I am currently a Principal Collaborative Scientist with the Kaiser Permanente Washington Health Research Institute where I am predominantly working on the Adult Changes in Thought (ACT) Study of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. Previously I worked as a Senior Research Epidemiologist specializing in Environmental & Chronic Disease Research within the Center for Applied Public Health Research, Biostatistics & Epidemiology Division at RTI International. I have a faculty appointments at Loma Linda University and USC. I earned my MPH from the Fielding School of Public Health at UCLA and my PhD in Epidemiology from the Department of Preventive Medicine at USC’s Keck School of Medicine. Subsequently I completed a three-year post-doctoral fellowship at UCLA in environmental neuroepidemiology as well as a one-year internship in communicable disease control and prevention at the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. I hold certifications in Public Health (CPH), SAS, Geographical Information Science (GIS), and college teaching. My research focuses on environmental, occupational, lifestyle and genetic risk and protective factors for cardiovascular and neurological diseases, specifically Parkinson’s disease as well as cognitive impairment and dementia.

In 2009, I co-founded the Milagro Allegro Community Garden, a vibrant and thriving community space that integrates urban farming, art and education in the Highland Park neighborhood of Northeast Los Angeles. In 2010, inspired by Michelle Obama’s “Let’s Move” campaign, with colleagues I developed LA Sprouts, a nutrition/cooking and gardening intervention aimed at reducing the risk of childhood obesity in predominantly Latino elementary school aged children. During 2012-17, I led the evaluation of the Little Green Fingers project, which constructed eight community gardens across Los Angeles County.

In 2014, I was a recipient of the Governor’s Environmental and Economic Leadership Award. In 2018, I was awarded a Fulbright Specialist grant to teach epidemiology to public health professionals at the National Center of Public Health in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. In February 2020, I was named a Fulbright Scholar and, in 2021, traveled to Iceland to teach and do research at the University of Iceland. In May 2022, I was awarded a second Fulbright Specialist grant (Environmental Health & Epidemiology) at the University of Cartagena, Colombia.

I am a member of professional societies including the American Public Health Association and the International Society of Environmental Epidemiology. I serve as a reviewer for prominent public health journals including Environmental Health Perspectives, Journal of the Neurological Sciences, and Public Health Nutrition and serve as guest editor for the journals Vaccines and Brain Sciences.

I am a native Angeleno inspired by the work of Wangari Maathai who founded the Green Belt movement in Kenya, and Alice Waters who created the Edible Schoolyard in Berkeley, CA.