

# Team Elevate Bios.



**Lillian Blades, Co-Designer**

**Lillian Blades** is an assemblage artist who is receiving increasing recognition for her public art installations throughout the city of Atlanta. Born in Nassau, Bahamas, Blades has resided in Atlanta, GA since 1996 and is included in Public Art Registries of Fulton County and the City of Atlanta Office of Cultural Affairs. She began her undergraduate studies at The College of the Bahamas as an architecture major before changing her major to Fine Art during her second year of study. She was awarded The Chris Blackwell Junkanoo Scholarship to finish her BFA in Art at the Savannah College of Art and Design and attended the prestigious Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine in 1999. She completed her MFA in painting the following year at Georgia State University and completed a residency at the Caversham Centre for Artists and Writers in KwaZulu Natal Province, South Africa.

Blades' work has appeared in several solo and group exhibitions throughout the United States, The Bahamas, Trinidad, Germany and South Africa. Her artwork focuses on themes of Mother & Child, Sewing & Quilting, as well as spirituality and ancestral visual traditions. Her public art often incorporates interactions and contributions from community members young and old. Blades created

"Quilted Community," a public art collaborative project funded by the Fulton County Board of Commissioners with over 300 participants from East Atlanta. "Quilted Community" is permanently displayed at the East Atlanta Library, Fulton County's first LEED Silver Certified government building. She also was commissioned to produce a permanent public art installation for the Hartsfield International Airport. Blades was commissioned by the Andrew Young Foundation to produce a permanent art installation for Young Middle School, a LEED certified school in the Atlanta Public School System. She has shown at the renowned Hammonds House Museum, Saddler Hudson Gallery and the National Gallery of the Bahamas. Her fine art is in the collection of the Birmingham Museum of Art, Clark Atlanta University, CLiCO and The National Collection of The Bahamas and is collected by private collectors nationally and internationally. Blades serves as an art instructor leading students in the completion of assemblage art projects that make use of recycled materials at schools serviced through the Threshing Floor Academy Arts in Schools Program. As Co-Designer, Artistic Manager, Lighting Design Manager, Interior Design Manager and Visual Artist for Team Elevate, Blades worked collaboratively with team members Meisha Card, the architects of Breedlove Land Planning, Inc and The Epstein Group to bring to life the urban farm she and Ms. Card designed collaboratively. As a public artist, Blades dreams of seeing an architectural urban installation of floating organic earthen beds in the heart of the city of Atlanta. She is committed to leading a more sustainable lifestyle and hopes the urban farm design will inspire others to do the same. For more information on Lillian Blades and her artwork visit [www.lillianblades.com](http://www.lillianblades.com).



**Meisha Card, Co-Designer**

**Meisha Card** is Founder, CEO and Director of **Threshing Floor Academy of Arts and Sciences, Inc.**, an innovative children's art and music program servicing Fulton, DeKalb and Gwinnett counties. The former Special Needs Kindergarten teacher and Family and Child Advocate founded the academy in 2008 with the mission of empowering families and children, equipping them with the skills and resources needed to effectively identify and pursue their God given purpose in life. The mission of Threshing Floor Academy is currently accomplished through the provision of an Arts in Schools and Authors in Schools Program. Through these programs, the academy partners with schools and child development centers to provide quality and exceptional learning experiences to students that work to enhance the current curriculum of each school. Over time the academy will evolve into a full fledge school that will be family focused with a heavy emphasis on the arts, community service, purpose identification and pursuit.

Card holds a B.A. In Psychology from the University of South Carolina and minored in Elementary Education. She has done graduate work in the area of School Psychology and has worked to advocate for the needs & rights of a number of families & children in both South Carolina and Georgia. Through participation in several research studies & service in the areas of public education, early-childhood education, family literacy, public relations and social service, Card has developed a passion for families and children, particularly those who have been marginalized.

Recently, Card began working to incorporate urban farming into Threshing Floor Academy's current culinary arts curriculum. The current curriculum enlists chefs to work with students through the Arts in Schools Program, leading them in the preparation of healthy meals, with the goal of encouraging students to make healthy food choices and try new things. Daily, she witnesses students fall in love with new foods and give vegetables they vowed they'd never try again a second chance all while discovering that eating healthy and trying new foods can be incredibly delicious and exciting. She currently is working to partner with local organic farmers to further empower students, equipping them with the skills and tools needed to grow their own home garden and/or organize a community urban farm. Card serves as Co-Designer, Project Manager, Educational Programming & Community Involvement Manager and Agriculture Co-Manager for Team Elevate. As the granddaughter of a rural Georgia farmer and self proclaimed foodie, Card reflected on her farming heritage, experience in education, her love of culinary arts, as well as her early aspirations to be an architect in designing an urban farm that would be positioned in the heart of the city of Atlanta. An artist in her own right, Card envisioned a farm that paid homage to Georgia's rich traditional farming heritage while embracing the excitement of new agriculture technology. She dreams of seeing the urban farm she designed with Visual Artist Lillian Blades constructed in the heart of the City of Atlanta and believes it will be a source of inspiration and excitement individuals young and old and serve as an empowerment center families and children of all economic backgrounds. For more information on Meisha Card and Threshing Floor Academy visit [www.threshingflooracademy.org](http://www.threshingflooracademy.org).

*"Artists & educators are cultivators of the heart & mind, possessing the ability to plant seeds of inspiration, affirmation, perseverance, & conviction that will reap a harvest of purpose, triumph, & destiny fulfilled in the minds & hearts of individuals young and old. It is my prayer that my work does just that."* -Meisha Card



**Breedlove Land Planning, Inc.** is a multi-disciplinary firm of award winning Landscape Architects, Planners and Civil Engineers. Founded by **Michael W. Breedlove**, RLA, FASLA, CPESC, LEED AP in 1985, the Georgia based firm prides itself on consistently providing exemplary customer service while serving as a leader in the study and execution of progressive land planning techniques that balance the natural environment with the built environment. The firm boasts some of the state's most accomplished Landscape Architects, Planners and Civil Engineers.

**Alan Wieczynski**, RLA, ASLA, LEED AP BD+C is a Landscape Architect at Breedlove Land Planning and a respected leader in sustainable site design. The University of Georgia graduate has been involved in managing all facets of site design for hundreds of projects throughout the State of Georgia and is a registered landscape architect, a LEED Accredited Professional and an elected member of the United States Green Building Council- Atlanta Branch Leadership Group. He has overseen the design and construction of over two dozen United States Green Building Council Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold certified or LEED pending projects. His professional experience encompasses a variety of scales, from urban residential design to regional planning with experience practicing out of offices in Washington D.C. and Atlanta, Georgia. His work has been featured in numerous regional and national publications including the Atlanta Journal-Constitution and Landscape Architecture Magazine. Wieczynski serves as Landscape Manager on Team Elevate. He is most excited about the restaurant feature of Team Elevate's urban farm design and the possibility of gaining a healthier lunch option while attending meetings around the Capitol, State offices and Atlanta City Hall.

**Roger Wells**, Environmental Designer at Breedlove Land Planning, Inc., is a recent graduate of the College of Environment and Design at the University of Georgia. Passionate about sustainable design, and equipped with admirable drafting, rendering and production skills, Roger serves as Landscape Assistant to Alan Wieczynski on Team Elevate. For more information on Breedlove Land Planning, Inc. visit [www.landplanning.net](http://www.landplanning.net).

*"I believe it is an important personal and professional virtue to strive to meet the needs of today without compromising the needs of the future."*

- Alan Wieczynski



**The Epsten Group (L to R) Dagmar Epsten, Michael McGrath, Kate Menke, Pete Choquette**

**The Epsten Group, Inc.** is an 8(a) certified Woman-Owned Business Enterprise and a global leader in innovative, sustainable and high performance building consulting and design. Founder, President and CEO, **Dagmar Epsten** is a Georgia Tech graduate and recipient of several sustainable design and achievement awards including the Construction Specifications Institute's National Environmental Stewardship Award. Epsten is among 34 of the world's most distinguished green building professionals to be named to the inaugural class of LEED Fellows by the Green Building Certification Institute (GBCI). She possesses LEED credentials in five specialties (LEED AP BD+C, O+M, ID+C, ND and Homes), 27 years of green building experience and an extensive portfolio including such exemplary projects as Georgia Tech's Technology Square, Atlantic Station in Georgia and Capital City Convention Center in Mississippi. She is a frequent presenter at international conferences including the Energy & Environment Conference and Exposition, Phoenix, Arizona, 2010, and the Green Building Focus Conference, Birmingham, Alabama.

Epsten Group offers a diverse range of services using architectural and interior design strategies that are environmentally sensitive. Their designs enhance communities, incorporate daylighting, energy efficiency and make sensible use of sustainable materials and existing structures. Epsten Group provides LEED consulting, commissioning of building systems, building envelopes, roofing & waterproofing consulting, retro-commissioning, energy modeling, daylighting studies, and interior design. They also supports corporate sustainability reporting to an extensive clientele of building owners, developers, architects, and engineers with expertise encompassing commercial, higher-education, government and residential projects. In 2006, they were selected by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) as one of two national consultants to review and approve certifications for the LEED rating systems. Today, Epsten Group is the global leader in LEED certification reviews, having provided over 4,000 reviews in more than 40 countries including the United States, China, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Germany, Brazil, Mexico and Vietnam.

A company of many firsts, The Epsten Group's Edgewood Office is the first building in the City of Atlanta to achieve LEED designation. Since that time they have made additional updates and expect to secure Platinum Certification, the highest rating within the LEED rating system, by the end of 2011. Their design of 171 17th Street Building in Atlantic Station Received the first LEED designation for a high rise office building in the world. Their design of the Len Foote Hike Inn, a Georgia Department of Natural Resources owned facility, was awarded the first LEED Existing Building (EB) designation in the State of Georgia. Additionally, Epsten Group was the first firm to obtain three green certifications in one project with this design. Recognized in 2011 as one of the Top 300 Small Businesses of the South and ranked on Inc.'s list of fastest-growing private companies in America, the firm has approximately 30 LEED Accredited Professionals on staff, along with a Professional Engineer, 2 Commissioning Agents and a Certified Green Roof Professional.

**Pete Choquette**, AIA, LEED AP BD+C, RESNET Certified Field Inspector & HERS Rater serves as Architecture and Consulting Department Manager at Epsten Group. Choquette holds a B.S. & Masters in Architecture and a City and Regional Planning Certificate from Georgia Tech. Choquette is a Registered Architect with experience in a broad range of architectural projects. He has completed several energy modeling projects in Atlanta and around the world. He has worked on the Intriago Residence in Conyers, GA, multiple LEED Gold projects and four projects at the Zoo Atlanta including the new Sumatran Tiger and Malayan Sun Bear exhibits. He is a member of the American Institute of Architects, the Smart Growth Network and an Advocate member of the American Wind Energy Association. As an architect, Choquette focuses on environmental ethics and sustainability as it relates to the interrelationship of environmental, social, and economic issues and the importance of balancing all three to establish a clean, just, and prosperous civilization. As Building Construction Manager for Team Elevate, Choquette is excited about the opportunity to be a part of a truly comprehensive sustainable design with a full range of potential environmental building solutions as well as social considerations that are often not considered in typical design projects. The following Epsten Staff members served alongside Choquette on Team Elevate: **Kate Menke**, LEED Certifications Team Leader and **Michael McGrath**, LEED Specialist II. For more information on The Epsten Group, Inc. visit [www.theepstengroup.com](http://www.theepstengroup.com).

*"I have always been interested in architecture as a social project in helping to provide a more just society. In graduate school, I began to focus on environmental ethics and sustainability and realized the interrelationship of environmental, social and economic issues and the importance of balancing all three to establish a clean, just and prosperous civilization "* -Pete Choquette