



MEET YOUR NEW BOARD CHAIR



A Letter from **Nathaniel Christian, III**

Dear Friends,

It's hard to put into words my feelings about taking on the position of Board Chair of the All Stars Project (ASP), but I'm going to try. I'd like everyone who is a part of the All Stars community to know a few things about me, about my values, and about my vision for the next chapter in the All Stars story.

First, please understand that the All Stars is not just something I do and have done for 25 years. It's a part of who I am. I grew up in a ghetto in the New York City area with a profound sense of isolation. While I lacked sufficient developmental role models, I was still loved and supported in and by my community. The trajectory of my life changed when my sixth-grade teacher, who, being white and Jewish, was from a completely different background than mine. She believed that I needed a different educational environment than the failing school system I was in; so, she sponsored my application to an elite school. That All Stars-type experience put me on track to obtain an Ivy League education and a law degree and to have a successful career in business and finance. Even as I was achieving many of my life's goals, I realized that I needed a deeper and more activist connection to the young people coming of age in communities similar to the one I had come from. For me, giving back wasn't an option—it was, and is, a moral and ethical imperative.

When I found the All Stars—or more accurately, when the All Stars found me through its super-charged donor acquisition and volunteer program—I knew I had struck gold. As I got to know the All Stars co-founders Fred Newman, Ph.D., and Lenora Fulani, Ph.D., former board member Joe Forgione, founding CEO (1989–2023) Gabrielle Kurlander, and Chris Street, who was then ASP's Development Director and is now our new CEO, I could see that the All Stars wasn't simply a program helping young people fit into the mainstream. ASP was also helping people in privileged situations to see (i) youth from poor communities as more than statistics or objects of pity and (ii) themselves as part of a much broader community. Our young people are an emerging generation who will make tremendous contributions to society if they're given the tools and the environment they need to develop. Suffice to say, All Stars is all about development. We have created the tools, methodology, leadership, and track record that puts development front and center in the lives of the young people who need it most.



To me, All Stars is a community of hope that stands as a beacon of light in a landscape that has always been challenging for underprivileged young people, a landscape that has unfortunately gotten darker in recent years. Therefore, I think it's no coincidence that I found this wonderful community of hope at the same time—spring 1998—that I found my faith community. Whereas I see the All Stars bringing faith in, and a hope for, one's own future and the future of a community, I see the faith community as nurturing and developing that individual and the collective hope. In the end, I think the respective messages of those communities have the same basic root. The more we look beyond differences of appearance and cultural backgrounds to see ourselves as one human family, the better off we all are.



For me, I clearly see myself in our young people. And it's because of them that I accepted the offer to serve as Board Chair and to partner with CEO Chris Street and the entire ASP leadership team to help All Stars grow to its next level of impact and influence.



I know that Chris and I have big shoes to fill. Our previous Board Chair Maria Morris (2017–2023) and former CEO Gabrielle Kurlander together led the organization through the challenging times of the pandemic, of social unrest in response to the killing of George Floyd, and the economic uncertainties that accompanied those events. The All Stars Project that they are handing off to Chris and me is vibrant, financially robust, and poised to help reshape the fields of Afterschool and Workforce Development. Brava to them. I hope that we can live up to their high standards and build on their huge accomplishments.

Ahead of us, Chris and I see a complex but exciting road. Breakthroughs in technology, the accelerating growth of artificial intelligence, and the global instabilities that challenge our country and our world at every turn drive us to continue to engage the core questions of human development, compassion, and understanding. For 25 years, I've seen All Stars step up and lead in these critical arenas. I'm ready to do my part in our next chapter of development.

Sincerely,
Nathaniel Christian, III
Board Chair

