



## **Shannon Cohen Biography**

Shannon Cohen is the founder and principal of Shannon Cohen, Inc. [dba Community Ventures]. Shannon is an award-winning industry leader and sought-after strategist, innovator, and inspirational leader. Through Shannon Cohen, Inc. Shannon has served several entities including but not limited to, The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, the Michigan High Intensity Drug Trafficking Agency, Kids Food Basket, Network180, Heartside Ministry, Friends of Grand Rapids Parks, Blue Cross Blue Shield of MI, Mercantile Bank, Camp Blodgett, and United Way of the Battle Creek and Kalamazoo Region.

She has been an active member of local, regional, and national philanthropic and community development efforts for the past sixteen years. Shannon has created, managed, and scaled several movements, initiatives, and incubator efforts designed to foster community renewal and stem public health ills with a special focus on youth.

Shannon is a W.K. Kellogg Foundation fellow, an Encore Innovation Fellow with the Grand Rapids Community Foundation, and has received several awards for her work and service including a 2015 Grand Rapids Business Journal Influential Woman feature, the 2014 '40 Under Forty' Award, Rising Star Award from Our Community's Children, and the Local Champion and Hero Award from the Michigan Coalition to Reduce Underage Drinking.

Shannon is a practitioner adjunct faculty member for the College of Community and Public Service and the School of Public, Nonprofit, and Health Administration at Grand Valley State University. She is passionate about empowering emerging and existing leaders to be transformative in the communities they serve.

Most recently, Shannon birthed 'Tough Skin, Soft Heart'. Tough Skin, Soft Heart is a movement specializing in empowering today's overextended leader to navigate the emotional, mental, and physical strain that often accompanies a life committed to being a difference-maker. Tough Skin, Soft Heart features three tiers – a blog series, motivational speaking, and a product line featuring portable affirmation in the form of soy candles, wall art, journals, stationary, and leadership care kits. One of her blogs, 'Frenemies' was published in the Huffington Post in 2016.

Shannon is the co-founder of Sisters Who Lead, a movement birthed out a research study Shannon facilitated with Patricia Sosa VerDuin entitled, 'Invisible Walls, Ceilings, and Floors: Championing the Voices and Inclusion of Female Leaders of Color in West Michigan.' Shannon also serves on the board for HQ, a drop-in center for youth experiencing homelessness and the Development Committee for Baxter Community Center.

Shannon and her husband are the proud parents of a 3-year old son, Duriel Cohen II.