

SOCIOLOGY CONNECTIONS

a networking event celebrating
alumni and current students

April 9th, 2026

St. John's University





Speakers

Kendra Chiu, Executive Director of the North Brooklyn Angels

Jaelyn Hill Rucker, Educator at Merrick Academy in Queens

Jerry Jeremie, Founder of JJ Creative Ventures

Nathalie Chara, Program Director at End of Life Choices New York

Chriss Sneed, Strategy consultant

Jahlani Jackson, Claims Examiner, D.C. Department of Employment Services

Samantha Llanos, Hospitality Manager

Raina Stewart, PTSA President, Newark Data Science & Information Technology High School

Nyah Torres, Sociology major

Alexandria Freeman, Sociology major, Criminal Justice minor

Kendra Chiu



Kendra Chiu holds a Master ('09) and Bachelor ('08) of Arts in Sociology from St. John's University and has spent over 15 years applying that foundation to nonprofit leadership and community organizing in New York City. Her sociological training continues to shape her approach to structural inequality, grassroots mobilization, and community-centered program design.

Currently Executive Director of the North Brooklyn Angels, she previously served as Senior Director of Grants and Communications at Outreach, a behavioral health nonprofit serving the greater New York area.

Committed to mentorship, Kendra spent nine years as an adjunct professor and a decade as a "Big Sister" at Big Brothers Big Sisters of NYC.

Jaelyn Hill Rucker



Jaelyn Hill-Rucker is a proud alumna of St. John's University, where she earned a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology in 2023. Currently, she is pursuing a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) at Relay Graduate School of Education, furthering her commitment to education and shaping young minds. Jaelyn is dedicated to serving her community as a Fourth Grade Educator at Merrick Academy in Queens, New York, where she fosters a culturally responsive, engaging, enriching, and safe learning environment for her students.



Jerry Jeremie



Jerry Jeremie is a Brooklyn-born educator, researcher, and founder of JJ Creative Ventures. Holding an MA in Sociology from St. John's University, he spent over 15 years in crisis intervention, community education, and youth development — not as separate careers, but as one continuous practice of listening without prejudice and naming what he found. That practice became Operation Playtalion™, a learning methodology that teaches young people how to read systems, resist manipulation, and mature into a changing world. He believes sociology is more than a degree. It is a capacity.

Nathalie Chara

Nathalie (she/her) is a Sociologist based in New York City. She holds a Master's degree in Gender and Sexuality Studies from the University of Amsterdam and a Master's degree in Sociology from St. John's University.

She has spent the last ten years in roles focused on bringing choice, autonomy, and dignity to survivors of human trafficking and LGBTQIA+ communities.

Nathalie is now the Program Director at End of Life Choices New York and advocates for end of life options to ensure everyone has a good death that is aligned with their wishes and values.



Chriss Sneed



Chriss Sneed holds a Bachelors of Arts in Sociology, a Masters of Arts in Sociology, and a graduate certificate in Feminist Studies. Currently, they are an ABD PhD in Sociology at UCONN, and a freelance strategy consultant, helping organizations and their leaders build better systems, internal capacity, and visionary programs.

Previously, Chriss worked at Barnard College; the Center for Urban and Racial Equity; the Audre Lorde Project, Wesleyan, Connecticut College, and SJU. An award-winning Fulbright Scholar and Sociology PhD Candidate, they have published and presented their works at national and international conferences.





Jahlani Jackson

Jahlani completed the B.A./M.A. Sociology in 2022. Currently, he works as a Claims Examiner for the Department of Employment Services, a subsidiary government body beholden to the USDOL.

While at SJU, he worked in Student Development, where he held leadership positions in the university's orientation program as well as being a part of the Common Ground Dialogue and Discover New York programs.

Since that time, he has been on a mission to return to the classroom as a professor, intending to get his doctorate.



Samantha Llanos



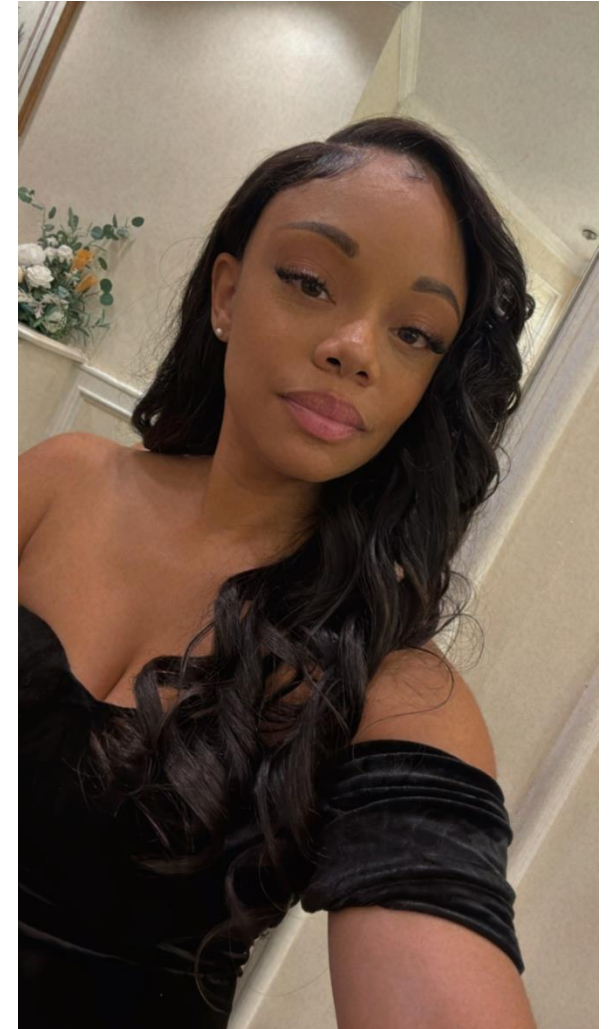
Born and raised in New Jersey. Samantha earned a BA in Sociology in 2019, with a minor in Government & Politics. Since graduating, she worked in homeless services and education. Now, she is working in hospitality management.

She believes that her degree in sociology opened her mind and her world. Her education allowed her to grow and flourish in her career, teaching her many lessons that shaped who she is as a person. Samantha trusts that everyone would benefit from a sociology education.

Raina Stewart



A proud alumna of St. John's University (Class of 2015) with a strong foundation in sociology and a Master of Social Work from Rutgers University (Class of 2024). Her academic background has fueled a passion for advocacy, equity, and community-based work. Raina has extensive experience working with high-risk youth, individuals experiencing homelessness, and those navigating substance use challenges. She previously served as a Program Coordinator within the City of Newark's Office of Homeless Services. Raina currently serves as the PTSA President for Newark Data Science & Information Technology High School. She has counselled youth and adults and aspires to become a Licensed Clinical Social Worker.



Nyah Torres



Nyah is a sociology student with a strong interest in the marketing industry. She is actively involved on campus through organizations such as Her Campus, LASO, and Marketing Club, where she engages in creative and collaborative work. She is passionate about building connections, exploring media and event spaces, and developing skills that align with her career goals in people-focused, fast-paced industries.

Alexandria Freeman



Graduating with honors this spring with a BA in Sociology and a minor in Criminal Justice, Alexandria currently works at Goodwill Industries, supporting initiatives focused assuring adults with disabilities on workforce readiness.

She also collaborates with advocacy groups to expand awareness of sexual assault, promoting education, prevention, and survivor support.

Alexandria plans to pursue graduate studies in Social Work, aiming to further their impact in addressing social inequality and advancing justice.

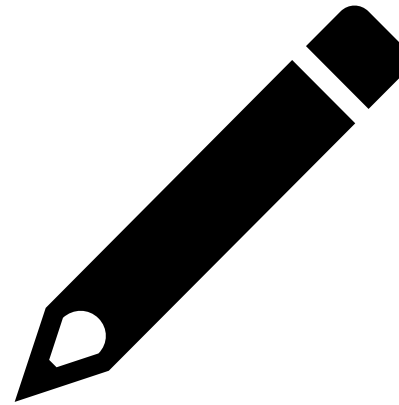
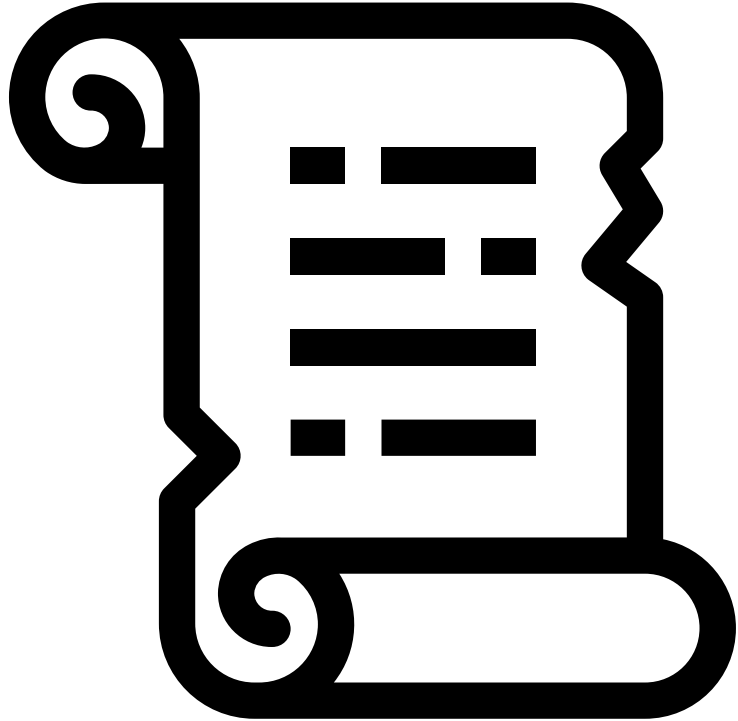


Speakers' Bios

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