

## Ohio CASA's 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Celebrate Kids! Conference

### Speaker Biographies

**Charlie Appelstein, MSW, *Appelstein Training Resources***

Charlie Appelstein, MSW, is a prominent youth care training specialist and author who trains and consults with parents and professionals throughout the U.S. and internationally. Charlie has authored two books that are widely used within the field, including *No Such Thing as a Bad Kid – Understanding and Responding to Kids with Emotional & Behavioral Challenges Using a Positive, Strength-Based Approach*. Charlie delivers a message of hope and possibility to our most vulnerable children and those who guide them. He lives in New Hampshire with his wife and daughter.

**Eileen P. Anderson, EdD, *Anne Templeton Zimmerman, MD Professor of Bioethics; Director, Educational Programs in Bioethics and Medical Humanities; Director, Center for Medicine, Society and Culture, School of Medicine, Case Western Reserve University***

Dr. Eileen Anderson is the Anne Templeton Zimmerman, MD Professor of Bioethics at the Case Western Reserve School of Medicine, where she directs the university's educational programs in Bioethics and Medical Humanities. An award-winning teacher, mentor, and researcher in the area of child and adolescent wellbeing, she is the founding director of the Center for Medicine, Society and Culture. A native Cleveland, Dr. Anderson earned her doctoral and master's degrees at Harvard University in Human Development, Psychology, and Anthropology after attending Brown University. She completed postdoctoral fellowships in Interdisciplinary Studies of Culture, Development, and Neuroscience at UCLA before joining the Departments of Anthropology and Bioethics at CWRU. She has spent the past two decades investigating how children and adolescents adapt to changes in their environments in ways that both advance and harm their health and is currently conducting research on child wellbeing in the U.S. Guardian ad Litem system. Dr. Anderson is widely published, regularly appears in the media, and has earned grants from NSF, NIH, the Office of Research Integrity at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the National Academy of Education, and the Spencer Foundation, among others. She is the creator of the Kids' Health and the Courts podcast.

**Yonnae Asé, *President, Hamilton County Youth Advisory Board***

Yonnae Asé is a 25-year-old African American Queen, licensed cosmetologist, certified peer support specialist, and proud former foster youth. She serves as President of the Hamilton County Youth Advisory Board, using her voice to advocate for system-involved youth and real policy change. She is currently interning with Cincinnati Works, iFoster, and TAY AmeriCorps as a Peer Support Navigator, connecting youth to the resources they need to thrive. From beauty to behavioral health, she shows up as her full self—bold, compassionate, and purpose-driven. She doesn't just talk about change; she is the change. Be a voice, not an echo—because every lived experience deserves to progress!

**Captain Shawn Bain (Ret.), *Street Smart Ohio***

Shawn Bain began his career in law enforcement in 1985. Shawn has been assigned to many different areas within law enforcement, including the Jail Division, Patrol Division, Canine Unit,

SWAT, and the Special Investigations Unit (SIU), conducting vice and narcotics investigations. Shawn has supervised in all these areas. He is a graduate of the FBI National Academy in Quantico, Virginia. Shawn is also a graduate of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Drug Unit Commanders Academy. He has attended numerous other schools and seminars across the country. Shawn has been assigned to numerous task forces assisting the FBI, DEA, and U.S. Marshals Service. Shawn is a member of the International Narcotics Interdiction Association (INIA), the Narcotics Association of Regional Coordinating Officers (NARCO), and the Ohio Task Force Commanders Association (OTFCA). He is a state-certified instructor for the Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy.

**Whitney J. Raglin Bignall, PhD, Associate Clinical Director, Leader of Community Impact and Evaluation, The Kids Mental Health Foundation**

Whitney J. Raglin Bignall, PhD, is the Associate Clinical Director and Leader of Community Impact and Evaluation at The Kids Mental Health Foundation. She is also an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics in the Division of Psychology and Neuropsychology at Nationwide Children's Hospital (NCH) and The Ohio State University College of Medicine. Clinically, she works as an integrated primary care psychologist at one of NCH's primary care centers, which serves a primarily low-income and racially diverse community. She also implements a program to help enhance parenting skills for raising young children and has built partnerships with community organizations, primary care offices, and neighborhood schools.

**Dr. Kailey Bradley, PhD, LPCC-S, NCC, FT, Refuge Counseling LLC**

Dr. Kailey Bradley, PhD, LPCC-S, NCC, FT, received her master's in clinical mental health counseling in 2015 from Ashland University and her PhD in counselor education and supervision from Ohio University in 2024. Dr. Bradley spent five years as a pediatric hospice bereavement coordinator before opening Refuge Counseling and going back to school in 2021. Currently, she is the co-owner of Refuge Counseling LLC and is an adjunct professor of thanatology at Marian University and an adjunct professor of counseling at Marshall University, where she teaches a wide range of courses including: Crisis Counseling, Grief Counseling, Intro to Death and Dying, Pediatric Hospice Care, Childhood Bereavement, Grief Theory, Disenfranchised Grief, and Expressive Arts in Counseling. Dr. Bradley also has nine peer-reviewed publications (currently) on topics related to bereavement and counseling, and she is the current president of the Association for Child and Adolescent Counseling, Ohio Division.

**Jaleshia (Jay) Brown, Founder and Coordinator, Hamilton County Youth Advisory Board**

Jaleshia (Jay) Brown spent 11 years in foster care and aged out of the system. She obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice and a certification in violence prevention while working as an STNA to support her and her son. Determined to create a better life for her son and a simpler future for others, she began her career interning with the Hamilton County Juvenile Court, moving on to a role as a Deputy with the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office. After learning her passion was elsewhere, her journey led her to case management of individuals experiencing homelessness. She helped them identify and remove barriers to stabilized housing and gave them the resources and support to sustain it. For the last three years, she has been running the Hamilton County Youth Advisory Board, a state-funded advocacy group for current and former foster youth aiming to

improve the foster care system, influence policy change, and create brighter futures for foster youth.

**Sarah Buffie, MSW, LSW, *Founder/Director, Soul Bird Consulting***

Sarah Buffie, MSW, LSW, is the founding director of Soul Bird Consulting and a nationally recognized Trauma-Responsive Care trainer. With over two decades in human services and community building, she is deeply committed to fostering felt safety, belonging, and healing through relationship. Sarah's academic focus on Polyvagal Theory, Positive Psychology, and Trauma-Sensitive Mindfulness informs her holistic approach to trauma work. Her service in AmeriCorps and the Peace Corps shaped her belief in the power of interdependence and community connection. As a certified Laughter Yoga Instructor, SAH Method practitioner, and graduate of the Polyvagal Certificate Course, she integrates body-based practices into her work. Sarah's mission is to guide families, educators, and helping professionals toward regulation, resilience, and restoration—one nervous system at a time.

**Kristine Buffington, LISW-S, *Trainer and Consultant, Buffington Consulting LLC***

Kristine Buffington, MSW, LISW-S, has been a clinical social worker for over 40 years, with a specialization in the treatment of traumatic stress. She is an affiliate member of the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, a nationally certified therapist and trainer in Trauma-Focused CBT, and advocates for and provides training to help human service, educational, and justice systems to practice trauma-informed care.

**Jason B. Bunting, MSW, LSW, & TRCC, *Trauma Informed Care Administrator, Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities***

Jason B. Bunting has a Master of Social Work degree and LSW from The Ohio State University and a Level 2 Trauma-Informed Care Certification from the Tristate Trauma Network. Combined, Jason has been involved in leadership, supervision, and training for 24 years. Currently, he is the Trauma-Informed Care Administrator for the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD), responsible for the overall program administration and implementation of Trauma-Informed Care within DODD's Developmental Centers. Previously, he was the Superintendent of the Northwest Ohio Developmental Center (NODC/Toledo, Ohio) within DODD. Prior to his employment with DODD, he spent over 19 years of his career with the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODR&C). During that time, he was employed at the Marion Correctional Institution (MCI/Marion, Ohio) and held a multitude of positions ranging from a Social Worker to the Warden of the facility. The highlight of his experiences was his participation in a leadership panel for Bryan Stevenson, the founder and Executive Director of the Equal Justice Initiative. In addition, he has worked with and been a part of the TEDx Community. Finally, one of his most unique training experiences comes from being a hostage negotiator while with ODR&C.

**Robert L. Caldwell, Jr., *Executive Director, AnswerPoverty.Org***

A Columbus, Ohio native, Robert Caldwell has been a practitioner and thought leader on the issue of urban poverty for more than twenty-five years. He is the founder or co-founder of several different social and human service programs, including the R.O.W.T.E.A.M.S. Program (Residents off Welfare Teaching Educating Achieving Motivating Success), which won the Governor's Award for Excellence in Public Service in the State of Ohio. Robert served as the Managing Director of the YWCA Family

Center, Franklin County's only emergency homeless family shelter offering an array of support to homeless families. During his tenure, the shelter served over 1,500 families and received national recognition from the National Alliance to End Homelessness. In 2016, Robert received a Distinguished Service Award from The Ohio State University for his work in the Weinland Park Community. Robert received his B.A. from Denison University in Corporate and Organizational Communication with an emphasis in English and Organizational Psychology, including coursework at The Ohio State University in Politics and American Culture. He completed graduate studies at Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Religious Education, Family Counseling, and Pastoral Counseling and at the University of Dayton in Counseling, Group Therapy, and Ethics in Professional Helping. Robert is also a graduate and fellow of the Ray Miller Institute for Change & Leadership at The Ohio State University African & African American Studies Extension Center.

**Judge Chad L. Carey**, *Clinton County Court of Common Pleas, Juvenile/Probate Division*

Judge Chad L. Carey is a life-long Clinton County, Ohio resident. He was raised on a farm, and he currently lives and works on a small family farm. Judge Carey attended Wilmington College, where he graduated with both double majors and double minors. He graduated from Capital University Law School while working for the Columbus City Attorney's Office in the "Night Prosecutor Program" as a hearing officer, where he heard up to ten cases every evening. Judge Carey practiced in a general law practice for 15 years, served as the Clinton County Municipal Judge for 15 years, and has been the Clinton County Court of Common Pleas, Juvenile/Probate Division judge since 2015. Judge Carey has been married to Tammy for 37 years and has a son, Spencer. He is a car enthusiast, loves the lake, the southeast Florida coast, and fishing.

**Nikki Crawford**, *Education and Outreach Manager, Hope and Healing Survivor Resource Center*

Nikki Crawford is an independent advocate, activist, and educator in Northeast Ohio. Currently employed as the Education and Outreach Manager at Hope and Healing Survivor Resource Center, Nikki utilizes community action, networking, and awareness to tackle difficult subjects like violence prevention, human trafficking, and childhood sexual abuse. Nikki believes that through education and communication, many forms of violence can be prevented, but those conversations begin with ending stigma and discomfort about the topics at hand. Nikki hopes to create a community where people can speak out on issues in the community with no pushback or punishment from the individuals and systems that continue to perpetuate the harm done onto our community members.

**Todd R. Curtis**, *Senior Investigator, Wood County Prosecutor's Office; Retired Detective Sergeant, Perrysburg Township Police Department*

Todd R. Curtis is a 30-year law enforcement veteran with over 20 years of experience as a criminal investigator. A former K-9 handler and special response team member, Todd also has over 20 years of experience as a law enforcement trainer and educator. Todd is a court-certified expert in domestic violence and strangulation assault, a certified OPOTA Instructor, Master Criminal Investigator, and a Criminal Profiler. Todd has extensive research and experience in investigating the mindset and behaviors of the abuser and their victims. He was instrumental in advocating for the passage of Ohio's felony strangulation law.

**Lisa DeGeeter**, J.D., CA, RASS, *Senior Director of Policy and Prevention, Ohio Domestic Violence Network*

Lisa DeGeeter obtained her Bachelor of Arts degree magna cum laude from Loyola University Chicago, and her J.D. cum laude from the University of Illinois College of Law. Prior to attending law school, Lisa worked on sexual and severe physical abuse cases as an advocate at a rape crisis program and a case manager at a children's advocacy center in suburban Chicago. After law school, Lisa was the Assistant Director of the Ohio Task Force on Family Law and Children, addressing parenting time issues. Lisa briefly worked on children's health policy for the Children's Defense Fund and served for more than 13 years as the founding Executive Director of a child advocacy and rape crisis program. Lisa served as the domestic violence subject matter expert for the CSEA Parenting Time Opportunities for Children federal demonstration grant, and in 2016 she was awarded the Model of Justice Advocate of the Year by the Ohio Crime Victim Justice Center. Lisa has served on her local Visitation Center Advisory Committee, Big Brothers Big Sisters board, Pickerington Local School District Community School Governing Board, and as the president of the Ohio Network of Children's Advocacy Centers Board. She has been a trainer with the Supreme Court's Guardian ad Litem Training Program for more than 17 years and currently manages the Linking Systems of Care for Ohio Youth project.

**Vicki Deisner, Esq.,** *State Government Affairs Advisor, Animal Welfare Institute and Executive Director, Ohio Animal Advocates*

Vicki Deisner, Esq., is the Animal Welfare Institute's (AWI) State Government Affairs Advisor and successfully passed Ohio's Pet Protective Orders and Cross-Reporting Law. Vicki has partnered to conduct hundreds of seminars on the implementation of these laws and the importance of recognizing the link between animal and human violence in protecting families from escalating violence. Vicki was formerly the Midwest Legislative Director of the ASPCA, where she was primarily responsible for legislative and advocacy initiatives in the states of Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, and Kentucky. Prior to that, she served as the Associate Director of the National Water Resources Campaigns for the National Wildlife Federation in Washington, DC, and Executive Director of the Ohio Environmental Council and Ohio Assistant Attorney General, Environmental Enforcement Section, in Columbus, Ohio. Vicki received her J.D. from Salmon P. Chase College of Law at Northern Kentucky University, her clinical degree in Respiratory Therapy from the University of Chicago, her M.S. in Physiology from the University of Cincinnati, Medical College, and her B.S. in Zoology from The Ohio State University.

**Quinn Dybdahl, Esq.,** *Senior Attorney, Program, Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption*

Quinn Dybdahl, Esq., is the Senior Attorney, Program at the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption. She supports the contracting procedures for the Foundation's signature program, Wendy's Wonderful Kids (WWK), and oversees the Foundation's national grants program. Quinn also provides counsel on issues that arise in implementing the WWK program. Her close work with the WWK program provides insight into legal barriers that prevent youth from achieving permanency, which Quinn translates to legal audiences nationwide through training and resources. Quinn has dedicated her career to serving families. She received a BS in Human Development and Family Science and a Certificate in Children Studies from The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law. Quinn has gained diverse insight into adoption and foster care issues through legal internships with a local court, child welfare agency, and law firm.

**Amanda Erickson**, *Senior Associate Director of Programs & Operations, Kaleidoscope Youth Center*

Amanda Erickson has worked with Kaleidoscope Youth Center since 2017, focusing on advocating for LGBTQIA+ youth across Ohio through education for youth-serving professionals, including teachers, social workers, and more. Amanda holds a Bachelor of Science in Education from Bowling Green State University and a Certificate in Public and Non-Profit Leadership from the John Glenn College of Public Affairs at The Ohio State University. She is a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer, and before joining KYC, she taught sex education and life skills in the juvenile justice system and managed program partnerships for a regional youth-serving organization.

**Kevin Everhart**, *Retired Narcotic Detective, Area Manager, Averhealth*

Kevin Everhart is the Area Manager for Central and Southern Ohio, American Court and Drug Testing Services (Averhealth), and a retired Narcotics Detective of over 25 years. Mr. Everhart has gained a vast knowledge of street drugs and trends while working undercover and later as the Assistant Task Force Commander of a Major Crimes Task Force. He's spent the past 15 years in management for treatment providers and is a Certified Breath Alcohol Instrument Instructor and a Certified Instructor for Federal DOT Urine Collections. Mr. Everhart has testified as an Expert Witness in numerous Child Protective Services, Probation, and Drug Court cases, along with Domestic Relation cases, on the interpretation of drug test results throughout the state of Ohio. He carries a vast knowledge in the field of narcotics, drug testing, and laboratory results interpretation.

**Holly Farah**, J.D., *CASA Staff Attorney, CASA/GAL Program of Summit County*

Holly Farah, J.D., joined the Summit County Juvenile Court as a Staff Attorney with the CASA/GAL Program in November 2016. Prior to that, she maintained a private practice with an emphasis on Family Law. She has served as an attorney guardian ad litem in the Juvenile Courts and Domestic Relations Courts of both Summit County and Portage County. Attorney Farah has also served as an attorney guardian ad litem for youth involved with Restore Court, Summit County Juvenile Court's certified specialized docket for juvenile human trafficking victims and high-risk youth. Attorney Farah received her Juris Doctor from The University of Akron School of Law in 1994.

**Chelsea Gaffey**, LSW, *Human Trafficking Liaison, Ohio Department of Youth Services*

Chelsea Gaffey is the Human Trafficking Liaison for the Department of Youth Services (DYS). She is a Licensed Social Worker with 13+ years of professional experience in the Anti-Human Trafficking field. Her work includes both domestic and international experience, as well as working in direct service, providing technical assistance, training, and advocacy work. As the Human Trafficking Liaison, Ms. Gaffey reviews human trafficking screening tools that are completed for youth coming through DHS, connects with any identified youth, and provides appropriate referrals. In addition to internal responsibilities, Ms. Gaffey works with Juvenile Courts across Ohio to provide trainings on human trafficking, sits on the Governor's Human Trafficking Task Force, and the Attorney General's Human Trafficking Initiative. As part of these initiatives, Ms. Gaffey is a member of subcommittees that inform statewide policies and protocols.

**Chelsey Getz**, LISW, *Training Coordinator, The Center for Family Safety and Healing*

Chelsey Getz (she/her) is a Licensed Independent Social Worker and Training Coordinator at The Center for Family Safety and Healing, an organization within Nationwide Children's Hospital. With

over 10 years of experience working in domestic violence agencies across Ohio, Chelsey incorporates her passion for prevention work by engaging with individuals, communities, and organizations to facilitate discussions on the dynamics of power-based violence and ways to create spaces of healing and flourishing. Chelsey also serves on the leadership committee of the Columbus CARE Coalition, led by Columbus Public Health. Additionally, Chelsey is a Certified Trauma Specialist in Trauma Responsive Care-II through the Tristate Trauma Network (TTN). In collaboration with CARE and TTN, Chelsey co-developed and facilitates the “Community Resilience Certification – Level 1 & 2.” As part of her own ongoing compassion resilience efforts, Chelsey finds hope in artistic expression, spending time in her garden, and building meaningful connections with others.

**Jamie Glodowski, MS, RD, LD, Clinical Lead Dietitian, Nationwide Children's Hospital**

Jamie Glodowski, MS, RD, LD, is the Clinical Lead Dietitian for the Department of Clinical Nutrition and Lactation and the Eating Disorder Program at Nationwide Children’s Hospital. Jamie’s passion lies in developing the essential role of dietitians in eating disorder treatment through an “all foods fit” mindset and a Health at Every Size (HAES) approach. She aims to provide compassionate, personalized medical nutrition therapy to patients and their families while promoting program and staff development.

**Sarah Harvan, MA, BA, Training Coordinator, CASA/GAL Program of Summit County**

Sarah Harvan is a graduate of the University of Akron with Bachelor and Master of Arts degrees in Family and Child Development. Upon graduation, she began teaching courses in Family and Child Development as an adjunct professor at The University of Akron. She began volunteering with the CASA/GAL Program of Summit County in 2010 and has been volunteering with Child Advocates of Cuyahoga County since 2016. Currently, Ms. Harvan is the Training Coordinator for the Summit County CASA program. She is a graduate of the Child and Family Leadership Exchange program and recently assisted in writing a juvenile law textbook.

**Kimberly A. Helfrich, Esq., Director, Guardian ad Litem Division, Hamilton County Office of the Public Defender**

Kimberly A. Helfrich, Esq., graduated from the University of Cincinnati with a Bachelor of Science in the field of Criminal Justice. She worked at the Department of Pretrial Services for Hamilton County Municipal Court for two years before attending law school. In 1997, Kim graduated from the University of Cincinnati College of Law and was admitted to the practice of law that same year. The following year, Kim accepted a position as a guardian ad litem in the Hamilton County Public Defender's Office, Guardian ad Litem Division. In 2001, Kim became the Assistant Director of the Guardian ad Litem Division and assumed the role of Director of the Division in 2005. Currently, Kim supervises a staff of 16 attorney guardians ad litem, 12 non-attorney guardians ad litem, four administrative staff, and one investigator. Kim is also a member of the faculty of the Ohio Supreme Court Judicial College, Guardian ad Litem Education Program.

**Judge David A. Hejmanowski, Delaware County Court of Common Pleas, Probate/Juvenile Division**

Judge David A. Hejmanowski has served as the Judge of the Probate/Juvenile Division of the Delaware County Court of Common Pleas since February of 2015 and was previously a Magistrate at that Court and Juvenile Court Administrator. Prior to this, he served as an assistant prosecuting

attorney for Delaware County. He graduated as a Public Service Fellow from The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law in 1999 and received his B.S. in Political Science from Hiram College in 1996. Currently a member of the board of the Supreme Court's Judicial College, he is also a past chair of the Supreme Court's Advisory Committee on Language Services and the Ohio State Bar Association Juvenile Justice Committee and current chair of the Ohio State Bar Association's Content Advisory Committee. From 2008 to 2011, he served a three-year term on the Ohio State Bar Association Board of Governors. During 2023, he served as President of the Ohio State Bar Foundation, and he is currently President of the Delaware County Bar Foundation. In 2020, he began a 10-year term as an officer of the Ohio Judicial Conference. He is a member of the Governor's Council on Juvenile Justice. From 2019–2022, he served on the Federal Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice, which advises Congress and the White House on juvenile justice policy matters. He is a member of the boards of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee of the National Center for Juvenile Justice. He is a frequent presenter for the Ohio Judicial College and the Ohio State Bar Association. Locally, he has served as President of the Delaware County Historical Society and on the boards of the Central Ohio Symphony, the Strand Cultural Arts Society, the Andrews House, and the Arena Fair Theater Company.

**Neha Jadhav, MD, *Clinical Fellow, Mayerson Center for Safe and Healthy Children, Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center***

Dr. Neha Jadhav is the third-year (and currently only!) fellow training in the Mayerson Center for Safe and Healthy Children in Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. Originally from Northern Virginia, Dr. Jadhav attended Virginia Commonwealth University for both her undergraduate studies and for medical school. She completed her residency in Pediatrics in St. Christopher's Hospital for Children in Northern Philadelphia and has been training to be a Child Abuse Pediatrician for the past three years.

**Gina A. James, BS, Sales and Training Executive, CasaManager**

Gina James has nearly 35 years of experience in child advocacy, volunteer advocate supervision, and program management. She is the Sales and Training Executive at CasaManager, supporting CASA/GAL programs nationwide through software training, implementation, and technical support. Gina is certified in volunteer retention, facilitation, mental health first aid, and child and adolescent service intensity instruments and has a strong background in staff development, data analysis, and interagency collaboration. She received a Bachelor of Science in Business with a focus on Small Business Management and Entrepreneurship and is the recipient of multiple state and national awards for leadership and program excellence in CASA and GAL organizations.

**Judge Kristen K. Johnson, J.D., *Hancock County Common Pleas Court, Probate and Juvenile Divisions***

Kristen Johnson is in her second term as the Judge in Hancock County Probate and Juvenile Court. Prior to being elected Judge, she served as Magistrate for the Court for five years and as an assistant prosecutor for Hancock County for 17 years. She received her Bachelor of Science degree from the Rochester Institute of Technology and her Juris Doctor degree from the University of Toledo. Judge Johnson has served as a trainer for forensic interviewing and guardians ad litem. Judge Johnson has been involved in a number of community organizations including the Governor's



Council on Juvenile Justice, Hancock Leadership Alumni Association, and the Hancock Christian Clearing House. She is the Founder and Past President of Hancock County Center for Safe and Healthy Children. Judge Johnson is a graduate of the JoAnne Davidson Leadership Institute, Hancock Leadership, and Hancock Government Leadership. She has received the CASA Community Light of Hope Award, the HLAA Community Leadership Award, the Distinguished Leadership Award, and the On Behalf of Youth (OBOY) Award. She currently sits on the Ohio Sentencing Commission, the Advisory Committee for Case Management, and is the President of the Ohio Association of Juvenile Court Judges.

**Kim Kehl, M.Ed.,** *Project Manager for the Ohio Department of Children and Youth*

Kim Kehl is currently a Project Manager for the Ohio Department of Children and Youth, where he provides consultation and technical assistance to Ohio's Qualified Residential Treatment Programs (children's residential programs) and Early Care and Education settings on trauma-informed approaches and trauma treatment models. Kim recently retired from state and county government after more than 32 years. During that time, he has had various roles with state agencies including the Ohio Departments of Education, Mental Health, Health, Job and Family Services, Transportation, and the Governor's Ohio Family and Children First Council. Most recently, Kim served as Ohio's Trauma-Informed Care Project Coordinator. Under the general direction of the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) Assistant Director, Office of Community Treatment Services, he collaborated with federal, state, and local partners to support training and implementation of trauma-informed practices throughout Ohio. He coordinated training efforts and fostered the implementation of trauma-informed practice within the OhioMHAS system in both the institutional and community domains. Preventing trauma and correctly identifying and responding to it when it has occurred has tremendous potential to impact the physical, behavioral, social, and economic health of Ohio and Ohioans. Kim received an M.Ed. in Educational Leadership from Wright State University in 1990 and a B.S. from Kent State University in Special Education and Elementary Education in 1978.

**Jeff King, Co-Director, OSU Leadership Center and Associate Professor, Department of Agricultural Communication, Education, and Leadership, Ohio State University**

Dr. Jeff King is the Co-Director of the OSU Leadership Center and Associate Professor with Ohio State University Extension and the Departments of Agricultural Communication, Education, and Leadership & OSU Extension. Jeff teaches undergraduate and graduate leadership-related courses within the Department of Agricultural Communication, Education, and Leadership and conducts leadership workshops at the state and national levels. Prior to his role with the OSU Leadership Center, he worked for over 20 years in Ohio 4-H Youth Development as a County 4-H Educator, Associate State 4-H Leader, and the State 4-H Director.

**Detective Mark Lovett,** Gang Investigation Unit, Columbus Division of Police

Detective Mark Lovett is a 35-year veteran with the Gang Investigation Unit of the Columbus Division of Police. Detective Lovett specializes in criminal gangs, outlaw motorcycle gangs, gang investigation, and gang member documentation.

**Brian Lowery, MPA, LSW,** *Educational Coordinator, Lowery Training Associates*

Brian Lowery is an Ohio Licensed Social Worker and trained Multi-Systemic Therapist who has worked with children and families in out-of-home care for over 40 years. He has extensive knowledge of dynamics affecting children living in households with a parent with SUD. He has trained on this topic for social workers, substance abuse counselors, and caregivers.

**Mackenzie Lyon, MSW, *Training Coordinator, The Center for Family Safety and Healing***

Mackenzie Lyon is a Training Coordinator with over five years of experience providing prevention and education with children and families. Previously, she provided direct support to survivors of domestic violence and families affected by child maltreatment. She has a passion for the empowerment and improvement of mental health and healthy relationships of young adult survivors of abuse and in the LGBTQ+ community through direct client interaction and systems change.

**Magistrate Brandin Marlow, *Clark County Juvenile Court***

Magistrate Brandin Marlow began serving as a magistrate in the Clark County Juvenile Court in 2013. Her work at the Clark County Juvenile Court includes the abuse, neglect, and dependency docket, juvenile civil protection matters, and grandparent power of attorney/caretaker authorization affidavit review. In the 10 years prior to joining the Clark County Juvenile Court, her private practice included the litigation of abuse, neglect, and dependency cases by representing parties to those matters as well as serving as a guardian ad litem. She graduated from The Ohio State University in 2000 with a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and received her Juris Doctorate (cum laude) from the University of Toledo in 2003.

**Erin McTiernan, PsyD, *Pediatric Psychologist, Nationwide Children's Hospital***

Erin McTiernan, PsyD, is a pediatric psychologist at Nationwide Children's Hospital. Dr. McTiernan's primary clinical focus is treating adolescents and young adults with eating disorders. She works closely with the Adolescent Medicine Department and the Eating Disorders Program to treat patients at the inpatient and outpatient levels of care. Additionally, Dr. McTiernan is involved in supervision of psychology trainees, research, and program development.

**Judge Jennifer K. Overmyer, J.D., *Preble County Common Pleas Court, Juvenile and Probate Divisions***

Jennifer K. Overmyer is a judge for the Probate and Juvenile Division of the Preble County Court of Common Pleas in Ohio. She was elected to the bench on November 4, 2014, becoming the first female to sit as a judge for Preble County. Prior to her election, Judge Overmyer presided as a magistrate for the Preble County Probate and Juvenile Court, a position she held for fifteen years. Judge Overmyer earned a B.S. degree from Ball State University Honors College in 1998 and a J.D. at Valparaiso University Law School in 1991. Since that time, she was also a magistrate in the general division, juvenile, and probate divisions, and has served on many boards. She currently sits on the Preble County Youth Foundation Board, the St. Clair Foundation Board, and the Eaton Rotary Board. Her memberships have included the Ohio Association of Juvenile Court Judges (president) as well as the Executive Committee of the Ohio Judicial Conference. She is a member of the Commission on the Rules of Superintendence, the OJC Probate Law and Procedure Committee, and the OJC Juvenile Law and Procedure Committee.

**Melanie Palmer**, IMFT-S, *Training Officer, Child Focus*

Melanie Palmer is an Independently Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist with Supervisory Status and the Training Officer at Child Focus. She is also a therapist/owner for Melanie Palmer, LLC, working with First Responders. Melanie has over 25 years of experience working with clients on a variety of issues in many settings. She develops and facilitates training on a variety of topics including trauma-informed care, suicide education, family relationships, parenting, stress management and self-care, communication, and more. Melanie collaborates and partners with several systems including mental/public health agencies, schools, judicial, law enforcement, business, faith-based, and other communities in efforts to expand and enhance knowledge to improve the quality of life for all.

**Vanessa Perkins**, *Workforce Development Director & Expert Consultant, Freedom A La Carte*

Vanessa Perkins is the Workforce Development Director at Freedom A La Carte and has previous experience working as a criminal justice professional for a local county court and the county prosecutor's office. Ms. Perkins is an anti-trafficking subject matter expert who uses her knowledge, experience, and professional expertise to educate professionals and general audiences across the state. She also serves as a grant project constituent for the Ohio Department of Public Safety Office of Criminal Justice Services.

**Sgt. Michael N. Powell** (Ret.), *Street Smart Ohio*

Sgt. Mike Powell began working with the Franklin County Sheriff's Office in Columbus, Ohio in December of 1973 and retired in March 2006 after a total of 36 years. For the last 20 years of his tenure, he was assigned to the Special Investigations Unit (S.I.U.) working narcotics, vice, and stolen property investigations. Mike is a graduate of the F.B.I. National Academy in Quantico, Virginia. From June 1995 through December 2001, he was federally deputized and was a supervisor with the F.B.I. Drug Task Force in Columbus. Mike has lectured quite extensively on narcotics, both locally and nationally. He is a member of the Narcotics Association Regional Coordinating Officers (NARCO) as well as a state-certified instructor of narcotics teaching at police academies throughout Ohio. He also drafted and is the lead instructor in basic and advanced undercover narcotics courses offered across the state since 1984.

**Amberle Prater**, PhD, LPCC-S, *Clinical Lead Supervisor, Center for Suicide Prevention and Research, Nationwide Children's Hospital*

Amberle Prater, PhD, LPCC-S, is the clinical lead supervisor for the Center for Suicide Prevention and Research (CSPR) at Nationwide Children's Hospital. In her role, she provides clinical care to adolescents and families, coordinates implementation of suicide prevention programming in schools, provides community-based suicide-prevention trainings, and supports the hospital's ZeroSuicide initiative. Dr. Prater has supported the implementation of the SOS Signs of Suicide Program and screening in over 270 schools throughout central and southeast Ohio since 2015. As a supervisor, she provides ongoing consultation and support to her team and manages partnerships with schools. She has also developed and provided training to staff and community behavioral health partners on identifying and responding to elevated suicide risk in youth.

**Jessica A. Ramos**, Esq., *Senior Attorney & Manager, Immigration Team, The Legal Aid Society of Southwest Ohio, LLC*

Jessica A. Ramos is the Manager of the Immigration Team and a Senior Attorney at the Legal Aid Society of Southwest Ohio. She practices and has an extensive background in immigration law and is recognized nationally as an expert on the plight of Unaccompanied Immigrant Children, including testifying before the Senate in 2018 on the issue. Jessica has served as a guardian ad litem in Butler County, Ohio since 2022. She currently serves as the Chair of the Ohio Chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association and serves on their National Board of Governors. Jessica is an alumna of The Ohio State University with a bachelor's degree in Spanish and a master's degree in Hispanic Linguistics, and she is a graduate of the University of Toledo College of Law. She reluctantly enjoys exercising and while a long-time resident of Ohio, her native state of West Virginia will always be "home."

**Chelsey Rennard, M.S., M.Ed., *Human Services Program Administrator 3, Ohio Department of Children and Youth, Bureau of Professional Development***

Chelsey Rennard is a Human Services Program Administrator 3 for the Ohio Department of Children and Youth, Bureau of Professional Development. She holds a Master of Science in Criminal Justice Administration and a Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction of Adult Education from Point Park University. Since 2015, Chelsey has served Ohio's children services system as an on-going caseworker, foster care specialist, adoption assessor, and trainer. She also brings experience as a former teacher and administrator in a private charter school, and from work with children services in Florida. Since joining the state in 2021, Chelsey has helped develop statewide training initiatives, supported legislation programs, and implemented innovative tools like AVE nueS Virtual Reality. Passionate about education and professional development, Chelsey is committed to strengthening the children services workforce through dynamic training and collaboration.

**Tara Roberson, *Training Associate Director, Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption***

Tara Roberson has over 17 years of experience in child welfare. She has worked in two different states in a variety of roles, learning the ins and outs of the child welfare system. Tara has worked in family preservation, ongoing child welfare, extended foster care, and transition-aged youth services. Tara began her work at DTFA as an Adoption Program Manager, where she was charged with the training and coaching of the child-focused recruitment model, helped recruiters overcome systemic barriers to permanency, and monitored fidelity to the CFR model. Tara assisted in the expansion of the Wendy's Wonderful Kids program in Ohio and assisted in increasing the number of recruiters in the state. She transitioned to the training team over three years ago and is currently a Training Associate Director at DTFA. Tara graduated from The Ohio State University with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology.

**Elizabeth Smart, Founder, The Elizabeth Smart Foundation**

The abduction of Elizabeth Smart was one of the most followed child abduction cases of our time. Through this traumatic experience, Elizabeth has become an advocate for change related to child abduction, recovery programs, and National legislation. Elizabeth triumphantly testified before her captor and the world about the very private nightmare she suffered during her abduction, which led to conviction. The Founder of the "Elizabeth Smart Foundation," Elizabeth has also helped promote The National AMBER Alert, The Adam Walsh Child Protection & Safety Act, and other safety legislation to help prevent abductions. Elizabeth has chronicled her experiences in the New York Times best-selling book, "My Story." In addition, she and other abduction survivors worked with the

Department of Justice to create a survivor's guide, entitled, "You're Not Alone: The Journey from Abduction to Empowerment." Elizabeth has recently released a new powerful and inspiring book about what it takes to overcome trauma, find the strength to move on, and reclaim one's life. "Where There's Hope" is the result of Elizabeth's mission: It is both an up-close-and-personal glimpse into her healing process and a heartfelt how-to guide for readers to make peace with the past and embrace the future. Elizabeth's abduction and recovery continue to motivate parents, law enforcement and leaders worldwide to focus on children's safety. She emphasizes vigilance by "everyday" people and the belief that hope always exists to find every missing child. Smart attended Brigham Young University, studying music as a harp performance major. She married her husband Matthew in 2012, and they now have three beautiful children. Elizabeth's example is a daily demonstration that there really is life after tragedy.

**Valeda Smith**, *Training Coordinator, The Center for Family Safety and Healing*

Valeda Smith is a Training Coordinator with over 10 years of experience working with youth and families. She is a graduate of Wittenberg University with a major in Sociology. Currently, she partners with K-12 schools as well as non-profit organizations to provide prevention education on child abuse, teen dating violence, and intimate partner violence. In addition, she is an authorized facilitator of Stewards of Children by Darkness to Light.

**Julie Sespico**, MSW, *Training Coordinator, The Center for Family Safety and Healing*

Julie Sespico is a Training Coordinator with The Center for Family Safety and Healing. As a part of the Center's prevention and outreach efforts for the past seven years, she specializes in bringing family violence education and trauma-responsive approaches to the greater Central Ohio area, working toward the organization's vision to break the cycle of domestic violence and child abuse and create safe and thriving communities. With that vision in mind, Julie holds certification in Trauma Responsive Care through the Tri-State Trauma Network, is an authorized facilitator of Darkness to Light: Stewards of Children and Safe Dates, and serves as a Trauma Trainer for The Columbus CARE Coalition. CARE is a first-of-its-kind community and city-led initiative here in Columbus. Under the guidance of Columbus Public Health, CARE works to increase awareness, education, and response to trauma, utilizing a network of caring providers and community members.

**Megan Stanley**, MS, RD, LDN, CSSD, *Clinical Dietitian, Nationwide Children's Hospital*

Megan Stanley studied dietetics and exercise science at Penn State University, then completed her Master's program and Dietetic Internship at Ohio State in 2019. She began her career working in college athletics at Ohio State as an intern, then at Duke University as a Sports Nutrition Fellow through Gatorade's immersion program. Post-pandemic, Megan has worked in settings including primary care, sports medicine, and orthopedics. Megan has been working at Nationwide Children's Hospital since March 2023 in their Eating Disorder Program and recently became a certified specialist in sports dietetics.

**Leah Stone**, MSW, LISW-S, *Registered Advocate, Training Director, Ohio Domestic Violence Network*

Leah Stone serves as the Training Director at the Ohio Domestic Violence Network, where she has worked since 2021. Leah facilitates, organizes, and presents trainings to advocates and allied

professionals across Ohio on a wide array of topics related to domestic violence advocacy, including safety planning, survivor-centered advocacy, technology-facilitated abuse, and ethics. Drawing from a decade of experience and the wisdom gained from survivors, Leah has expertise in trauma-informed care, shelter advocacy, crisis intervention, support group facilitation, and trauma-focused psychotherapy.

**Robyn Traywick, J.D., R.N., *Law Office of Robyn Traywick, LLC***

Ms. Robyn Traywick is an attorney and registered nurse who has done educational advocacy for almost 30 years, first as a lay advocate and then as an attorney. She has worked as a guardian ad litem for children in abuse and neglect cases since 2006. She is faculty for the Ohio Supreme Court Judicial College and teaches several courses every year for guardians ad litem.

**Magistrate Eric Wahl, Esq., *Franklin County Domestic Relations Court***

Eric Wahl became a magistrate in Franklin County Domestic Relations Court in 2017, where he hears pre-decree divorce matters and post-decree divorce issues involving custody, child support, and spousal support. Magistrate Wahl graduated from Bowling Green State University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science in 1997, and from Capital University Law School, where he earned his Juris Doctor in 2001. He was admitted to the Ohio Bar that same year and the United States District Court for the Southern District of Ohio in 2006. Magistrate Wahl began his practice as an associate at Robert A. Bracco and Associates, where he handled a variety of cases including civil and business litigation, criminal matters, and domestic relations and juvenile cases. In 2011, he became a sole practitioner, handling primarily divorce and private custody cases, as well as abuse, neglect, and dependency matters. Throughout his time as an attorney, Magistrate Wahl dedicated most of his practice to serving as a guardian ad litem in divorce and custody matters, as well as abuse, neglect, and dependency cases. Magistrate Wahl is also a member of the faculty of the Ohio Supreme Court Judicial College, Guardian ad Litem Education Program.

**Judge Helen Wallace, *Montgomery County Juvenile Court***

Judge Helen Wallace is the administrative judge of the Montgomery County Juvenile Court, leading the organization of approximately 450 employees who strive to provide individualized justice for children and to protect the community, carefully balancing the interests of both. Prior to being elected as Montgomery County's first female Juvenile Court Judge in 2019, she worked as a prosecutor, defense attorney, guardian ad litem, and family law and civil litigation attorney for nearly 20 years. Judge Wallace earned her law degree from George Washington University Law School, after obtaining a bachelor's degree in International Affairs from the University of Cincinnati. Judge Wallace presides over specialized dockets including Juvenile Wellness Court and Treatment Court. Wellness Court offers mental health support and rehabilitation to youth. Treatment Court assists in the rehabilitation of juveniles who have been adversely affected by drugs and alcohol. Judge Wallace encourages family involvement and collaboration between treatment providers, probation, and the youth in an effort to reduce recidivism and promote positive, healthy futures. Judge Wallace serves on the Ohio Criminal Sentencing Commission convened by the Ohio Supreme Court and is a member and past Chair of the Juvenile Justice Subcommittee. Judge Wallace is a member of the Dayton Bar Association and co-chaired the 2024 Bench Bar Conference. Judge Wallace is a member of the Ohio State Bar Association, the Ohio Judicial

College, serving on the Law and Procedure Subcommittee, and is a member of the National Conference of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

**Micayla Wilson**, BSW, *OVC Program Administrator, Office of Criminal Justice Services*

Micayla Wilson has over seven years of professional experience in the anti-human trafficking field. Many of these years were spent in direct service with teenage survivors and their families through residential care services and community-based services. Ms. Wilson is now serving in the state Anti-Human Trafficking Department at the Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services. She works as an OVC Program Administrator, assisting in the development and oversight of protocols and programs across the state to improve outcomes for minor survivors through child welfare and juvenile justice, including the development of specialized dockets dedicated to child trafficking.

**Kayla Zawislak**, LCSW, CADC, *Director of Patient and Family Services, Addiction Policy Forum*

Kayla Zawislak has worked closely with individuals with a substance use disorder, their family members and friends, and a variety of stakeholders through APF's helpline, training programs, smartphone applications, and stigma initiatives. She is passionate about providing training and education around addiction, treatment, recovery, and stigma through APF's training and Anti-Stigma Curricula. She has had the opportunity to conduct research in projects to help bring the voices of individuals with lived experience to the table. She values sharing her clinical and personal experience to help break down the stigma and barriers that folks may face when struggling with or recovering from an addiction.