

Charlie Biggs

“Co-Creating Inspiring and Inclusive Futures”

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Profile

I am an educator, nonprofit leader, and Appreciative Inquiry facilitator with a deep commitment to helping other leaders and organizations succeed.

Professional Development Workshops, Webinars, and Courses (partial)

"Appreciative Leadership for Montessori School Leaders" – A six-session online course sponsored by the International Montessori Council, Cohort 1: August-September 2021; Cohort 2: March-April 2022, Cohort 3: September-October 2023.

Presentations for the International Montessori Council's weekly Leadership Webinars: "Setting Goals with Appreciative Inquiry" (5/15/24), "Leadership by Invitation and Welcome" (10/18/23), and "Appreciative Practices for Montessori Leaders" (3/8/23 & 7/11/23).

"Introduction to Appreciative Leadership: Using Appreciative Inquiry to Enhance Your Leadership, Engage Your Staff and Families, and Strengthen Your School!" - Association of Illinois Montessori Schools, Annual Conference, 2/26/22.

"Hope Is a Practice": Building Resilience through Appreciative Inquiry" – Montessori Alliance of Tennessee "Caring for Our Community" webinar series, 2/6/21.

Publications (partial)

"Leading Your School the Montessori Way: Flip Your Organizational Chart." *Montessori Leadership*, Vol. 24.2 (2022).

"Notes on Financial Stability for Montessori Schools during COVID-19 – or Any Time." *Montessori Leadership*, Vol. 22.4 (2020).

Experience

2025-Present

Interim Coordinator • Mirani Foundation • Knoxville, TN

- Coordinate East Tennessee grantmaking for the Mirani Foundation, a family foundation in Knoxville, TN, that supports organizations working in the areas of health, education, and social justice.
- Communicate with applicants and grantees.
- Schedule site visits and applicant presentations at meetings of the Mirani Foundation Advisory Council (MFAC).

2018-Present

Charles Biggs & Associates • Knoxville, TN

- Provide coaching, consulting, and collaborative planning services to nonprofit organizations and independent schools. Past clients include the Ijams Nature Preschool (Knoxville, TN), United We Read (Kingsport, TN), and the Tennessee Geographic Alliance.
- Facilitate professional development courses, workshops, and webinars (see left column for details).
- Write and publish articles on organizational leadership, nonprofit management, and staff development, among other topics. (see left column for details).

2009-2017

Director • Knoxville Montessori School • Knoxville, TN

- Coordinated the work of the Knoxville Montessori School (KMS), a nonprofit private school that provides high-quality Montessori education to children from preschool through 5th grade.
- Increased KMS's enrollment by 30% - from 57 students in 2009-2010 to 74 students in 2017-2018.
- Grew the school's operating income by 50% - from \$436,288 in 2009-2010 to \$655,483 in 2017-2018.
- Established a need-based financial aid program that provided up to 50% of tuition to 20%-25% of our students each year.
- Coordinated facilities upgrades that included renovating the school's classrooms and playground.
- Coordinated KMS's accreditation by the International Montessori Council.

2002-2009

Capital Campaign Coordinator • Highlander Research and Education Center • New Market, TN

- Worked collaboratively as part of the Fundraising and Communications Team, a multi-racial, intergenerational team supporting Highlander's work for social, economic, and racial justice.

“Follow Your Teachers!’ - Running a Montessori School with an Entrepreneurial Spirit and Non-Profit Values.” *Montessori Leadership*, Vol. 22.1 (2020).

Community Service (partial)

Mirani Foundation – Member of the Advisory Council (2022-Present).

Montessori Alliance of Tennessee – Member of the Board of Directors (2017-Present). Treasurer (2022-Present). Chair of the Education Committee (2018-2024). Secretary (2018-2022).

Alliance of Infant Mental Health in Tennessee – Member of the Board of Directors (2019-2025), Board Secretary (2020-21), Vice President (2021-2022), President (2022-2024), Past President (2024-2025).

Association for Infant Mental Health in the USA - Member of the Board of Directors (2024-2025).

Education and Professional Development (partial)

Appreciative Inquiry Facilitator Certification, Center for Appreciative Inquiry, Las Vegas, NV. (2021).

The Five Most Important Questions You’ll Ever Ask About Your School: Strategic Planning for Montessori Schools, Maren Schmidt, *Kids Talk* (2018).

Consortium for Social Enterprise Effectiveness, Haslam College of Business, University of Tennessee, Knoxville (2017).

M.Phil., English, Columbia University, New York, NY (1984).

M.A., English, Columbia University, New York, NY (1982).

B.A., History and American Studies, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ (1974).

- Helped raise over \$500,000 annually for Highlander’s operating budget and approximately \$250,000 for Phase I of Highlander’s 75th Anniversary Capital Campaign.
- Coordinated upgrades to Highlander’s Workshop Center and residential facilities.

1996-2002

Managing Editor • Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal • University of Tennessee • Knoxville, TN

- Coordinated editing and production of *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, which publishes scholarly articles in the humanities and social sciences.
- Helped organize conferences and symposia, including a national conference in 1997 on “The Future of the Harlem Renaissance.”

1990-2001

Adjunct Instructor • Department of English, University of Tennessee • Knoxville, TN

- Designed and taught freshman composition, sophomore literature, and upper-division literature and American Studies courses.
- Recipient, John C. Hodges Excellence in Teaching Award, 1992.

1984-1990

Adjunct Instructor • Dept. of English, City College of New York • New York, NY

- Designed and taught basic writing and freshman composition courses, including the first sections of computer-assisted freshman composition offered at CCNY.

1980-1984

Foundation & Nonprofit Consultant • New York, NY

- Provided program evaluation, docket writing, and other services to the New World Foundation, the J.C. Penney Foundation, Joint Foundation Support, and the Norman Foundation.
- Provided management and fundraising assistance to a variety of local and national nonprofit organizations, including Arts Alive!, which helped organize artists and musicians to participate in the June 12, 1982 anti-nuclear rally in New York’s Central Park.

1974-1979

The Youth Project • Washington, DC

- **Eastern Office Field Director** (1977-1979) - Directed the Youth Project’s Eastern Office, which provided funding and organizational assistance to grassroots social-justice organizations in the Northeast, Midwest, and Appalachia. Supervised a staff of four in offices in Washington, DC, and Knoxville, TN.
- **Eastern Office Field Representative** (1975-1977) - Provided funding and organizational assistance to grassroots social-justice organizations in New England and the Midwest.

[Updated – 4/11/2025]