

# Conversations with the Inspiring MaKara Rumley

## Local Stories



Today we'd like to introduce you to MaKara Rumley.

### **MaKara, let's start with your story. We'd love to hear how you got started and how the journey has been so far.**

I was raised in Gaithersburg, MD, a suburb about an hour outside of the nation's capital. The environment, landscape, and cultural diversity was something I took for granted at the time, but upon reflection realize that it made me who I am today. My superpower was that I really can "see" people for their unique talents and the contributions that they can give to any project. Throughout my career, I have been tapped to "handle" the most challenging personalities in many environments. Earning a law degree greatly prepared me to be able to balance the social, political, and economic impact of any given project. My talent became so pronounced that I was chosen as a Political Appointee under the Obama Administration to be a Senior Advisor to the Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4, on community engagement. Upon leaving the Agency, I founded Hummingbird, a community engagement consulting firm, and it has been one of my best life decisions thus far.

### **Great, so let's dig a little deeper into the story – has it been an easy path overall and if not, what were the challenges you've had to overcome?**

The road to owning a successful company has been a journey that is not for the faint of heart. I networked and pitched and planned for two years without significant revenue, foregoing personal income for the long-term success that I envisioned. My tips for future

entrepreneurs are as follows:

- Stay positive and redirect one’s thoughts and actions when doubt surfaces.
- Have a strong family support system which is vital to staying the course and remaining energized.
- For a young woman, be confident in your voice and laser focused.
- During the building phase, surround yourself with people who are innovative trailblazers and intimately understand entrepreneurship.
- Be choosy in your companionship, it can be tough venting to someone who works a 9 to 5 and may be risk-averse.

### **What should we know about Hummingbird? What do you guys do best? What sets you apart from the competition?**

Hummingbird presents the complete package to our clients. Ranging from the small to the large, Hummingbird is able to bring together various perspectives and find the common linkage to create community engagement that works. We use that connection to identify, assess and promote the steps to go beyond the status quo, beyond the expected. We approach all of our services with the cultural competency that is essential to truly reach the intended target audience. We serve as the translator for divergent viewpoints, building bridges between people and the “bottom-line.”

Our services are the following:

1. Draft and implement community engagement plans for federal agencies and planning, engineering, architecture, and development firms;
2. Create and provide strategic communications plans for the environmental/utility industry;
3. Lead soft skills workshops for tech companies;
4. Facilitate strategic planning processes for micro non-profits.

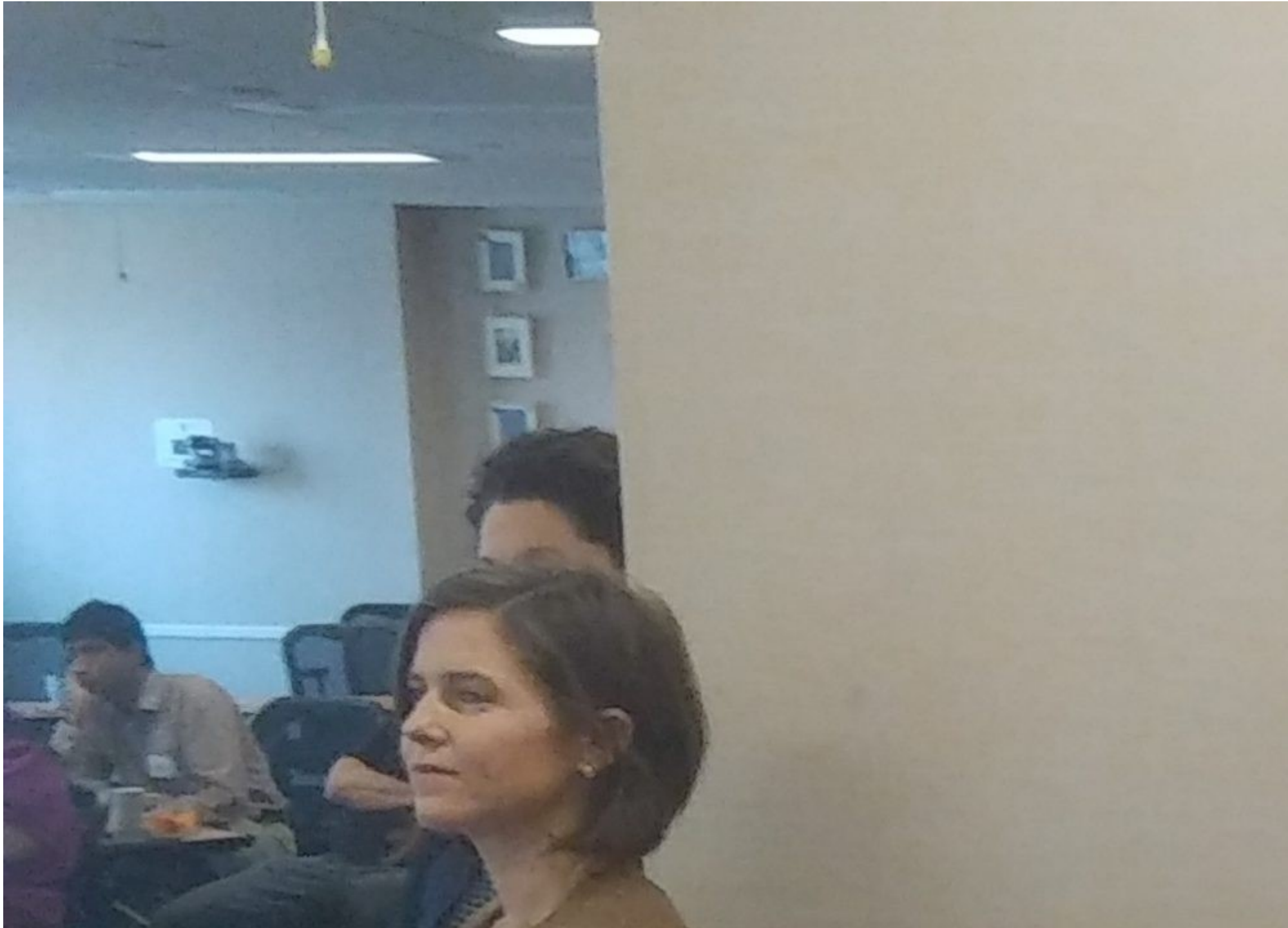
### **Looking back on your childhood, what experiences do you feel played an important role in shaping the person you grew up to be?**

My parents always encouraged me to speak up for what I believed in despite potential backlash or challenges. They never let me shy away from bravery or courageousness and that has served me well throughout my adult life. It’s important to know what your own personal values and mission are so that you can honor them in everything that you do. My own personal mission is to “Lead with intentionality in the pursuit of excellence with intelligence, elegance, and beauty.”

### **Contact Info:**

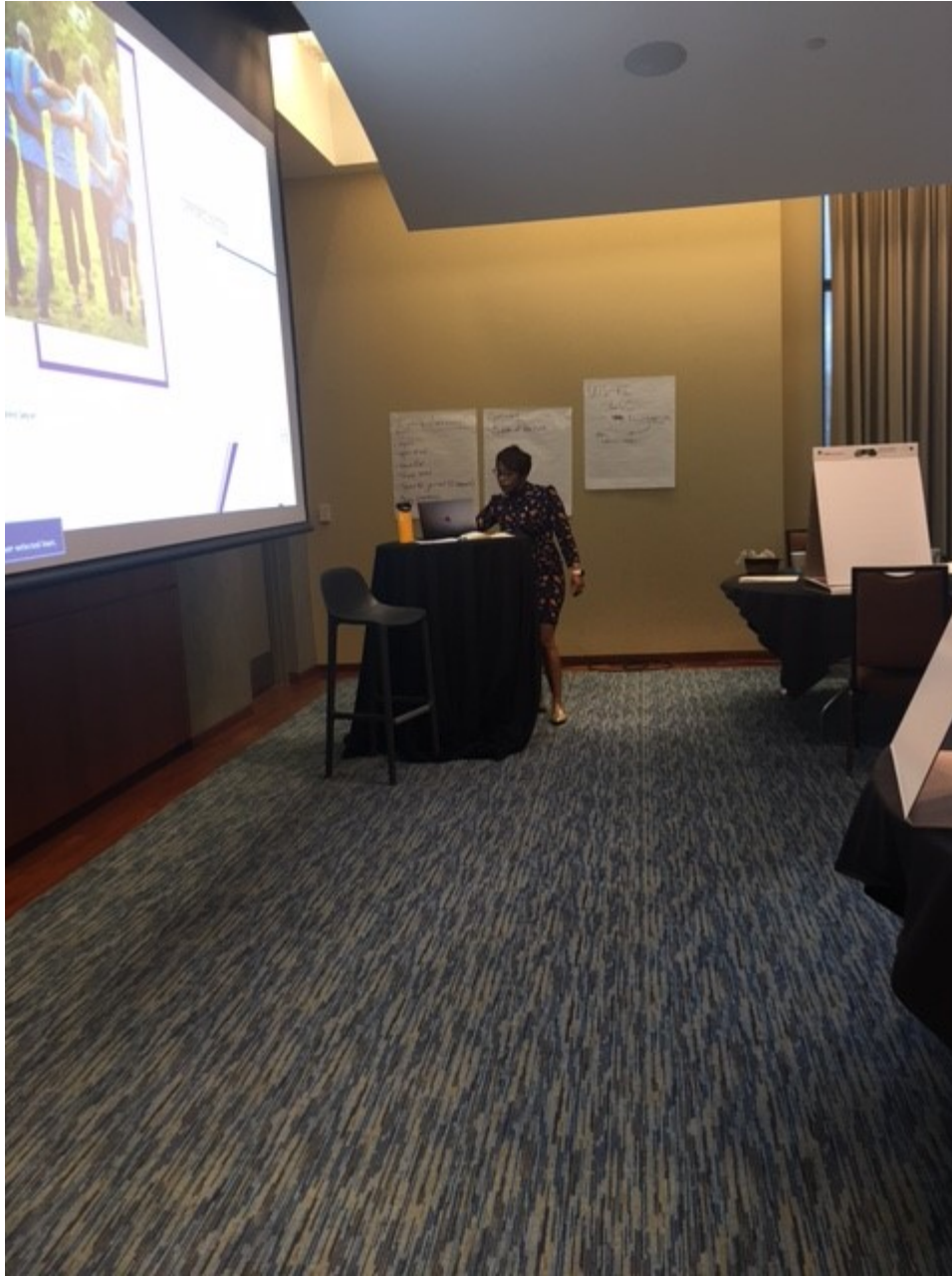
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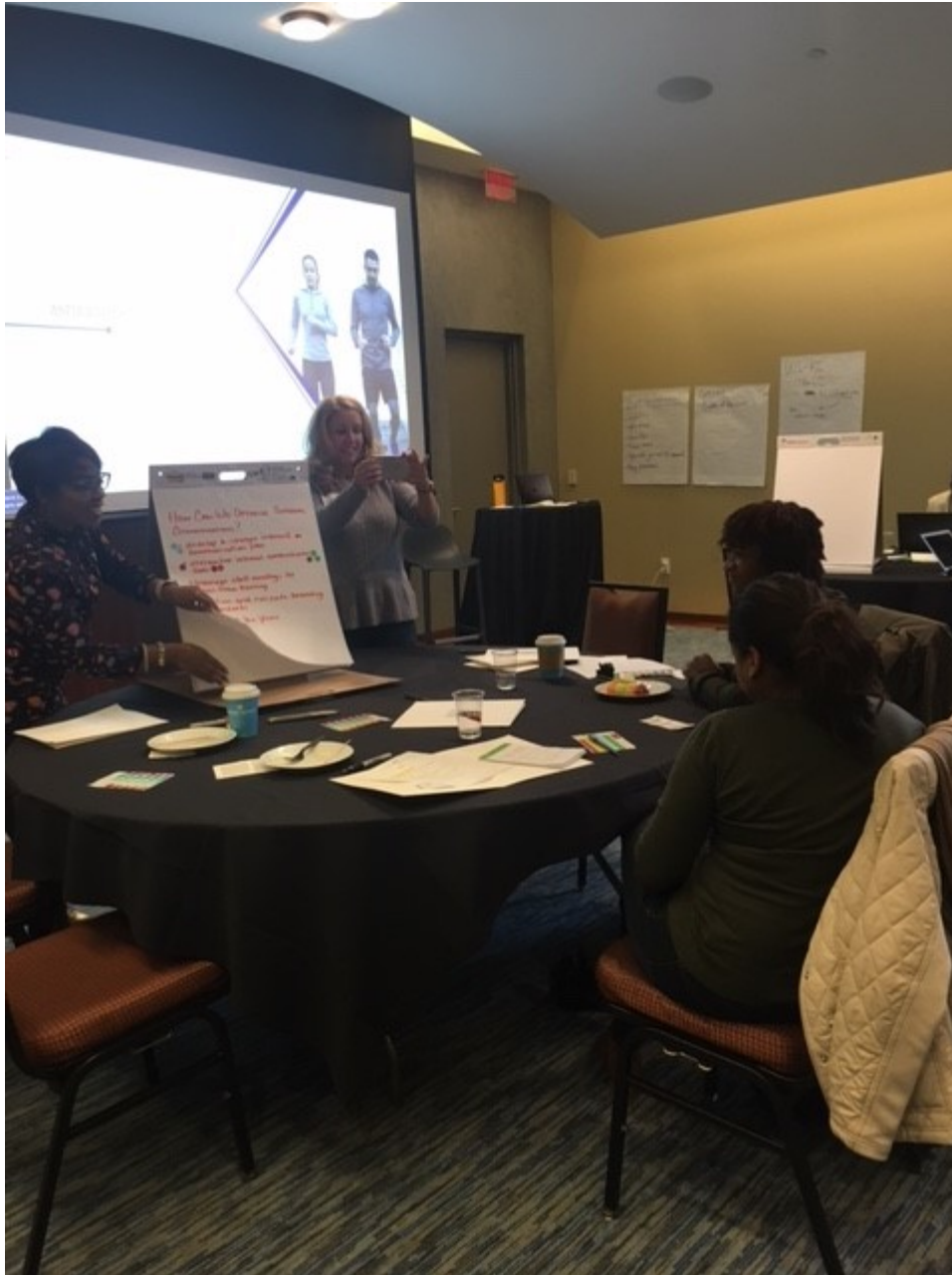
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**Image Credit:**

MaKara Rumley, Hood Huggers (Asheville, NC) for poster attached to tree, Mackenzie Madden, Christian Braneon, Blyth Mumford-Coleman



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