

Jessica Aviva, Ph.D.

(AKA Jessica Dreistadt)

Creative leader, collaborative co-conspirator, and catalytic changemaker working toward a more vibrant, loving, and healthy world for all

SUMMARY

Jessica Aviva, Ph.D. is an educator, writer, researcher, organizer, project designer, activist, and entrepreneur who helps feminist leaders and progressive community organizations recognize and realize their unique creative brilliance.

EXPERTISE

- Community-based organizations
- Feminist leadership
- Progressive social movements and social justice
- Organizational development
- Research design, data collection, and analysis and presentation of findings

PUBLICATIONS

Author of 16 books including *The Joy of Feminist Leadership*, *Limitless Loving Leadership*, *Contemplative Activism*, *Whole Happy and Healthy*, *Ashley and Tiana*, *The Fruition Coalition Marketing Plan Workbook*

Published in: *Huffington Post*, *Elephant Journal*, *Theory in Action*, *PsychCentral*, *Emerge Woman Magazine*, *Lehigh Review*, *Religions*

CONTACT DETAILS

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ACADEMIC BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE

Ph.D. in Organizational Leadership MS in Nonprofit Management

EASTERN UNIVERSITY

- Dissertation: *Portraits of Women Leaders: Solidarity and Social Division in Progressive Social Movement Organizations*
- Teaching assistant for LEAD740 Foundations of Research Methodology and LEAD871 Research Methodologies II: Quantitative Methods

MA in Sociology

LEHIGH UNIVERSITY

- Independent study about history and social impact of Hip Hop and punk cultures
- Created database of White privilege resources
- Evaluated public perceptions of development project

BS in Marketing and Management

DESALES UNIVERSITY

Adjunct Lecturer, 2008-2019

DESALES UNIVERSITY

Courses taught: *Leadership in the Modern Organization*; *Leadership Skills Development*; *Introduction to Sociology*; *New Ventures, Inc.*, *Entrepreneurship*; *Introduction to Fundraising*; *Public Relations for Nonprofits*

SELECTED PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Current

- Founding Director, *The Fruition Coalition*
- Convener and Facilitator, *Club Fruition*
- Coordinator, *Fruition Academy*
- Organizer, *Feminist Leadership Forum*

Past

- Executive Director, *Family Connection of Easton*
- Director, *Sixth Street Shelter*
- Director, *Community Action Development Corporation of Bethlehem*
- Director of *Advocacy and Outreach*, *Second Harvest Food Bank of Lehigh Valley and Northeast Pennsylvania*

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PROJECTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Nonprofit Management and Organizational Development

- Twenty years of experience in the nonprofit sector including more than six years as an executive director; served in the director role at a shelter for families experiencing homelessness, a community development corporation, and a family center network
- Created strategic plans for a regional foundation, children's hospice, networking association, community land trust, regional food bank, regional youth-serving organization, and two Community Action agencies
- Conducted a strategic analysis of an international B Corporation
- Developed a variety of policies, procedures, and plans to facilitate organizational resilience, sustainability, and impact
- Managed and led human resource initiatives including policies and procedures, recruitment, onboarding, professional development, employee engagement, and leadership development

Community Organizing, Advocacy, and Planning

- Assisted with the formation of three nonprofit organizations to address affordable housing needs
- Assisted with the creation of a regional arts council
- Organized a regional coalition resulting in state-level policy change
- Developed campaigns to promote awareness and engagement in advocacy initiatives
- Started an advocacy academy to increase civic engagement among low-income people
- Facilitated and created community revitalization and housing plans for urban, suburban, and rural communities
- Co-facilitated creation of the first multi-municipal Neighborhood Partnership Program in Pennsylvania
- Designed and piloted a Food Stamp (now SNAP) application assistance program later funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture
- Prepared Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice and Equity Plan reports for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Education

- Eleven years of experience as an adjunct university lecturer; have designed and taught traditional, hybrid, and online classes; assisted with organizing and grading for doctoral level classes
- Proficient in Blackboard, Teachable, and Kajabi course design and management
- Designed, promoted, and facilitated professional development and community-based workshops related to nonprofit management, entrepreneurship, marketing, finance, research, and data analysis independently and in partnership with organizations including the U.S. Small Business Administration, ArtsQuest, and Nonprofit Technology Resources
- Facilitated a series of workshops to develop marketing and fundraising skills in the performing arts community
- Created an online school for leaders and activists
- Launched a Success by 6® transition to kindergarten pilot site and partnered to develop a community-wide transition to kindergarten plan
- Designed and evaluated early childhood, afterschool, and summer educational programs

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PROJECTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Research

- Worked with research teams to assess public perception of a development project at a historic industrial site, the relationship between spirituality and social action, and barriers facing women of color in higher education
- Interviewed working mothers in their homes throughout Philadelphia about challenges related to childcare
- Ability to gather, analyze, and interpret multiple sources of secondary data to identify needs and make decisions
- Experienced with qualitative and quantitative approaches, survey design, data collection, transcription, data analysis, and formatting in APA and Chicago styles

Writing, Editing, and Publication Design

- Author of 11 books about leadership, social change, and wellness
- Created a technical assistance manual for minority- and woman-owned business certification
- Developed a customer service handbook that was replicated by a mid-sized city
- Created policy and procedure manuals for a multi-site housing and social service organization
- Created a school-based family support training manual and replication guide

Marketing, Public Relations, Event Management, and Communications

- Executive producer of an award-winning documentary about hunger
- Organized fundraising events and annual meetings for various organizations
- Organized an event to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Community Action programs
- Organized community events including a senior expo, job fair, children's art shows, and networking events
- Created newsletters, annual reports, brochures, flyers, and websites to tell organizations' stories and engage partners

Resource Development

- Secured more than \$20 million in public and private support for various projects from nationally competitive funding competitions, public agencies, foundations, businesses, and individuals
- Developed comprehensive contract compliance systems for grants and formalized partnerships; conducted internal audits and prepared programs for monitoring visits resulting in commendations from federal auditors
- Created development plans and case statements to strengthen fundraising strategies

Project and Information Management

- Co-managed an \$800,000 new construction project that created five apartments for families experiencing homelessness
- Collaborated with a health network and a local foundation to provide dental care to uninsured children
- Computer skills include SPSS, Microsoft Office, QuickBooks, PolicyMap, Dedoose, NVivo, MailChimp, Kit, social media

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AWARDS

- 2025 Kathy A. Possinger Housing Policy Fellow, PA Housing Finance Agency
- Nominee, Eastern University's 2022 Board of Fellows for Dissertation Excellence in Organizational Leadership Award
- Williams Prize for outstanding student paper in the social sciences at Lehigh University
- Second place winner in the Prudential Young Entrepreneur business plan competition
- MarCom Award for excellence in marketing and communication

SELECT CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- Engaging Social Division: Practices of Women Leaders within Progressive Social Movement Organizations, 24th annual conference of the International Leadership Association, Online
- Critical conversations: Social transformation through language. Roundtable discussion at the 14th annual conference of the International Leadership Association, Denver, CO.
- A postcritical existential phenomenological study about experiences of empowerment and liberation in social justice organizations. Poster presentation at the 14th annual conference of the International Leadership Association, Denver, CO.
- Building bridges in progressive social change organizations. Lecture presented at the Peace, Justice and Conflict Resolution Conference, Bethlehem, PA.

Team Presentations

- Appreciative inquiry: A leader's most powerful tool for visioning and planning. Panel discussion at the 14th annual conference of the International Leadership Association, Denver, CO, by E. Kaufman, K. Priest, J. Dreistadt, T. Morrow, J. Wyatt, & C. Wheeler.
- Transitions: Facilitating a successful school start for students, parents, and teachers. Workshop presented at the Early Childhood Education Summit, State College, PA, by J. Dreistadt and A. Hunt.
- Teaching social justice through service learning. Panel discussion at the Peace, Justice and Conflict Resolution Conference, Bethlehem, PA by C. Gray, M. Sheptak, M. Ryan, J. Dreistadt, and V. Bastidas.
- Family support handbook and replication guide. Presentation at the Family Involvement Conference, Lake Harmony, PA by J. Dreistadt and L. Bedoya.
- BethWorks Now Development Proposal: A Sociological Perspective. Presentation at Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA by J. Lasker, J. Dreistadt, J. Gardocki, J. Miernicki-Nojunas, S. Neibler, A. Seng, C. Tavares, & E. Wolski.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- Member, International Leadership Association