

Valerie Castile, CEO and President, Philando Castile® Relief Foundation (short version)

Valerie Castile is the mother of Philando and Allynsza Castile. In 1987, she relocated to Minnesota with her then only child, Philando, to give him a better life. Her beloved son was murdered by a police officer in July 2016 in Falcon Heights, Minnesota. Since then, Valerie Castile has dedicated herself to helping families who have lost a loved one by gun violence; she founded the Philando Castile Relief Foundation (PCRF) in honor of her son. Valerie's hopes include working collectively to decrease the unnecessary loss of life by any person or police, to increase awareness of the hurt and trauma received as a mother, and to create the narrative that All Lives Matter. She also guides the PCRF in reducing students' negative lunch balances throughout Minnesota school districts, is in honor of Philando's work as a cafeteria supervisor. Philando often paid for students' lunches out of his own pocket if they didn't have enough money. In June 2019, Valerie joined Minnesota Representative Ilhan Omar and Senator Tina Smith in introducing the [No Shame At School Act](#), legislation which prohibits schools from shaming children who are unable to pay for their school lunch.

Valerie Castile, CEO and President, Philando Castile® Relief Foundation (long version)

My name is Valerie Castile, mother of Philando and Allynsza Castile. I'm a mother 100%. I relocated to Minnesota to give my children a better life in 1987. My first born, one and only beloved son, was murdered by a Peace officer on July 6, 2016 in Falcon Heights, MN.

I founded the Philando Castile Relief Foundation (PCRF) in honor of my son. Through the PCRF, I have become a change agent and have dedicated myself to helping families who have lost a loved one by gun violence. The foundation donates a stipend toward funerary assistance, resources for grief counseling, and other resources as needed. The foundation helps reduce negative lunch balances for school districts across Minnesota. The foundation was part of the working group at John Jay Criminal College in New York that developed the "Toolkit "for the prosecutor's role in addressing police officer-involved fatalities and critical incidents. I have been involved in several panels and working groups to address and advocate for police reform and policy changes. The PCRF was instrumental in the July 6, 2020 update to the Minnesota Drivers' Manual, which addresses gun ownership and what is expected of both the driver and the police when a weapon is in the vehicle.

My current hopes include working collectively to decrease the unnecessary loss of life by any person or police officer, to increase awareness of the ongoing hurt and trauma received as a mother and in families because of gun violence, and to create the narrative that all lives matter. The PCRF has been recognized by several prestigious organizations, among them the 2018 Community Champion Award from the Minneapolis Urban League. In 2020, our recognition has included: the ACLU Room and Board Torchbearer Award; the NEA Reg Weaver Human and Civil Rights Award; the St. Paul and Minneapolis Foundations Facing Race Award; the 1st John Lewis Justice Award; and the Strong Buffalo Award from the Dakota Sioux tribe.

The PCRF has received several letters of appreciation from Minnesota schools for our efforts to eliminate child hunger and lunch shaming: including the St. Paul Public School District, Cooper . On June 19 , 2019 I stood on Capitol Hill to announce the "[No Shame At School Act](#)" with Rep. Ilhan Omar, that she and Senator Tina Smith drafted. The PCRF feels strongly that we must care for the future leaders of this great country; no child should go hungry. This is Food Justice.