MIC NEWS

MARCH 2026

MIC's 4TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:

SIARRA GUILLORY

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Tell us about yourself.

I'm a creative and analytical professional currently continuing my path in tech, with a background rooted in curiosity, resilience, and self-reinvention. I'd like to call myself a unicorn of sorts. Over the past several years, I've explored areas like software development, product design, and data work, while navigating real-life challenges that pushed me to grow both personally and professionally.

I'm especially passionate about bridging logic and creativity—whether through coding, design, or problem-solving. At this stage in my journey, I'm focused on mastering my skills, increasing my earning potential, and creating a life that reflects both stability and freedom. I'm also someone who values self-awareness, accountability, and continuous growth. We all have innate gifts and talents.

What inspired you to pursue your current path?

Honestly, a mix of curiosity and pressure. I've always been someone who wants to understand how things work—systems, people, patterns—and tech felt like a space where I could actually apply that.

At the same time, I knew I wanted more for myself financially and mentally. I didn't want to feel stuck or limited, and tech felt like one of the few paths where I could build real leverage if I stuck with it.

So it wasn't just passion—it was intention. I chose this path because it made sense for the life I'm trying to create.

What challenges have shaped you the most, and what did you learn from them?

One of the biggest challenges has been staying consistent in the middle of doubt—especially when it's coming from outside *and* inside at the same time. I've had moments where I questioned if I wasted time, if I was behind, or if I was even cut out for this. And on top of that, dealing with people who didn't fully understand or support the path made it heavier.

What I learned is that doubt doesn't mean stop—it just means you're in the middle of becoming something new. I also learned that not everyone needs to understand your vision for it to be valid. You just have to keep going long enough to prove it to yourself.

How do you stay motivated during difficult or uncertain times?

I don't always rely on motivation—I rely on discipline and perspective. There are definitely days where I feel off, tired, or unsure, but I've learned not to let that completely stop me. Even if I move slower, I still try to move. I also remind myself why I started. I think about the version of me that wanted more and made the decision to change things. That version of me deserves follow-through. And sometimes, it's as simple as not wanting to go backwards.

What does success look like to you right now?

Right now, success looks like stability and options. It's being in a position where I'm not stressed about money, where my skills are actually paying off, and where I have the freedom to make decisions without feeling stuck

or dependent.

It's also internal—feeling solid in who I am, not constantly second-guessing myself, and knowing I can handle whatever comes next. I'm not chasing a title or image. I'm building a life that feels secure, aligned, and mine.

What are you currently working on or excited about next?

Right now, I'm focused on sharpening my skills and getting more intentional about how I move in my career. Not just doing the work, but positioning myself better, increasing my value, and opening up higher-paying opportunities. I'm also working on building more structure in my life overall—financially, mentally, and professionally.

What I'm excited about is the shift I can feel happening. It's not loud or dramatic, but it's real. Things are starting to click, and I know I'm getting closer to the version of my life I've been working toward.

Any fun facts, favorite books, or new "manifestations" you'd like to share with our readers?

A fun fact about me is that I'm deeply introspective—I spend a lot of time analyzing patterns in people, behavior, and even my own mindset. That self-reflection has been a huge part of how I've grown and navigated different phases of my life. Lately, I've been focused on manifesting stability, financial independence, and alignment in both my career and personal life. Not just success on paper, but a life that actually feels good to live in day-to-day and feels balanced to me. I'm also big on the idea of becoming the "next version" of yourself intentionally—through habits, discipline, and mindset shifts —not just wishing for change, but actively building it. Got you — I'm going to keep this very *you*: honest, a little sharp, self-aware, and grounded in reality (not fluffy or fake-deep).

UNDERSTANDING COOKIE POP-UPS AND WEBSITE TRACKING

BY LEESEL FRASER

Understanding Cookie Pop-Ups and Website Tracking

If you browse the internet regularly, you have probably seen banners at the bottom of websites asking if they can use cookies or track your activity. Many people quickly click "Accept All" without thinking about it. However, understanding these pop-ups can help you make better choices about your online privacy.

What Are Cookies?

Cookies are small files that websites store on your device when you visit them.

Are All Cookies Essential?

Some cookies are essential, meaning they help the website function properly. For example, they may remember your login information, keep items in your shopping cart, or store language preferences . Without these cookies, certain parts of the website may not work correctly.

LEESEL FRASER

Because these cookies are required for the website to function, they usually cannot be turned off. On many sites, they may appear as a pre-checked or greyed out option, or sometimes they are simply listed as "essential cookies" without a toggle or checkbox. This is because they must remain enabled for the website to work properly.

Tracking and Analytics Cookies

Other cookies are used for tracking and analytics. These cookies collect information about how you browse a site, what pages you visit, and what you click on.

Companies use this data to understand user behavior, improve their websites, and often to show personalized advertisements. However, this type of tracking can go further than many people realize.

Over time, these cookies can help companies build a detailed profile about you, including your interests, habits, and browsing patterns. This information may be shared with or sold to third-party advertisers, allowing them to target you with specific ads across different websites.

While this is common, it also means you may be giving up more personal data than you intend without realizing it.

Why Some Websites Pre-Select Cookies

Not all websites handle cookie preferences the same way. Some websites automatically enable only the necessary cookies, allowing users to decide whether they want to enable additional tracking or advertising cookies.

However, other websites may have multiple cookie options already pre-selected. This means that if someone clicks "Accept" or "Save Preferences" without reviewing the settings, they may unknowingly allow additional tracking cookies.

For this reason, it can be helpful to click "Manage Preferences" or "Cookie Settings" instead of immediately selecting "Accept All." You can quickly uncheck any pre-selected options, or in some cases choose "Deselect All" if that option is available. Many websites also include a button like "Only Allow Essential Cookies."

Once you have made your choices, simply click "Confirm Choices" or a similar button. The good news is that once you understand what to look for, this process only takes a few seconds.

Final Thoughts

Cookie pop-ups are designed to give you a choice, but they only work in your favor if you take a moment to use them. Instead of automatically clicking "Accept All," spending a few seconds reviewing your options can significantly reduce how much of your data is collected and shared.

Being informed does not mean rejecting everything. It simply means taking control. Small actions, like adjusting your cookie preferences, can go a long way in protecting your online privacy over time.

2026 MIC ANNUAL CONFERENCE SNAPSHOTS

THEME: BE THE CHANGE, BY CHANGING YOURSELF

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APPLICATIONS EXTENDED

Cohort 1
Application
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*Great news! We've extended applications for the MNC-CTC Cybersecurity Residency Program until **May 15, 2026.***

Apply Here: www.mnc-ctc.com

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If you are seeking structured progression aligned with how employers actually hire — and you are prepared to commit to intentional development — this may be your time.

Architecture is Intentional.

We aren't just building volume; we are building alignment.

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Read the full post and explore Mary N. Chaney's recent series on the cybersecurity labor market by visiting her profile on LinkedIn