

August 10, 2019

I am currently employed by Harford Community College and Cecil College as a Grant Coordinator for the Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund, a program offered through the Maryland State Department of Education. I have a Master's degree in Early Childhood Education Special Education and was an Elementary School teacher for eleven years prior to my current position.

I first met Dr. Iris Barnes at the Maryland Lynching Memorial Project at The Reginald F. Lewis Museum in Baltimore City. She stepped into a leadership role of chairing the Harford County Lynching Memorial Project Committee, which I was eager to be a part of after such an informative and inspiring event. We began our monthly committee meetings soon after. I was immediately impressed and also felt very much at ease from the first meeting and I believe it was primarily due to her comfortable, yet efficient personality. This was the most diverse committee I have been privileged to participate in, with an equal representation from African American and European Americans. While not equal, we also had diversity in gender, religion and sexual orientation. Tasked with planning an event that brings with it an emotional history, Dr. Barnes holds the perfect combination of skills needed to create a supportive environment.

Dr. Barnes is perhaps the most hard working person I know. She is dedicated and committed to whatever project or program is before her. In addition to working with Dr. Barnes on the Harford County Lynching Memorial Project Committee, she invited me to join a committee tasked to write a grant funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services Museum Grants for African American History and Culture program in an effort to build the capacity of African American museums and support the growth and development of museum professionals at African American museums. She is insightful in gathering diverse groups of people to obtain varied resources and achieve the most impactful result. I watched her in action as a volunteer at The Hosanna School Museum Juneteenth celebration, a large scale annual community event that culminated from a year of planning.

I have also engaged with Dr. Barnes as she facilitated planning "Walk In Their Shoes" a community outreach program in conjunction with Girl Scouts of Central Maryland in which she mentored a 16 year old Girl Scout through her Gold Award project to be held at The Hosanna School Museum. Dr. Barnes ability to manage multiple projects simultaneously and work with a variety of age levels, personalities, and people from various backgrounds and cultures seemingly effortlessly is impressive to say the least. Her even, upbeat, and optimistic personality is a comfort in stressful situations. I recommend Dr. Iris Barnes, without hesitation. Not only I am confident in her success at any task before her, she has the ability to nurture the success of those around her as well. She is able to stand in the spotlight with grace, and jump in at a moment's notice behind the scenes to be sure things run smoothly.

I am happy to answer any additional questions you may have. I can be reached at 410-599-5263 or alyssa.ehram40@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

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