

## **WEALTH Day 2023**

### **Title: Environmental Justice Community Panel**

#### **Description:**

The climate crisis is real and there are urgent calls globally to take definitive action. Although all are impacted by this crisis, people living in environmental justice (EJ) communities have a disproportionate share of environmental burdens and have long suffered increased health risks from environmental impacts. This presents an opportunity for those at the fence line to utilize science and technology to develop and advocate for policy change addressing environmental injustices. EJ community members and organizers offer a richly nuanced discussion of structural and environmental racism, and extractive behavior along with strategies for resistance and building power through community engagement.

#### **Moderator:**

**Beto Lugo Martinez:** Co-Executive Director, CleanAirNow



Beto is an environmental justice organizer and co-executive director of CleanAirNow Environmental Justice Organization. Beto serves to raise community voices in the fight against environmental racism and to overcome systemic exclusion of frontline communities from the decision making process. His lived experience, growing up fenceline to a petrochemical facility continues to drive his work at the intersection of climate, environmental justice, and public health.

He is a founding member of the California Environmental Justice Coalition, Co-Founder of La Union Hace La Fuerza a farmworker justice organization and member of national CJ & EJ networks including the EJ Leadership Forum and the National Leadership Advisory Board Member of the Moving Forward Network. Beto's contributions to the movement include organizing, legislation that prioritizes environmental justice and community led research

amongst many other community engaged initiatives that directly influenced state policy.

Beto has co-authored multiple academic publications on community based participatory research, air pollution, data accessibility, community engagement. In August 2021 Beto was invited to serve on the Federal Clean Air Act Advisory Committee, to represent a grassroots frontline perspective. He is also serves in advisory board roles of professional associations and academic institutions , such as (APHA) American Public Health Association Center for Climate, Health and Equity, Children's Environmental Health Sciences Translational Research at USC, Community Engagement Core of the Southern California Environmental Health Sciences Center at USC, Health Effects Institute Environmental Justice Advisory Group and USC MPH Public Health Advisory Board Member for the Trojan Scholars for Advancement in Public Health.

### **Panelists**

**Atenas Mena:** Environmental Health Director, CleanAirNow



Atenas Mena is the Environmental Health Director and shares co-leadership role at CleanAirNow. Atenas Isabel Mena, born and raised in Kansas City, is a proud first generation Mexican American. Ms. Mena received her Bachelor's degree in Nursing from Avila University in 2014 and went on to receive her Master's in Nursing Leadership from Missouri Western State University in 2019. In addition to working as a nurse, Ms. Mena received extensive environmental health training in the field, working with the Children's Mercy environmental health team, as both an educator as well as a team coordinator.

Ms. Mena worked continuously throughout the last few years with CleanAirNow through boots on the ground projects, served as a Board of Directors, and has just recently transitioned into the current leadership role as environmental health director. Atenas centers her work around reducing health inequities, educating communities on environmental health impacts, and empowering community members to have a voice and fight for equity and environmental justice.

**Ana Ramos:** Community Organizer, CleanAirNow



Ana Ramos currently lives in Armourdale, KS, she has served the Wyandotte community for over 17 years. As a member of Canaan Church and a volunteer at community centers, she has served her community as: Secretary, educator, community mobilizer, and health promoter. Her service has given her the opportunity to get to know her community and recognize the challenges it faces. Her passion is to make a difference for the well-being of people. She recognizes the impact that the environment has on people's comprehensive health and seeing the need in her community, has joined CleanAirNow to achieve environmental justice, especially in the most impacted communities by pollution and inequities.

**Luis Humberto Estrada:** Founder, Somos Kansas



Luis Humberto Estrada is a Mexican National from Guadalajara, Jalisco Mexico and has been a resident of Topeka since 1994. He Currently serves as an advocate for the First Generation and

undocumented Community and its youth in Shawnee County and throughout the state of Kansas.

The focus of his work is in strengthening communities and improving the lives of the underserved residents through educational, social, and economic opportunities. He is the Founder of Somos Kansas, a digital platform that looks to empower youth, promote advocacy and civic engagement in Topeka, Shawnee County, and communities of color across the state of Kansas. Informing people of their rights and helping the undocumented communities with resources and important information. He has Chaired and served on boards and committees such as The Human Relations Commission for The City of Topeka, The Shawnee County Covid-19 Response Team for The Shawnee County Health Dept., Shawnee County Food and Farm Council, and The Woman and Minority Business Development Council at The Greater Topeka Partnership.