

CONNECT. INSPIRE. TRANSFORM.



AMERICAN LEADERSHIP FORUM SILICON VALLEY
FELLOWS PROGRAM

CLASS XLV • 2025-2026



**THIS IS NOT AN
MBA PROGRAM.**

**THIS IS ABOUT
BECOMING A
BETTER HUMAN
BEING.**



LETTER FROM THE CEO



World, you've changed.

It's 2024, and we have been through, and continue to endure, times called unprecedented and extraordinary. The old ways of being and doing and problem-solving are no longer working. Information is coming at us faster and faster, and by the way – who else is tired of living through another “once in a generation” disruption?

ALF was built for this moment—where leaders of companies, communities, and movements convene and commit to mindfulness and empathy building, ground-breaking dialogues, and co-creating new ways of being and doing that serve and sustain people and our planet.

When I meet with leaders about the Fellows experience, I hear the exhaustion in their voices and reasonable trepidation over committing to 20+ days of ALF classes over 13 months. They want it, they need it, but it feels indulgent and impossible. You may dread trying to carve out the time, but I can promise you that you'll end up looking so forward to it, circling that Friday on your calendar to be in community with your tribe. Only the very busy and impactful are invited to be a part of this Fellowship. (I promise you, we all win the busy Olympics.)

The ALF Fellows experience made me a better leader, yes. But it also made me a better parent, partner, and citizen. I had two kids under ten and was CEO of a television/media operation with a staff of thirty when I said yes to ALF. I didn't know how badly I needed to get outside of myself, my four walls and networks, to learn my true purpose. ALF wasn't “professional development” as much as it was a spiritual grounding coupled with the gift of trusted relationships that would teach and support me on my path forward.

Instead of having a bias toward action, we encourage a bias toward reflection. Before deciding what we need to do, we need to decide who we want to be. We discourage moving fast and breaking things and encourage sitting in the fire in order to imagine what better could be. The ALF curriculum walks you through a set of principles and practices that stretch you spiritually and cognitively; so that you can live into your highest human potential.

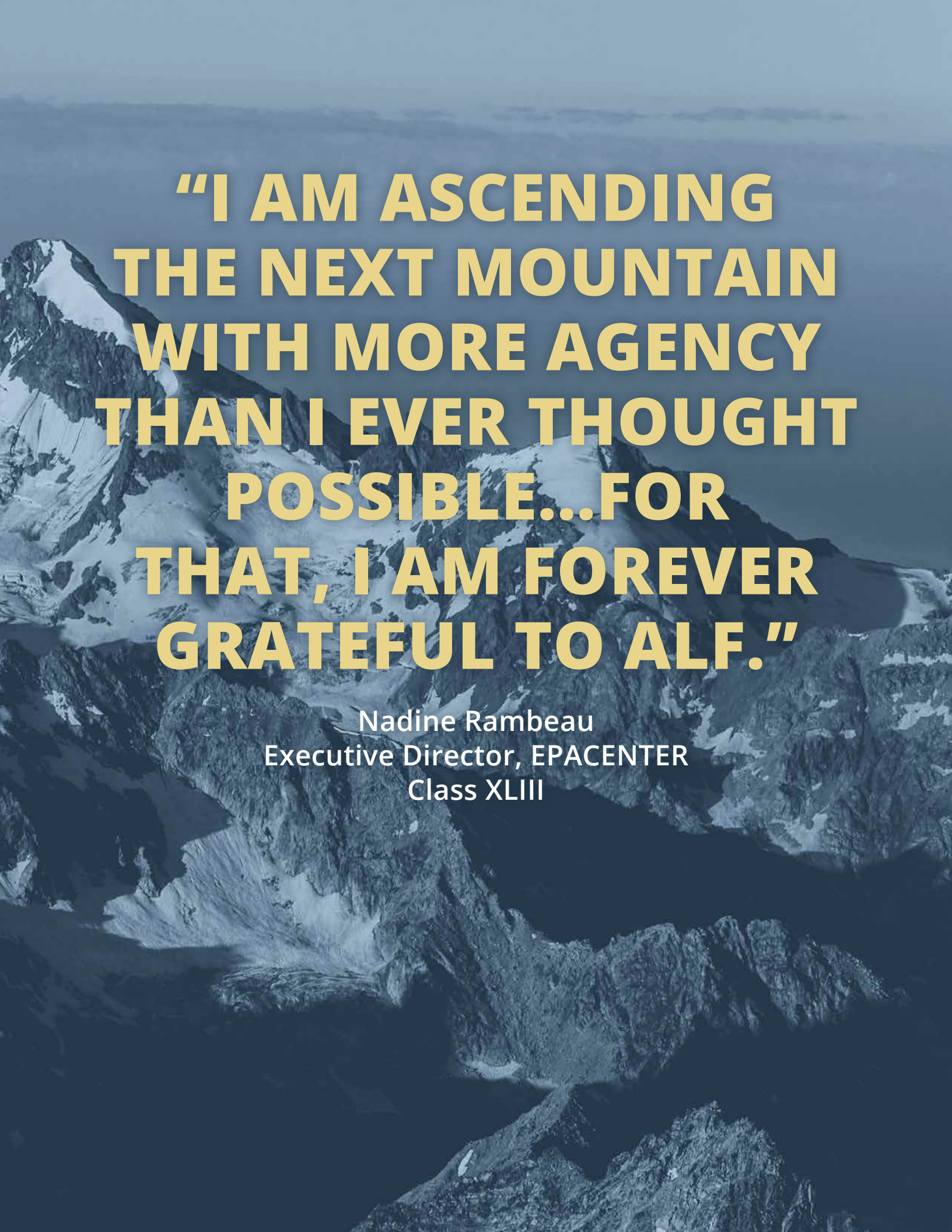
It is not for the meek. It is for the curious. And the courageous. So be prepared to be a little uncomfortable.

Consider if you are ready to take the next step in your human evolution, co-creating a new culture where humans not only weather the storms but dance together—with purpose—in the rain.

Are you in?

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Suzanne St. John-Crane', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Suzanne St. John-Crane
Chief Executive Officer
Class XXV / Urbanism XXXIV



**“I AM ASCENDING
THE NEXT MOUNTAIN
WITH MORE AGENCY
THAN I EVER THOUGHT
POSSIBLE...FOR
THAT, I AM FOREVER
GRATEFUL TO ALF.”**

Nadine Rambeau
Executive Director, EPACENTER
Class XLIII



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ANN DEBUSK
FOUNDER, ALF SILICON VALLEY

THE ALF STORY

American Leadership Forum (ALF) was founded in 1980 in Houston, Texas by Joseph Jaworski, who left his successful law practice to address what he increasingly saw as a crisis of leadership throughout the country. He envisioned an organization dedicated to bringing together diverse leaders from multiple sectors in communities across the country to deeply explore their personal leadership capacity, build deep trust among the group to help each leader to get beyond the devaluing prejudices that we all hold, and to learn how diverse people can coalesce around issues and discover new possibilities.

In 1988, our Founder Ann DeBusk was approached by former U.S. Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, John W. Gardner, to build a Silicon Valley Chapter.

ALF SILICON VALLEY HAS JOINED AND STRENGTHENED MORE THAN 850 LEADERS SINCE 1988 AND IS PART OF THE ALF NATIONAL NETWORK WITH OVER 5,000 SENIOR FELLOWS ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

The ALF Fellows program brings together seasoned leaders—from private, non-profit, and public sectors—to explore their shared humanity, broaden their systems thinking lens, deepen their capacity to weave and leverage networks for good. Graduates of the program—Senior Fellows—share a common understanding of, dedication to, and capacity for, acting as better human citizens and networked leaders.

ALF's impact on the community springs from this engaged, vibrant, evolving and active network of leaders who, through the course of their life and work, inspire their colleagues to community action.



CONNECT.

Explore mindfulness and meditation for self-renewal, reflect on your life journey and leadership stance, learn and practice a different way of dialoguing around difficult issues, try on concepts and new practices with your classmates in a trusted, confidential environment. Choose a question, decision or area of focus to work on.

INSPIRE.

Take a journey to the wilderness with your classmates, deepening team relationships through physical challenges and exercises that explore our differences, creating renewed understanding and empathy for diverse life paths. Understand earned and unearned power and privilege, exploring systemic societal inequities and our role in breaking or perpetuating them. Become comfortable being uncomfortable. Shift from a consumer to a citizen mindset, creating a class network that takes care of the whole.

Discern the personal work we must undergo in order to create intended outcomes. Leverage your somatic intelligence to lead more powerfully.

TRANSFORM.

Work with ALF guest faculty around the keys to achieving our highest outcomes. Engage in inquiry circles with classmates to work through barriers and begin to set a course forward.

Connect to the greater ALF network, exploring ALF principles applied through ALF Affinity Groups and the broader community. Dive into design thinking around social and civic challenges, accessing the wisdom of your classmates to co-create innovative solutions.

Commit to your next steps at Stand and Deliver, followed by an intimate graduation experience.

THE FELLOWS PROGRAM EXPERIENCE

Through the ALF Fellows experience, leaders reach outside of their professional training and networks to explore stories and strategies that raise our collective human consciousness, deepen empathy and expand our ability to see, feel and lead in this new paradigm.

Our signature Fellows Program experience is built upon these core ALF National values:

- We believe in the power and importance of trusted relationships.
- We believe that diversity, equity, inclusion, justice and belonging are critical for thriving, equitable communities, healthy people, and a healthy planet.
- We believe in the power of dialogue and collaborative leadership with leaders who have curiosity about people whose identity, culture, background and life experiences may be different from their own.
- We believe we have a responsibility to prioritize active civic engagement to equitably serve for the benefit of all people in our communities.
- We prioritize and engage in practices of mindfulness, grace, acceptance, accountability and openness to personal and professional growth.



Through the arc of the Fellows Program year, the class explores three distinct levels that we at ALF believe can elevate you as a citizen of the human network.

MY LEADERSHIP

Co-creating a brave space to be vulnerable as a leader and human. Exploring our/my personal experiences and building empathy for people on different paths. Setting personal intentions for the year. Developing and incorporating a mindfulness practice.

OUR COMMUNITY

Creating a class community built on empathy, honesty and trust. Deepening relationships and holding each other accountable. Engaging in courageous conversations. Wrestling with power, privilege, equity, and belonging, and the discomfort that arises due to differences in the room.

OUR IMPACT

Exploring new possibilities from our deepened relationships and broadened perspectives. Embracing civic responsibility and network leadership. Applying what we've learned by making decisions differently in our personal, professional and community circles. Collaborating to create a more equitable and thriving Bay Area.

THE ALF Fellows Program offers a compelling and relevant platform from which the class creates an authentic and dynamic learning environment. Three core principles help to create the most value in the program: presence, confidentiality, and generative dialogue.

PRESENCE | Show Up

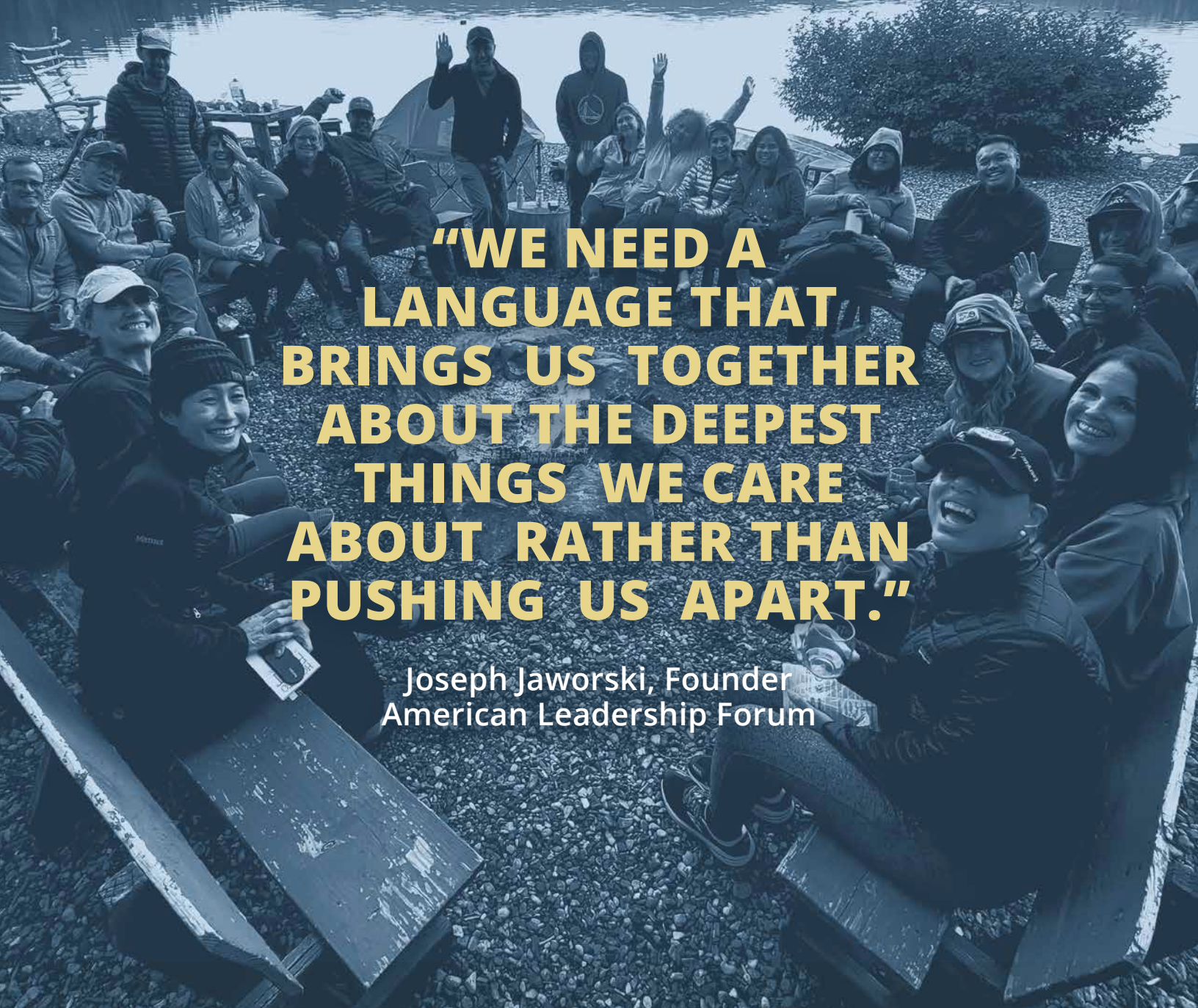
The simple act of showing up and participating fully in each session may be the most powerful contribution you can make to the overall success of the program. The class selection process is methodical and intentional. Your presence and engagement is critical to the class experience. Significant individual and class development opportunities occur throughout the year without regard to the subject matter on the agenda. Therefore, we caution you not to make any judgements about whether to attend based upon the content scheduled for the day. Fellows can be surprised by all they missed in one session.

CONFIDENTIALITY | Keep It In The Class

The Fellows Program offers a unique opportunity for leaders to learn from each other. From day one we request an agreement among all to hold our conversations in confidence. This confidence will allow individuals to explore important issues and opportunities in a community of supportive peers.

GENERATIVE DIALOGUE | High Quality Conversation

ALF is a non-partisan organization bringing together a broad diversity of political ideologies and religious beliefs. Dialogue across differences is core to our curriculum and a commitment that we make as Senior Fellows to practice. The capacity to both engage in and sponsor dialogue for the common good is a distinguishing characteristic of an ALF Fellow and Senior Fellow.



"WE NEED A LANGUAGE THAT BRINGS US TOGETHER ABOUT THE DEEPEST THINGS WE CARE ABOUT RATHER THAN PUSHING US APART."

Joseph Jaworski, Founder
American Leadership Forum

APPLIED LEARNING

Throughout the year, each Fellow is asked to apply ALF principles and practices within his or her scope of influence. What each Fellow chooses to do can vary tremendously. One Fellow may alter the structure of a regularly occurring meeting; another may host a dialogue following a significant community event or occurrence.

HOSTING A SESSION Fellows will be invited to host one of the class sessions throughout the year. This is an opportunity to "bring your classmates to work" and provide some insight into your company, and your world.

CLASS XLV 2025-2026 SCHEDULE

Pre-Orientation/Finding Our Rhythm

MAR 14

Orientation* (Overnight)
Foundations for Community

APR 10-11

Dialogue Across Differences

MAY 9

Embodied Leadership & Practice Hike

JUN 13

Wilderness Experience* (Overnight)

Please note: There is no cell or internet access for all but a brief stop on a hike. There is a landline for emergencies only.

JUL 11-16

Social Gathering with significant others/families

AUG TBD

Lessons from Wilderness & Forecasting the Future

SEP 12

Regular class days are scheduled from 8:00AM-4:00PM.

**Denotes mandatory session in order to continue in program.*

Attendance at every session is critical. ALF Silicon Valley reserves the right to exit Fellows from the program after missing more than two sessions.

CLASS XLV 2025-2026 SCHEDULE

Leadership Context Retreat (Overnight)

OCT 13-14

Innovation Day/Seeding Change in our
Communities through Innovative Thinking

NOV 14

Civic Responsibility

JAN 9

Taking Stock of Our Journey* (Overnight)

FEB 12-13

Creating New Rhythms Together

MAR 13

Graduation*

MAR 27

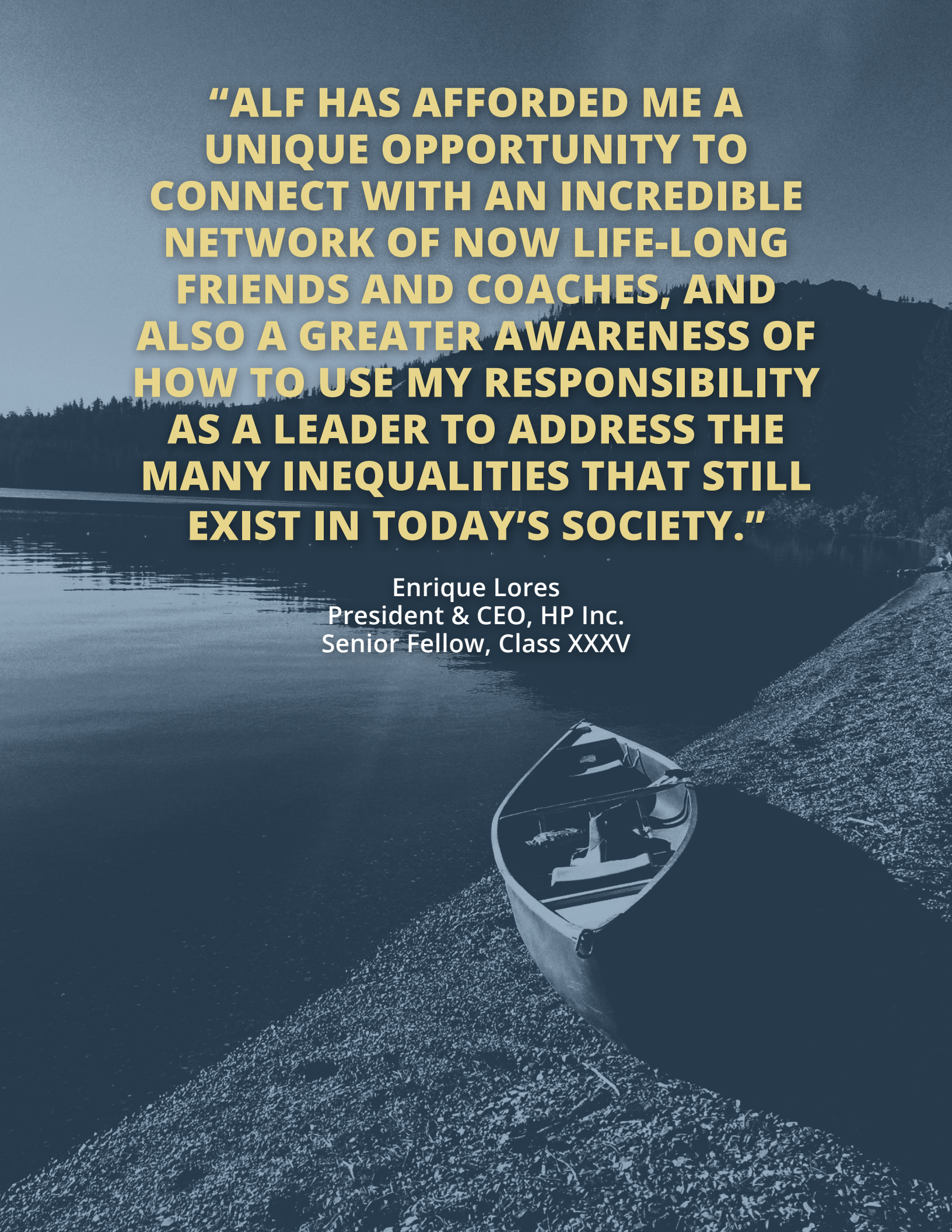
Post-Graduation Check-In

OCT 9

Regular class days are scheduled from 8:00AM-4:00PM.

**Denotes mandatory session in order to continue in program.*

Attendance at every session is critical. ALF Silicon Valley reserves the right to exit Fellows from the program after missing more than two sessions.

A serene landscape with a calm lake, a forested shoreline, and a small boat on a pebbly beach. The scene is captured in a monochromatic blue and white color scheme. The lake is in the foreground, reflecting the sky. The shoreline is covered in pebbles and small rocks. In the background, there are dense evergreen trees and a range of mountains under a clear sky.

**“ALF HAS AFFORDED ME A
UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO
CONNECT WITH AN INCREDIBLE
NETWORK OF NOW LIFE-LONG
FRIENDS AND COACHES, AND
ALSO A GREATER AWARENESS OF
HOW TO USE MY RESPONSIBILITY
AS A LEADER TO ADDRESS THE
MANY INEQUALITIES THAT STILL
EXIST IN TODAY’S SOCIETY.”**

Enrique Lores
President & CEO, HP Inc.
Senior Fellow, Class XXXV

HOW TO BE A PART OF THE EXPERIENCE

ONLY 28 ARE INVITED. PRESENCE, COMMITMENT, AND PARTICIPATION ARE REQUIRED.

ALF's Network Development Committee selects up to twenty-eight leaders from across sectors annually that have been nominated by the broader network of Senior Fellows, who are graduates of the Fellows program. The primary source of value in the ALF Fellows Program is the commitment of each Fellow to each other. We, as an organization, deeply invest in the care and development of these twenty-eight Fellows and, therefore, ask for your complete presence, commitment and participation throughout the Fellows year.

Historically, classes have honored the needs of a Fellow who misses a session because of unique and unavoidable circumstance; however, many classes have struggled when a particular Fellow missed two or more sessions. **ALF may decide to exit a Fellow from the program should they miss more than two classes. Please manage your calendar to make all scheduled sessions.**

TUITION

ALF Fellows Experience Tuition is \$18,000 + \$750 commitment fee.

In order to secure your spot, payment is due within forty-five days of your invitation to the program. If this presents a hardship, payment plans may be arranged.

Please note: Once you accept the invitation into the Fellows Program experience by signing a Commitment Form, 30% of tuition is collectible and non-refundable.

Many Fellows are sponsored by the organization where they work with tuition being funded via professional development or travel budgets. Some Fellows cover their tuition personally. The personal commitment fee must be paid by the ALF Fellow.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

As a part of the Fellows experience, you will join your class on a six-day wilderness trip typically held in the Lake Basin region of the Sierras. Accommodations are shared, with two nights in tents.

Participants will be involved in strenuous physical activities that include walking on uneven terrain, hiking uphill and downhill with a 10- 25 lb. pack for distances of 5 – 8 miles at altitudes of up to 8,000 ft., and rock climbing and rappelling. These activities are not required but are a part of the group experience. We recommend that all Fellows see their doctor for a physical prior to the trip.

ALF has accommodated a wide variety of physical limitations and health needs, from Fellows in wheelchairs or on crutches, to severe dietary restrictions, to C-PAP machines. Please do not hesitate to ask for medically necessary accommodations prior to the trip.

BECOMING A SENIOR FELLOW

At your last class session, you will complete the first part of your ALF journey and begin another. Senior Fellows are graduates of the ALF experience and are part of a network unlike any other. We are 815 strong and growing, with influential cross-sector leaders from across the Valley.

Being a Senior Fellow comes with incredible opportunity, as well as responsibility. We ask all Senior Fellows to make these commitments:

TAKE THE CALL & MAKE THE CALL.
USE THE NETWORK.

DIALOGUE FIRST. SUSPEND JUDGEMENT, BE CURIOUS, BE OPEN, LISTEN.

EDUCATE, INNOVATE, DONATE.
BE A PART OF SYSTEMS CHANGE.

ENGAGE IN ALF.
YOUR PARTICIPATION MAKES US ALL STRONGER!

ALF CONNECT

Once you graduate, you will be given access to ALF Connect, a website and smartphone app connecting Senior Fellows from all ALF chapters. You will be invited to join Affinity Groups, participate in Discussions, register for Events, and connect with other Senior Fellows with similar areas of interest.

AFFINITY GROUPS

Senior Fellows are encouraged to start or strengthen ALF Affinity Groups, where Senior Fellows connect across classes around life, work, and community concerns. Some groups are meant to be social or coaching circles, while others are deeper dialogue opportunities around community issues with tangible outcomes. Affinity Groups are how we as Senior Fellows connect beyond our classes and can deeply access the full potential of the network. A list of current Affinity Groups is online.

ALF INSIGHTS

Bring the power of ALF facilitation and convenings to your business or organization. ALF Insights has the ability to emerge new frameworks for how an organization, team or network of leaders manages change and embraces dynamic processes. Learn more at alfinsights.org.

COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS

ALF does not shy away from difficult dialogues on entrenched, systemic issues. Quite the contrary — we embrace them. ALF hosts speaker series and small group dialogues throughout the year. You are invited to suggest / host / attend.

BOARD & COMMITTEE SERVICE

Senior Fellows are invited to be a part of ALF organizational work, from helping to seat classes to providing financial oversight. A couple of graduates are generally invited to join the Board of Directors.

ALF POWER CIRCLES

The ALF Silicon Valley team assists with connecting you to a strategic group of Senior Fellows to help advance your defined project.

ALF SILICON VALLEY FACULTY



AKEMI FLYNN / FELLOWS PROGRAM LEAD FACILITATOR

As ALF's Chief Impact Officer, Akemi fosters connections, dialogue, and collaboration among leaders from diverse sectors, backgrounds, and perspectives to support their leadership and contributions to a more equitable and thriving community.

Akemi has nearly 30 years experience working for multicultural community building and equity in Silicon Valley. Prior to ALF, she served as Executive Director of a multi-faith, multi-racial organization leading grassroots community organizing for racial and economic justice. Akemi benefits from experiences and relationships with leaders in the non-profit, philanthropic, public policy, corporate, business, faith, and cultural communities. She is a member of Class XXVII, wife of an ALF Senior Fellow, and mother of two young adults.



DR. BYRON BURKHALTER / FELLOWS PROGRAM CO-FACILITATOR

Byron is the founder of Out of Privilege, a company which works with corporations, nonprofits and educational institutions to create inclusive spaces by changing organizational language, values and practices.

Byron earned his doctorate in Sociology from UCLA focused on detailed studies of interaction, laws concerning racial and sexual identity in the workplace, biracial identity, whiteness and multiracial political coalitions in US history. He has taught at the university level, spoken at large public rallies and published on coalition building across race, sex and class differences. Byron also runs discussion groups where people from different backgrounds build connections by grappling with current issues.



CHRISTIE HARDWICK

Christie Hardwick is an inspirational speaker and facilitator in a variety of forums and provides strategic thinking and spiritual guidance services to clients across the United States.



JENNY NIKLAUS

As Chief Facilitation Officer, Jenny Niklaus works to support leaders to use their leadership as a catalyst for dynamic social change. Her work is deeply connected to the work of inclusion and race equity.



CHIKE NWOFFIAH

Chike is an actor, theater director, educator, and award-winning filmmaker, and consultant on theater, film, television, and multimedia projects.

*Note that Faculty are invited to sessions based on the needs and interests of the Fellows.
Facilitators and faculty are subject to change, based on class needs and availability.*



alfsv.org | 408.554.2002

Sobrato Center for Nonprofits

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