

Eileen P. Anderson, EdD, Anne Templeton Zimmerman, MD Professor of Bioethics; Executive Director, Cultural Solutions, LLC, Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine

Eileen Anderson is the Anne Templeton Zimmerman, MD Professor of Bioethics at Case Western Reserve University. Dr. Anderson is the director of the university's educational programs in Bioethics and Medical Humanities and founding director of the Center for Medicine, Society and Culture and its related programs. As a medical and psychological anthropologist and ethicist, she studies how young people adapt to changes in their environments in ways that both advance and harm their well-being. Currently, Dr. Anderson is studying the wellbeing of court-involved children in Ohio and the training of professionals who serve them. She is the creator and host of Kids' Health and the Courts podcast and a widely published author. Dr. Anderson is a Northeast Ohio native who earned her BA at Brown University, her master's and doctorate from Harvard University, and her postdoctoral certification in developmental neuroscience from UCLA. She is the mother of three vibrant adolescent young women.

Stacey Bergstrom, Assistant Deputy Director of Protective Services, Fairfield County Job and Family Services

Stacey Bergstrom is the Assistant Deputy Director of Protective Services at Fairfield County Job and Family Services, a role she has held for the past four years. With nearly two decades of experience in child welfare, Stacey brings extensive knowledge and leadership to her work supporting children and families. She holds both a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Education from Ohio University. Throughout her career, Stacey has led numerous initiatives and innovative projects within Fairfield County, including Ohio START, Fellowship, Practice in Action Together, Treatment Foster Care, and Partnering with Ohio Parents. In addition to her leadership roles, Stacey is actively engaged in policy implementation and advancing best practices in child welfare. She has also contributed to workforce development by training caseworkers and supervisors through the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program.

Brian L. Bethel, PhD, LPCC-S, LCDC III, RPT-S, Trauma Therapist, Independent Trainer/Consultant

Dr. Brian L. Bethel is a Professional Clinical Counselor-Supervisor, a Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor (LCDC III), and a Registered Play Therapist-Supervisor (RPT-S) with specialized training in counseling children, adolescents, and families. Dr. Bethel earned his PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision from Ohio University where he also earned dual master's degrees in clinical counseling and rehabilitation counseling. With over twenty years of clinical practice, Dr. Bethel brings a diversity of strengths to his clinical practice. He has dedicated much of his professional career to working with individuals impacted by trauma and continues as a mental health clinician for a Child Advocacy Center that serves children and families across southern and southeastern Ohio.

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

Dr. Raglin Bignall has a passion for making mental health services equitable for all children and families. That passion has played out in her career through her academic and clinical work with a focus on narrowing mental health disparities in children. She played an integral role in working with families at a Nationwide Children's Primary Care Center, which served a primarily low-income and racially diverse community. She also implemented a program to help enhance parenting skills for raising young children and built partnerships with community organizations, primary care offices, and neighborhood schools.

Josh Borschowa, *CASA Volunteer, CASA/GAL Program of Summit County*

Josh Borschowa has served as a CASA volunteer since February 2022, advocating for the safety, stability, and wellbeing of children in the court system. His commitment to empathy and integrity carries into his professional life as a cyber security specialist, where he focuses on protecting systems, data, and the people who depend on them. He brings a thoughtful, analytical approach to every challenge and strives to make a meaningful impact in both his community and his field.

Sarah Buffie, MSW, LSW, *Founder/Lead Facilitator, Soul Bird Consulting*

Visionary leader and founder of Soul Bird Consulting, Sarah Buffie, MSW, LSW, is a passionate advocate and educator of trauma-informed approaches for holistic healing. With expertise in trauma-responsive care, she challenges existing paradigms to foster empathy and understanding of trauma's complexities. Drawing on two decades of experience, Sarah prioritizes felt-safety and belonging in her work. Her academic journey focused on Polyvagal Theory, Positive Psychology, and Trauma-Sensitive Mindfulness, and was enriched by time spent in Americorps and the Peace Corps that inspired her deep value in interdependence and community.

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

Kristine Buffington, MSW, LISW-S, is a cum laude graduate in psychology from Eastern Michigan University. She earned her master's degree in social work from Western Michigan University and has over 40 years of experience in the field of clinical social work with professional experiences including advocacy, training, and consultation in child traumatic stress and trauma-informed systems. She believes that a key mission in our work should be to honor and restore dignity in the people we serve and all members of society.

Beth Cardina, LSW, *Program Director, CASA/GAL Program of Summit County*

Beth Cardina, LSW, is a long-time child welfare advocate and social worker who has dedicated nearly 40 years to the field, beginning her career in 1988. As Program Director for the CASA/GAL Program of Summit County, Beth leads one of the state's most successful programs and served on the Ohio CASA Board of Directors from 2017 until December 2023. Beth was acknowledged for her commitment to children with the "Trailblazer" award at Akron Children's More childhood, please ceremony in October, 2025. Following the loss of her son, Will Cardina, to suicide on February 16, 2025, Beth and her husband, Bill, founded the non-profit organization, "Will Call." The organization aims to de-

stigmatize grief and loss by providing a platform for people to share their personal experiences.

Matt Coberly, *CASA Volunteer, CASA/GAL Program of Summit County*

Matt Coberly's professional background includes two years as an attorney working abuse, neglect, and matters at the Public Defender's Office, twenty-seven years as an FBI Special Agent, and eleven years as the Global Director for Security and Loss Prevention at a multinational corporation. For the past two years, Matt has proudly served as a CASA/GAL volunteer. Working side-by-side with CASA families and the Summit County CASA team has been incredibly rewarding, providing him with the perfect sense of purpose for his retirement. He found his way to CASA through personal connections and his other volunteer commitments. Backed by a strong foundation of a 38-year marriage, four adult sons, and six granddaughters, he brings deep, family-centered values to this role.

Andre Davis, *Coordinator, Children of Incarcerated Parents Community Advisor, Youth Voices Study, Nationwide Children's Hospital*

As Coordinator of the Children of Incarcerated Parents Project at Nationwide Children's Hospital, Andre Davis develops resources to support justice-involved families affected by incarceration and provides consultation to hospital clinicians treating children experiencing trauma associated with parental incarceration. In this role, he created a resource guide for adults currently caring for children with an incarcerated parent and implemented family engagement day programming to strengthen positive parent/child relationships within Ohio correctional facilities. Davis has more than a decade of experience working with justice-involved youth and families, including working as a neighborhood and violence intervention specialist for the City of Columbus. This experience has led to community-research partnerships and collaboration with researchers at The Ohio State University.

Lisa DeGeeter, JD, 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 JD 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 Sister board, Pickerington LSD 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.

Magistrate Michelle Edgar, Magistrate/Deputy Director of Specialized Dockets and Strategic Initiatives, Fairfield County Probate/Juvenile Court

Michelle Edgar has been a Magistrate with Fairfield County Probate and Juvenile Court since 2013. Magistrate Edgar graduated from Capital University Law School and became a Franklin County CASA volunteer in 2000. She also had a private practice where she concentrated her work in family law cases, specifically juvenile law and GAL work. Magistrate Edgar serves on the Advisory Committee for Children and Families at the Supreme Court of Ohio and is a Co-Chair of the Subcommittee on Responding to Child Abuse, Neglect, and Dependency. She also serves as the Juvenile Practice Area Chair for the Ohio Association of Magistrates.

James Ellis, Attorney, Ellis Law Office, LLC

Mr. Ellis holds juris doctor and LLM in Taxation degrees and has practiced law in California since 1981 and Ohio since 2000. For 15 years he taught classes at Terra State Community College and Tiffin University, including business law, American government, and ethics. After serving as Mayor of Fremont, Ohio from 2012 to 2016, he began representing parents and children in children services cases, while also acting as a GAL in these cases and in private cases. Mr. Ellis currently provides legal services to CASA of Seneca, Sandusky and Wyandot Counties and represents CASA volunteers in individual cases. He has served on the Board of Directors of Community Health Services, a regional health care provider, for 23 years, as a Trustee of Birchard Public Library of Sandusky County, as Chairperson of the Sandusky County Red Cross and Board member of Sandusky County Habitat for Humanity, while providing legal services for other nonprofit organizations.

Dana Fleitman, MA, EdHD, Senior Training & Awareness Specialist, Stalking Prevention, Awareness, and Resource Center (SPARC)

Dana Fleitman has been with SPARC since 2018. In her role, she provides training and technical assistance to multidisciplinary professionals across the country on recognizing and responding to stalking. With a focus on public awareness, Dana authors and designs original resources – including ready-to-use curricula, discussion guides, and publications on stalking. She oversees the Vital Signs project, developing new tools to enhance the stalking response in healthcare settings, and leads SPARC's National Stalking Awareness Month efforts each January. Prior to joining SPARC, Dana was the Senior Manager of Prevention and Training Programs at Jewish Women International. Her previous work includes coordinating training and technical assistance for the HHS Office of Adolescent Health teen pregnancy prevention grantees and she has direct service experience with groups including foster teens, refugees, and recent immigrants. She is based in the Washington, D.C. area.

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

Sarah Harvan began her involvement with the CASA/GAL Program of Summit County as a volunteer in 2011 and for the last 14 years has been the Training Coordinator for the program. She is a graduate of the Child and Family Leadership Exchange and participated with 'Insight' through Leadership Akron. Sarah has been an Adjunct Professor at The University of Akron and was recently recognized as the Outstanding Alumni of the Year in the Child and Family Development department. Outside of work Sarah and her husband keep busy with their two little girls.

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 ten-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.

Rose Larson, RA, *Executive Director, DWAVE*

Rose Larson is culturally Deaf and deeply involved in the grassroots Deaf community. She has been with Deaf World Against Violence Everywhere (DWAVE) since September 2013, beginning as an advocate and outreach coordinator/assistant director before advancing to Executive Director. Prior to joining the organization in a staff role, Rose volunteered on DWAVE's board of trustees for several years. Rose is trained as a Sexual Assault Response Advocate and volunteers through DWAVE in partnership with the Sexual Assault Response Network of Central Ohio. Before her work with DWAVE, she spent 11 years supporting Deaf individuals with disabilities. Rose holds Registered Advocate status with advanced standing in the state of Ohio and is believed to be the first Deaf person in Ohio, and possibly nationally, to become a certified forensic interviewer. She is a respected state and national speaker who has provided multiple trainings for law enforcement, nurses,

advocates, and community members on topics related to advocacy, accessibility, and the Deaf community.

Joyce Lee, PhD, MSW, MS, LCSW, Associate Professor, The Ohio State University College of Social Work

Dr. Joyce Lee is an Associate Professor and Director of the Child and Family Wellbeing Lab at The Ohio State University College of Social Work. Dr. Lee is a child welfare and family strengthening scholar, with expertise in research that promotes child health and strengthens family wellbeing through the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and data science methods. Her current work has three interrelated themes: 1) identifying family processes that contribute to or disrupts child abuse and neglect with the goal of child maltreatment prevention; 2) promoting men's contribution to child wellbeing by supporting their positive fathering quality and encouraging early father involvement in children's lives in both the family and child welfare system contexts; and 3) achieving equity in child outcomes by reducing health disparities and fostering the wellbeing of children affected by the child welfare system. She is also interested in the ethical application of AI and data science methods for child welfare research. She is currently the Vice President of the Social Work AI Network (SWAN) and Director-At-Large leading the AI Task Force of the Society for Social Work and Research Board.

Sarah Levels, MSW, Human Services Developer, Ohio Department of Children and Youth, Bureau of Youth and Young Adult Supports

With over 25 years of dedicated service in child protection, Sarah Levels has built her career around supporting young people and families as they navigate critical transitions. Since 2016, she has served as a Human Services Developer for the Ohio Department of Children and Youth, contributing to the statewide oversight of Bridges, Adoption Assistance Connections to 21 (AAC 21), and Kinship Guardianship Connections to 21 (KGAP C21). Before joining the state, Sarah led Independent Living services at Franklin County Children Services, where she supported youth preparing for adulthood and long-term stability.

Judge Amy H. Lewis, Greene County Juvenile Court

Amy Lewis has served as the Judge of the Greene County Juvenile Court since March 2021. She was previously a Magistrate at that Court from March 2000 to March 2021 and the Court Administrator from 2016 to 2021. Prior to this, she served as an Assistant Prosecuting Attorney for the Greene County Prosecutor's Office and was the Xenia City Prosecutor. She graduated from the University of Kentucky and the Ohio Northern University College of Law. Currently, Judge Lewis serves as the vice chair on the Supreme Court of Ohio Board of Bar Examiners and is the Chair of the Supreme Court of Ohio Subcommittee on Juvenile Justice through the Advisory Committee on Children and Families. She also serves on two Ohio Judicial Conference Committees: Juvenile Law and Procedure and Criminal Law and Procedure. She is also a member of 100 Women of Greene County Making a Difference and is past president and a current member of the Greene County Bar Association. Judge Lewis previously served on the Ohio RECLAIM Advisory Committee and as a member of the Supreme Court of Ohio Board on the

Unauthorized Practice of Law. In 2023 she was appointed by Governor Mike DeWine to the Ohio Juvenile Justice Working Group to conduct a holistic review of the state's juvenile justice system, including the Ohio Department of Youth Services (DYS), county juvenile detention facilities, and community corrections facilities.

Michaela “Chae” Little, LISW-S, LICDC, *Psychotherapist, Lindner Center of HOPE*

Michaela “Chae” Little, LISW-S, LICDC, is an outpatient telehealth psychotherapist at the Lindner Center of HOPE with extensive experience working across the behavioral health continuum including inpatient, residential, PHP, IOP, and outpatient settings. Her clinical work focuses on trauma and helping individuals build resilience in the face of complex life stressors. Chae uses an integrative therapeutic approach, incorporating evidence-based modalities to tailor treatment to each client's goals, experiences, and strengths. In addition to her clinical work, she provides professional training on a wide variety of topics ranging from compassion fatigue to trauma and addiction with an emphasis on resilience, professional sustainability, and trauma-informed practice.

Ashleigh LoVette, PhD, *Assistant Professor, Director, Youth Voices Study, College of Public Health, The Ohio State University*

Dr. Ashleigh LoVette is a public health researcher and youth advocate whose work focuses on promoting the health and healing of young people experiencing adversity. She received her doctorate in Behavioral and Social Health Sciences from Brown University and completed an interdisciplinary post-doctoral fellowship focused on violence/trauma at Johns Hopkins University. As a faculty member within the College of Public Health at The Ohio State University, Dr. LoVette leads a program of strengths-based research that informs youth-centered programs and policies. She is also an active board member for multiple youth-serving community organizations. Her current research includes Youth Voices, a community-engaged study seeking to identify culturally and developmentally relevant ways to promote the mental and sexual health of adolescents who have experienced parental incarceration. Through her community-centered research and service, Dr. LoVette seeks to make a difference in the lives of young people, so they can not only survive, but thrive.

Brian Mariotti, *CASA Volunteer, Board Treasurer, CASA/GAL Program of Summit County*

Brian Mariotti is a Summit County CASA volunteer and the Board Treasurer of the CASA/GAL Program of Summit County. With 20 years of commercial banking experience and a background as a hospice companion, he is a dedicated youth advocate who previously spent over a decade leading projects for the LeBron James Family Foundation. Brian is honored to be the parent of three children and in his free time enjoys pickleball, hiking, reading, cooking, board games, and exploring Northeast Ohio restaurants.

Bridget Moore, *Family Engagement Specialist, Fairfield County Probate/Juvenile Court Court*

Bridget Moore is a Family Engagement Specialist for the Fairfield County Juvenile Court in Lancaster, Ohio, with over 25 years of experience serving at-risk youth and their families. Her background includes work with Athens County Children Services and the Fairfield

County Juvenile Court. She is known for her genuine, direct approach and strong advocacy for the youth and families she serves, emphasizing accountability, trust-building, and collaboration to achieve lasting, positive outcomes.

Trenna Paxton, MSW, *Trauma Informed Outreach Advocate, DWAVE*

Trenna is Hard of Hearing and was raised in mainstream environment before finding the Deaf community at age 17. From here, she learned sign language while beginning college at Gallaudet University where she majored in Social Work. During her senior year, she interned full time with a domestic violence shelter in Washington, D.C. and helped local agencies lobby for increased funding for Deaf education. After graduating, she entered her Master of Social Worker program where she focused on violence and advocacy work. During this time, she partnered with Deaf DAWN in D.C. to help create fundraising opportunities. In her last semester at Gallaudet, Trenna interned with DWAVE and was subsequently hired as a Trauma Informed Outreach Advocate upon graduating with her master's degree in social work in May 2023. Trenna received her social workers licensure last winter.

Karla Nelson, *Court Program Manager, Fairfield County Protective Services*

Karla Nelson has worked for Fairfield County Protective Services since 1990. Ms. Nelson has worked in various positions throughout the agency. Ms. Nelson currently provides oversight to all Court related areas of service for the agency, is the liaison for staff with legal counsel and the courts, provides guidance/coaching/mentoring to staff on court related Protective Services needs, and has participated in county initiatives with the Fairfield County Juvenile Court.

Jen Newton, PhD, *Associate Professor, Special Education, Ohio University*

Jen Newton is an associate professor at Ohio University. Dr. Newton's research interests include anti-racist, anti-ableist education, early childhood inclusion, and inclusive teacher preparation. She regularly presents locally, regionally, and nationally on a range of inclusive educational topics. Dr. Newton's 25 years in inclusive education began as an early interventionist and an inclusive prekindergarten teacher prior to pursuing doctoral studies. She is currently a teacher educator and an inclusive consultant and researcher.

CeCe Norwood, MA, *Co-Founder/CEO, Black Survivors of Sexual Assault Institute*

CeCe has been a CASA guardian ad litem for abused and neglected children and youth since 2007. She has also served as an education surrogate parent, adoption recruiter, and a coach for resource parents and caseworkers. CeCe has been connected to Ohio's foster care system since 1992, when she adopted her 11-month-old daughter. In 1995, she became a certified trainer with both the Ohio Child Welfare and Adult Protective Services training systems. She facilitates and develops proprietary and standardized educational opportunities for resource parents, caseworkers, and allied professionals on a variety of child and adult abuse and neglect issues. She is recognized as the 2026 National Sexual Violence Resource Center's Visionary Voice Awards for her exceptional dedication and impact within the anti-sexual violence movement.

Kendall Oliano, LSW, Training Associate Director, Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption

Kendall Oliano has almost a decade of experience in child welfare and currently serves as a Training Associate Director with the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption. In her role, she provides training in the Child Focused Recruitment Model to adoption recruiters, child welfare professionals, and stakeholders. She began her career working with children and adults with developmental disabilities. After transitioning to a position in foster care, she discovered a passion for advocating for children and families involved in the child welfare system. Kendall served in a variety of roles in this field including case management, licensing, training, onboarding, and clinical case management. She was instrumental in developing and serving in a new position focused on supporting and developing the skills of newly licensed foster parents. Kendall graduated from Cedarville University with a bachelor's degree in social work and is a licensed social worker in the state of Ohio.

Amberle Prater, PhD, LPCC-S, Suicide Prevention Clinical Lead Supervisor, 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 280 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 trainings to staff and community behavioral health partners on identifying and responding to elevated suicide risk in youth.

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

Jessica A. Ramos is the Manager of the Immigration Team and also 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 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."

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

Tara Roberson has over 18 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 the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption 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 six years ago and is currently a Training Associate Director at the foundation. Tara graduated from The Ohio State University with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology.

Chris Ryba, CASA Volunteer, Board Member, CASA/GAL Program of Summit County

Chris Ryba is a dedicated advocate and community volunteer with eight years of service as a CASA volunteer, during which he has represented the best interests of 14 children across eight cases. He also serves on the CASA/GAL Program of Summit County Volunteer Board and has spent the past three years helping lead volunteer engagement as co-chair of the Volunteer Recognition Committee. Professionally, Chris works as a Customer Experience Manager for a Contact Center as a Service (CCaaS) company, where he focuses on helping organizations leverage AI to improve customer and agent experiences. Outside of his professional and volunteer work, Chris has been married for 33 years and is the proud father of two children.

Tristian Smith, MSEM, MSIA, CBCP, PMP, Army Veteran, Child Advocate, Author, Keynote Speaker, Nebraska CASA, Nebraska Foster Care Review Board

Tristian Smith is an award-winning author, keynote speaker, and child welfare advocate whose journey from foster care to military leadership shapes his work with audiences across the country. After navigating more than 25 foster homes as a child, he went on to serve nearly a decade as a U.S. Army officer specializing in Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) defense operations. Tristian holds a B.A. in History from Fort Valley State University, an M.S. in Emergency Management from the University of Maryland Global Campus, and an M.S. in Intelligence Analysis from Johns Hopkins University. He is the author of *Against All Odds*, an Amazon Best Seller and award-winning memoir that explores resilience, mentorship, and the life-changing impact of steady support systems. He currently serves as a Nebraska CASA volunteer, a member of the Nebraska CASA Board of Directors, and a member of Nebraska's Foster Care Review Board.

Jenny Stotts, MS, LSW, Youth Ombudsman, Youth and Family Ombudsmen Office, ODJFS

Jenny Stotts is Ohio's Youth Ombudsman. Previously, Stotts was the Director of the Athens CASA/GAL Program. She also worked with UPP at Ohio University and as a caseworker and forensic interviewer with a PCSA. In addition, she has taught courses on trauma-informed care. Stotts earned degrees from Ohio University in Social Work and Social Sciences, holds an LSW, is a graduate of Leading in Appalachia, and holds a Lean Six Sigma black belt. Stotts completed extensive training in positive peace and conflict resolution, and volunteers with an international task force to facilitate dialogue in times of high conflict. Stotts' work has been published in national and international publications.

Stotts has spoken and presented at numerous events, including Rotary's International Assembly and Global Support Seminar before audiences of Regional Leaders and U.N. Representatives representing 200 countries.

Daniel Sullenberger, Lead Staff Attorney, CASA of Franklin County

Daniel W. Sullenberger (He/Him/His) is the Lead Staff Attorney with Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Franklin County. Daniel has worked as a CASA Staff Attorney in Franklin County since 2013. Daniel attended Wittenberg University where he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1994. In 2007, he received his Juris Doctor from Capital University Law School. Before his role as a CASA Staff Attorney, Daniel was in private practice where he specialized in juvenile law. As a CASA of Franklin County Staff Attorney, Daniel advocates for children's best interests in abuse, neglect, dependency, and delinquency proceedings alongside dedicated volunteer Guardians ad Litem.

Rachel Thompson, Staff Attorney, CASA of Franklin County

Rachel Thompson (She/Her/Hers) is the newest staff attorney with Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Franklin County. Rachel started working as a CASA Staff Attorney in 2024. Rachel attended The Ohio State University where she received a Bachelor of Arts degree in 2017. In 2021, she received her Juris Doctor from Capital University Law School. Before her role as a CASA Staff Attorney. Rachel worked as an attorney for Franklin County Children Services. As a CASA of Franklin County Staff Attorney, Rachel advocates for children's best interests in abuse, neglect, dependency, and delinquency proceedings alongside dedicated volunteer Guardians ad Litem.

Makaila Tussing, Specialized Dockets and Strategic Initiatives Coordinator, Fairfield County Probate/Juvenile Court

Makaila Tussing has been a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor since 2011. Mrs. Tussing joined Fairfield County Juvenile Court in 2016 as a member of the court's behavioral health team where she provided consultation to court staff along with assessments and ongoing therapeutic services for court involved youth. Mrs. Tussing has been serving in her current role since 2019.

Beth Weinstock, MD, Executive Director, BirdieLight

Beth Weinstock is a poet and physician from Columbus, Ohio, and also a mother of four whose eldest son Eli died March of 2021 when he unintentionally ingested fentanyl while a sophomore at American University. In honor of Eli, she and her family founded BirdieLight, an organization dedicated to ending the senseless loss of Americans due to drug adulteration. BirdieLight has educated 1000s of young people, parents, and caregivers about overdose prevention by increasing substance literacy and reducing stigma related to substance use.

Marea Wesney, Placement & Facilitation Supervisor, Fairfield County Protective Services

Marea Wesney has 21 years of service within Fairfield County, working at the Multi-County Juvenile Detention Center and Fairfield County Protective Services. Ms. Wesney has served Fairfield County Protective Services as an Intake and Assessment caseworker, then moved into a supervisory role in multiple service areas to include parenting time, screening, intake, ongoing, and placement & facilitation. Most recently, Ms. Wesney has played a role in strengthening collaboration efforts between Protective Services and the Juvenile Court, assisting with cross training initiatives and working with focus groups.

Andrea Witwer, *Licensed Clinical Psychologist, Professor-Clinical Psychiatry and Behavioral Health, The Ohio State University*

Dr. Witwer is a Professor in the Departments of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health and Psychology at The Ohio State University and is the Director of Training for the Nisonger Center, University Center of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities. Dr. Witwer has extensive experience providing interdisciplinary clinical services, training, and conducting research in the field of autism and intellectual and developmental disability (IDD). She has published research related to co-occurring emotional, behavioral, and psychiatric disorders in those with autism spectrum disorders and other developmental disabilities as well as assessment of autism spectrum disorders.

Laurie Wright, MSW, LISW-S, *Human Services Developer, Ohio Department of Children and Youth, Bureau of Youth and Young Adult Supports*

Laurie Wright is a Human Services Developer with the Ohio Department of Children and Youth, where she has served for five years. She began her tenure at DCY as a statewide trainer for child protection staff and now contributes to the Independent Living and Transition Age Youth team, supporting efforts that help young people in foster care move toward self-sufficiency. With over a 35-year commitment to strengthening outcomes for youth involved in the child protection system, Laurie draws on three decades of experience at Franklin County Children Services, where she supervised both new employee and ongoing teams and worked as an ongoing caseworker serving older, multi-needs youth.