



# Leadership Biographies

## Executive Leadership



### **Erica Mackie**

P.E., CEO and Co-Founder

Erica is the CEO and co-founder of GRID Alternatives, the nation's largest nonprofit solar installer. She started the organization with co-founder Tim Sears in 2001 while working as a professional engineer implementing large-scale renewable energy and energy efficiency projects for the private sector. Their vision was to make the benefits of these technologies available to low-income communities that need the savings and jobs the most, but have the least access.

Using a barn-raising model, GRID Alternatives trains and leads teams of job trainees and other community volunteers to install solar electric systems exclusively for low-income families and communities. Every project generates "triple bottom line" results: measurable, long-term financial benefits for low-income families struggling to keep up with monthly expenses; real-world, hands-on experience for local workers in the growing field of solar installation; and environmental benefits by eliminating greenhouse gas emissions and building support for solar power as a practical solution for all of our communities.

Ms. Mackie has received numerous awards for her leadership of GRID Alternatives, including the Governor's Environmental and Economic Leadership Award in 2008, the New Leaders Council Energy Leadership Award in 2009, the James Irvine Foundation Leadership Award in 2010, the US Green Building Council's Green Building Super Hero Award in 2010 and the 2013 Clean Energy and Empowerment Award from C3E. She speaks regularly at solar and energy-related conferences such as PV America and Solar Power International on renewable energy access and gender diversity in the solar industry.



### **Tim Sears**

P.E., COO and Co-Founder

Tim Sears is the COO and co-founder of GRID Alternatives, the nation's largest nonprofit solar installer. He co-founded GRID Alternatives with Erica Mackie in 2001 and has helped develop it into a major national non-profit bringing solar technology and training to underserved communities across the country. He has shared with Erica Mackie numerous leadership awards for this work, and in 2014 was honored by the White House as a "Champion of Change" for Solar Deployment.

Mr. Sears is a graduate of Stanford University with a degree in Civil and Environmental Engineering, and before starting GRID Alternatives managed consulting teams of engineers providing comprehensive energy efficiency retrofit recommendations and construction management of projects totaling over \$3 million.solar industry.



## **Anna Bautista**

### VP of Construction and Workforce Development

Anna Bautista is head of construction and workforce development programming for GRID Alternatives, the nation's largest nonprofit solar installer. In that role, she leads GRID's two major workforce diversity initiatives: RISE, an initiative launched in 2015 aimed at increasing diversity in the solar industry and connecting an industry that needs good people with communities that need good jobs; and the National Women in Solar Initiative, launched in 2014 to bring more women into the solar industry and support their professional growth.

Anna has over 10 years of experience in solar as a site supervisor, trainer and educator, project manager, and design and installation technician. She is proud to represent among the two percent of NABCEP certified PV professionals who are women but hopes to see that percentage grow to the double digits. She speaks regularly at solar and energy-related conferences such as Solar Power International and Intersolar on workforce diversity and renewable energy access.



## **Zach Franklin**

### VP of Development and Communications

Zach Franklin joined GRID Alternatives in 2006 and has helped grow it into a nationally recognized brand with broad industry support. Under his leadership, GRID Alternatives has launched three major co-branded programmatic initiatives with industry partners, developed unique corporate social responsibility models for the solar and utility industries, and built a robust corporate volunteerism program.

Prior to joining GRID, Mr. Franklin worked in the affordable housing field in the areas of project development, fundraising, and community services. He holds a degree in economics and history from Brown University.



## **Jeff Coleman**

### VP of Outreach

Jeff has been a leader at the intersection of technology, organizing, and social impact for more than a decade. Since 2003, Jeff has helped leading nonprofits, labor unions, campaigns, and startups build large-scale grassroots organizations by combining traditional community organizing practices with smart, strategic opportunities to leverage emerging technology. Jeff has been a founding executive, advisor, and consultant to social impact startups including Farmigo, Amicus, and Organizer Inc. - technology platforms that empower citizens to organize and bring change to their communities. Prior to that, as Deputy Field Director in 2008 and Senior Advisor in 2012, he was instrumental in developing the groundbreaking organizing strategy of Barack Obama's historic presidential campaigns.

Jeff has led hundreds of organizing workshops and trainings throughout the U.S. and abroad, and has been a frequent panelist, speaker, and facilitator at events such as Netroots Nation, Rootscamp, Personal Democracy Forum, and NTEN's Nonprofit Technology Conference. He studied Geographic Information Systems at San Francisco State University.



## **Stan Greschner**

### VP of Government Relations and Market Development

Stan Greschner leads state and federal regulatory and government engagement for GRID Alternatives. He previously directed the nation's first low-income solar incentive program (California's Single-family Affordable Solar Homes Program), and led the successful campaign to pass California's Equitable Access to Solar Energy Act (AB 217) in 2013. Today he continues to work closely with policy makers, regulators, utilities, solar companies, and community organizations throughout the country to expand solar access and jobs to underserved communities.

In 2015, Mr. Greschner was honored by Green for All as a Climate Champion for his work to ensure that people from all communities benefit from the growing clean energy economy.

Mr. Greschner holds a bachelor's degree in bio-mechanical engineering from Marquette University, and a master's degree in philosophy and public policy from American University. He has spoken about inclusivity and access in the clean energy industry at numerous events and industry academic conferences, including the Clinton Global Initiative 2015 Annual Meeting and Solar Power International.

## Programmatic Leadership



## **Erika Symmonds**

### Director of Workforce Development

Erika Symmonds joined GRID Alternatives in 2015 to help launch its new workforce initiatives and ensure that solar career opportunities are accessible to individuals in disadvantaged communities. In that role, she helped develop a resume bank to connect hiring solar companies with experienced job seekers, organized the first-ever solar job fair at Solar Power International, and improved GRID's job placement tracking efforts.

Ms. Symmonds came to GRID from Green City Force, a New York-based nonprofit she co-founded to connect youth of low-income backgrounds to opportunities in the green economy. She received numerous accolades for her work there: in 2013, Green City Force was named the "Most Innovative Nonprofit in NYC" by Mayor Bloomberg and in 2014, the nonprofit was chosen to receive the Advocates Award by Environmental Associates of New York. She is a Brooklyn, New York native and holds a degree in Media Arts and Sciences from Wellesley College. Ms. Symmonds speaks about workforce initiatives and job training at environmental and energy industry events and conferences.



## **Tim Willink**

### Director of Tribal Programs

Tim Willink joined GRID in 2014 to lead its new National Tribal Solar Program, bringing solar power and job training to tribal communities nationwide. Mr. Willink earned his B.A. in economics from Cornell University and worked as a lobbyist for the Navajo Nation Washington Office representing the tribe in economic development and education. After living and traveling throughout the United States and Canada, he settled in Colorado and spent six years with Namaste Solar as a Field Supervisor for commercial solar installations.

A Navajo from Pueblo Pintado, New Mexico, Mr. Willink has a deep understanding of energy issues on tribal lands, and aims to partner with tribes on both residential and commercial projects in order to bring solar to tribal communities across the country. He speaks regularly about tribal energy access and economic opportunities on panels and at conferences around the country hosted by NREL, Department of Energy, the EPA, various tribal colleges and more.



## **Jenean Smith**

### Director of International Programs

Jenean Smith founded international nonprofit Power to the People in 2008 to help bring renewable energy solutions to the developing world, and led its integration into GRID Alternatives in 2014. Rooted in deep community engagement, the program provides a model for effective solar deployment in off-grid communities, helps “voluntourists” connect firsthand with the challenges of energy poverty, and engages the local community in hands-on renewable energy work.

Ms. Smith is a lifelong advocate for the advancement and use of renewable energy technologies. After serving in the Peace Corps in Nicaragua she worked in Honduras as a Youth Program Director for the Riecken Foundation, where she created a youth leadership program for rural Honduran teenagers in 33 communities.

Ms. Smith holds a bachelor’s degree in sociology from the University of Massachusetts, an MBA from Northeastern University in Boston, and a master’s degree in Sustainable International Development from the Heller School of Policy and Management at Brandeis University. She speaks frequently on energy access and international development at universities and conferences such as Solar Power International and Intersolar North America.



## Regional Leadership



### **Renée Sharp**

Regional Director, GRID Alternatives Bay Area

Renée Sharp became the Bay Area Regional Director for GRID Alternatives in 2015. Prior to joining GRID, she served as the Director of Research at Environmental Working Group, the nation's leading environmental research and advocacy organization. Ms. Sharp has given hundreds of media interviews and has been featured in media outlets including *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, NPR, and PBS, among others. Her areas of expertise include solar energy and green job training, water and energy policy, and the potential health implications of chemicals lurking in our air, food and drinking water.

Ms. Sharp holds a bachelor's degree in Biology from Rice University, and a master's degree in biology from Pennsylvania State University where she studied the lifecycle environmental impacts of electricity generation.



### **Paul Cleary**

Executive Director, GRID Alternatives San Diego

Paul Cleary launched GRID Alternatives San Diego in 2008, and has grown it to serve thousands of families and job trainees with solar power and hands-on training throughout San Diego and Imperial Counties. Under his leadership, GRID San Diego has pioneered GRID Alternatives' work with both Native American tribes and military veterans.

Mr. Cleary's nonprofit experience began in the early 1990s, when he helped evaluate a rural electrification project in Guatemala. After receiving a master's degree in international relations from the University of California, San Diego, Mr. Cleary worked in public health and human trafficking prevention along the U.S.-Mexico border.



### **Tom Esqueda**

Executive Director, GRID Alternatives Central Valley

Tom Esqueda joined GRID Alternatives in 2009 to expand its work in the Central Valley region of California. Under his leadership, GRID Alternatives Central Valley partners with job training organizations, affordable housing providers and local governments across 12 counties to help address some of the biggest issues facing the region: un- and underemployment, poor air quality, and economic distress. He has also pioneered GRID Alternatives' work providing technical assistance and solar project development for multi-family affordable housing.

He began his career as a real estate loan officer, working for several financial institutions before joining the County of Fresno to work with affordable housing programs. Mr. Esqueda's desire to help families achieve the dream of homeownership led him to also become an instructor of first time homebuyers classes. Mr. Esqueda is native to Fresno, California and holds a bachelor's degree in business marketing from Fresno State University.



## **Bob Gragson**

Executive Director of GRID Alternatives North Valley

Bob Gragson opened GRID Alternatives North Valley in 2011, and has led its expansion from Chico and the rural northern parts of the state into Sacramento as funding from California's cap-and-trade program became available. Mr. Gragson has over 20 years of experience as executive director of five nonprofit organizations including the Solar Living Institute in Hopland, CA, and several social service organizations. Growing up in Oklahoma where his father was a research chemist with a major oil company, he learned early on about the limits of an oil-based economy, and as a result is an ardent advocate for solar power and other alternative energies.

Mr. Gragson holds a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Furman University and an MBA from Walden University, and has also completed additional graduate studies in public administration.



## **Justin Hitchcock**

Executive Director, GRID Alternatives Central Coast

Justin Hitchcock worked with GRID Alternatives as both an outreach coordinator and project manager before taking a leadership position in 2015, gaining extensive experience providing renewable energy education to underserved communities, building partnerships with community organizations and local government agencies, and creating a strong project pipeline.

Before coming to GRID, Mr. Hitchcock worked for the Peace Corps in the Dominican Republic on environmental initiatives and youth development projects. Mr. Hitchcock studied Civil Engineering at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, where he now lectures on solar engineering.



## **Michael Kadish**

Executive Director, GRID Alternatives Greater Los Angeles

Michael Kadish served on the board of GRID Alternatives Greater Los Angeles for two years before becoming its Executive Director in 2013. Under his leadership, the organization has more than doubled its size and impact. In 2015 he led the launch of GRID's work in the City of Los Angeles with the backing of the State of California's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, which has generated national and international media coverage. He also steered the organization's efforts to create a robust workforce development program in partnership with job training organizations throughout the region that serve primarily disadvantaged communities, with over 200 volunteers obtaining employment since 2013.

Mr. Kadish has over fifteen years of experience in public affairs, non-profit consulting, communications, clean-tech, and politics. His advocacy work includes the successful passage of clean energy legislation on both the local and federal levels. Previously, he served as the Director of Public and Consumer Affairs for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and as State Policy Director for the 2008 Obama campaign.

Mr. Kadish holds a bachelor's degree from Columbia University and a master's degree from Harvard University Kennedy School of Government. Mr. Kadish has been a speaker at USC's Brittingham Social Enterprise Lab, the Los Angeles Cleantech Incubator, Green Business Basecamp and elsewhere. He has also been published by Fast Company's Co.Exist website.

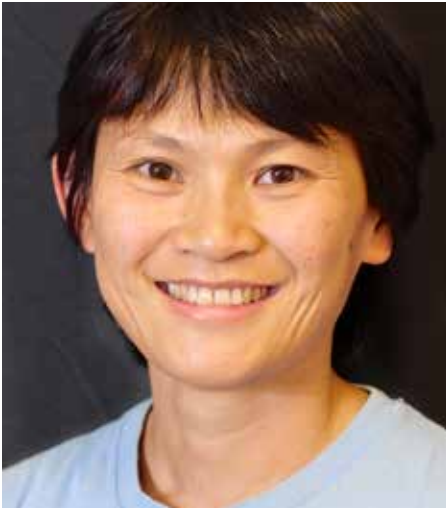


## **Nicole Steele**

Executive Director of GRID Alternatives Mid-Atlantic

Nicole Steele launched GRID Alternatives Mid-Atlantic in 2014 to serve D.C., Maryland, Delaware and Virginia. In addition to building out GRID Alternatives' solar installation and job training work in the region, Ms. Steele works with policymakers at the local and state levels to help them develop and implement inclusive solar policies and programs.

Ms. Steele has over 10 years of experience in the environmental and energy fields in the areas of urban planning, grassroots advocacy, policy development, program design and implementation as well as many other disciplines. Prior to joining GRID Alternatives, she managed the Alliance to Save Energy's Policy team's development program and budget, external communications, and high profile initiatives including energy efficiency in city planning and the Alliance's Commission on National Energy Efficiency Policy. Ms. Steele also served as the Director of the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) Program, a 2009 American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) stimulus program, for Loudoun County, Virginia. She speaks regularly about energy access and workforce diversity on panel discussions, media interviews, and industry and academic conferences.



## **Bambi Tran**

Regional Director, GRID Alternatives Inland Empire

A. Bambi Tran opened GRID Alternatives Inland Empire in 2011 to serve a region facing some of the state's worst air pollution and widespread economic distress. Under her direction, GRID Inland Empire provides solar power and hand-on solar training to thousands of individuals each year, lowering housing costs and providing direct pathways to employment. She has over 20 years of experience in green building, education, community development, and nonprofit management. In her career, she has worked as a green builder, designer, educator, and consultant to a number of organizations, such as Habitat for Humanity affiliates, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and Global Green.

Ms. Tran began her nonprofit career as a volunteer with the Peace Corps in El Salvador. She taught design courses at the Art Institute of California-Inland Empire, served on a number of Boards, including the US Green Building Council-Inland Empire Chapter, and is a member of the County of San Bernardino Solid Waste Advisory Task Force.

Ms. Tran is a LEED Accredited Professional and holds a master's degree in real estate development from the University of Maryland – College Park and a Bachelor of Science in architecture from the University of Virginia. She is a frequent speaker and presenter to a wide variety of audiences—from student groups to professional associations to city councils.



## **Chuck Watkins**

Executive Director, GRID Alternatives Colorado

Chuck Watkins opened GRID Alternatives Colorado in 2012 and serves as its executive director. Under his leadership, GRID Colorado completed the first-ever community solar array in partnership with a utility to serve exclusively low-income customers, a model that has generated national attention and is now being piloted all over the state.

He has over ten years of experience managing affordable housing projects throughout the U.S. and overseas in Mexico, India, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. His professional background includes residential green building, energy efficiency, workforce development, and disaster response. He is a passionate renewable energy advocate and has led dozens of solar installations for low-income homeowners.

Mr. Watkins holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from Auburn University.