



New York State Children's Alliance
2025 LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
EMPOWERING PROFESSIONALS TO RESPOND
TO CHILD ABUSE



Welcoming: Law Enforcement, Prosecutors, CSEC & Victim Advocates,
Child Protective/Child Welfare Personnel, Probation Officers, Medical Providers,
Mental Health Professionals, School Personnel, Community Outreach & Education Staff,
and others working with children

OCTOBER 27TH - 29TH, 2025 • ALBANY, NY

AT-A-GLANCE

MONDAY: OCT. 27th

1:15pm-5:00pm
**EARLY CONFERENCE
CHECK-IN**

2:00pm-5:30pm
**PRE-CONFERENCE
SEMINAR:**
(separate registration)

TUESDAY: OCT. 28th

7:30am-5:00pm
Conference Check-in

8:30am-5:30pm
Exhibitor Tables

8:00am-8:30am
Breakfast/Welcome

8:45am-9:45am
Keynote Session

10:00am-11:15am
Session 1

11:30am-12:45pm
Session 2

12:45pm-1:45pm
LUNCH

1:45pm-3:00pm
Session 3

3:15pm-4:30pm
Session 4

5:00pm-6:00pm
Networking Reception

WEDNESDAY: OCT. 29th

8:00am-8:45am
Breakfast/Awards

9:00am-10:15am
Session 5

10:30am-12:00pm
Closing Presentation

12:00pm-12:30pm
Raffles/Send-off

NYSCA WELCOMES YOU!

We are excited you have joined us for the NYSCA 2025 Leadership Conference. The purpose of the Conference is to develop and enhance professional skills in prevention, recognition, assessment, and treatment of all forms of child maltreatment.

Look for a NYSCA Team or Board Member wearing a white lanyard with orange and blue imprint for help. Our team is here to provide any support or assistance you may need. Enjoy the conference, and we'll see you next year!

PRE-CONFERENCE SEMINAR: Oct. 27th / 2:00pm-5:30pm

FORECAST Model **Location: Fort Orange Ballroom**

PRESENTED BY: Kerri Bergendahl, Tony DeVincenzo, & Jessica Wozniak

Join the Child Advocacy Training & Support (CATS) Center team to explore what it can look like when Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) and their multidisciplinary team (MDT) partners provide children and families with a trauma-informed response.

Overview of NCTSN's 12 Core Concepts for Understanding Traumatic Stress Responses in Children and Families, which offers a conceptual framework and shared language. Plus, a demonstration of UMSL's FORECAST Model. Each FORECAST simulation is a full-day training session, so we are choosing one of our favorite modules to share with you. The FORECAST model is interactive and requires audience engagement!

CONFERENCE KEYNOTE: Derek Clark / 8:45am-9:45am



Derek Clark "Rapping Dad"

An inspiring motivational speaker, who overcame a dark and traumatic past, having spent 13 years in the foster care system after enduring abuse, rejection, and abandonment. His early life was filled with challenges that could have easily led him down a destructive path, but Derek refused to be defined by his circumstances.

Through resilience, determination, and a shift in mindset, he learned to transform his pain into purpose. Derek embraced his story not as a victim but as a victor, choosing to write a new narrative of hope, healing, and empowerment. By divorcing himself from the mindset of helplessness, he created a positive destiny, inspiring countless others with his message of resilience, self-empowerment, and the power of owning one's future, regardless of the past. His journey exemplifies the transformative power of personal responsibility and choosing to rise above adversity.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28th

7:30am- 5:00pm: Conference Check In Location: **Fort Orange Walkway**

Check-in kicks off Tuesday, October 28th at 7:30am! Swing by the main table at the Fort Orange Walkway to grab your name tag and conference bag. CEU/CLE check-in details will be there too!

8:00am-5:30pm: Exhibitor Tables Location: **King Street Courtyard**

Be sure to visit our exhibitor tables! For the first time ever, we're bringing exhibitors to the NYSCA Leadership Conference. On Tuesday only, you'll find a number of vendors in the King Street Courtyard. This is a special chance for CAC staff and MDT members to connect with partners, discover resources, and explore tools designed to support your everyday work!

8:00am-8:30am: Breakfast Location: **Fort Orange Square**

8:30am-4:00pm: Data Lounge Location: **Koi Ponds in the Fort Orange Courtyard**

Enjoy this space designed for you to relax and recharge! You'll find a variety of stress-relief toys and charging stations for your laptop or phone. Tebo Cossa will be in attendance—please stop by to say hello! As a Collaborate user, you can also schedule your information sessions right here at the Collaborate Lounge.

WORKSHOP SESSION 1: 10:00am-11:15am

1A

Embedding Trauma-Informed Care: A Cross-Agency Organizational Assessment Initiative

Location: **King Street #8**

Presented by: Marla Behler & Kerri Bergendahl

In 2023, the Child Advocacy Center (CAC) of Putnam County led a groundbreaking initiative to strengthen trauma-informed practices across county departments by implementing the Trauma-Informed Organizational Assessment (TIOA). In partnership with Baystate's Child Advocacy Training & Support Center and the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN), this initiative engaged nearly 100 county employees in a structured self-assessment process covering nine key domains of trauma-informed care. This session will explore the implementation process, including strategies for engaging diverse staff, addressing confidentiality concerns, and fostering cross-department collaboration. Presenters will share early outcomes, lessons learned, and next steps for translating findings into sustainable, trauma-informed practices that support both staff and the families they serve.

relationships with school staff. The session will cover how student disclosures often occur in these settings and the steps for making a thorough, accurate report to the State Central Registry. The discussion will then transition to what happens once a report from a school disclosure reaches the Dutchess County CAC. Attendees will gain insight into the initial actions taken by Child Protective Services and/or law enforcement, and how collaboration is established between the Personal Safety Program Facilitator, CPS, Law Enforcement, and the CAC Family Advocate. The session will conclude with a review of two real cases from the past two years, illustrating how prevention efforts, immediate response, and ongoing support intersect to serve children and families.

1C

Behind Every File is a Child: Investigating and Prosecuting Internet Exploitation Cases

Location: **King Street #4-CLE CREDIT (1 HOUR)**

Presented by: Matthew Stegner & Lynette M. Reda

Internet crimes against children (ICAC), including the possession and distribution of child sexual abuse material (CSAM), are among the most disturbing and complex cases facing child advocacy professionals today. This session will provide a front-line perspective from an ICAC Task Force field supervisor, focusing on what CSAM is, how these crimes impact not only the children depicted but entire communities, and why a trauma-informed multidisciplinary team (MDT) response is critical. Participants will also review real case examples to understand how coordinated efforts between law enforcement, child protection, advocacy, and mental health professionals lead to more effective and compassionate outcomes.

1B

Preventative to Crisis Intervention: Bridging the Gap

Location: **King Street #6**

Presented by: Jessica Wexler & Rebecca Mahon

This session will explore the connection between prevention programming and crisis intervention at The Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse in Dutchess County, NY. Participants will first learn how the Personal Safety Program is scheduled and delivered in partnership with local school districts, and what it takes to maintain strong, professional

continued

WORKSHOP SESSION 1: 10:00am-11:15am

1D

The Missing Children Recovery Operation: What We Learned and How We Can Help You Prepare

Location: King Street #2

Presented by: Nancy Harris, Madeline Hehir & Cheryl Wier

According to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) in 2023 NCMEC assisted law enforcement, families and child welfare with 28,886 reports of missing children.

Most children (65%) were female, with the mean age of 6-years-old and the median age of 5-year-old, however teenagers between the age of 15 and 17-years-old were the second most common group abducted during nonfamily abductions.

Goals of the operation:

1. Locate and recover as many missing youths as possible.
2. Receive recovered youth with a comprehensive response that supports underlying needs to prevent future missing episodes.
3. Strengthen local partnerships across systems to enhance practice around missing youth.
4. Offering training, technical assistance, and resources to partner agencies to support future missing youth work.

1E

Bearing Witness: Holding Space for Survivors of Family-Controlled Sex Trafficking of Children

Location: Town Hall Amphitheater

Presented by: Kait Gannon & Laurie Krull

Survivor-leader Kaitlynn Gannon and clinician Laurie Krull, LCSW-R, co-founders of Mezzo Allies, Inc., share research and lived expertise on effective strategies to identify and respond to family-controlled child sex trafficking.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify key indicators of family-controlled commercial sexual exploitation of children (FC-CSEC), organized sexual abuse, and potential caregiver involvement in child sexual abuse materials (CSAM) production that are often missed by current screening tools and protocols.
- Analyze the complex barriers to disclosure specific to familial trafficking and organized abuse, including the impact of early developmental trauma, dissociation, and programmed silence on memory, behavior, and victim presentation.
- Apply trauma-informed, parts-aware, and relationally steady strategies to assessment, intervention, and post-disclosure support that can increase the likelihood of safety, trust, and future help-seeking for victims of family-controlled trafficking and organized abuse.

MOVE TO ROOMS/SNACK BREAK: 11:15am-11:30am

WORKSHOP SESSION 2: 11:30am-12:45pm

2A

Building Resilience in Yourself and Others

Location: King Street #8

Presented by: Tamaé Memole

This session blends research with real-world tools to help you strengthen your own resilience and support others in building theirs. Participants will leave with actionable techniques to reduce stress, foster more positive relationships and create environments to engage in difficult conversations more constructively.

2B

Empowering Parents: Unlocking the Power of SEL at Home

Location: King Street #6

Presented by: Stefanie Szwejbka & Rebecca Macfarlane

This workshop highlights the development and early success of the Parent Academy, a program designed by the Child Advocacy Center of Greater Rochester (CACGROC) to strengthen the connection between parents and the school-based prevention programs their children are learning. By integrating trauma-informed approaches, the 5 protective factors, and critical prevention topics, this program helps caregivers gain practical skills while fostering a supportive community of parents. Learn how we addressed key challenges such as engaging parent groups, building hope, and ensuring sustainability.

continued WORKSHOP SESSION 2: 11:30am-12:45pm

2C

Facing the Big Bad F-Word: Practical Fundraising Tips for Small to Medium Nonprofits and CACs

Location: King Street #4

Presented by: Rachel Johnson

Whether you're new to fundraising or looking to refresh your strategy, this interactive session will guide you through the essential building blocks of successful development work. Explore different types of fundraising—individual and corporate giving, online campaigns, grants, in-kind support, and peer-to-peer fundraising—and how to build a compelling case that inspires action and donor relationships that last. Participants will collaborate on prospect brainstorming and leave with a list of potential supporters and clear entry points to begin outreach. We'll cover donor engagement tools like the prospect pyramid, donor lifecycle, and ways to track key metrics like retention rates. Learn how to secure meetings, lead meaningful tours and presentations, find grants and leverage social media to amplify relationships.

We'll also dive into the importance of building a committee of volunteers, growing your peer-to-peer fundraising program—how to activate affinity groups, create friendly competition, and recognize captains and top fundraisers to boost participation and results. You'll walk away with ideas you can implement immediately, plus resources for ongoing training.

2D

Integrating Nutrient-Dense Foods into Mental Health Services

Location: King Street #2

Presented by: Vicki Braunstein & Kiera Keyon

Children who have faced trauma and neglect are at greater risk for mental health issues, such as PTSD, anxiety, and depression. While traditional therapies focus on psychological needs, nutrition's impact on mental health is often neglected. Research shows that proper nutrition supports brain development, regulates stress, and fosters resilience, while deficiencies can worsen symptoms. The presentation "Nourishing the Mind" explores how nutrition affects mental health in at-risk children, offering evidence-based strategies to enhance treatment and promote well-being. It also discusses integrating nutritional advocacy into treatment plans and community initiatives to address food insecurity. Attendees will gain knowledge and tools for a holistic approach to child advocacy.

2E

From Disclosure to Trial: Prepping Children for Testifying

Location: Town Hall Ampitheater

CLE Credit (1 hour)

Presented by: Chelsie Hamilton & Colleen Marvel

This workshop will walk participants through the stages of preparing to testify, from CAC interviews and felony hearing preparation to grand jury appearances and trial testimony. Using case studies, presenters will explore how to deliver difficult news while a case is pending, what strategies have succeeded (and which have fallen short), and the top factors to consider early in the investigation of sexual abuse. Attendees will leave with practical, field-tested guidance to strengthen their courtroom confidence and improve case outcomes.

Learning Objectives:

- Do's and Don'ts of CAC Interview, Felony Hearing Prep, Grand Jury Prep, and Trial
- How to deliver bad news while a case is pending.
- Top things to always consider early in investigation of Sexual Abuse

LUNCH BREAK: 12:45pm-1:45pm

Location: Fort Orange Square

Don't Forget...
Visit Our Exhibitors' Tables



Tuesday, 8:00am-5:30pm

King Street Courtyard

On Tuesday only, you will find a number of tables in the King Street Courtyard. Connect with partners, discover resources, and explore tools designed to support your every day work!

WORKSHOP SESSION 3: 1:45pm-3:00pm

3A

Unified Pursuit: Merging Title IX and Criminal Investigations for Comprehensive Justice

Location: King Street #8-CLE CREDIT (1 HOUR)

Presented by: Brook Thomas,

Allie Kibler-Campbell, & Joe Muroff

School administrators are required by federal law to investigate gender-based discrimination. When the allegations include sexual assault, a Title IX investigation runs parallel to a criminal investigation. Noticing these duplicative efforts and the detrimental effects they had on victims led us to create a collaboration between our Children's Advocacy Center (CAC), Multidisciplinary Team (MDT), and area public schools to streamline these investigations. Our goal was to mirror the CAC model of coordinating the MDT so victims would not be subjected to an additional interview and grant victims' access to other supportive services. This workshop will briefly outline Title IX regulations and demonstrate the relevance of Title IX within the field of child abuse prevention, investigation, and treatment. We will make the case for the importance and benefits of creating partnerships between schools, CACs and MDTs. Participants in this workshop will take away strategies to implement a collaboration between their MDT and local school systems immediately, plus resources for ongoing training.

3B

The Moment That Changed Everything: A Case Study in Prevention Education and Creative Arts Therapy

Location: King Street #6

Presented by: Shirin Mazdeyasna & Audrey Peterson

This presentation will explore the powerful intersection of prevention education and trauma-informed therapeutic intervention through a real-life case study that began with a school-based child abuse prevention program. The family advocate and prevention educator from the local Children's Advocacy Center (CAC), will share her experience delivering a comprehensive child abuse prevention curriculum in local public schools and at times, leading into disclosures from the students. Designed to empower children with knowledge about body safety, boundaries, and trusted adults, this curriculum also serves as an early identification tool for children at risk. During one of these school visits, the advocate recognized signs of distress in a student and facilitated an

instant referral to the school guidance counselor. The child subsequently disclosed ongoing sexual abuse by her father, initiating a multidisciplinary team (MDT) response and a three-year journey of trauma recovery through art therapy. In collaboration for this presentation, a licensed art therapist from the CAC will present this child's therapeutic progression, illustrating how trauma-focused cognitive behavior therapy and use of art therapy provide a safe, expressive outlet for healing. Pending final consent from the client and her non-offending parent in July of 2025, the presentation will include samples of the child's artwork to demonstrate the evolution of her emotional processing and resilience over time. The session will highlight the value of early prevention education, the importance of interagency collaboration, and the effectiveness of trauma-informed care grounded in creativity and client empowerment. Participants will gain understanding on trauma-informed intervention strategies and inspiration for implementing similar programs in their own communities. This session is ideal for advocates, MDT members, clinicians, and educators seeking to deepen their understanding of integrated prevention and intervention approaches. Attendees will gain knowledge and tools for a holistic approach to child advocacy.

3C

Strategic Planning and Foresight in Uncertain Times

Location: King Street #4

Presented by: Brie Lusheck

We live in an era of constant volatility—shifting politics, unpredictable economies, and rapid change. In these conditions, proactive strategic planning and foresight are essential for survival and growth. This interactive workshop helps participants move beyond reactive, short-term thinking to adopt a proactive, future-focused approach. Through practical tools, exercises, and real-world examples, attendees will learn to anticipate challenges, build resilient plans, and uncover opportunities in uncertainty. They will leave equipped to think creatively, analyze their competitive landscape, and lead with confidence and agility through change.

continued

WORKSHOP SESSION 3: 1:45pm-3:00pm

3D

When Caregivers Don't Believe: Impact, Intervention, and Support for Families Experiencing Abuse

Location: King Street #2

Presented by: Claire Villanova

This presentation will focus on the impact of unsupportive, non-offending caregivers on children who have experienced abuse, the trajectory of services and recovery, and the multidisciplinary team investigation. Content will focus on non-offending caregivers as secondary victims of abuse, and the various forms of trauma and stress that impact them and may contribute to a lack of support. Attendees will also learn trauma-informed methods of working with unsupportive caregivers and interventions that can foster a positive, appropriate environment for children healing from abuse.

3E

Leading Together: A Panel of CAC Educators and Executive Directors

Location: Town Hall Ampitheater

Presented by: Jennifer Wormley & Derek Tefft
(Saratoga Center for the Family)

Jami Rock & Scott McDowell

(Clinton County Child Advocacy Center)

Sam Vaughn & Christopher Russel (BestSelf)

This session brings together CAC Executive Directors and Outreach Educators from across New York State to share their experiences in developing and supporting education programs. Panelists will discuss how the educator role is funded, strategies for finding the right fit for the position, and how educators are engaging schools and delivering prevention curricula. The conversation will also touch on the diverse approaches across the state, from charging for lessons to offering them free of cost. likelihood of safety, trust, and future help-seeking for victims of family-controlled trafficking and organized abuse.

MOVE TO ROOMS: 3:00pm-3:15pm

WORKSHOP SESSION 4: 3:15pm-4:30pm

4A

The Utilization of Forensic Nurses in Child Maltreatment Cases

Location: King Street #8

Presented by: Kaylin N. Dawson

Forensic examiners play a vital role in investigating and prosecuting violent crimes beyond sexual assault. Their expertise in identifying, documenting, and preserving evidence supports cases of child abuse, domestic violence, and other assaults. Trained to recognize subtle injuries and trauma, they provide objective, trauma-informed evaluations critical in court and help connect victims to the justice system.

Understanding the forensic exam process strengthens collaboration among law enforcement, healthcare, child protection, and advocacy services—leading to better, victim-centered care. Greater awareness of their role promotes timely referrals, improved evidence collection, and stronger support for victims.

Albany Medical Center's Division of Forensic Medicine serves over 800 victims of violence each year.

4B

Enhancing Emotional Intelligence for Child Abuse Professionals

Location: King Street #6

Presented by: Ilana Beausejour

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a critical skill for child abuse professionals and multidisciplinary teams. This session explores how EI strengthens connections with children, enhances teamwork, and supports staff well-being. Learn actionable EI strategies and cross-disciplinary leadership tools to navigate complex challenges, inspire collaboration, and drive systemic resilience for the future.

Learning Objectives:

- Participants will be able to identify the key elements of emotional intelligence and their relevance to child abuse interventions and teamwork.
- Participants will be able to apply practical techniques for developing and utilizing emotional intelligence in professional settings and team environments.
- Participants will be able to evaluate the impact of emotional intelligence on communication, conflict resolution, and team collaboration in the context of child abuse and multidisciplinary teams.

continued

WORKSHOP SESSION 4: 3:15pm-4:30pm

4C

Accessible Forensic Interviews: Tailoring Your Approach for Children with IDD

Location: King Street #4

Presented by: Geri Brooks

This session will focus on strategies for conducting effective, child-centered forensic interviews with children who have intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Attendees will explore tools and assistive devices that can be integrated into the interview process to promote communication, as well as practical tips and real-world considerations to support the child's needs from start to finish. Whether you're new to interviewing children with IDD or looking to strengthen your skills, this session will offer insights for improving accessibility and ensuring every child's voice is heard.

4D

Layers of Harm: How Racism and Poverty Shape the Impact and Response to Child Abuse

Location: King Street #2

Presented by: Kristina Coleman

This session will explore the systemic inequities that impact children and families of color in the child welfare system. Discussion will address the overrepresentation of Black and Brown children in child protection cases, disparities in investigations and services, and the ways poverty and housing insecurity shape safety planning and recovery. Participants will gain insight into both policy and practice recommendations aimed at creating more equitable outcomes and meaningful support for vulnerable families.

4E

Fur Real Leaders: CAC Directors & Their Therapy Dogs Share Their Journey

Location: Town Hall Ampitheater

Presented by: by Directors:

Amy Quonce (CAC of Northern NY)

Ashley Davoli (CAC of Fingerlakes)

Deb George (Madsion County CAC)

Jess Ferrantino (The Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse)

Kris Beard (Cortland CAC)

Join CAC Directors from across New York State as they share their unique paths to bringing a facility dog into their center. Hear the different avenues they pursued, lessons learned along the way, and practical tips for integrating a dog into their MDT response. Some of the dogs will be joining their directors for this session—come ready for insights, inspiration, and a little tail-wagging charm!

END OF DAY ONE

Meet us at the Fort Orange Courtyard for the...

Networking Reception

5:00pm-6:00pm

Present your conference name badge and receive a free drink ticket good for one beer, one glass of wine, or one soda.

Also, grab a game card and have fun!

See You There!



WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29th: 8:00am-12:30pm

8:00am-8:45am / Breakfast & CAC Awards / Fort Orange Ballroom

WORKSHOP SESSION 5: 9:00am-10:15am

5A

Building a Road for Run-Away Youth

Location: King Street #8

Presented by: Sam Vaughn & David Mann

Participants will learn about the strategies Erie County NY took in creating a type of program that meets the needs of at-risk youth while strengthening collaboration among their MDT members. The session will highlight successful models, address common challenges, and provide practical tools for developing a program that fosters safety, trust, and positive outcomes with runaway youth.

5B

The First Step in Healing: The Importance of a Trauma-Informed Approach in Medical Forensic Exam

Location: King Street #6

Presented by: Cheryl Wier

A trauma-informed medical forensic exam is essential for children who have experienced maltreatment. This approach prioritizes their physical, emotional, and psychological safety while recognizing the profound effects of trauma on development and health. Children affected by abuse often present complex medical and emotional needs requiring sensitive, specialized care. Forensic clinicians must understand how trauma shapes a child's perception and behavior, engaging both the child and caregivers with compassion, respect, and support to build trust and promote healing. This presentation explores the core principles of trauma-informed care in pediatric forensic exams, emphasizing strategies to minimize re-traumatization, empower families, and foster recovery. Using best practices, clinical guidelines, and case examples, it highlights developmentally appropriate communication, culturally responsive care, and multidisciplinary coordination across healthcare, advocacy, mental health, and legal systems. Attendees will learn practical tools to integrate trauma-informed approaches into practice—ensuring accurate evidence collection while affirming each child's dignity and humanity.

5C

Navigating Safety Planning with Youth Who Engage in Problematic Sexual Behavior: Meeting Children Where They Are

Location: King Street #4

Presented by: Geoff Sidoli

This session will explore the complexities of working with youth who engage in problematic sexual behavior (YPSB), with a particular focus on sibling and

intrafamilial dynamics. Through a multidisciplinary lens, participants will gain a deeper understanding of how to develop trauma-informed safety plans that are responsive to the individual needs of each child involved, those causing harm and those impacted. This session will also address real-world challenges to safety planning, especially in rural areas, and offer concrete strategies for overcoming barriers. Professionals across all disciplines will gain better insights in developing a shared, practical, and trauma-informed approach to safety planning in YPSB cases.

5D

Leadership That Has Greater Impact

Location: King Street #2

Presented by: Octavia E. Cowans

Designed for CAC and MDT professionals, this workshop helps leaders reflect on their unique leadership styles within the multidisciplinary context. Participants will learn about Situational Leadership and how to apply this adaptive approach to effectively guide the diverse group involved in child abuse investigations. By mastering these strategies, attendees will enhance collaboration, improve decision-making, and strengthen their impact in serving children and families.

5E

MDT Considerations for Presenting Evidence in a Forensic Interview

Location: Town Hall Amphitheater

CLE Credit (1 hour)

Presented by: Michelle Kline & Gabby Glenning

This training provides MDT partners with practical guidance and structured approaches for introducing and presenting external evidence/information—such as photos, digital communications, or other case materials—during a forensic interview. Participants will learn the importance of timing, neutrality, and child-centered methods to ensure that the process is legally defensible, trauma-informed, and developmentally appropriate. The session emphasizes best practices, common challenges, and strategies for integrating evidence while maintaining the integrity of the interview and minimizing suggestibility serving children and families.

10:15am-10:30am:

**MOVE TO CLOSING PRESENTATION/
SNACK BREAK/RAFFLES**

CLOSING PRESENTATION 10:30am-12:30pm

The Power of Adaptability in Communication **Location: Fort Orange Ballroom**

Presented by: Jen Henry

The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place. We all strive to be respectful and considerate—but even with the best intentions, our conversations can miss the mark. That's why we've invited Jen back to replace confusion with clarity and turn good intentions into effective conversations. In this engaging closing keynote, Jen will offer a quick refresher on the four Bird Styles, then shift the focus to something even more powerful: adapting your communication style in real time to better connect with others. When we adjust how we communicate based on who we're speaking with, conversations become clearer, outcomes sharper, and collaboration stronger. With her signature energy and playful approach, Jen makes it easy to laugh, learn, and apply what you've learned right away. You'll leave not only feeling seen and understood—but also better equipped to create that experience for others.

12:00pm-12:30pm: RAFFLES & SEND-OFF

Location: Fort Orange Ballroom

Don't head out just too soon! Join the NYSCA team for our conference send-off. We'll wrap up with a big thank-you to our CACs and MDT members, celebrate the connections made over the past few days, and announce our raffle winners before we say goodbye. It's the perfect way to close the conference together!

Be sure to stick around for your chance to win!



CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS:

NETWORKING RECEPTION: Tuesday, Fort Orange Courtyard, 5:00pm-6:00pm

Each conference attendee will receive a free drink ticket for one beer, one glass of wine, or one soda at the of wine, or one soda at the Fort Orange Courtyard. Pick up your free drink ticket at the Courtyard entrance by showing your conference name badge.



CAC AWARD PRESENTATIONS: Wednesday 8:30am-8:45am

NYSCA appreciates and thanks all the amazing multidisciplinary team members who provide critical services in 47 Child Advocacy Centers across the state. We are excited to recognize, again this year, a few outstanding team members.



RAFFLE PRIZES: Wednesday Noon-12:30pm

There are a lot of great items to check out this year. Make sure to fill out your 5 raffle tickets and enter to win.



CONFERENCE CEUs and CLUs

CEU credits will be offered by The New York Foundling and are available for Mental Health Counseling, Social Work, and Psychology.

CLE credits will be provided to all practicing attorneys by the Office of the Bronx District Attorney for workshop sessions 1C, 2E, 3A & 5E.

You must sign in at the REGISTRATION TABLE each day of the conference.



CONFERENCE CERTIFICATES

All those attending the conference will receive a certificate of attendance based on workshops attended after completing a conference evaluation. Certificates of Completion will meet ongoing education hours for NCA Standards.



THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING! *More information, coming soon, for the NYSCA 2026 Leadership Conference.*

Thank You

2025 LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE SPONSORS



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BIOGRAPHIES

ASHLEY DAVOLI MHC, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER OF THE FINGER LAKES

Ashley Davoli has dedicated her career to supporting children and families impacted by trauma. She began working with the Finger Lakes Child Abuse Response Team as a Forensic Interviewer in 2011, following her work as a Child and Adolescent Therapist serving trauma survivors for many years. In 2015, she joined the Child Advocacy Center of Finger Lakes as a Child Advocacy Specialist. Ashley advanced into leadership roles over the years, serving as Program Manager in 2020, Associate Director in 2022, and Executive Director in 2023. In these positions, she has held various roles, including education specialist training on topics in the field of trauma and child abuse, forensic interviewer, case manager, advocate, trauma therapist, forensic interviewing trainer/mentor and director. She holds a master's degree in mental health counseling and brings both clinical expertise and a deep commitment to advocacy into her leadership. Phoenix, Golden Retriever Title: CACFL Facility Dog at the Child Advocacy Center of the Finger Lakes

ALLIE KIBLER-CAMPBELL MS, PREVENTION AND OUTREACH SUPERVISOR, CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER OF SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN

Over the span of 8 years with the agency, Allie has grown the program from inception to a tri-county initiative in Southwest Michigan dedicated to educating tens of thousands school-age children, adults working in youth serving organizations, and caregivers, on the prevention of child abuse. In her work with the community, Allie has created meaningful partnerships with area schools and was the recipient of the Berrien Regional Education Service Agency 2024 "Partner in Education". Allie also serves on the Board of Directors for two local schools and is a member of several community groups including the Whole Child Collaborative, Truancy Task Force, Human Trafficking Task Force, and United Way of Southwest Michigan Investment Team. In addition to her work within Southwest Michigan, she is a contracted employee with the Children's Advocacy Centers of Michigan as a Prevention Alliance Educator, where she helped develop and facilitate the Keeping Kids Safe curriculum.

AMY QUONCE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, VICTIMS ASSISTANCE CENTER OF JEFFERSON COUNTY

Amy Quonce has been working in the Child Advocacy Center movement for over 19 years. Starting when the Child Advocacy Center opened in Jefferson County in 2006 Amy has worked in various roles to support the program including advocate, coordinator and program director. As the Program Director, Amy worked with partner agencies to expand the CAC program into the tri-county area serving Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence Counties enhancing services to children and families in need. In 2024 Amy was promoted to Executive Director of the Victims Assistance Center, the umbrella organization for the Child Advocacy Center of Northern New York. In addition to the CAC, the Victims Assistance Center operates a residential safe shelter, sexual assault program and domestic violence program. Emelia, Yellow Labrador Title: Facility Dog at the CAC of Northern NY

AUDREY PETERSON LMSW, TRAUMA THERAPIST & PREVENTATIVE EDUCATOR, CAC/ REACH OF MHACG

Audrey Peterson serves as the Family Advocate at the Greene County Child Advocacy Center. She also works as a Preventative Educator, delivering age-appropriate Healthy Boundaries curriculum in schools across Columbia and Greene Counties.

BRIE LUSHECK STRATEGY CONSULTANT, CURTIS STRATEGY

Brie Lusheck empowers nonprofits to achieve sustainable growth and expand their impact. She brings a unique blend of expertise gained from diverse roles in both the public and private sectors. During her tenure at the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, she spearheaded the national expansion of the Wendy's Wonderful Kids program, significantly increasing its impact on children in foster care. Her experience also includes serving as Deputy Director of Children's Initiatives and Executive Director of Family and Children First Councils for Governor Mike DeWine, where she focused on child welfare. Brie began her career in public policy with the Ohio House of Representatives and later

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contributed impactful research on social issues at the Center for Community Solutions. Brie is a graduate of both Ohio University, where she received her MBA with a concentration in Healthcare Administration, and Ashland University, where she participated in Ashbrook Scholar Program. Brie also serves as vice-chair of Governor DeWine's Ohio Commission of Service and Volunteerism.

BROOK THOMAS FORENSIC INTERVIEWING SPECIALIST, CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER OF SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN

Brook is honored to have been employed as a Forensic Interviewing Specialist for the Children's Advocacy Center of Southwest Michigan for the past eight years. She was recently hired as a contract Forensic Interviewing trainer for Children's Advocacy Centers of Michigan. Brook obtained both her bachelor's and master's degrees in social work from Grand Valley State University. She has served on numerous boards in the community and is the current Mayor of St. Joseph, MI.

CHELSE HAMILTON J.D., FIRST ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY, WYOMING COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Chelsie Hamilton first started as an Assistant District Attorney in Monroe County in 2018. In May of 2020, Chelsie came back home to Wyoming County to be an Assistant District Attorney. Currently, she serves as the First Assistant District Attorney in Wyoming County. ADA Hamilton is assigned to handle all sexual abuse, child and adult, cases for Wyoming County in New York.

CHERYL WIER MSN RN SANE-A SANE-P NYSAFE, FORENSIC NURSE, SOUTHERN TIER CAC, ST. PETER'S HEALTH PARTNERS

Cheryl Wier has been a registered nurse since 2006, specializing in emergency nursing, forensic nursing, and nursing supervision. She has been a forensic nurse since 2008 and is currently practicing at several locations throughout northwestern Pennsylvania and western New York. Cheryl served as the Clinical Nurse Coordinator for the Duquesne University ANE-SANE grant, an initiative aimed at developing forensic nursing clinical skills and offering essential support to students advancing from novice to experienced SANE providers. Cheryl advocates for forensic nurses and the patients they serve on various national and statewide committees focused on improving care for these individuals. Wyoming County in New York.

CHRISTOPHER RUSSEL COMMUNITY OUTREACH SPECIALIST, SCOTT BIELER CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER AT BESTSELF

Chris has been working with the Scott Bieler Child Advocacy Center at BestSelf for over two years but is no stranger to presenting with youth. Whether it has been about child abuse, social emotional skill building, drug and alcohol use prevention, or benefit advisement; Chris has over 10 years of experience working with diverse groups of children across Western New York to keep them safe and informed.

CLAIRE VILLANOVA MSW, FORENSIC INTERVIEW SPECIALIST AND PROGRAM COORDINATOR, CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER OF NIAGARA

Claire Villanova has worked at the CAC since 2020. Claire has held various roles at the Center, including Child Fatality Review Team Coordinator and Safe Harbour Project Coordinator. Claire holds a Master of Social Work from the University at Buffalo, where she also earned her undergraduate degree in Public Health and Human Services with a focus on Early Childhood Development. Claire's focus areas include caregiver engagement and trauma-informed practice.

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COLLEEN MARVEL VICTIM ADVOCATE, WYOMING COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Colleen Marvel has been working with victims of crime since 1998. Colleen holds a bachelor's degree and brings decades of frontline experience to her work. From 1999 to 2011, she served as Coordinator of the Justice for Children Advocacy Center. She then worked as a Domestic Violence Advocate at the Wyoming County District Attorney's Office from 2011 to 2014. Since 2014, she has been the Crime Victim/Witness Program Coordinator, continuing her commitment to supporting victims and promoting justice.

DAVID MANN LIEUTENANT, BUFFALO POLICE DEPARTMENT SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT

Lt. David Mann has been the Lieutenant in charge of the Buffalo Police Department Special Victims Unit since 1995. He currently is the Board Chair of the New York State Children's Alliance

DEB GEORGE PROGRAM DIRECTOR, MADISON COUNTY CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER

Debra is proud to dedicate her career to the safety, security, and wellbeing of children and families. Completing a college degree in Human Development in early 2015, Debra launched her career with a position at Head Start from 2015-2017 allowing her the privilege of working with families in a very "direct" capacity. Through her time serving these families she was able to identify strengths, needs, and weaknesses within family systems. In 2017, Debra accepted a position with Oneida County Child and Family Services as a Child Protective Services Caseworker. She worked diligently with Social Services, Family Court, and other service providers to help ensure the safety and welfare of the children in the community. In 2020, Debra took a Child Protective Services Caseworker position with Madison County Department of Social Services. She quickly became a CPS member of the Multi-disciplinary Team (primarily investigating reports of child sexual abuse) and in 2022, Debra became the Director of the Madison County Children's Advocacy Center. Debra continues to serve the children and families of Madison County through her tireless efforts to increase awareness, deliver education, and to provide support and services to victims of childhood sexual abuse. Tali, Labradoodle Title: Therapy Dog at the Madison County CAC

DEREK CLARK "RAPPING DAD" KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Derek Clark's journey is a testament to resilience and redemption. Despite enduring unimaginable abuse, abandonment, and emotional turmoil as a child being thrust into the psychiatric hospital at the tender age of five. His thirteen years in the San Francisco Bay Area foster care system were marked by humiliation, aggression, and overwhelming anxiety compounded by unjust labels placed upon him. Yet, with the support of compassionate foster parents and a dedicated social worker, Derek defied the odds demonstrating remarkable resilience in the face of adversity.

Derek's personal experiences have equipped him with invaluable insights into overcoming hardship. Today, Derek is a source of inspiration as a speaker, author, and viral sensation known for his "Rapping Dad" videos, which have garnered over 250 million views. As the author of seven books, including titles like "Disable the Label," "Never Limit Your Life," and the "I Will Never Give Up" series, Derek shares his life's trials and triumphs to inspire others to embrace resilience and unwavering determination.

DEREK TEFFT CAPITAL CAMPAIGN & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DIRECTOR, SARATOGA CENTER FOR THE FAMILY

In his first 18 months, Derek grew the prevention outreach program from 0 to 16 school partnerships with more than 5,000 students reached. Derek has more than nine years in the child advocacy field and a background in public health, he focuses on building sustainable partnerships and creating innovative strategies to strengthen prevention education.

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GABRIELLA GLENNING, ESQ. ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY, CAPTAIN OF THE FAMILY PROTECTION UNIT, MONTGOMERY COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Ms. Glenning is responsible for supervising a team of resolute prosecutors, committed to seeking justice for the most vulnerable members of the community, including survivors of sexual and domestic violence, as well as child abuse. She began her career in the office in 2016 and has become a fixture from her beginnings as an undergraduate intern, through her time in law school, and after graduating from Villanova Law in 2019. During her time with the District Attorney's Office, Ms. Glenning served the community as a line prosecutor in the Family Protection Unit and as the captain of the Major Crimes Unit. She was captain of the Major Crimes Unit for two years and was responsible for overseeing investigations related to burglary, robbery, organized theft, and other acts of violence. In May 2025, Ms. Glenning returned to the Family Protection Unit as captain. While there, Ms. Glenning served as the designated prosecutor responsible for investigating, enforcing, and prosecuting those involved in human trafficking. Aside from her domestic violence, sexual violence, and human trafficking work, Ms. Glenning has extensive experience working with child victims and has collaborated with the Mission Kids Child Advocacy Center during her time at the District Attorney's Office.

GEOFF SIDOLI LCSW, NATIONAL TRAINER, NATIONAL CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE

Geoff Sidoli is the current National Training Fellow and past Coordinator for the National Children's Alliance Institute for Better Mental Health Outcomes. He assists CACs around the country developing, implementing, and sustaining mental health services including ones for children and youth exhibiting problematic sexual behavior (PSB). Prior to coming to NCA, Geoff was the founding director of the Mountain CAC in Asheville, NC where he supervised a clinical department that assessed and treated trauma and PSB utilizing multiple evidence-based/supported models, including a PSB model that he developed. Geoff is a national trainer in the Care Process Model-Pediatric Traumatic Stress screener and co-developed and trains an enhancement of TF-CBT for PSB. He is a clinical member of the Association for the Prevention and Treatment Sexual Abuse (ATSA) as well as a Fellow. He sits on ATSA's child and adolescent committee as well as the ethics committee. He also trains and consults regionally and nationally on the topic of sexual abuse, assessment, and treatment. Geoff is also NCA's Training and Technical Advisor for PSB and facilitates NCA's youth with problematic sexual behaviors national work group.

GERI BROOKS FORENSIC INTERVIEWER/MDT CONSULTANT

Geri Brooks has over 30 years' experience working within the child welfare system alongside multidisciplinary teams. While working at a child advocacy in Rochester, NY, Geri had various roles including Senior Forensic Interviewer and the Director of the Multi-Disciplinary Team supervising and conducting forensic interviews. She has conducted over 2,000 forensic interviews for children who have experienced alleged maltreatment, sexual abuse, exploitation or have witnessed violent crimes. Geri also travels to conduct forensic interviews of children and adults who have IDD (Intellectual Developmental Disability). She currently consults and provides on-call forensic interview mentoring and facilitates Peer Review for area law enforcement agencies and other CACs. Geri offers specialized trainings tailored to law enforcement, child welfare professionals, and university settings, covering topics such as child sexual abuse, physical abuse, and exploitation. She provides multi-disciplinary team training/case consulting on best practices and services as an expert witness in court proceedings.

ILANA BEAUSEJOUR LMSW, CONSULTANT

Ilana Lezama-Beausejour brings a wealth of experience and dedication to the field of social work. With a deep commitment to empowering individuals and strengthening support systems, she has spent several years serving in various capacities, from providing behavioral therapy interventions for children in the child welfare system, to equipping foster parents with essential social-emotional skills and promoting understanding across diverse backgrounds. Her professional journey has also led her to work within the Juvenile Justice System, where she was instrumental in supporting at-risk youth and cultivating relationships with key stakeholders to advocate for

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communities with limited access to resources. During her tenure in direct service practice, she successfully developed a mental wellness program in New York City, designed to address trauma and foster healing amongst vulnerable youth. In addition to her work with children and families, Ilana has a passion for equipping organizations with the training, tools, and resources they need to enhance their services and create lasting change. By providing targeted support, she strives to strengthen programs and systems so they can better serve the individuals who rely on them. Ilana's passion lies in creating meaningful impact, both at the individual level and within broader organizational structures. Grounded in the belief that her purpose is to inspire change and illuminate pathways to growth, Ilana strives to be a beacon of light for the lives and institutions she touches.

JAMI ROCK EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CLINTON COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER

Jami started with the Child Advocacy Center (serving Clinton, Essex, Franklin and the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe) in December 2015 as the Administrative Assistant and has more recently become the Executive Director. She is also a forensic interviewer, which is what she truly enjoys! Prior to joining the Child Advocacy Center Jami worked for about 14 years as a Paralegal, which she also enjoyed. Jami grew up locally in Plattsburgh and has remained in the area all of her life. Jami is a proud mom to two wonderful daughters and Mimi to two lovely grandsons. Jami enjoys time with family, uses exercise as a positive outlet, and enjoys the gorgeous summers in the North Country.

JEN HENRY FOUNDER OF BUSINESS ON PURPOSE

Jen Henry hosts workshops for companies to strengthen communication skills. She teaches individuals to speak in a healthy and uplifting way so that all members of the team feel heard and understood. Jen dedicated the majority of her professional life to Aflac Insurance, where she excelled as a corporate trainer and leader. Renowned as "the greatest trainer in the whole wide world," she frequently graced various stages with this esteemed title. Throughout her extensive tenure at Aflac, Jen gained invaluable insights, discovering that at their core, people share a common desire to be acknowledged, comprehended, and appreciated. This profound understanding shaped her approach and fueled her commitment to help others create meaningful connections with individuals. With the intention of guiding and coaching like-minded individuals on their path of continuous development, Jen founded Business on Purpose. Her primary objective is to empower others through teaching and provide them with the necessary tools for growth. By sharing her knowledge and expertise, Jen aims to inspire individuals to embrace their potential and make meaningful strides towards their personal and professional goals.

JENNIFER WORMLEY MS, ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, HARRIET M. WEST CAC/SARATOGA CENTER FOR THE FAMILY

Jennifer Wormley currently serves as the Associate Executive Director of Saratoga Center for the Family, a role she has held for the past two years. She brings 14 years of experience as the Center's Child Advocacy Center Director. Jennifer oversees all CAC operations, manages grant writing and reporting, and supports the organization's fundraising efforts. She is committed to outreach education as a vital part of the CAC's mission and as a means to promote child safety and raise community awareness about the value and impact of CACs.

JESSICA FERRANTINO CAC COORDINATOR, THE CENTER FOR THE PREVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE

Jess Ferrantino currently serves as the Co-Interim Executive Director & the Child Advocacy Center (CAC) Coordinator at the Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse (CPCA) in Poughkeepsie, NY. She is also the very proud primary handler of the agency's Facility Dog, "Peace". In recognition of her contributions, Jessica received the 2024 Director's Edge Award from the New York State Children's Alliance (NYSCA). She is an active member of multiple local committees and task forces, such as CASADA (The Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Abuse; role of Treasurer), the SART (Sexual Assault Response Team) Steering Committee, The Dutchess County Human Trafficking Task Force, and the NYSCA DEI committee. Peace, Golden Labrador Title: CPCA Facility Dog

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JESSICA WEXLER MSW, COORDINATOR OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS, THE CENTER FOR THE PREVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE (CPCA)

Jessica Wexler is from Poughkeepsie, NY. Jess has been working at The Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse (CPCA) for four years and truly loves what she does. As the Coordinator of Educational Programs, she travels across Dutchess County teaching kids of all ages how to stay safe and empowering them with the knowledge and confidence to speak up. It's incredibly rewarding to be part of a mission that helps protect and uplift children in her community every day.

JESSICA WOZNIAK PSYD, PROJECT DIRECTOR, THE CHILD ADVOCACY TRAINING & SUPPORT CENTER AT BAYSTATE HEALTH

Jessica Wozniak, PsyD is a clinical psychologist and the Clinical Research and Development Manager at Baystate Medical Center's Department of Psychiatry in Springfield, MA, and an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Massachusetts Medical School-Baystate (UMMS). In her role she oversees community-based projects, clinical research, and training including oversight of all projects funded by SAMHSA/NCTSN. She is the Director of the Child Advocacy Training and Support Center, a national training and consultation center for Children's Advocacy Centers. Additionally, Dr. Wozniak oversaw the development of the One Mission Project which provides coordinated services to child trafficking victims. She is also a leader of the Hampden County Coalition to Identify and Prevent the Sexual Exploitation of Children. Dr. Wozniak is a nationally recognized trainer in Trauma-Focused Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy, the most rigorously tested treatment for trauma in children. Additionally, she conducts training for community organizations as well as presenting at national and international conferences on topics related to trauma-informed practices, vicarious trauma, trauma-informed multidisciplinary teams and sexual exploitation of children.

JOSEPH MUROFF CHIEF OF THE SPECIAL VICTIMS DIVISION, BRONX COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Joseph Muroff is in his 39th year at the Bronx County District Attorney's Office in NYC. He is a member of Bronx DA Darcel Clark's Executive Staff as Chief of the Special Victims Division. The Division includes the Office's Child Abuse/Sex Crimes Bureau, the Domestic Violence Bureau, the Crime Victims Assistance Bureau and the Human Trafficking Unit. During his tenure at BXDA, Mr. Muroff has been directly involved in the planning, development and implementation of several notable institutions in Bronx County, including: "Bronx Community Solutions", the Bronx Integrated Domestic Violence (IDV) Court Part, the Bronx Sexual Assault Task Force, and the co-located Bronx Child Advocacy Center. Mr. Muroff has spoken and lectured on a wide variety of topics in the fields of Domestic Violence, Sex Crimes, Child Abuse and Trauma Informed Prosecutions to numerous outside organizations, such as the NYPD, NYC Corporation Counsel, the New York State Prosecutor's Training Institute (NYPTI), and numerous community-based organizations and associations. He has also served on the faculty of the National College of District Attorneys (NCDA) and as an advisor to the American Association of Prosecuting Attorneys (APA). For the last several years, Mr. Muroff has served as co-chair of the New York State DA's Association's Special Victims and Domestic Violence (SVDV) Legislative Subcommittee. He has been actively involved in advancing legislation in NY State which positively impacts victims and survivors of crime. In 2007, Mr. Muroff was honored at the 30th Anniversary Celebration of the Crime Victims Treatment Center of St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center, in recognition of his "tireless commitment to assisting victims of violent crimes". In 2017, Mr. Muroff received the "Prosecutor of the Year, Executive Leadership Award" from the New York Prosecutor's Training Institute. This award is given to a prosecutor "who exemplifies strong leadership, is responsible for innovative and important programs, and thereby enhances criminal justice throughout the State." In January of 2020, Mr. Muroff became a Board Member of the New York State Children's Alliance (NYSCA), the membership organization representing Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) and Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs) which provide services to 61 counties and 8 tribal nations in New York State.

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KAIT GANNON CO-FOUNDER AND CEO, SURVIVOR, MEZZO ALLIES

Kait Gannon is a nationally recognized survivor leader, advocate, and speaker with lived experience of family-controlled human trafficking and organized abuse. She is the Co-Founder and CEO of Mezzo Allies, a nonprofit organization dedicated to bridging the gap to safety for victims of family-controlled exploitation through training, education, and systems change. Kait brings a unique and critical perspective to the anti-trafficking field, drawing on both her personal journey and her policy, clinical, and training work across sectors. She has trained child welfare agencies, medical professionals, child advocacy centers, and law enforcement. Through her work and her podcast, *The Ugly Truth About the Girl Next Door*, Kait has helped raise national awareness of the realities of familial trafficking—challenging outdated narratives and calling attention to the urgent need for survivor-informed systems. Her advocacy is reshaping how communities and institutions understand and respond to complex trauma and exploitation.

KAYLIN N. DAWSON MSN, BSN, RN, SANE A/P, NYSAFE, FORENSIC PROGRAM MANAGER, ALBANY MEDICAL CENTER, DIVISION OF FORENSIC MEDICINE

Jessica Wozniak, PsyD is a clinical psychologist and the Clinical Research and Development Manager at Baystate Medical Center's Department of Psychiatry in Springfield, MA, and an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Massachusetts Medical School-Baystate (UMMS). In her role she oversees community-based projects, clinical research, and training including oversight of all projects funded by SAMHSA/NCTSN. She is the Director of the Child Advocacy Training and Support Center, a national training and consultation center for Children's Advocacy Centers. Additionally, Dr. Wozniak oversaw the development of the One Mission Project which provides coordinated services to child trafficking victims. She is also a leader of the Hampden County Coalition to Identify and Prevent the Sexual Exploitation of Children. Dr. Wozniak is a nationally recognized trainer in Trauma-Focused Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy, the most rigorously tested treatment for trauma in children. She conducts trainings for community organizations as well as presenting at national and international conferences on topics related to trauma-informed practices, vicarious trauma, trauma-informed multidisciplinary teams and sexual exploitation of children.

KERRI BERGENDAHL LICSW, TRAUMA INFORMED ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT COACH, THE CHILD ADVOCACY TRAINING AND SUPPORT (CATS) CENTER

Kerri Bergendahl, LICSW is the Program Coordinator for The Child Advocacy Training and Support (CATS) Center. The CATS Center is a nation-wide training grant, funded by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN), awarded to Baystate Health in Springfield, MA. In this position, she provides trauma-informed, multidisciplinary team training and consultation for children's advocacy centers and their partners. Ms. Bergendahl is a certified Trauma Informed Organizational Assessment (TIOA) Coach, endorsed by NCTSN to lead organizations through the process of implementing the TIOA. Additionally, she is a certified facilitator in the Foundations for Outreach through Experiential Child Advocacy Studies Training (FORECAST) model and faculty-in-training for NCTSN's Core Curriculum on Childhood Trauma (CCCT). Ms. Bergendahl continues to carry a small caseload of clients in her role as Behavioral Health Clinician, with clinical specialties in Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Problematic Sexual Behaviors; certified in Trauma Focused-Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and trained in Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing.

KIERA KEYON ATC, NUTRITIONAL THERAPY PRACTITIONER & CERTIFIED ATHLETIC TRAINER, SARATOGA CENTER FOR FAMILIES

Kiera Kenyon has been working individually with clients on utilizing food to improve mental health for the last 3 years. Kiera is inspired by the innate intelligence of both the human body as well as nature and believes utilizing natural foods from the earth helps our bodies to absorb and utilize the nutrients to bring balance into our bodies and minds. Kiera has since paired up with Vicki Braunstein and Stephen Zabala at Saratoga Center for Families to develop group training for individuals and families to help them incorporate food into their lifestyle to nourish their minds and souls. Kiera initially

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worked as an athletic trainer at several colleges and has always had a profound fascination for how and why the body works. After a dark spiral in her own mental health, Kiera came to use food to help pull herself out of despair and is now steadfast in helping others do the same.

KRIS BEARD DIRECTOR, CORTLAND COUNTY CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER

Kris Beard has been the Director of the Cortland County Child Advocacy Center in Cortland, NY, for over 11 years. Her agency contracts out to Josie's Journey for Canine Comfort Services during Forensic Interviews and Court Appearances. She has served on the NYSCA Board for over 6 years. Kris holds a bachelor's degree in human services and has over 20 years of experience managing programs serving low-income and mental health populations. Luna, Finnley, and Olive Titles: Comfort Dog, Joise's Journey

KRISTINA COLEMAN MPA, LCSW, VICE PRESIDENT OF CHILD ADVOCACY AND MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS/ CHIEF MEDICAID COMPLIANCE OFFICER, SAFE HORIZON

Kristina E. Coleman is a respected child advocate, mental health professional, and community leader with over 14 years of experience at the intersection of trauma, equity, and family healing. She currently serves as Vice President of Child Advocacy and Mental Health Programs at Safe Horizon the nation's largest victim services agency where she leads teams supporting children and families impacted by abuse, neglect, and violence. As CEO and Founder of YouRmore LLC, Kristina champions culturally responsive care and specializes in the unique needs of Black mental health, healing generational trauma, and empowering marginalized communities. Her dual master's degrees in Social Work Leadership and Public Administration equip her with both clinical expertise and strategic vision to lead systems-level change. Kristina has contributed to nationally recognized models such as Fair Futures and serves on multiple nonprofit boards. Her work centers on dismantling systemic barriers—particularly racism and poverty while uplifting resilience and rewriting narratives of healing across generations.

LYNETTE M. REDA ESQ., CHIEF OF TRAINING, ERIE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Lynette Reda is a veteran prosecutor with over 30 years of experience in criminal law. As Bureau Chief of the Special Victims/Domestic Violence Bureau, she leads prosecutions of sensitive felony cases including sexual assault and domestic violence. Her career spans roles in both prosecution and defense, and she has taught trial techniques and legal strategy at law schools and police academies. She holds a J.D. from Pepperdine University and is admitted to practice in New York, California, and Washington D.C. She is currently transitioning into the role of Chief of Training at the Erie County District Attorney's Office.

MADELINE HEHIR MSW, SR. DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT & PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUCCESS, OFFICE OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Madeline Hehir is responsible for managing New York's service systems for older youth, including but not limited to youth who survived human trafficking and exploitation, missing youth, youth who ran away or are homeless, older youth in foster care, and youth who are involved in both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Her work is grounded in a positive youth development framework. She is a published author, recorded a featured interview with StoryCorps, and is a regular speaker at national conferences. Ms. Hehir is a founding member of the National Child Welfare Anti-Trafficking Collaborative and serves on its steering committee.

MARLA BEHLER LMSW, PROGRAM DIRECTOR CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER OF PUTNAM COUNTY

Marla Behler is the founding Program Director of the CAC of Putnam County, where she has led efforts to support vulnerable children and families since 1999. With over 30 years of experience in child protection, crisis response, and community-based mental health, Marla has been a driving force behind the county's multidisciplinary response to child abuse and numerous trauma-informed initiatives. She co-founded the Putnam County Suicide Prevention Task

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Force and co-leads both the Putnam County LOSS (Local Outreach to Suicide Survivors) Team and the Psychological Response Team. She also manages the county's Child Fatality Review Team. Marla spearheaded the Trauma-Informed Organizational Assessment across county departments and developed Handle with Care, New York's first school-community trauma response program. Marla has been recognized by Congressman Mike Lawler as a Woman of Distinction and by the Stanton Anthony Symposium for her leadership and lifelong dedication to child and family well-being. She also received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Putnam Northern Westchester Women's Resource Center for her commitment to ending domestic violence.

MATTHEW STEGNER FOUNDER, STEGNER CONSULTING & TRAINING LLC | RETIRED SENIOR INVESTIGATOR, NEW YORK STATE POLICE

Matthew Stegner has over 26 years of experience in law enforcement, he now trains nationally and internationally on topics including sexual assault, domestic violence, child abuse, child exploitation, and trauma-informed police leadership. While with the NYS Police, Matt supervised felony investigations in Erie County, NY, including leading a specialized unit focused on child exploitation in coordination with the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force. He designed the agency's Sexual Assault Investigations training module and served as lead instructor for the New York State Police Sexual Assault Seminar. A Master Instructor certified by the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services, Matt worked closely with victim advocates and championed trauma-informed practices across investigative disciplines. His recognitions include five-time Trooper of the Year (Troop T-SP Buffalo), two-time Investigator of the Year (Troop A), Supervisor of the Year (Troop A BCI), the FBI N-DEx Award, and the NYSP Superintendent's Commendation. He was also honored with the Erie County Law Enforcement Foundation Career Achievement Award.

MICHELLE KLINE MSS, LCSW, FORENSIC INTERVIEWER SUPERVISOR MISSION KIDS CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER

Michelle is the Forensic Interviewer Supervisor at Mission Kids Child Advocacy Center. Before working at Mission Kids, Michelle was a Lead Forensic Interview Specialist at the Philadelphia Children's Alliance for 9 years. Michelle conducts forensic interviews and helps support and train new and current interviewers. Michelle has completed over 2,600 forensic interviews of children and adults in her career. Michelle comes to Mission Kids with many years of experience training individuals and community organizations on the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, and queer (LGBTQ) youth. In the past, she has also helped support new professionals in the fields of Social Work and Psychology as an adjunct faculty member at Arcadia University and Cabrini University as well as a field liaison at Bryn Mawr College's Graduate School of Social Work & Social Research.

NANCY HARRIS NP-C, NYSAFE, SANE-A, SANE-P, MEDICAL MANAGER, ST PETERS HEALTH PARTNERS

Nancy's career in nursing spans 40 years during which she has worked in pediatrics, neonatal ICU (Intensive Care Unit), hospitalist, and emergency services. While working in the emergency department for Samaritan Hospital she served as the Manager for the Hospitals Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner program. Nancy has completed several sexual assault forensic examiner and pediatric trainings, and during her career she has performed over 2000 sexual assault exams. In 2009, Nancy earned her certification as an adult nurse practitioner from SAGE College in Albany, NY (New York). Nancy was instrumental in developing a system wide program to include four hospitals and two Child advocacy centers in the capital region. The regional CAC (Child Advocacy Centers) current program covers 27 Counties in NY State, and Nancy is the acting Medical Manager. Nancy is a co-founder and Medical Manager for the TELESafe Program (Pilot program provided by an OVS (Office of Victim Services) Grant, providing services across New York State for the last four years. Nancy is a member of numerous MDT's (multidisciplinary team), Child fatality Review teams, NYS Medical workgroup for NYS and active with many local and international organizations. Nancy and a team of colleagues created and provided free pediatric sane training (with the help of NYSCA (New York State Children's Alliance)) for all medical providers in NYS and has developed a preceptorship program for those providers. Nancy along with a colleague have been instrumental in the education of several forensic physicians, social workers, and nurses in

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Romania. Nancy has been the recipient of the “TEAL” award in 2020 which was presented by Albany County SART Team, “Making a Difference” Award in 2022 presented by NYSCA and in 2023 the “Distinguished Fellow” award from IAFN (International Association of Forensic Nursing). Force and co-leads both the Putnam County LOSS (Local Outreach to Suicide Survivors) Team and the Psychological Response Team. She also manages the county’s Child Fatality Review Team. Marla spearheaded the Trauma-Informed Organizational Assessment across county departments and developed Handle with Care, New York’s first school-community trauma response program. Marla has been recognized by Congressman Mike Lawler as a Woman of Distinction and by the Stanton Anthony Symposium for her leadership and lifelong dedication to child and family well-being. She also received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Putnam Northern Westchester Women’s Resource Center for her commitment to ending domestic violence.

OCTAVIA E. COWANS CONSULTANT

Octavia E. Cowans Octavia is a trainer, facilitator, and educator. She is also described as a bridge builder, figuratively. She facilitated her 1st diversity workshop at age 21 and never looked back. Octavia has owned her own Diversity Consulting business and throughout her career she has continued to do Diversity & Inclusion work as much as possible. Octavia is also a Master Diversity Trainer and has conducted “Train The Trainer” sessions around the country. Some of her clients have been colleges, non-profits, faith-based organizations, large companies, High Schools and Middle schools, Social Service agencies and more. She was a trainer and consultant for GSUSA for 8 years. Octavia also worked for one of the oldest, and largest, non-profits in the USA, Children’s Aid Society. She was a Community School Director of a Flagship Elementary School and a Middle School. Octavia is currently the Director of Volunteer Engagement, Partnerships & Member Care at Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson and continues to do private diversity consulting. Octavia has said that she continues to feel excited about, and gains immense satisfaction, being involved in Diversity & Inclusion work, even after doing it for more than 38 years.

RACHEL JOHNSON CO-INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND SENIOR DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT, THE CENTER FOR THE PREVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE

Rachel Johnson has over 20 years experience helping nonprofits grow. Rachel works closely with community residents, corporations, government officials and other nonprofits to prevent child abuse in Hudson Valley. Prior to the CPCA, Rachel served as Vice President of Resource Development at United Way where she created The Louis Greenspan Children’s Corner to provide children with basic necessities. Rachel started her journey at The Culinary Institute of America where she worked for ten years fundraising and organizing various events. There she secured gifts from \$100 - \$100,000, including a \$2.5 million grant to build their Marriott Pavilion. Rachel has helped organizations nearly double their fundraising revenue and her appeals have been recognized at the Northeastern Annual Giving Conference. She is the recipient of the prestigious Athena International Award through the Dutchess County Regional Chamber of Commerce, Forty under 40 Mover and Shaker Award, Gold Award for Professional Excellence from The Culinary Institute of America, member of the Association for Fundraising Professionals, Narcan Administrator, Certified “No Hit Advocate,” member of the Dutchess County Crime Victims Committee and Board Member for Community Family Development – a nonprofit providing quality care and education to children. From 5Ks to galas, Rachel can be found organizing events that grow attendance and revenue.

REBECCA MACFARLANE PARENT ACADEMY COORDINATOR, THE CHILD ADVOCACY OF GREATER ROCHESTER

Rebecca Macfarlane is a dynamic nonprofit leader, strategic planner, and certified professional coach with over two decades of experience driving organizational growth and community impact across the U.S. and U.K. Based in Rochester, NY, she specializes in trauma-informed care, leadership development, and cultural transformation. Rebecca has led multimillion-dollar programs, trained hundreds of volunteers and professionals, and designed widely adopted tools for nonprofit leaders. Her coaching-centered approach empowers teams, strengthens partnerships, and delivers lasting change. Whether launching innovative parent education programs or guiding boards through strategic planning, Rebecca brings clarity, compassion, and a relentless commitment to building resilient communities.

BIOGRAPHIES

REBECCA MAHON MSW, PERSONAL SAFETY PROGRAM FACILITATOR/FAMILY ADVOCATE, THE CENTER FOR THE PREVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE

Becca Mahon is from Poughkeepsie, New York and received my bachelor's degree in human development and Family Relations from SUNY Plattsburgh in 2020 and just received her Masters of Social Work Degree in August of 2025. Becca has been with the CPCA for just over two years now; starting as a Personal Safety Program Facilitator and has since shifted over to the Family Advocate role in the CAC. Becca loves working with children and families and truly appreciates the work our teams do as an entire agency. She hopes to be able to continue this important work and bring information to other MDT members about how to be a hero for kids!

SAMUEL E. VAUGHN LCSW, DIRECTOR, SCOTT BIELER CHILD ADVOCACY

Samuel E. Vaughn, LCSW is an experienced Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) with a strong background in forensic mental health, child advocacy, and program management. Currently serving as the Program Director of the Child Advocacy Center at BestSelf Behavioral Health, he oversees operations and clinical oversight of an OMH certified child/adolescent clinic and a NCA member Child Advocacy Center. Sam manages a diverse team of professionals and provides case consultation on child and adolescent mental health, family therapy, and abuse. With previous roles as a DBT Therapist, Adjunct Professor, Therapist and Staff Supervisor, Program Supervisor, Forensic AMH Therapist, and Supervising Counselor, Sam has consistently demonstrated his commitment to providing comprehensive clinical services, leading teams, and delivering high-quality mental health care. Sam holds a BA in Sociology and an MSW, magna cum laude, from the University at Buffalo School of Social Work. He is a certified DBT therapist and is licensed as a Master Social Worker and Clinical Social Worker in the State of New York. In recognition of his achievements, Sam has received awards such as the Buffalo Business First WNY 30 Under 30 and the Field Educator Special Recognition Award from the University at Buffalo. With a passion for helping others and a wealth of experience in the field, Sam continues to make a significant impact on the mental health community.

SCOTT MCDOWELL CHILDREN'S SERVICES PROGRAM SPECIALIST, CLINTON COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER

Scott joined the Clinton County Child Advocacy Center's team in 2018 as a Children's Services Program Specialist. He graduated from SUNY Plattsburgh with a Bachelor of Science in Human Development and Family Relations. Scott's career in education and experience as a home visitor has provided a solid foundation for supporting the program's goals and promoting outreach and awareness education in the community and for local schools.

SHIRIN MAZDEYASNA MA, ATR-BC, LCAT, TRAUMA & ART THERAPIST, CAC/ REACH OF MHACG

Shirin Mazdeyasna is an Iranian artist and a board certified and registered Licensed Creative Arts Therapist. As a certified rape crisis counselor, she offers trauma therapy to survivors of crime and prolonged abuse through an OVS funded, victim assistance program, at a non-profit agency in the Upper Hudson Valley, NY. Shirin has been trained in Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Dialectical Behavioral Therapy, and EMDR.

STEFANIE SZWEJBKA MCJ, VP PREVENTION SERVICES, THE CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER OF GREATER ROCHESTER

Stefanie Szejbka is a child advocacy and prevention education leader with 20+ years of experience in program development, training, and community engagement. As Vice President of Prevention Services, she oversees strategic prevention initiatives, education programs, and outreach partnerships. Her work has influenced policy, advanced training standards, and expanded prevention education statewide. A frequent state and national presenter, Stefanie holds many certifications in prevention curricula and sits on several national advisory boards.

BIOGRAPHIES

TAMAÉ MEMOLE M.S. ED, CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PREVENT CHILD ABUSE NY

Tamaé Memole brings more than 30 years of experience in the not-for-profit and government sectors to her work. She is a nationally certified trainer with the Children's Trust Fund Alliance and has trained more than 3,000 participants across New York State, grounding them in a perspective shift that supports families. She has extensive experience developing systematic approaches to implementing and sustaining prevention programs; developing training systems that identify, equip and support community level prevention; supporting local projects through coordination with national and state level partners; and developing training curricula, professional development offerings and other materials. She has consulted on organizational culture change that creates a protective factor responsive environment for staff. Tamaé is a frequent presenter at statewide and national conferences.

TONY DEVINCENZO MA, FACILITATOR, ADV SUCCESS STRATEGIES

Tony DeVincenzo is the Founder & Principal of ADV Success Strategies, where he helps teams and individuals cultivate strengths, enhance collaboration, and create strategies for success. He has presented at regional and national conferences on topics including team dynamics, leadership, and responding to high-stakes challenges. Tony's perspective is shaped by over 30 years of professional experience, including his leadership role as Director of Programs and MDT Coordinator at Deirdre's House and his 25-year law enforcement career in New Jersey, where he specialized in crimes against children. Known for his engaging, practical style, Tony partners with organizations to strengthen teamwork, clarify goals, and create sustainable growth.

VICKI BRAUNSTEIN LCSW, THERAPIST, SARATOGA CENTER FOR THE FAMILY

Vicki Leigh Braunstein is a Therapist at the Saratoga Center for the Family School-Based Program, where she focuses on Education and Program Development. In 2025, she launched the Food and Mood Program, promoting the use of nutritious foods to improve mental health. Her academic background includes a BA in Fine and Applied Art, an MFA in Dance, and an MSW. Vicki is a certified yoga instructor and has taught yoga and meditation at Temple University. At SUNY Albany, she has co-instructed a graduate course in Alternative Therapy, integrating meditation and mindfulness. Vicki is a certified EMDR therapist, trained in various therapeutic methods, and recently completed a certification on the role of food in mental health. She empowers clients to make lifestyle choices that positively impact their mental well-being, using a holistic approach that includes art, mindfulness, and trauma processing techniques.



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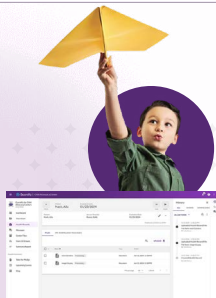
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