

# KIMBERLY J. EMCH

Professional Trainer and Public Speaker

**Founder & Executive Director, Festa (Serving Our Neighbors Ministries)**

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## Summary

*Kimberly J. Emch is a rare first-hand knowledge speaker* (in our world where 90% of information we learn is from secondhand accounts). As an innovative nonprofit founder, social justice entrepreneur, and high-energy communicator Kim mobilizes communities to address suburban poverty through practical solutions resulting in life-changing relationships and stronger communities that move people out of poverty. She is known for compelling, inspirational storytelling and real-world tools that audiences can apply immediately and her ability to unite large groups of diverse people and partners around a shared cause.

## Core Expertise & Lived Work

- Identified Suburban poverty in 2007: what's hidden and how to build respect based community solutions where people go from surviving to thriving
- Creator of a three generation education model
- Creating a program culture where multigenerational, cross-cultural relationship building happens
- Volunteer and community mobilization at scale (800-1,000 people per year)
- Program design for "hand-up" pathways out of poverty
- Leadership, partnership development, and entrepreneurship
- Cultural competency and inclusive community engagement

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## Signature Programs & Impact

- **Festa Founder & Executive Director (2007–present):** Leads a \$1.7M annual mission, created 90+ nonprofit jobs, mobilizes 800+ volunteers annually, all to support families taking steps out of poverty.
- **Hilliard Free Summer Lunch Program Founder (2007–present):** Over **211,000 meals served** since launch; model replicated in **17 Ohio communities**.
- **3-Generation Family English Program Founder (2009–present):** Serves **1200+ learners** from **90+ countries**, infants through grandparents, across 40+ zip codes. Scaled to three locations and taught three Ohio communities this model to serve their neighbors.
- **Documentary Creator:** Concept Developer & Executive Producer, *ESL: More than a Language* — a film highlighting 15 neighbors who met at a unique family English program and built relationships, across lines of difference that transformed their lives from surviving to thriving. The film hopes to grow empathy that inspires people to meet their neighbors and increase access to family-centered ESL nationwide.

## Speaking Topics

- **The Essence of Ethnic Difference (Dr. Nicole's Training):** A practical, hopeful framework for understanding ethnic differences and building healthy cross-cultural relationships that strengthen communities.
- **Poverty Simulations & Presentations:** Immersive experiences and teaching that reveal the hidden realities of poverty and activate audiences toward meaningful, dignity-centered responses.
- **Volunteering: Mobilizing the Community to Serve:** How to recruit, train, empower, and retain volunteers in a way that builds belonging and produces measurable community impact.
- **Shame & Honor (Biblical-Based):** A biblically grounded look at shame and honor dynamics, and how understanding them transforms communication, discipleship, and neighbor-care.
- **Eastern & Western Culture:** A bridge-building session on cultural worldview differences and how to lead, communicate, and serve more effectively across them.
- **Flagship Programs at Festa:** Real-world blueprints and stories behind Festa's Summer Lunch Camps and 3-Generation Family English (Family ESL) programs—what works, why it works, and how others can replicate it.
- **Business ESL: English is the first rung on the workforce ladder.** Creating out of the box English language solutions to meet corporate, individual and community needs.

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- **Founder's Story: Finding a Community Need & Doing Something About It:** Kim's journey from noticing a gap to building a movement—practical lessons in courage, listening, and launching what your community truly needs.
- **Bringing People Together Across Lines of Difference:** Tools for building trust across socio-economic, cultural, racial, ethnic, and religious differences through life-changing relationships.
- **Rallying a Community of Support Around a Social Cause:** How to pull schools, churches, nonprofits, businesses, and neighbors into one shared mission with clarity, joy, and staying power.
- **Current Trends Affecting Adult ESOL Learners and Programs:** barriers learners face, assessments and placements of learners, wrap around services and funding for programs.

## Media, Podcasts & Notable Features

Television / Video / Press / Forums:

- [HBO Real Sports](#)
- [TEDx Hilliard](#)
- [NBC4 Columbus](#)
- ABC 6 On Your Side
  - [Festa Business ESL](#)
  - [Festa 3-Generation Family ESL](#)
  - [Festa 3-Generation Family ESL](#)
- [Columbus Metropolitan Club](#)
- [United Way of Central Ohio](#)
- [For Columbus Kingdom Collaboration](#)
- Ohio TESOL, Adult/Refugee Education Interest Annual Meeting 2025

## Podcasts:

**Kim Emch, Festa**  
**Army of Normal Folks**

**EP9 - Festa - Kim Emch**  
**The Bridge to Kindness Podcast**

**Suburban Poverty, Kim Emch of Festa**  
**For Columbus Podcast**

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**How To Eradicate The Hidden Poverty In Your Community**

**Success to Significance Podcast**

**Kim Emch, Episode 96**

**Unscripted Podcast**

## Awards & Recognition

- Young Church Woman (2008)
- Living Faith Award (2009)
- Asset Builder Award (2010)
- Sunny 95 “20 Most Outstanding Women” (2012)
- Capital University Alumni Distinguished Service Award (2012)
- Junior League of Columbus Community Award (2016)
- Ohio Summer Nutrition Program of the Year (Children’s Hunger Alliance, 2015)
- Jefferson Award finalist (2017)
- Friend of Public Education (OH School Boards Association, 2017)
- Stand Together Foundation “Most Transformative Nonprofits” (2021)
- Stand Together Catalyst Program graduate (2023)
- Stand Together Catalyst Impact Grant program recipient (2025-2026)

## Education & Professional Training

- New Strategies Program – Business for Impact, Georgetown University (2025) sponsored by JP Morgan Chase
- Stand Together - principal based management and effective storytelling
- Certified Train-the-Trainer, Cultural Competency in Leadership by Dr. Edwin Nichols (2022)
- DeVos Urban Leadership Initiative graduate (2018)
- B.A., Economics (Cum Laude), Capital University; Minors in Sociology & Public Address (1992)

## Prior Professional Experience

- Corporate Trainer and bank officer, Huntington National Bank (1992–1999) Built corp. training department, authored curricula, and delivered presentations to audiences up to 450.