

## 2021 International Women's Day Event Speaker Bios

### **Beth Ellen Holimon – Dining for Women President and CEO**

Beth Ellen has a BA in Women Studies from the University of Colorado at Boulder and MA in Linguistics from the University of South Florida. She has been in the public and private arenas for over 20 years with expertise ranging from executive management, fundraising, board development, to strategic planning. She has served as an Area Executive Director for the American Cancer Society, Executive Director at the Bowers-Rodgers Emergency Shelter for Children in South Carolina, and in numerous other executive director roles. Additionally, she was a financial advisor with Smith Barney working with individuals and nonprofit foundations furthering philanthropic goals with strategic wealth planning. Her work with nonprofits and executives continued when she began consulting in 2006. She is a Certified Fund Raising Executive, a BoardSource Certified Governance Trainer, a certified executive coach, as well as a consultant with the Connective Leadership Institute. Beth Ellen's perspective on leadership and human interaction have been shaped by her early work as a rape crisis counselor, training coordinator for a domestic violence shelter, development director, and as a teacher in South Korea. She was a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar to Mexico to work with Rotary Clubs through three states on issues of domestic violence. She has traveled through Southeast Asia and Central America for months at a time. She has served on numerous boards and volunteers her time assisting local organizations with fundraising and board governance work. She now hopes to remain in one place with her two little boys, a giant poodle, and a patient husband.



### **Dr. Veena Khandke – Dining for Women Director of Grants & Partnerships**

Dr. Khandke holds bachelor and master degrees in Psychology from the University of Mumbai (India), and a doctorate in Human Development from the University of California, Davis. Dr. Khandke was born in Hong Kong, grew up in India and is fluent in four of India's 23 official languages. She has been a US citizen since 2008. At DFW, she manages the Grant Cycles, advises applicants, works with grantees and liaises with DFW Partners. In addition to her work with DFW, Dr.

Khandke is an adjunct instructor in Asian studies at Furman University. Her academic interests have always focused heavily on poverty in developing countries and women's rights and empowerment. She enjoys traveling and is an unabashed foodie. Dr. Khandke also volunteers in her community and is a member of DFW in Greenville, where she resides with her family. "I see working with DFW as the coming together of all parts of me: academic training, passion and contributing to changing the lives of women and girls in developing countries," she says.

## **Barbara Collins – Dining for Women Co-Founder**

Barbara Fintel Collins is co-founder of Dining for Women, and the author of *Love, Norm*, a miraculous message of hope and the story of how her father made her believe she could change the world. Since the first chapter meeting in 2003, Barb has devoted her life to nurturing the Dining for Women grassroots movement that multiplies the power of an individual to lead transformational social change. She believes that Dining for Women's simple model which nurtures community and democratizes philanthropy is resonating in a world calling for change.



A graduate of the University of Minnesota with a degree in gerontology, Barb has devoted her career to the nonprofit sector, first opening the doors of Warm Hearth Village in Blacksburg, Virginia, then honing experience in alumni relations and resource development at William Mitchell College of Law and St. Norbert College. Then she discovered her passion for infusing innovation into nonprofit mission impact strategies, and for shaping thriving and sustainable organizations.

In 1989, a life altering trip to Tanzania lit a flame for investing in the futures of the remarkable women she met. Returning home, she realized there was no easy way to reach back across the ocean and get money into the hands of the women. That changed on January 21, 2003, at the very first chapter meeting of Dining for Women, when in a moment of strategic serendipity, Barb's passion and experience merged, giving oxygen to that flame.

Since that night, Dining for Women has become the largest global giving circle movement dedicated to advancing gender equality and well-being for women and girls around the world. With over 470 chapters, and 35,000 activated global citizens, Dining for Women has invested over \$7 million in grants to organizations in more than 60 countries. These grants have directly impacted the lives of 250,000 women and girls and have created a powerful ripple effect into the lives of over one million people in their families and communities. Under her leadership, Dining for Women has initiated partnerships with the Peace Corps, UNICEF, OXFAM and Michelle Obama's Let Girls Learn Initiative. In May 2018, the United States Institute of Peace opened its door for Dining for Women's fifteenth anniversary celebration.

In 2014, Barb was named an Everyday Freedom Hero by the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center. She lives in Greenville, South Carolina, and in 2017 she was named a SHEro Phenomenal Philanthropist by SHEGreenville.

Barb has two grown daughters, Nora and Jeanette, and lives in Greenville, South Carolina with her husband, Greg, a husky named Annie, and Phoenix, the well-known feisty cat.



**Jennifer Schechter – Co-Founder and CEO, [Integrate Health](#)**

Jennifer Schechter has been building innovative healthcare solutions since 2005, when she opened Integrate Health's first rural HIV treatment center while serving as a US Peace Corps Volunteer in Togo. Since taking on the role of CEO in 2012, Ms. Schechter has helped to expand Integrate Health's impact in the fight to end preventable deaths of women and children. Working in the marginalized nation of Togo, Integrate Health collaborates with the Togolese Ministry of Health to implement and test proactive, integrated, community health delivery innovations.

Since January 2020, Integrate Health has worked alongside the Ministry of Health to mount a proactive response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to raising nearly 1M USD to procure supplies and improve infrastructure, Integrate Health facilitated Togo's participation in the COVID-19 Action Fund for Africa, resulting in the delivery of over 1.3 million units of personal protective equipment (PPE) designated for Community Health Workers. Integrate Health has also demonstrated the importance of continuity of care, continuing all program delivery and even expanding to new geographies during the pandemic. Click [here](#) to read more about Integrate Health's work to combat COVID-19.

The innovations developed by Integrate Health and the Togolese Ministry of Health are contributing to the global movement to bring about systems-level change in the way primary healthcare is delivered. Under Ms. Schechter's leadership, Integrate Health has been recognized by the Clinton Global Initiative and supported by a number of social impact investors. Ms. Schechter is a Rainer Arnhold Fellow with the Mulago Foundation, a recipient of the Sargent Shriver Award for Distinguished Humanitarian Service and a recipient of the Cordes Fellowship. She is also a member of the Advisory Board for the Community Health Impact Coalition. Ms. Schechter received a Bachelor of Science in International Politics from Georgetown University and Master's degrees of Social Work and Public Health from the University of Washington.

**Sahaletou Yelebo Marie – Development and Operations Assistant, [Integrate Health](#)**

Sahaletou Yelebo was born and raised in Togo, West Africa. In 2013, Saha joined the Integrate Health team in Togo where she worked as the community outreach coordinator and later was part of the team that launched the Maternal and Child Health pilot program. Eager to explore her love for women's empowerment, Saha left IH in 2015 to join Pathways Togo, a girl's education NGO where she led the middle and high school program. While assisting young scholars and advocating for their rights to education, Saha saw first-hand the challenges girls face due to social perceptions of women's role in society. This experience motivated her to go to graduate school, to strengthen her human rights advocacy skills. She moved to the United States in 2017, expecting to achieve that goal. She is currently in pursuing her master's degree in Human Rights Practice Program at the University of Arizona. Saha is happy and grateful for the opportunity to re-join



the Integrate Health team on the US side, where she is hoping to contribute to the amazing work that IH is doing in her home country. On her first day of work in April 2020 she said, “it feels like home”!



**Judi Aibel – Executive Director, [Grandmother Project](#)**

Judi has 20 years of experience working with community health, education and child protection programs primarily in Africa but also in Latin America, Asia and the Pacific. Her training is in anthropology, public health and adult education. Her interest and expertise is in development of community programs that build on socio-cultural roles and realities and that empower communities to promote their own well-being. Judi has received several awards for her innovative work:

*Thomson Reuters Trust Women Award -2012*

*Ashoka fellow -2015*

*BBC Inspirational & Influential Women Award –2016*

*Global Thinkers Forum Award for Positive Change -2017*

**Heather Ibrahim-Leathers – Founder and CEO, [Global Fund for Widows](#)**

Ms. Ibrahim-Leathers founded Global Fund for Widows following the passing of her grandmother in 2009. Since then, the Global Fund for Widows has raised over \$1,000,000 for economic empowerment programs in Egypt, India, Tanzania, Nigeria, Bolivia, and the Dominican Republic. With its focus on training and financing widows and female heads of households into building sustainable and inelastic micro-enterprises, the Global Fund for Widows has enabled more than 10,000 widows to become economically empowered and self-sustained. Ms.

Ibrahim-Leathers has further ensured the sustainability and economic viability of each widow’s micro-enterprises by developing intricately interdependent value chains, affording purchasing power and high visibility into their income streams.



In addition to technical and economic programming, Ms. Ibrahim-Leathers is an active advocate for the rights of widows and child widows at the United Nations, presenting regularly including at the Human Rights Council in Geneva, at the Commission on the Status of Women in 2018, 2017, 2016, and 2015 in New York. Ms. Ibrahim-Leathers has also presented on widows at the United Kingdom’s House of Lords.

Prior to her career in non-profit, Ms. Ibrahim-Leathers served as a Vice President, in Credit Suisse’s Leveraged Investment Group, where she was directly responsible for over \$1 billion in high yield and leveraged loan assets. Prior to Credit Suisse, Ms. Ibrahim-Leathers worked at JPMorgan where she was an Emerging Markets Fixed Income analyst responsible for over \$4 billion worth of debt issuance. Ms. Ibrahim-Leathers earned the coveted Institutional Investor Award in 1997 for her seminal research on Brazilian banks.



Ms. Ibrahim-Leathers co-authored *Toddlers ON Technology* in 2013, a parental guide to explaining the benefits and risks of toddlers and their use of touch screen technology.

Ms. Ibrahim-Leathers earned her Bachelors in Economics from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania and is a Chartered Financial Analyst.



**Anna Schoon – Chair, Dining for Women Regional Leader Committee**

Anna holds a master’s degree in social justice from Loyola University Chicago and is a member of Alpha Sigma Nu, the honor society of Jesuit universities. She wrote her master’s thesis on place and belonging. In 2018, she was awarded a fellowship with Common Good Fellowship in Cincinnati, Ohio studying community-building and belonging with Walter Brueggemann, Peter Block, and John McKnight. Anna is particularly interested in place-making and belonging as means to restore disinvested neighborhoods.

Anna Schoon has over 25 years of leadership experience in a variety of human service settings. Since 2006, Anna has been working at Northwest Indiana Community Action, based in Crown Point, Indiana where she currently serves as Vice President of Planning and Business Development. In her role, Anna leads the organization’s community needs assessment processes, develops outcome-oriented strategies for change, and leads the organization’s efforts to measure and document success.

Anna started her Dining for Women chapter in Valparaiso, Indiana in 2013 and serves as Chair of the Regional Leader Committee.