serving as the Vice President for Institutional Diversity and Inclusion at Xavier University and brings more than 15 years of expertise in higher education, diversity and inclusion, and strategic leadership to the W3 board. Dr. Banks strives to live the values of inclusive excellence so that all people can navigate life without bias, racism or prejudicial treatment, and has said that impacting change in students and within the community serves as her biggest inspiration. Women Walking West is honored to have Dr. Banks as a board member and we look forward to incorporating the expertise she brings with her to Women Walking West as we continue with our commitment to further the education of foreign-born women.



## Cathy Bishop-Clark, Ed.D.

Doctor of Education (EdD) Educational Foundations, University of Cincinnati, Master of Science (MS) Quantitative Analysis Master of Science, University of Cincinnati, Bachelor of Science (BS) Computer Science, University of Dayton

Dr. Cathy Bishop-Clark most recently served as Associate Provost and Dean of Miami University Regionals, College of Liberal Arts and Applied Science. During her 29 years at Miami, Dr. Bishop-Clark served as Chair of Computer and Information Technology, Associate Dean, and Assistant Dean at the Middletown campus and received the Miami University E. Phillips Knox Teaching Award in 2008. She was a professor of computer and information technology before recently retiring. Dr. Bishop-Clark is recognized as a West Chester Liberty Chamber Alliance Women of Excellence recipient. Her commitment to making achieving a higher education more affordable aligns with W3's goal of mentoring foreign-born women to aid them in achieving academic success. Women Walking West is honored to have Dr. Bishop-Clark's insight as we continue to grow and expand our mentoring programs.

## Dan Kommeth

Bachelor of Arts (BA) English, Journalism, Miami University

Mr. Dan Kommeth has spent 29 years in the automotive industry. Dan was General Manager of Performance Lexus until January of 2019, when he became Managing Partner of Lexus of Milwaukee. He is currently the Director of Business Development for DealerMade Photo Studios where he serves as a liaison between automotive dealership executive management and corporate headquarters. Dan is an active member of the Board of Directors for the City of Mason/Deerfield Township Chamber of Commerce. He has been an active promoter and supporter of Women Walking West for years, and successfully garners support for W3 from within the automotive industry and in the surrounding community. Dan is a forward-thinking and ambitious visionary, and his marketing and networking expertise, combined with his ability to cultivate strong, trusting relationships will make him an essential component of the W3 success story..



# GOOD NEWS!

The RISE to 100 Fundraising Campaign launched on Giving Tuesday!



The goal is to raise \$10,000 by the end of the Campaign. Thus far we have raised \$3000 and the campaign is still active. Please scan the QR code to



donate and support the education of foreign-born women in our community.

## Save the dates:

APRIL 11, 2024

Melting Pot Series:

Screening of the movie "Happy"

9:00-10:00am

Sinclair College Courseview.

All are welcome.

APRIL 20, 2024

STEM Guitar Building Project

9:00am-3:00pm

Sinclair College Courseview

Mentees, Mentors & Community members are welcome.

Maximum 10 participants.

## W3 Board

**George H. Sehi, Ph.D., Chair**  
Former Executive Dean and Professor,  
Sinclair College

**DeAnn Hurtado, Ph.D., Vice Chair**  
Professor, Sinclair Community College

**Judy Lightner-Noll, Ph.D., Secretary**  
JLN Coaching

**Carey Curtis, Treasurer**  
Chief Commercial Officer  
North Side Bank & Trust

**Dwight Packard, JD Advisor**  
Attorney at Law, Graydon LLP

**Ivy K. Banks, M.Ed., J.D.**  
Vice President for Institutional Diversity  
& Inclusion at Xavier University

**Cathy Bishop-Clark, Ed.D.**  
Former Associate Provost and  
Dean of Miami University Regionals

**Tom Daskalakis**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Clinton Memorial Hospital

**Marian C. Glancy, Ph.D.**  
Former Provost  
Antioch University Midwest

**Dan Kommeth**  
Director of Business Development  
for Dealmade Photo Studios

**Sherry Taylor**  
President & CEO  
Mason Deerfield Chamber

**Su Chang**  
Ex-Officio Board Member  
Senior Director, Research & Development  
Procter & Gamble

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## Women Walking West

### "Her Words: A Storytelling Competition"

The "Her Words" Essay Writing Contest was crafted as a platform for participants to weave captivating narratives that delve into their personal journeys—chronicling their origins, navigating challenges, articulating aspirations and dreams, reminiscing about their home country, highlighting proudest accomplishments, and envisioning their futures. Twenty-nine inspiring and powerful stories were submitted and our panel of judges chose three winners and selected two for honorary mention.

***Congratulations to all the participants for taking on this challenge!***

**Please enjoy a brief overview of the winners' essays:**



**First Place Winner: Dillys Jinui Fongong** received a \$750 cash award. She notes that "receiving this scholarship is not only a tremendous financial relief for me, but it also serves as a powerful motivation to continue my academic pursuits and achieve my goals. Thank you for believing in my potential and for investing in my future." She comes from a family of educators and after experiencing harrowing challenges she arrived in the US at the age of 17 to attend Miami University. She is currently a nursing student at Sinclair Community College and conducts research at Miami University.



**Second Place Winner: Glorie Akuzwe** received a \$500 cash award. She is a social work major at Sinclair. One of her favorite things to do is volunteer. She said: "I love being able to pour love into my community. I believe that leadership isn't about directing or controlling people. True leaders are people that work for the people they serve." Glorie comes from the Democratic Republic of Congo, where she experienced a lot of turbulence due to war and poverty. She is currently a student at Sinclair Community College and says: "I love learning new things and college is the best place to do so. Even though this is my first semester at Sinclair, I love it so far; I love attending class. I am proud of my enthusiasm for learning and for striving for a better life."



**Third Place Winner: Stephany Ortega Gomez** received a \$350 cash award. Stephanie's motto is: "if you reach the heart you stay in the mind". She was born in Cali, Colombia. She has a degree in Social Communication and Journalism from the Universidad Autónoma de Occidente in Colombia. Currently, she is a psychology major at Sinclair Community College. In her essay she writes: "I have the gift of not forgetting important dates, although sometimes I wish I only remembered the ones marked with a laugh. But I suppose that life is also about remembering those dates that are marked with a tear. Because? Because that's when I start to bloom." Her greatest inspiration is her family.

 **Women Walking West**

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