

Savanna Bishop



Savanna is the CEO and Founder of a local non-profit charity, Mid Town Moms, whose mission focuses solely upon making sure that kids have the vital essentials of childhood, such as birthday cakes and presents, school supplies, and Christmas gifts. Savanna is dedicated to empowering women by assisting them in time of need may it be helping with their child's birthday parties, school supplies or just simple support in advocating for student rights in schools. Savanna proudly represents her community and stands firmly in her beliefs to ensure that every child and family has a fighting chance in today's world.

Leah Becoat

At the age of 17, Leah Becoat began using her gifts of writing and storytelling to serve her church as well as at risk youth in her neighborhood. She created stories and plays which focused on the experiences of black and brown girls, filling a void that existed in our community. She uses theater productions to provide plays for the community with social justice themes. Leah's stories give black and brown girls a healthy voice. Each summer she conducts an annual youth summer program which culminates in a theatrical production. Using art to engage audiences and encourage them to address difficult social justice issues is not a new idea, but Leah is the one who made this concept a reality here in the Alton area.



Yvonne Campbell



Ms. Campbell believes it is her mission to support local youth from low-income areas who may lack opportunities. She is a teacher and mentor, and supports her employees in the restaurant by encouraging them to believe in the power of their dreams. She is a testament that Alton youth can achieve their dreams as well, with the support of mentors and organizations such as the YWCA. She shares her success story with area youth, telling them, “It is possible, no matter where you live, and no matter what you look like, you can be what you want to be.” Yvonne is a warm, nurturing, and above all, generous human being. She freely gives of herself, her time and her resources. The support that she received is something that she is now passing on, and thereby enriching the community.

Lanea P. DeConcini

Through her in-depth knowledge in education and her firm beliefs, Lanea DeConcini understands first-hand the importance of empowering women and children and establishing a strong educational system. With over 25 years as a current Administrator and former Educator in the Alton School District, Lanea has worked diligently in eliminating racism, empowering women and encouraging youth while supporting them to be the best they can be! She believes in striving for Diversity Awareness and Equality among races. She believes that one must first address the basic needs of a child in order to fully comprehend and understand the components needed to fully engage in that learning process. Through her passion coupled with her strong leadership skills and professional demeanor, Lanea has truly been an array of hope uplifting women and children in this community.



Amy Gabriel



A lawyer with the Gori Law Firm, Amy Gabriel started out her legal career as an assistant prosecuting attorney with the Madison County State's Attorney office. Her work with the State's Attorney's office led her to the decision to use her energy and resources to further work to achieve safer environments for young children and teens. She has spent 11 years working with the Child Advocacy Center in Madison County, an organization formed to provide professional intervention and supportive services to fight child abuse. In her current professional life at the Gori firm, Amy continues to seek justice for women. Her practice focuses on representing women who have been injured by medical devices that were represented to be safe and dependable, but which proved otherwise.

Jennifer Gottlob

A lifelong resident of Alton, Jennifer Gottlob embodies the YWCA's mission and is highly involved in improving the community of Alton. An Occupational Therapy assistant who is currently working on a freelance basis, Jennifer makes a difference in the lives of her patients on a daily basis. She has been involved in multiple volunteer events including the Alton citywide clean up, the Salvation Army Thanksgiving meal, Community Hope Center, being a shopper for the Junior League Locker (buying clothing for children in need),. She has donated her time and numerous items to other organizations including the Oasis Women's Center, All God's Children Shall have Shoes and Head Start. She has an incredibly positive outlook on life, and typically has a smile on her face, says hello to all and has never met a stranger. She does not meet strangers, but makes new friends, and is blessed to have friends of all ages and races.



Cameo C. Holland



As an extraordinary leader and a compassionate member of the community, Cameo C. Holland has truly exhibited her leadership abilities and given back to her community. Through her community labors and diligent volunteer work, she proves her loyalty and enthusiastic passion for the community of Alton. She has been a member of the YWCA Board of Directors since 2017, and currently she serves as the Board President. Cameo's desire to be involved keeps her engaged in the community. Cameo continues to be transparent in her devotion for her community through her passionate work and labor in whatever component she is needed to ensure Alton continues to thrive!

Trish R. Holmes

Trish Holmes volunteers her time with many organizations that focus on women's issues. She spends time with these organizations to learn about their needs and programs, and to raise awareness about their work, and what needs to be done to improve the economic status of women in the area. Trish leads by example in all her interactions and presents herself in a professional and respectful manner; she is an advocate for authenticity. She gives back to the community in myriad ways. She truly sees the importance of mentorship and giving young people accessible adults with whom they can communicate. Trish is truly a role model and inspiration for young women of the community and is making a difference in the community.



Lacy Spraggins McDonald

Lacy S. McDonald recognizes the power of education to improve lives and open doors. She works for the Hayner Genealogy and Local History Library in Alton and uses her position to educate the Alton area on diversity, inclusion and history. One of her most recent projects at Hayner Library was creating a collection of picture books about immigration as well as American Indians and descendants of enslaved people. Taking the term “herstory” to heart, Lacy works to include the often-overlooked lives and stories of women in the library’s collections, as well as in conjunction with other local projects. Lacy has gone to great lengths to find and include often overlooked genealogy research materials for African Americans and other underrepresented nationalities.



Marie Nelson



As a long time, dedicated employee of the Madison County Housing Authority (MCHA) where she serves as Program Director and a prominent leader in the community, Marie Nelson has become a role model and community activist. She has devoted 42 years of employment with the MCHA and she volunteers countless hours of her time to both the elderly and the youth. Marie has been duly recognized in her efforts and has received various awards for her outstanding service and commitment, including awards from Southern Illinois Healthcare Foundation, 100 Black Men of Alton, NAACP Madison/Venice Branch, Peace Keepers MLV, and the Madison County Housing Authority. Marie’s outstanding efforts demonstrate her commitment to her community and she has been instrumental in many events. She lives by her motto, “Trust in what you do, continue to do it and it will take you where you need to go”.

Carrie Schildroth

Through her work at the Alton Middle School, Carrie Schildroth has had a big impact on the lives of her students. Her commitment to the education of all students has led her to be recognized by the Illinois State Board of Education as a “Those Who Excel” Recipient twice in her career, for her work both in and out of the classroom. Her belief is that every person, regardless of their gender, race, or cultural background has something positive to bring to their classroom community and every person should be willing to learn from others; that is how we help bridge gaps and develop friendships. On her own time, Carrie will also help the parents of these new students get their children signed up for parks and rec programs, and before and after school programs; again so they can feel at home in their new community and learn what opportunities America offers all people.



Starrette Smith



As an advocate for positive social change in her community, Starrette Smith devotes her life to being a positive role model and ensuring that she confidently impacts families and her community. She demonstrates a positive attitude and conducts herself in the most professional manner through every perspective. Starrette gives to her community through her time and talents, as she mentors the youth helps them understand the importance of daily challenges faced. Through her efforts to make her community better, she volunteers her time to multiple groups while supporting her family in their endeavors. Starrette holds true to her compassionate manner that her legacy be built on the foundation that the youth are important and she will stand with them to ensure they have the upbringing, the teachings, the love and support needed for them to develop the best social skills, education and daily life skills possible to make the most of their young lives.

Representative Katie Stuart

While State Representative Katie Stuart strives to represent all her constituents, some of the issues she chooses to pursue demonstrate the advantages of having diversity in our representatives in government. Katie has worked in the legislature to make sure that the Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer program is fully funded each budget year, which is important for providing that the most economically vulnerable women in Illinois have access to cancer screening which is critical to early detection, thereby saving lives and improving quality of life. She also sponsored the Reproductive Health Act to make sure women's healthcare is protected. In her prior life, Katie was a middle school and high school teacher, and a professor at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. She uses her background in education to inform her work in the legislature with regard to school issues.



Crystal Uhe



As a prosecutor who has tried cases in Madison, Jersey, Bond and St. Clair Counties, Crystal Uhe has faced down men accused of predatory criminal sexual assault and other violent acts against women, and, at the time this was written, gained convictions in every case. Knowing the importance of getting the best evidence yet protecting the young victims of abuse, Crystal volunteers on the Advisory Board of Directors of the CAC as well as the Friends Board of Directors, giving her time and experience to improve the services rendered by the agency. Having been named as the St. Louis Major Case Squad Prosecutor of the Year in 2019, she is qualified to be a role model for young women who are looking for a career in the field of law enforcement.

Sandra D. West

Sandra West has influenced the lives of hundreds of youth in her work with the Alton School District, the Boys and Girls Club of Alton, and in her community volunteer work. At the Alton School District, she has worked on the School Work Program. Sandra was instrumental in developing a Social Justice component for this program. She has been able to bring her unique perspective to work with a diverse set of students. Sandra, who's described as a woman of unwavering character with a very warm and caring spirit and passion for serving youth, especially girls, has facilitated the Boys and Girls Club SmartGirls life skills program sessions for hundreds of young women and has mentored hundreds of youth in her role as Mentor Coordinator. She believes that all youth in the Alton area have a voice that needs to be heard, and that by giving young people a voice, it will ultimately strengthen and improve the Alton community.

