

## **SPEAKER BIOS**

### **A Conversation About Activating Spaces and Places Through Resident Engagement**

#### **James Brodick**

##### **Director of Community Development and Crime Prevention**

##### **Center for Court Innovation**

James Brodick is the Center for Court Innovation's director of community development and crime prevention. Mr. Brodick leads the Center's work on a range of community development and crime-prevention initiatives in New York City, including the Brownsville Community Justice Center, Harlem Community Justice Center, Queens Youth Justice Center, Neighbors in Action, Cure Violence (South Bronx, Crown Heights, and Bedford-Stuyvesant), and the Mayor's Office Neighborhood Safety Initiatives. Mr. Brodick leads a team of senior staff members to define a vision for the Center's involvement in community-based crime prevention and to ensure its work remains at the cutting-edge of the field. He is also responsible for implementing a range of data-driven methods to measure the effectiveness of the Center's crime-prevention work. Since joining the Center in 1998, he has held numerous leadership roles, including director of NYC Community Courts, the Red Hook Community Justice Center, and NYC Community Cleanup, and he was the lead planner and inaugural director of the Brownsville Community Justice Center. Mr. Brodick is a graduate of Saint John's University and is a New York State certified mediator.

#### **Deron Johnston**

##### **Director**

##### **Brownsville Community Justice Center**

Deron Johnston is director of the Brownsville Community Justice Center, a program of the Center for Court Innovation. He oversees day-to-day operations; manages partnerships with City agencies and resources; oversees the development and execution of various programs; mobilizes stakeholders; and develops strategies to improve public safety. Mr. Johnston also develops and coordinates place-based projects that focus on the development, beautification, and maintenance of Brownsville's business and residential districts. With a background in education, sociology (B.A.), and business (M.B.A.), and a fondness for facilitating change through the arts, Mr. Johnston uses a multidisciplinary approach to development and programming to lead initiatives at the Justice Center.

#### **Leah Russell**

##### **Project Coordinator**

##### **Near Westside Peacemaking Project**

Leah Russell is coordinator of the Near Westside Peacemaking Project, a program of the Center for Court Innovation. The Peacemaking Project provides community-based conflict resolution services for Onondaga County residents. Ms. Russell is also lead facilitator of Take Back the Streets, a community-organizing campaign focused on improving health and safety in the Near Westside neighborhood of Syracuse. She also coordinates the Take Back the Streets Service Providers Collaborative and the resident-led Community Impact Team. Previously, she coordinated the Tribal Access to Justice Innovation Project, which developed website content

about emerging best practices in tribal justice systems, and an ESL drug treatment court program at the Syracuse Drug Treatment Court. Ms. Russell received her master's degree from the University of California at Santa Barbara in Latin American Studies. Her past activist work includes: advocating for farmworkers and immigrant communities, organizing academic workers to mobilize for collective bargaining rights, and mentoring at-risk and justice-involved youth. For five years, Ms. Russell taught courses in the Curriculum and Instruction Department at SUNY Oswego. She has extensive international travel experience and is fluent in Spanish and Brazilian Portuguese.