

NEWS RELEASE

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Two New Directors Join the Garrison Institute's Senior Team

[Garrison, NY – October 5] Two new leaders, **Dr. Angel Acosta** and **Lina Pasquale**, have joined the senior team of the non-profit Garrison Institute in Garrison, New York, and will direct its Garrison Institute Fellowship and Contemplative-Based Resilience programs, respectively.

The Garrison Institute's mission is to apply the wisdom that arises from contemplation and insights derived from science to today's pressing social and environmental issues to create a more compassionate and resilient future. "We're excited to welcome Lina and Angel to the Institute's leadership team," said **Jonathan Wiesner**, the Institute's CEO. "They represent a significant new phase in our evolution, because their talents are going to help expand the breadth and reach of our programs."

Dr. Angel Acosta is now the inaugural Director of the [Garrison Institute Fellowship](#), a new initiative that has selected eleven emerging leaders from a wide array of fields. The first cohort of fellows includes psychologists, anthropologists, artists, musicians, poets, mindfulness practitioners, healers, activists, and architects. They will collaborate with one another and with the Institute over a one-year period to create innovative, cross-disciplinary art, research, and community programs. As Director, Dr. Acosta will mentor the Fellows and facilitate their collaborations.

"I see the Fellowship as a means to create and curate projects that emphasize interdependence and mutuality," he said. Key themes of the Fellowship include "the science of interconnection," which studies the deeply interconnected nature of reality and consciousness, and "generative action" which can create transformative personal and social change. These ideas are expressed both in wisdom traditions and contemporary research, for example in the work of [Otto Sharmar](#) or Garrison Institute Board member [Dan Siegel](#).

"We firmly believe that personal and planetary well-being depends on us finding new ways of being together that stem from a respect for and understanding of the reality of our interdependence," Dr. Acosta says. "In the midst of today's environmental degradation and political polarization, it's a good time to seek to understand that mutuality and interdependency are at the core of our existence. It's a growing body of work, and the Garrison Institute Fellows will contribute to it by exploring it further. They're taking on the challenge of helping bring people together to co-create a better future and a more compassionate society."

Dr. Acosta has a passion for helping young people think globally and act locally. Prior to joining the Garrison Institute, he served as a program director for the national nonprofit CFES Brilliant Pathways, where he facilitated leadership trainings and created pathways to higher education. He also directed and taught at a global leadership study abroad program in Rome through the award-winning organization Leadership exCHANGE.

After participating in the Mind and Life Institute's Academy for Contemplative Leadership, Dr. Acosta began consulting and developing learning experiences that weave leadership development with conversations about inequality and healing, and make use of contemplative and restorative practices.

For example, as a member of the 400 Years of Inequality Project, he designed the Contemplating 400 Years of Inequality Experience, which takes a mindfulness-based, contemplative approach to understanding structural inequality. A former trustee for the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society, he presented at the Asia Pacific Forum on Holistic Education in Kyoto, Japan. He also serves as the Creative Director at the NYC Healing Collective, a community initiative curating work and insights at the intersection of healing, wellness, and social transformation.

Raised in the Bronx and Manhattan, Dr. Acosta is a proud first-generation Dominican-American and a graduate of SUNY Plattsburgh. He completed his Ed.D. in the Curriculum and Teaching Department at Teachers College, Columbia University.

Lina Pasquale is now the Director of the Garrison Institute's [Contemplative-Based Resilience \(CBR\) Project](#), which provides resilience trainings for healthcare professionals, social workers, humanitarian aid workers, first responders and other frontline workers exposed to chronic stress. Most recently, CBR tools and trainings have been specially adapted for caregivers and other workers on the front lines of the covid-19 crisis, including in a free [instructional video series](#).

Demand for CBR trainings in the US and globally currently far exceeds capacity, but Ms. Pasquale believes that's about to change. "My aspiration is to scale CBR to have a wider reach across the board, so we're not just focusing on a subset of workers," she said. "Anyone in a caregiving situation can benefit from building and practicing habits that can strengthen resilience during times of stress. I truly believe in the transformative impact of CBR, which offers caregivers tools and practices so they may 'Be Well to Serve Well.' I am optimistic that with such a robust faculty, which we'll expand, we're going to extend its reach to those who can benefit from CBR, whose core goals are Awareness, Balance and Connection. In fact, we all can benefit from CBR, especially during this time of collective trauma due to the covid-19 pandemic."

Prior to joining the Garrison Institute, Ms. Pasquale helped advance resiliency and "[trauma-informed care](#)" in a wide range of professional settings. The trauma-informed care approach recognizes and alleviates the impacts of chronic stress and adverse conditions on workers in human services fields.

She previously served as a Senior Division Director and Executive Team member of Good Shepherd Services. In 2014, she was selected by Morgan Stanley's Strategy Challenge Program to work with business experts to create a business plan, market analysis, and organizational strategy to extend the reach of trauma-informed care. The result was the Good Shepherd Services Center for Trauma-Informed Practice, which works with human service professionals in a wide range of fields.

Ms. Pasquale has also worked as faculty member and consultant at the Sanctuary Institute of the Andrus Children's Center, taught in the Psychology Department of Iona College, and was a researcher and training specialist at Columbia University and Fordham University. Raised in the Bronx, she holds two graduate degrees from Teachers College, Columbia University and The New School for Social Research. She currently serves as an advisory member for The Campaign for Trauma-Informed Policy and Practice, a coalition of advocates committed to creating a trauma-informed society where individuals have the support they need to thrive.