



# UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh Child Advocacy Center APRIL 30, 2026, and MAY 1, 2026

## **The Pittsburgh Child Advocacy Center Mission**

At the Child Advocacy Center at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC, it is our mission to protect children and promote healthy families. We strive to accomplish this mission by adhering to standards of excellence in assessment of child maltreatment and in medical care of vulnerable children. We also work in collaboration with and in support of the efforts of other child protection professionals, by providing acute and primary medical care, case management, medical consultations, court testimony and SCAN and multidisciplinary team meetings.

### **Conference Goals**

- To provide information and skill-building for Child Protection/Welfare Professionals and those concerned about the well-being of our children
- To provide a forum for sharing information by national and local experts
- To provide an opportunity for inter-agency staff networking

### **Target Audience**

All individuals who touch the lives of maltreated children to include but not limited to Physicians, Advanced Practice Practitioners, Nurses, Allied Health Care Workers, Social Workers, Child Protective Services, Councilors, Advocates, Case Workers, Law Enforcement, Attorneys and Judges

## **Conference Registration Information**

**Registration will be completed online**

**at**

**<https://cvent.me/ZMmy1w>**

## **Registration FEES**

### **Two-Day Registration April 30-May 1, 2026**

**Early Registration Fee by 3/1/26** **\$275.00**

**Registration Fee After 3/1/26** **\$350.00**

### **One-Day Registration- April 30, 2026 Thursday OR May 1, 2026 Friday**

**Early Registration Fee by 3/1/26** **\$200.00**

**Registration Fee After 3/1/26** **\$250.00**

**All payments must be received prior to the conference in order to attend unless special arrangements are made with Heather Derda at [derdahl@upmc.edu](mailto:derdahl@upmc.edu)**

## **Continuing Education Units/Co-Sponsorship**

In support of improving patient care, the University of Pittsburgh is jointly accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) and the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), and the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), to provide continuing education for the healthcare team.

### **Physician (CME)**

The University of Pittsburgh designates this live activity for a maximum of 11.0 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

### **Nursing (CNE)**

The maximum number of hours awarded for this Continuing Nursing Education activity is 11.0 contact hours.

### **Physician Assistant (AAPA)**

The University of Pittsburgh has been authorized by the American Academy of PAs (AAPA) to award AAPA Category 1 CME credit for activities planned in accordance with AAPA CME Criteria. This activity is designated for 11.0 AAPA Category 1 CME credits. PAs should only claim credit commensurate with the extent of their participation.

### **Social Work**

As a Jointly Accredited Organization, University of Pittsburgh is approved to offer social work continuing education by the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) Approved Continuing Education (ACE) program. Organizations, not individual courses, are approved under this program. State and provincial regulatory boards have the final authority to determine whether an individual course may be accepted for continuing education credit. University of Pittsburgh maintains responsibility for this course. Social workers completing this course receive 11.0 continuing education credits.

Other health care professionals will receive a certificate of attendance confirming the number of contact hours commensurate with the extent of participation in this activity.

### **CONTINUING LAW ENFORCEMENT EDUCATION (CLEE)**

This program is approved for 11.0 CLEE credits by the MUNICIPAL POLICE OFFICERS' EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMISSION. It is the responsibility of police chiefs or their designee to data enter MPOETC-approved CLEE courses into their officers' training records within the web-based Training and Certification System (TACS). A certification of completion will be issued with approved CLEE course information at the conclusion of the conference.

### **Continuing Legal Education (CLE)**

This program will be offered for CLE credit (5.5 hours for 4/3/2025 [including 1.0 hr. of ETHICS] and 6 hours for 4/4/2025 for a possible total of 11.0 hours). Conference participants will complete a credit request form and submit it along with payment to Pennsylvania Continuing Legal Education Board to receive their credit hours. The total payment due for all will be on forms. Forms will be available at the conference when participants sign in for hours.



## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Rachel Berger MD, MPH is the Medical Director of the Pennsylvania Office of Children, Youth and Families. Prior to taking this position in July 2024, she was Professor of Pediatrics and Clinical and Translational Research at the University of Pittsburgh, a Child Abuse Pediatrician at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh and Director of Child Abuse Research at the Safar Center. She received a BA from Harvard University, MD from Columbia University and MPH from the University of Pittsburgh. She served as chief of the division of Child Advocacy at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh from 2013 until 2022. She has co-authored over 130 peer-reviewed publications and book chapters. She served on the Pennsylvania Task Force for Child Protection, as the research lead for the Federal Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities (CECANF) during the Obama administration and as a senior policy fellow for Casey Family Programs.



Dr. Puls is a Professor of Pediatrics in the Division of Pediatric Hospital Medicine at Children's Mercy Kansas City. The overall goal of his research agenda is to reduce child maltreatment, including disparities in maltreatment. He is especially interested in public policies as prevention for child maltreatment at the population-level and improving the equitable identification of children at risk for maltreatment in healthcare settings. He has over 30 peer-reviewed publications in the areas of child maltreatment, public policy and the social determinants of health. He has served on numerous state committees and seminars relating to child maltreatment.



Sasha Joseph Neulinger is the Founder and President of Voice For The Kids, and Co-Founder and Head of Production at Step 1 Films. In 2015, Sasha presented at TEDx Bozeman with his first public speech, "Trauma Is Irreversible. How It Shapes Us Is Our Choice." Since his TED Talk, Sasha has presented over 100 plenary and keynote speeches around the world, helping raise over \$8 Million for the fight against child abuse. He has presented plenary speeches at some of the largest international child abuse prevention and intervention conferences, including the Dallas Crimes Against Children Conference (2016), National Children's Alliance Leadership Conference (2018), and the San Diego International Conference on Child and Family Maltreatment (2023).

Sasha made his directorial debut at the 2019 Tribeca Film Festival with his autobiographical, feature length documentary, REWIND. REWIND had its US Television Premiere on May 11, 2020 as a part of PBS' Independent Lens lineup, and has since been streaming for audiences internationally. REWIND was nominated for a 2020 Critics Choice Award for Best First Feature Documentary and received three Emmy Nominations in 2021, including Outstanding Social Issue Documentary, Outstanding Direction, and Outstanding Editing.

## Schedule of Events

### Thursday, April 30, 2026

8:30–9:00 AM	Registration and Continental Breakfast, Exhibits and Posters
9:00-9:30 AM	Opening Address - Dr. Michelle Clayton
9:30-10:30 AM	Workshop I
<i>10:30-10:40 AM</i>	<i>BREAK – Exhibit tables on main concourse</i>
<b>10:40-11:40 AM</b>	<b>Keynote address: Integrating Medical Expertise into Child Welfare Practice: Making Progress One Day at a Time</b>
11:40 AM	Lunch (provided) – <i>available during Champions of Hope and Healing Awards</i>
11:50 AM-12:20 PM	Champions of Hope and Healing Award Presentation
<i>12:20 PM-12:30 PM</i>	<i>BREAK – Exhibit tables on main concourse</i>
12:30-1:30 PM	Workshop II
<i>1:30-1:45 PM</i>	<i>BREAK – Exhibit tables on main concourse</i>
1:45-2:45 PM	Workshop III
<i>2:45 PM-3:00 PM</i>	<i>BREAK – Exhibit tables on main concourse</i>
3:00-4:00 PM	Workshop IV
4:00 PM	Adjournment

### Friday, May 1, 2026

8:00-8:30 AM	Registration and Coffee, Grab and Go Breakfast
<b>8:30-9:30 AM</b>	Workshop V
9:30-9:40 AM	<i>BREAK -</i>
<b>9:40-10:40 AM</b>	<b>Keynote address: Public Benefits and Child Maltreatment: Implications for Prevention and Equity</b>
<b>10:40AM-12:10 PM</b>	<b>Keynote address: Rediscovering The Beauty Within</b>
12:10-12:40 PM	Lunch (provided)
<i>12:40-12:50 PM</i>	<i>BREAK – Exhibit tables on main concourse</i>
12:50 – 1:50 PM	Workshop VI
<i>1:50 – 2:00 PM</i>	<i>BREAK – Exhibit tables on main concourse</i>
<i>2:00-3:00 PM</i>	Workshop VII

## Presentation Summaries and Objectives

**Thursday, April 30, 2026**

**9:00 AM- 4:00 PM**

<b>Opening Address</b>	<b>9:00- 9:30 AM</b>
<b>Presenter: Michelle Clayton, MD, MPH</b>	<i>Audience-ALL</i>
Dr. Clayton will provide an update on the state of the Child Advocacy Center and update on programs and new ideas.	

### **Workshop Session I • 9:30 AM to 10:30 AM**

#### **1A. Common vs Rare Bleeding Disorders in Childhood: What to look for on exam**

<b>Presenter: Xavier Frederico, MD, MS</b>	<i>Audience-ALL</i>
<b>Description:</b> Attendees will learn about common and rare bleeding disorders that may show up in childhood. Dr. Xavier will review how skin findings that are consistent with a bleeding disorder will look during a physical exam and notable findings that are not indicative of a bleeding disorder. Dr. Xavier will review when a child should be recommended for an expert evaluation by a pediatric hematologist.	

<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recognize the common characteristics consistent with a bleeding disorder and how these differ from abusive injuries.</li> <li>2. Become familiar with the medical and lab evaluations recommended by pediatric hematologists when there are concerns for a bleeding disorder.</li> <li>3. Recognize that children with bleeding disorders may still have inflicted injuries, with education about the findings which may be present, and awareness that some bleeding disorders may produce symptoms which mimic abusive head trauma.</li> </ol>
<b>60 min</b>	

#### **1B. Impact of Implicit Bias upon Safety & Patient Care**

<b>Presenter: Rickquel Tripp, MD, MPH, CDR, USN, FAEMS</b>	<i>Audience- ALL</i>
<b>Description:</b> Research has shown that implicit bias within our healthcare and public safety environments has led to health disparities and healthcare inequities. We need to empower our clinicians to have a better understanding of bias to mitigate it from negatively affecting patient care. We dive into the science behind implicit bias and analyze real-life case scenarios of how bias was present leading to harmful patient outcomes along with promoting strategies to overcome bias.	

<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand the science behind implicit bias and how bias leads to health disparities.</li> <li>2. Analyze case vignettes to reveal and interpret implicit bias.</li> <li>3. Practice techniques to mitigate their own bias.</li> </ol>
<b>60 min</b>	

#### **1C. Holding the Hurt: Navigating Moral Distress in the Fight Against Child Maltreatment**

<b>Presenter: Drew Krantz, PsyD, LPC, NCC, CATP</b>	<i>Audience- ALL</i>
<b>Description:</b> This presentation introduces child maltreatment professionals to the concepts of moral distress and moral injury. Participants will learn key definitions, common triggers, and early signs of distress, as well as the difference between moral distress, burnout, and secondary traumatic stress. Practical tools for immediate use will be discussed to begin to address moral distress both individually and within team. This session is ideal for anyone involved in the child maltreatment field.	

<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increase understanding of moral distress and its sources.</li> <li>2. Enhance skills for recognizing and managing moral distress.</li> <li>3. Strengthen organizational and team capacity to reduce moral distress.</li> </ol>
<b>60 min</b>	

<b>1D. Understanding Sadistic Online Exploitation (SOE): Behavioral Insights and Investigative Challenges</b>	
<b>Presenters: Briana Grant and Melissa Stormer, PsyD</b>	<b>Audience-ALL</b>
<b>Description:</b> The FBI's BAU has observed a rise in online child exploitation (CE) with sadistic elements. Sadistic Online Exploitation often involves a spectrum of abusive behaviors, including extortion, forced or coerced self-harm, production of CSAM, animal cruelty, and harm to others. This presentation focuses on offender behaviors, characteristics, and comparisons with other CE offenders and examines victimology, the psychological impact on victims, disclosure barriers, and investigative considerations.	
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	1. Identify and explain common characteristics, personality traits, and behaviors of sadistic online exploitation offenders.
<b>60 min</b>	2. Identify commonalities and differences between sadistic online exploitation offenders and other online child exploitation offenders. 3. Describe victimology and the psychological and emotional impact on victims.

<b>KEYNOTE ADDRESS: Integrating Medical Expertise into Child Welfare Practice: Making Progress One Day at a Time</b>		<b>10:40-11:40AM</b>
<b>Presenter: Rachel Berger, MD, MPH</b>		<b>Audience-ALL</b>
<b>Description:</b> In July 2025, Pennsylvania became one of more than 20 states with a statewide Medical Director. In this presentation, Dr. Berger will discuss several projects she has been working on over the past year, resulting changes at the state level, and how these changes may impact you. She will also discuss projects which are planned over the next 12-18 months.		
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	1. Explain the role of a Child Welfare Medical Director.	
<b>60 min</b>	2. Describe why referrals to Childline for bruising in infants <5 months old are always a CPS allegation. 3. List at least three ways in which collaboration can improve the health care of children in foster care.	
<b>Champion of Hope and Healing Presentation</b>		<i>No CME credit awarded</i>
		<b>11:50AM-12:20PM</b>

<b>Workshop Session II • 12:30 PM to 1:30 PM</b>	
<b>2A. Pennsylvania's Child Protective Services System: A Guide for Medical Professionals</b>	
<b>Presenters: Rachel Berger, MD, MPH and Amber Kalp, MSW</b>	
<b>Audience-ALL</b>	
<b>Description:</b> In this session, participants will learn about the administrative framework of Pennsylvania's CPS system and how this impacts the interaction between medical professionals and CPS. Participants will also enhance their understanding of how CPS responds to reports of suspected child abuse. Using case examples, participants will learn how to document concerns for child maltreatment in a way which allows CPS to be responsive and how to navigate the CPS system once a report has been made.	
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	1. Describe characteristics of a county administered Child Protective Services (CPS) system such as PA.
<b>60 min</b>	2. Understand how this administrative framework impacts the response of CPS to reports of suspected abuse. 3. Communicate with CPS in a way which is most likely to benefit children and families.
<b>2B. Working Together: How CACs and MDTs Can Best Serve Children with Disabilities</b>	
<b>Presenter: Staci Whitney, LMSW</b>	
<b>Audience-ALL</b>	
<b>Description:</b> This workshop is intended for multidisciplinary professionals seeking to advance their understanding of best practices for accommodating children with disabilities in a child advocacy setting. Participants will learn about biases and assumptions related to investigating cases, practical accommodations, and how these accommodations can be	

made within policies and practice to best serve child victims and witnesses with disabilities including pre-interview considerations.	
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify common biases regarding investigating cases with children with disabilities.</li> <li>2. Describe the adaptations and considerations for accommodating children with disabilities in a child advocacy setting.</li> <li>3. Recall pre-interview considerations for cases involving child victims and witnesses with disabilities.</li> </ol>
<b>60 min</b>	
<b>2C. Navigating Child Victims and Witnesses through the Criminal Court System</b>	
<b>Presenter: Kendra Strobel</b>	<b>Audience-ALL</b>
<b>Description:</b> This presentation will walk attendees through the criminal justice system from the beginning of the investigation to the end of sentencing and beyond. It will address talking to child victims and witnesses from the beginning and how to prepare them for all stages of the court proceedings. It will also cover the Tender Years statute and how and when to use it.	
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Learn different stages of the criminal justice system and how to best protect child victims and witnesses throughout that process.</li> <li>2. Learn about the “Tender Years” statute, including both the contemporaneous alternative methods for testifying and hearsay exceptions, and when and how to best use both parts of the statute.</li> <li>3. Learn how to best talk to and prepare child victims and witnesses for the courtroom in the criminal justice system.</li> </ol>
<b>60 min</b>	
<b>2D. How to Utilize Doctors and Other Witnesses in Trial and Still Get the Verdict</b>	
<b>Presenters: Jennifer Wolford, DO, MPH and Angela Reed Strathman</b>	<b>Audience-ALL</b>
<b>Description:</b> This workshop will review how to build relationships with local experts and set up some foundational guidelines that can be applicable to all cases. Additionally, Ms. Strathman and Dr. Wolford will review some successes and some challenges encountered when working together to prepare for a child abuse trial and how to capitalize on the skill set and experience of medical or child development experts to provide a jury with the most clear case with critical supporting testimony.	
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Learn about the long timeline necessary to be ready for a child abuse trial and the early efforts in preparation.</li> <li>2. Learn about how to communicate and get the right information in understandable terms from your medical experts</li> <li>3. Review case examples of trial preparations that are proven to be effective</li> </ol>
<b>60 min</b>	

### Workshop Session III • 1:45 PM- 2:45 PM

#### 3A. Tools Embedded in EPIC for Addressing Child Abuse

<b>Presenters: Hannah Sahud, MD and Karin Wickwire, DNP, CPNP-AC, AG-ACNP, SANE-A, SANE-P</b>	<b>Audience-ALL</b>
<b>Description:</b> Learn about the Child Abuse Screen in UPMC EPIC, review Order Sets for maltreatment concerns, and explore the Child Abuse Initiative (CAI). Join us to ask questions, discuss, and learn how to integrate these tools into your workflow from day one. Non-UPMC clinicians are also welcome and may find our approach useful for adapting similar tools in their own EMR.	
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Know what tools are embedded in EPIC for Addressing Child Abuse (these are the CAS, the Order Sets and the Reporting Tool) and how to use them.</li> <li>2. Know what the Child Abuse Initiative is and if you are at a UPMC institution that uses it.</li> <li>3. Know how and when to reach out to the Child Advocacy Division for concerns of child maltreatment seen in non-CHP facilities.</li> </ol>
<b>60 min</b>	

**3B. “Non-Verbal” What it Means and Why an Interview is Still Possible**

<b>Presenter: Staci Whitney, LMSW</b>		<i>Audience-ALL</i>
<b>Description:</b> This workshop is intended for professionals who want to learn how to communicate with individuals who do not speak or who are considered “non-verbal.” This workshop will discuss adaptations to account for individuals who do not speak, use gestures, use a communication device, or speak few words. Through this workshop, participants will have increased understanding of verbal behavior and communication methods.		
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	1. Identify common biases regarding communicating with children who do not speak.	
<b>60 min</b>	2. Discuss verbal behavior and how people who do not speak communicate.	
	3. Recall the skills needed to conduct a forensic interview in the most reliable, legally defensible manner with someone who does not speak.	

**3C. Children, Youth and Families and Substance Use**

<b>Presenter: RoseAnn Hill, MA, CAADC</b>		<i>Audience- ALL</i>
<b>Description:</b> Understanding the nature of addiction is crucial to recognizing its ripple effects on parenting and child welfare. Substance use doesn’t cause maltreatment, but it significantly increases the risk. Children in these environments often experience chronic stress, which affects brain development. Our role is not just to report, but to support families toward recovery and safety. Recovery is possible, and children can thrive when families are supported holistically.		
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	1. Discuss terminology and tools for connecting clients with services.	
<b>60 min</b>	2. Understand the complexities of the role of the child welfare worker when there is substance use allegations.	
	3. Promote a harm reduction culture that is inclusive.	

**3D. Familial Human Trafficking**

<b>Presenters: Brittany Liptak, MS</b>		<i>Audience-ALL</i>
<b>Description:</b> Participants will be able to identify key risk factors of and have a better understanding of the micro, mezzo and macro levels of addressing familial human trafficking.		
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	1. Define familial human trafficking and examine its prevalence.	
<b>60 min</b>	2. Explain mental health implications for victims of familial human trafficking.	
	3. Discuss implications of and next steps in addressing familial human trafficking.	

**Workshop Session IV • 3:00 PM- 4:00 PM**

**4A. Empowering Teens to Thrive: Assessment of a Multidisciplinary Program for Youth Patients Affected by Violent Injuries**

<b>Presenter: Alison Culyba, MD, PhD, MPH, Ursula Parlin, MD and Keona Blankenship</b>		<i>Audience-ALL</i>
<b>Description:</b> This presentation will provide a brief overview of the Empowering Teens to Thrive (ET3) Hospital-Based Violence Intervention (HVIP) program. It will focus further on the one-on-one healing-centered mentorship component of the ET3 program by exploring the outcomes of surveys and individual interviews with youth mentees and mentors. ET3 youths' and mentors' experiences at addressing the psychosocial needs of youth affected by violence will be illuminated.		
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	1. Describe the various components of the ET3 hospital-based violence intervention program.	
<b>60 min</b>	2. Identify the three themes or areas of support experienced and identified by ET3 participants being mentored.	
	3. Name implications of a one-on-one healing centered community mentorship model such as the ET3 mentorship program.	

<b>4B. Enhancing MDT Collaboration to Confront the Commercialized Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC)</b>	
<b>Presenter: Adrienne Cavanaugh and Clare Henderson, CSEC</b>	<b>Audience-ALL</b>
<b>Description:</b> This training equips participants with an understanding of investigative and case management challenges in CSEC cases, effective strategies for collaborating with multidisciplinary teams, and approaches tailored to different CSEC case types. This training provides a comprehensive, multidisciplinary framework for addressing the complex needs of children impacted by sexual exploitation. Emphasis is placed on addressing service gaps, and incorporating trauma-informed, survivor-centered practice.	
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	1. Identify investigative and case management challenges unique to CSEC cases.
<b>60 min</b>	2. Apply strategies to effectively collaborate with multidisciplinary teams (MDTs) in CSEC investigations and case management.
	3. Apply strategies to effectively collaborate with multidisciplinary teams (MDTs) in CSEC investigations and case management.
<b>4C. The Problem with the “Love the Sinner, Hate the Sin” Response to a Child Who Comes out as LGBTQ+</b>	
<b>Presenter: Jason Van Ness, LSW</b>	<b>Audience-ALL</b>
<b>Description:</b> This presentation will examine the problematic nature of approaching a child coming out with the response of "Love the Sinner, Hate the Sin." Five arguments are presented as to why this approach is harmful and key implications for the field of social work and social work practice. Attendees will also learn about the current consensus of scientist pertaining to LGBTQ+ identities as well as resources available throughout Allegheny County for families of LGBTQ+ people.	
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	1. Gain an understanding of the evolution of homophobia and transphobia within the religious right over the past seventy years.
<b>60 min</b>	2. Gain an understanding of the five reasons why this approach is harmful for LGBTQ+ youth and adults.
	3. Learn about resources throughout Allegheny County for families navigating the process of a loved one coming out as LGBTQ+.
<b>4D. Modern Leadership</b>	
<b>Presenter: Brian Kohlhepp</b>	<b>Audience-ALL</b>
<b>Description:</b> Effective leadership in today’s rapidly evolving environment requires more than traditional command-and-control approaches. This presentation explores how contemporary leaders can strengthen trust, enhance organizational legitimacy, and cultivate resilient teams by integrating the principles of building community partnerships, implementing sound policy and oversight, promoting wellness and safety, and fostering procedural justice at every level.	
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	1. Identify and explain the leadership characteristics and how they apply to modern organizational challenges.
<b>60 min</b>	2. Demonstrate practical strategies for integrating transparency, procedural justice, and community engagement into leadership practice.
	3. Apply modern leadership principles to real-world scenarios to strengthen team performance, organizational culture, and public trust.

**Friday, May 1, 2026**  
**8:30 AM to 3:00 PM**

**Workshop V • 8:30 -9:30 AM**  
**5A. Confessions in Cases of Physical Abuse**

<b>Presenter: Margaret Russell, MD</b>		<i>Audience-ALL</i>
<b>Description:</b> Exploration of what we know about cases of confessions of child physical abuse, ways to address acute safety in the home, and future avenues for supporting families who have experienced physical abuse and the associated medical evaluation and/or investigation.		
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand epidemiology of confessions in cases of physical abuse.</li> <li>2. Explore counseling on access to lethal means</li> <li>3. Identify areas for improvement in supporting the non-offending caregiver.</li> </ol>	
<b>60 min</b>		
<b>5B. Preserving the Child's Statement: Memory, Suggestibility, and the Critical Role of Minimal Facts in Forensic Interviews</b>		
<b>Presenters: Rachel Booker and Alison Munshi</b>		<i>Audience- ALL</i>
<b>Description:</b> This training introduces forensic interviewing within the Children’s Advocacy Center model, focusing on how memory, trauma, and suggestibility affect child disclosures. Participants learn why minimal facts gathering is essential and how to use open-ended, non-suggestive questions to preserve a child’s statement, reduce retraumatization, and strengthen the accuracy and legal defensibility of investigations.		
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain how memory and trauma impact the accuracy of a child’s disclosure, including how stress, developmental stage, and reconstructive memory processes affect recall and why open-ended narrative prompts support more reliable information.</li> <li>2. Identify and apply strategies to minimize suggestibility, recognizing the difference between suggestive and non-suggestive questioning and demonstrating the use of developmentally appropriate, open-ended questions that reduce the risk of influencing a child’s account.</li> <li>3. Understand the purpose and practice of minimal facts gathering, including why limiting initial questioning preserves the integrity of the child’s statement, reduces retraumatization, and strengthens the legal defensibility of the investigation.</li> </ol>	
<b>60 min</b>		
<b>5C. Engagement (Building a Constructive Dialogue/Getting in the Front Door)</b>		
<b>Presenters: Jason Ware and Brooke White, MSW</b>		<i>Audience- ALL</i>
<b>Description:</b> Have you ever been afraid to knock on the front door of a home to meet with a family? Have you ever been afraid of what to say to clients when you show up to their home unannounced? Have you ever worried about meeting with a client after reading a summary of the prior history or the current situation? If you answered yes to any of these questions, this session is for you. This session will focus on a discussion of tips and tricks to have a meaningful and informative conversation.		
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Learn some tools and techniques to prepare yourself prior to meeting with a client.</li> <li>2. Learn some tips on building quick rapport with a client of any age that you are meeting for the first time.</li> <li>3. Learn some techniques to tell facts from fiction based on your client's conversations.</li> </ol>	
<b>60 min</b>		
<b>5D. Criminal Justice Considerations in Sentinel Injury Cases and Drug Overdose Cases in Non-Speaking Children: Determining if Criminal Charges are Feasible</b>		
<b>Presenters: Michael Santek, Thomas Kelly and Devon Nixon</b>		<i>Audience- ALL</i>
<b>Description:</b> Cases involving injuries to victims virtually incapable of injuring themselves pose unique challenges to criminal justice stakeholders. In these cases, determining the feasibility of bringing criminal charges related to child physical abuse or neglect goes far beyond the mere presence of injuries to a young child that could not have injured themselves. This presentation seeks to inform MDT partners on the information typically necessary for successful prosecution of these cases.		
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand what evidence is required for a successful prosecution in a sentinel injury case.</li> </ol>	

<b>60 min</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Understand strategies for success when victim children are unable to communicate and/or identify how they were injured or who injured them.</li> <li>3. Learn what medical testimony may be required for a successful prosecution.</li> </ol>
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<b>KEYNOTE ADDRESS: Public Benefits and Child Maltreatment: Implications for Prevention and Equity</b>		<b>9:40AM-10:40 AM</b>
<b>Presenter: Hank Puls, MD</b>		<i>Audience- ALL</i>
<p><b>Description:</b> The risk for child maltreatment results from a complex confluence of individual-, household-, community-, and societal-level factors. Poverty and unmet basic needs are strongly associated with child maltreatment risk. Moreover, public benefit programs that address poverty and unmet basic needs have shown potential for reducing child maltreatment. This keynote address will review public benefit programs — including food stamps, tax credits, Medicaid, TANF — and their potential role as a societal-level intervention for reducing child maltreatment. Limitations pertaining to the existing evidence-base and public benefit programs as a prevention strategy will be discussed.</p>		
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discuss the evidence-base for public benefit programs as means of child maltreatment prevention.</li> </ol>	
<b>60 min</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Contextualize racial and ethnic differences in child maltreatment and how public benefit programs may or may not be addressing those differences.</li> <li>3. Briefly discuss next steps for research and advocacy.</li> </ol>	

<b>KEYNOTE ADDRESS: Rediscovering The Beauty Within</b>		<b>10:40AM–12:10PM</b>
<b>Presenter: Sasha Neulinger</b>		<i>Audience- ALL</i>
<p><b>Description:</b> In his intimate yet energized presentation of “Rediscovering The Beauty Within,” Sasha Joseph Neulinger invites audiences to understand the power and significance of choice. Recognizing his own personal crossroads at age 23, Sasha had to make one of the hardest, yet most important choices of his life. The follow-through on that choice would lead to a life-changing, direction-altering journey that birthed his Emmy Nominated film, REWIND, all while affording him the opportunity to triumph and reclaim ownership of his life despite his traumatic childhood. Utilizing photos and home videos as immersive aids, Sasha shares the most important lessons from his journey, how those lessons helped him, and how they may help others.</p>		
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Learn about the intimate thoughts, logic, and beliefs of a child sexual abuse victim while trapped in the secret (pre-intervention).</li> </ol>	
<b>120 min</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Learn how the absence of a CAC, and the high-profile nature of a case can negatively impact the prosecution and the mental health of the victim.</li> <li>3. Learn how Sasha was able to shift his perceptions, thoughts, logic and beliefs, and what he uses today to positively reinforce a healthy life, post trauma.</li> </ol>	

<b>Workshop Session VI • 12:50 PM to 1:50 PM</b>		
<b>6A. The First Step in Healing: The Importance of a Trauma-Informed Approach in Medical Forensic Examinations</b>		
<b>Presenters: Cheryl Wier, MSN, RN, SANE- A, SANE-P</b>		<i>Audience-ALL</i>
<p><b>Description:</b> A trauma-informed forensic exam is essential for children who have experienced maltreatment, as it prioritizes their physical, emotional, and psychological safety. By engaging both the child and their caregivers, respecting autonomy, and fostering safety and trust, healthcare professionals can promote healing and reduce re-traumatization. Participants will learn strategies to integrate trauma-informed approaches into practice while affirming each child’s dignity and resilience.</p>		
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Define key elements of trauma-informed care in the context of pediatric forensic examinations.</li> </ol>	
<b>60 min</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Identify strategies to minimize re-traumatization and promote psychological safety.</li> </ol>	

	3. Describe the role of trauma-informed medical forensic examinations within the CAC model.
<b>6B. Beyond PCIT; Making Appropriate Recommendations for Mental Health Treatment for Children and Families in the Child Welfare System</b>	
<b>Presenter: Teri Pentz, LPC, NCC and Kimberly Blair, PhD</b>	
<i>Audience-ALL</i>	
<b>Description:</b> When young children encounter the Child Welfare System, courts often order Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT), a known evidence-based treatment, to provide mental health support. Participants will gain an understanding of other trauma-informed treatments and take away specific language to guide court-mandated treatment for children. While sharing child development basics on attachment and early experiences, we will also explore the impact of intergenerational trauma children and families.	
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	1. Discuss how early relationships and experiences support emotional development and regulation.
<b>60 min</b>	2. Name three additional trauma treatments that address different aspects of complex trauma. 3. Understand intergenerational trauma and its impact on families.
<b>6C. Abuse Preventing - Utilizing Triple P to Support All Parents</b>	
<b>Presenters: Jenyne Carter</b>	
<i>Audience- ALL</i>	
<b>Description:</b> Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) traditionally focus on acute intervention following abuse and trauma. However, there is growing recognition of the need for prevention services that strengthen families and reduce risk factors before crises occur. A Child's Place, PA developed the Healthy Parenting Program to provide upstream prevention services that strengthen families before crises occur. This presentation explores how we can expand beyond crisis response to include prevention-focused services.	
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	1. Gain understanding of Triple P Mindset and how it empowers parents to be more effective.
<b>60 min</b>	2. Learn Triple P Principles and how to utilize them with high-risk families. 3. Become aware of support available for families.
<b>6D. Parent Attorneys &amp; Their Clients; the Roles, the Goals, and the Work Pathways</b>	
<b>Presenters: Andrea Groh, Esq. and Erin Work, Esq.</b>	
<i>Audience- ALL</i>	
<b>Description:</b> This presentation will provide a needed opportunity to get to know the role and responsibility of a parent attorney in civil proceedings. Presenters will review opportunities for increased understanding and collaboration. Presenters will also teach about the timeline of court proceedings and outcomes effects on the family's composition and long-term goals.	
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	1. Understand parent attorneys' role, mandates and objectives.
<b>60 min</b>	2. Learn how to work collaboratively with parent attorneys. 3. Learn about the timelines and implications of court proceedings and the long-term effects of outcomes.

### Workshop Session VII • 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM

<b>7A. Recognition and Testing in Pediatric Exposures to Illicit Substances</b>	
<b>Presenters: William Trautman, MD and Anthony Pizon, MD</b>	
<i>Audience-ALL</i>	
<b>Description:</b> Understanding the signs and symptoms of common street drugs in children and identifying the most appropriate testing methods for confirmation. The audience will also gain general knowledge about how long these substances remain in a child's system, both with and without observable symptoms.	
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	1. Identify common signs and symptoms of illicit substance ingestion/overdose, esp. cocaine, fentanyl, and THC.
<b>60 min</b>	2. Identify the types of illicit substances for which the UDS and CUDS screen and confirm.

	3. Understand the general timeframe that drugs stay in a child's system, and the challenges with specific estimates.
<b>7B. When The Work Weighs Heavy: Addressing Ambiguous Corporate Grief in Child Advocacy Teams</b>	
<b>Presenters: Melissa McLean, ACFI, M.Div., M.Ed.</b>	
<i>Audience- ALL</i>	
<b>Description:</b> Child advocacy work carries not only secondary trauma but also ambiguous corporate grief; the unresolved, collective grief teams experience when cases stall or outcomes remain unfinished. This session introduces the framework and offers practical strategies for reflection, closure, and resilience. Participants will gain tools to sustain themselves, foster psychological safety, and strengthen collaboration across medical, legal, CPS, law enforcement, and advocacy roles.	
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Define ambiguous corporate grief and differentiate it from secondary trauma and burnout, with special attention to how it appears in forensic interviewing when disclosures are partial, absent, or cases stall.</li> <li>2. Recognize the impact of unresolved, collective grief on forensic interviewers and MDT collaboration, including how it shapes communication, case continuity, and team resilience.</li> <li>3. Apply practical strategies, such as reflective practices, rituals of closure, and peer/team supports, to help forensic interviewers and MDTs sustain themselves and strengthen organizational culture.</li> </ol>
<b>60 min</b>	
<b>7C. Break the Cycle: How Addressing Intergenerational Child Abuse &amp; Neglect Can Help Prevent Child Abuse</b>	
<b>Presenters: Debra Phillips, LCSW</b>	
<i>Audience- ALL</i>	
<b>Description:</b> This session challenges professionals to reimagine child protection through the lens of intergenerational trauma and offers an approach that offers compassion, along with accountability. By empowering families to break their own destructive patterns, we ultimately build safer futures for children.	
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand how epigenetic inheritance, attachment patterns, internalized family scripts, and environment stressors keep the door open for inherited trauma.</li> <li>2. Recognize early warning signs and apply evidence-based, prevention-first strategies.</li> <li>3. Deliver timely, targeted support that keeps children safe and reduces unnecessary disruption.</li> </ol>
<b>60 min</b>	
<b>7D. The Implications of Police Social Work: Bridging Systems to Support Children and Families</b>	
<b>Presenter: Samantha Yule, MSW, LCSW</b>	
<i>Audience - ALL</i>	
<b>Description:</b> This presentation explores the emerging and vital role of police social work in supporting individuals, children, and families involved with law enforcement. Attendees will gain insight into how multidisciplinary teamwork enhances interventions and helps minimize cases of child maltreatment. The session will highlight real-world applications, discuss challenges and successes, and demonstrate how police social work contributes to safer, healthier communities through trauma-informed, holistic care.	
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describe the role of police social workers in connecting individuals, children, and families to essential community resources.</li> <li>2. Identify how multidisciplinary collaboration between law enforcement, education, and health systems supports child welfare and family stability.</li> <li>3. Analyze the impact of police social work on intervention and prevention efforts related to child maltreatment and crisis response.</li> </ol>
<b>60 min</b>	

## Conference Location and Hotel Information



David Lawrence Convention Center  
1000 Fort Duquesne Blvd, Pittsburgh PA 15222  
412-565-6000

### HOTEL INFORMATION

**Hampton Inn & Suites Pittsburgh – Downtown**  
1247 Smallman St.  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

**Room block: UPMC 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Pittsburgh Conference**

**Available nights: April 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

**Last day to book: Monday, March 30, 2026**

**Price: \$179 USD per night (plus tax)**

**[Book your group rate for Child Maltreatment  
Conference 2026 Here](#)**

## Presenter Biographies

### Kimberly Blair, PhD

#### Director, Theiss Center for Child and Adolescent Trauma

Dr. Kimberly Blair, PhD, is a licensed psychologist and Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine whose work centers on early childhood trauma and child maltreatment. She directs the Child & Adolescent Trauma and Early Childhood Mental Health Outpatient Programs at UPMC Western Behavioral Health, leading efforts to integrate evidence-based trauma treatments into clinical care and workforce training.

In 2012, Dr. Blair secured the first of three consecutive SAMHSA–National Child Traumatic Stress Network grants to establish the Theiss Center for Child & Adolescent Trauma, which has since become a regional hub for the treatment of complex trauma in children ages 2–17 and a key site for trauma informed service dissemination. In 2022, she received a SAMHSA Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health grant to develop the Pittsburgh Early Attachment and Relationships Project, expanding trauma focused services for young children and strengthening Pennsylvania’s early childhood mental health workforce.

Across two decades, Dr. Blair has led the design and implementation of trauma informed programs across outpatient, day treatment, mobile therapy, and school-based behavioral health settings. Her work bridges clinical intervention, program development, and translational research, advancing accessible and developmentally responsive care for maltreated and traumatized young children.

### Keona Blankenship

#### Lead Mentor, Empowering Teens to Thrive (ET3) program, University of Pittsburgh

Keona Blankenship is the Lead ET3 Mentor and a community member of South Hill top. She mentors numerous youths impacted by community violence and facilitates various programs across communities and in schools throughout the Pittsburgh School District. These programs include: the Jump Start Job Skills Training Program, Sisterhood 2.0, and Expect Respect. Mrs. “Kee,” as she is lovingly known, is also the mother of a Blended Family of 14 children.

### Rachel Booker

#### Forensic Services Program Director, Safe Shores DC Children’s Advocacy Center

Rachel Booker serves as the Forensic Services Program Director at Safe Shores, D.C.’s only Children’s Advocacy Center. In this role, she leads the Forensic Services team and conducts child forensic interviews in cases involving sexual abuse, physical abuse, child sex trafficking, internet crimes against children, and exposure to violence. Rachel has conducted hundreds of forensic interviews, bringing both compassion and clinical skill to her work with children and families.

Rachel is extensively trained in this highly specialized field and has completed the internationally recognized National Children’s Advocacy Center (NCAC) Forensic Interview Training, The American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC) Child Forensic Interviewing Clinic, and the NCAC Advanced Forensic Interview Training. Further, she has enhanced her skills through training provided by the National Criminal Justice Training Center and the FBI on topics related to her work, including child sex trafficking forensic interviewing, presenting evidence in child forensic interviews, and the multidisciplinary team response to child sex trafficking. Rachel has also successfully completed the FIND Advanced Forensic Interviewing Individuals with Disabilities training and the FIND Adapted Interview Training for Individuals Who Do Not Speak. Additionally, Rachel is certified in Stewards of Children® child sexual abuse prevention training.

Rachel regularly shared her expertise through trainings and presentations. She has trained audiences including the United Nations, the United States Army, the DC Bar Association, DC Family Court, international delegations from Ukraine, Mongolia, Romania, and Colombia (through the U.S. Department of State), and various local, state, and federal agencies.

Prior to her time at Safe Shores, Rachel served as Director of the Infants and Toddlers program at the Arc of Prince George’s County, where she oversaw early intervention services and home visits for families of children with developmental delays or disabilities. In this role, she supervised a team of service coordinators and served as liaison to the Public Schools System’s Multidisciplinary Team.

Rachel is currently pursuing a Master of Social Work degree at George Mason University. She holds bachelor's degrees in psychology and criminology & criminal justice from the University of Maryland, College Park, along with a minor in Terrorism Studies.

**Jenyne Carter**

**Healthy Parenting Program Manager, A Child's Place**

Jenyne Carter is a mission-driven nonprofit leader with over 15 years of experience in trauma-informed program development, counseling, and community partnerships. As the Healthy Parenting Program Manager at A Child's Place, she oversees staff and programming across three Pennsylvania counties, ensuring fidelity to evidence-based curricula including Triple P and Parents as Teachers. Her work focuses on creating culturally responsive, family-centered initiatives that build resilience and self-advocacy in diverse communities.

Prior to her current role, Jenyne served as a School Counselor at Young Scholars of Western PA Charter School, where she developed comprehensive K-8 guidance programming and provided individual and group counseling on trauma, racial identity, and family wellness. Her career also includes Peace Corps service in El Salvador as an English teacher and community educator, where she led workshops on empowerment, health education, and positive discipline.

Jenyne holds an M.S. in School Counseling from Kansas State University and is a certified Elementary and Secondary School Counselor in Pennsylvania. Bilingual in English and Spanish, she brings extensive intercultural experience and a deep commitment to equity, collaboration, and community-driven program design.

**Adrienne Cavanaugh**

**Family Advocate, Mission Kids Child Advocacy Center**

Adrienne is an alumna of Temple University where she earned her bachelor's in criminal justice. After working in the legal field for a few years, she changed course and became a stay-at-home mom to her 2 children. Alongside her husband, she became a foster parent through Montgomery County Office of Children in youth in 2018 and in 2019 they adopted their son to become a family of 5. After working with children who have experienced trauma, Adrienne returned to school and earned her master's in social work in December of 2023. Outside of Mission Kids, she co-founded Fostering Hope, a nonprofit which provides services to children and families experiencing foster care. Additionally, she is the co-founder and was the lead instructor at Community Wellness Academy which provides trauma-informed education, support, interventions, and coaching to individuals, agencies, and communities who have been impacted by primary and secondary trauma. She has created and facilitated trauma-informed training workshops for the foster care community and is dedicated to ongoing healing through education. Additionally, she has lead trainings and workshops on the Commercialized Sexual Exploitation of Children for Mission Kids. She is passionate about caring for people and providing healing for children and families in the face of adversity.

**Alison Culyba, MD, PhD, MPH**

**Division Director of Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine, UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh**

Alison Culyba, MD PhD MPH is Division Director of Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine at the UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, and Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Public Health, and Clinical and Translational Science at the University of Pittsburgh. Dr. Culyba directs the Empowering Teens to Thrive Program, a hospital-based violence intervention program and community-based mentoring program for teens injured by community violence. She leads multiple community-based research studies focused on youth violence prevention and community resilience and works closely with the broader ecosystem of organizations focused on violence prevention in Allegheny County.

**Briana Grant**

**Supervisory Special Agent, FBI**

SSA Grant has been an agent with the FBI for over 14 years. She has been assigned to the Behavioral Analysis Unit since 2021 and provides operational support on crimes against children investigations. SSA Grant also conducts psychological assessments for the FBI's Safeguard Unit. SSA Grant served as a program manager and training coordinator for the FBI's Indian Country Crimes Unit for three years. As a training coordinator, she worked with numerous agencies to provide training to federal, state, and tribal partners. She provided instruction on sex abuse investigations, trauma, and suicide prevention.

SSA Grant was at the forefront of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP) initiative and provided integral guidance for the FBI's MMIP investigative protocol. SSA Grant has experience investigating sex crimes, domestic violence, and CAC to include homicide and physical and sexual abuse on several Indian reservations. SSA Grant was an Arizona Child Abduction Response Coordinator and an Evidence Response Team member. Prior to joining the FBI, SSA Grant worked as a

therapist at a boarding school, provided substance abuse treatment and re-entry services to male offenders in prison, and worked with children in residential treatment facility. SSA Grant holds a master's degree in forensic psychology. SSA Grant and Dr. Melissa Stormer are currently conducting research on Sadistic Online Exploitation.

**Andrea Groh, Esq.**

**Allegheny County Bar Foundation Juvenile Court Project (JCP)**

Andrea Groh is a Managing Attorney at the Allegheny County Bar Foundation Juvenile Court Project (“JCP”), where she has represented parents accused of abuse and neglect in Juvenile Court since 2014. Andrea is also the JCP’s Appellate Counsel, representing parents in dependency appeals to the Superior Court and Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, as well as for Child Line expungement appeals at the Bureau of Hearings and Appeals. Andrea received her juris doctorate from Pitt Law in 2012 and was admitted to practice law the same year. She holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees from The State University of New York – Binghamton, where she focused her studies in feminist epistemology, critical race and gender studies, and bioethics.

**Clare Henderson, CSEC**

**CSEC Case Coordinator and Advocate, Mission Kids Child Advocacy Center**

Clare Henderson, CSEC Case Coordinator and Advocate, received her bachelor’s degree from DeSales University. Prior to working at Mission Kids, she worked for Montgomery County Children and Youth (OCY) as an Intake case worker for 9 years and her last year at Children and Youth she was an Intake Supervisor for the Pottstown Unit. Clare joined the Mission Kids Team as the Supervisor of the Family Advocacy Program in September 2018. In October 2021, Clare transitioned to become Mission Kids first ever Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, or “CSEC” Case Coordinator and Advocate.

Clare is responsible for coordinating and advocating for any child/teen suspected of be a victim of commercial sexual exploitation in Montgomery County. In this position, she is responsible for notifying multidisciplinary team (MDT) members about all meetings as dictated by the protocol developed in Montgomery County. In addition, works collaboratively with the MDT by being a liaison between the child/teen and MDT partners as appropriate. Additionally, she has lead trainings and workshops on the Commercialized Sexual Exploitation of Children for Mission Kids. Clare is passionate about finding new ways to utilize resources for children in care, focusing on trauma therapy.

**RoseAnn Hill MA, CAADC**

**Substance Use Disorder Consultation Specialist, Office of Children, Youth and Families, PA Department of Human Services**

RoseAnn is the Substance Use Disorder Consultation Specialist for Children Youth and Families in Allegheny County. The Office of Children, Youth and Families protect children from abuse and neglect and works with families to provide a safe and loving permanent home for children. RoseAnn’s role is to partner with SUD community providers to develop a full continuum of services, including residential treatment services for OCYF-involved families with substance use challenges.

RoseAnn is a certified advanced alcohol and drug counselor (CAADC) with a master’s in counseling psychology from Michigan State University. RoseAnn has served as a therapist, assessor, case manager and liaison.

**Amber Kalp, MSW**

**Western Regional Office Director for OCYF, Department of Human Services, Regional OCYF Offices**

Amber Kalp, M.S.W., serves as the Western Regional Director for the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, Office of Children, Youth and Families. She has more than 26 years of experience in child welfare, having held a wide range of county-level positions throughout her career. Her roles included frontline casework with children and families, contract monitoring to ensure service compliance, and county management overseeing ongoing treatment units, adoption services, and independent living programs.

In 2010, Ms. Kalp transitioned to state child welfare, where she worked closely with numerous county child welfare systems and placement providers, offering technical assistance, guidance, and support to strengthen service delivery and outcomes for children and families. Ms. Kalp earned her Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Pittsburgh and later received her Master of Social Work degree from the University of Pittsburgh.

**Thomas Kelly, Esq.**

**Assistant District Attorney, Allegheny County District Attorney's Office**

Tom Kelly is an Assistant District Attorney for the Allegheny County District Attorney's Office. He is in the Child Abuse Unit, which handles cases involving the physical and sexual abuse of children. He has been an Assistant District Attorney since March of 2014 (with an unfortunate year-and-a-half break where he practiced civil law) and has been back in the Child Abuse Unit since 2020. Tom attended law school at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, OH and prior to that he taught middle school in Baltimore, MD.

**Brian Kohlhepp**

**Deputy Chief, Ross Township Police**

Brian Kohlhepp is currently the Deputy Chief of Police. Here he oversees all the activities of the police department. He continues to supervise the Detective Division as well as the Forensic Investigation Unit. He spent most of his career in investigation as a Detective and eventually Detective Sergeant. He is also a department Public Information Officer handling all media events for major incidents and investigations. He investigates all major criminal incidents such as suspicious deaths, sexual assaults, and child abuse. He has testified as an expert in Forensic Crime Scene Reconstruction. He has numerous hours of specialized training in various policing subjects and is a polygraph examiner. He has a BA from Waynesburg University in Criminal Justice and a master's from Pennsylvania Western University at California (Summa cum Laude) and is a graduate of the FBI National Academy.

Deputy Chief Kohlhepp is on faculty teaching at Duquesne University, the Legal Studies Master's Pennsylvania Western University, graduate and undergraduate courses at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, and Waynesburg University. He also serves as a Program Director and Instructor in numerous criminal investigation and forensic continuing education classes for attorneys and law enforcement at the Center for Law and Public Policy at California University of PA held in the Pittsburgh and Philadelphia area. In addition, he has conducted various continuing education seminars for John Jay College at their main campus in New York City.

**Drew Krantz, PsyD, LPC, NCC, CATP**

**Supervisor/Therapist/Trainer, UPMC Child Advocacy Center of Central PA & Restoring Joy Counseling & Consulting Services, LLC**

Dr. Drew Krantz, LPC, NCC, CATP is a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) and is the Behavioral Health Supervisor at the UPMC Child Advocacy Center of Central PA. He is also the owner of Restoring Joy Counseling & Consulting, LLC, a practice that provides therapy, consultation, and training in secondary traumatic stress. He has a PsyD in Behavioral Health Leadership from Walden Leadership. He is certified in multiple evidence-based treatment modalities for treating trauma. He is a certified trainer in the Components for Enhancing Career Experience and Reducing Trauma (CE-CERT) model. He is the co-chair of the Trauma Informed Care Steering Committee of UPMC Central PA and the Executive Director of the ACE Committee of Dauphin County, PA.

**Brittany Liptak, MS**

**Forensic Interview Specialist, Homeland Security Investigations**

Brittany Liptak, MS is a Forensic Interview Specialist within Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), Investigative Services Division (ISD), Victim Assistance Program (VAP). Ms. Liptak is stationed at ASAC-Pittsburgh. Ms. Liptak started her child welfare career in 2010 as an intake case worker for Fayette County Children and Youth Services in Pennsylvania. In 2015, Ms. Liptak pursued a career in forensic interviewing with A Child's Place, PA (ACP)-one of Allegheny County's two Child Advocacy Centers. Ms. Liptak spent nine years as a forensic interviewer where she interviewed over 1400 children who have alleged maltreatment, sexual abuse, physical abuse, exploitation, or have witnessed violence. Because ACP serves six counties, Ms. Liptak was a member of many multi-disciplinary teams and human trafficking taskforces, many of which Ms. Liptak is still an active participant. She also provides ongoing collaboration, training, and education to Child Protection Services caseworkers, law enforcement, counselors, and the public, as well as supervises college interns.

**Melissa M. McLean, ACFI, M.Div., M.Ed.,**

**Executive Director / Forensic Interviewer, Warren County Children's Advocacy Center**

Melissa M. McLean, ACFI, M.Div., M.Ed., is the Executive Director and Forensic Interviewer at the Warren County Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) in northwestern Pennsylvania, serving children and families in Warren and Forest Counties. She is also an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ, a dual perspective that informs her work at the intersection of trauma, resilience, and organizational care while remaining professionally distinct.

Since 2019, McLean has led the Warren County CAC as both its administrator and primary forensic interviewer. She has conducted more than 300 child forensic interviews and coordinated hundreds of multidisciplinary team (MDT) case reviews. Under her leadership, the CAC has expanded to provide advocacy, prevention education, and facility-dog-assisted services in a rural context where resources are limited and creativity is essential. She has overseen growth in case referrals, the development of family advocacy into a full-time program, and the launch of prevention initiatives tailored to schools and community partners.

At the national level, McLean co-chairs the National Children’s Alliance’s Rural CAC Collaborative Working Group, where she helps elevate the voices and needs of rural programs across the country. She also serves as a member of Pennsylvania DHS’s Northwest Citizen Review Panel, contributing recommendations to improve the state’s child welfare system.

McLean holds a Master of Divinity from Chicago Theological Seminary, a Master of Science in Education from Elmira College, and a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature and American Studies from Elmira College. She is a member of the Association of Professional Solving the Abuse of Children (APSAC) and the Academy on Violence and Abuse (AVA).

Across her roles, McLean emphasizes collaboration, creativity, and sustainability. She has developed and delivered innovative training curricula, including the VILLAGE program, which was designed at the request of mandated reporters to provide practical, scenario-based learning that goes beyond traditional child abuse reporting requirements. She has also championed the integration of facility dogs into forensic and advocacy work, supporting children during interviews, court preparation, and community engagement.

**Alison Munshi**

**Child and Adolescent Forensic Interviewer, Safe Shores DCCAC**

Ali Munshi (she/her) is a Child and Adolescent Forensic Interviewer at Safe Shores, the DC Children’s Advocacy Center. As an interviewer, she has conducted hundreds of child forensic interviews in cases involving sexual abuse, physical abuse, child sex trafficking, internet crimes against children, and exposure to violence. Ali is trained in the internationally recognized National Children’s Advocacy Center (NCAC) Forensic Interview Structure as well as advanced trainings offered by the National Criminal Justice Training Center that include child sex trafficking forensic interviewing and presenting evidence in child forensic interviews. Additionally, Ali assisted in the creation of and helps facilitate the DCCAC Peer Review that focuses on interviewing in urban environments, and she participates in MRCAC Peer Reviews. Ali regularly conducts the training on Gathering Minimal Facts for the MDT Orientation at Safe Shores and is a certified facilitator in the Stewards of Children® child sexual abuse prevention training.

Before coming to Safe Shores, Ali first connected with the CAC world as a Family Support Specialist in the Healthy Families Program at NCAC. During her time at NCAC, she presented on supporting LGBTQ+ Youth at the APSAC Colloquium and NCAC’s Symposium on Child Abuse. From rural Ohio, Ali has lived throughout the US and in Europe as part of a military family. She has previously worked in education, LGBTQ+ advocacy, foster and adoption services, surrogacy, and in a drug prevention program for elementary students. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education from Mt. Vernon Nazarene University in Mt. Vernon, OH.

**Devon Nixon**

**Detective, Pittsburgh Bureau of Police**

Detective Devon Nixon has been a sworn member of the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police since 2016 and has been assigned to the Bureau's Special Victim's Unit since 2018. The Special Victim's Unit is responsible for the investigation of missing persons, child abuse, sexual assaults, and domestic violence.

**Ursula Parlin, MD**

**Physician, UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh**

Ursula Parlin, MD, is a pediatric resident at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. Ursula received her Bachelor of Arts from Oberlin College with a major in Hispanic Studies. She spent a year researching epigenetic factors influencing diabetes pathogenesis at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia before pursuing her medical doctorate at Sidney Kimmel Medical College of Jefferson University. During medical school, she was in the Underserved Urban Track and focused on medical Spanish and the global and local factors leading to Latinx immigrant health inequities. In residency, Ursula is one of the leaders of the Community-Oriented Resident Education (CORE) group.

**Teri Pentz, LPC, NCC**

**Clinical Training Supervisor, Theiss Center for Child and Adolescent Trauma**

Teri Pentz is a licensed Professional Counselor who has over 35 years of experience working with children and their families, both in early intervention and in infant and early childhood mental health. She has a master's degree in counseling psychology from Chatham University and has earned Infant Mental Health Endorsement (IMH-E®) through the Pennsylvania Association for Infant Mental Health (PA-AIMH) at the Clinical Mentor level. Teri has been a direct service provider in early intervention, child and adolescent behavioral health, and with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities across the lifespan. She has been a service coordinator and supervisor for early intervention and behavioral health services within several county level programs in Central and Western Pennsylvania. Teri is a Rostered Clinician and Supervisor in Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP). Since 2012 Teri has been a provider of reflective supervision for CPP and early childhood mental health clinicians as well as for clinicians seeking Infant Mental Health Endorsement.

Currently, Teri works at the Theiss Center for Child and Adolescent Trauma as the Clinical Training Supervisor, providing and coordinating training and consultation for clinicians and others serving children and families in various settings. Teri also continues to work as a therapist, specializing in Child-Parent Psychotherapy.

**Debra Phillips, LCSW**

**Clinical Social Worker, UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh**

Debbie Phillips is a licensed Clinical Social Worker with more than 40 years of experience serving children, adults, and families across the foster care, mental health, and healthcare systems. She has worked at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh for 18 years, much of that time in the Emergency Department, where social workers stand on the frontline of crisis response and child protection. Her approach blends clinical skill, compassion, and personal insight shaped by decades of helping families navigate trauma. Phillips is a lifelong advocate for trauma-informed care and prevention.

**Anthony Pizon, MD**

**Chief of Medical Toxicology Division, Department of Emergency Medicine**

Dr. Anthony (Tony) Pizon received his medical degree from the University of Toledo School of Medicine in 2001. He then completed his Emergency Medicine Residency at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center in 2004 and his Medical Toxicology Fellowship at Banner Good Samaritan Medical Center in Phoenix, Arizona in 2006. Dr. Pizon is currently a Professor in the Department of Emergency Medicine, Division of Medical Toxicology at the University of Pittsburgh, School of Medicine. He serves as Chief of the Division of Medical Toxicology and Director of the Medical Toxicology Fellowship at UPMC. He is also Assistant Medical Director of both the Pittsburgh and West Virginia Poison Centers. Yet, most importantly, he is blessed with amazing wife, Caryn, and four wonderful children (Benjamin, Elizabeth, Gabriela, and Seraphina).

**Angela Reed Strathman**

**Chief Trial Counsel, Beaver County District Attorney's Office**

Angela Reed Strathman is the Chief Trial Counsel and head of the Special Victim's Unit at the Beaver County District Attorney's Office. She received her B.A. from Oregon State University in 2008 and her J.D., from Duquesne University School of Law in 2015. After graduating, Ms. Reed Strathman worked as a law clerk for President Judge John McBride in Beaver County. Thereafter, she joined the Beaver County District Attorney's Office in June of 2017. Immediately upon starting, she began prosecuting sexual assault and child abuse cases. Ms. Reed Strathman quickly made it her career to specialize in victim cases and soon after, the Special Victim's Unit was formed with her as the head. As Chief Trial Counsel, she reviews and prosecutes the majority of the child abuse and sexual assault cases that come through Beaver County and assists other attorneys in handling these cases.

After accepting her job in the District Attorney's office, she moved to Beaver County where she currently resides with her husband and two children. Ms. Reed Strathman spends all of her free time with her children, a 9-year-old daughter and 6 year old son. She is seen most nights and weekends coaching them and their peers at softball and basketball where she has embraced her new name of "Coach Angela."

**Margaret Russell, MD**

**Child Abuse Physician, Child Advocacy Center, UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh**

<p>Dr. Russell is a Board-Certified Pediatrician and a Board-Eligible Child Abuse Pediatrician. She received her medical degree from the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine in 2019, completed a Pediatrics Residency at UPMC Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh, and completed a Child Abuse Pediatrics Fellowship at the University of Utah. Dr. Russell has contributed to book chapters regarding child physical abuse and is a member of professional societies including the American Academy of Pediatrics, The American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children, and the Helfer Society, an international honorary society of physicians committed to prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of child abuse and neglect. Dr. Russell’s research focus is understanding epidemiology of confessions within child physical abuse and understanding how to use this unique information to partner with families and improve outcomes for children who have experienced physical abuse. She is also committed to evidence-based education of child-serving professionals in recognition of and response to child maltreatment in our communities.</p>
<p><b>Hannah Sahud, MD</b></p>
<p><b>Child Abuse Physician, Child Advocacy Center, UPMC Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh</b></p>
<p>Hannah Sahud, MD is an Assistant Professor in the Division of Child Advocacy at Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh. She is also the CAC Outpatient Clinical Director and Director of the Child Abuse Initiative. Dr. Sahud practiced general Pediatrics for 20 years before joining the Child Advocacy Division. She focuses on education about identifying and addressing child maltreatment for general pediatricians, case workers, ED physicians, school nurses and others who were not trained specifically in Child Abuse Pediatrics. Dr. Sahud is always happy to answer any question about addressing child maltreatment or to get you to the right resource if she is not it.</p>
<p><b>Michael Santek</b></p>
<p><b>Detective, Pittsburgh Bureau of Police</b></p>
<p>Michael Santek has been a police officer with the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police since 2015, and most recently has been a detective in the Special Victims Unit since 2020. As an SVU detective, he investigates crimes of physical and sexual abuse against children, along with crimes of sexual assault against adult victims.</p>
<p><b>Melissa Stormer, PsyD</b></p>
<p><b>Supervisory Special Agent, FBI</b></p>
<p>Dr. Melissa Stormer is a Supervisory Special Agent (SSA) with OSI and a Clinical/Forensic Psychologist. She has been an OSI agent for 20 years and has experience working and advising on investigations regarding violent crimes, sex crimes, crimes against children, and national security matters. As a clinical/forensic psychologist, her education and experience has focused on serious mental illness, personality disorders, sexual deviancy, and predatory behavior. Dr. Stormer also conducts court-ordered evaluations regarding violence risk, sexual risk, competency to stand trial, and mental status at the time of the offense for the Commonwealth of Virginia. She was assigned to the FBI BAU in February 2022. Dr. Stormer and SSA Briana Grant are currently conducting research on Sadistic Online Exploitation.</p>
<p><b>Kendra Strobel</b></p>
<p><b>Assistant District Attorney, Mercer County District Attorney's Office</b></p>
<p>Kendra Strobel is currently an Assistant District Attorney in Mercer County. In the past, she has also been an Assistant District Attorney in Armstrong County, where she focused on domestic violence, sexual assault, and other crimes against children and families. Prior to her tenure as an ADA, she worked as an Assistant Public Defender in Luzerne County, where she also defended many cases with child victims and witnesses. She graduated from the University of Pittsburgh School of Law in 2017 and has been working in criminal law since then.</p>
<p><b>William Trautman, MD</b></p>
<p><b>Assistant Fellowship Director, Medical Toxicology Fellowship UPMC, Medical Toxicologist, UPMC</b></p>
<p>Will Trautman is a Medical Toxicology and Emergency Medicine Attending at UPMC treating both children and adults. He completed his Emergency Medicine Residency as well as a Medical Toxicology Fellowship at UPMC and joined the Emergency Medicine and Toxicology faculty in 2023. He currently serves as the Assistant Fellowship Director for the Medical Toxicology Fellowship and as Assistant Professor of Emergency Medicine in the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine.</p>

**Rickquel Tripp, MD, MPH, CDR, USN, FAEMS**

**Vice Chair of BEE UPMC ME, EMS Medical Director, Vice Chair of ESI Department of Emergency Medicine, UPMC**

Rickquel Tripp, MD MPH CDR USN FAEMS, is a nationally recognized expert in addressing provider implicit bias, creating health equity, and building a diverse workforce. She is a dynamic speaker and leader in addition to receiving many awards for her diversity, equity, and inclusion work such as UPMC Award for Commitment and Excellence in Service (ACES) in 2019, the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine Social Justice Educator Award in 2023, Onyx Woman Leadership Award in 2023, YWCA Bridge Builder Award in 2023, Gateway Medical Society Healthcare Policy & Advocacy Champion Award in 2024, Iota Phi Foundation Exemplary Service Award for Medicine in 2024, and Dr. Larry E. Davis Excellence in Leadership Award in 2025. As an EMS Medical Director of 4 different agencies, Dr. Tripp has provided subject matter to numerous EMS agencies and organizations regarding health disparities and equity, provider implicit bias and strategies to mitigate bias affecting medical care, and OB/GYN emergencies. She holds MD from Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and MPH from Harvard School of Public Health along with being a Commander in the Navy Reserves.

**Jason Van Ness, LSW**

**Licensed Social Worker**

Jason Van Ness is a licensed social worker and investigative journalist in the Pittsburgh region. Jason contributes regularly to Qburg and his work focuses primarily on the intersection of faith and politics, and his work has also been featured in the Freedom from Religion Foundation as well as The Advocate. Jason spent ten years in the child welfare arena and began his journey there through the Albert Schweitzer Fellowship, where he designed and implemented a mentoring project for LGBTQ+ youth and their families, culminating with a regional conference designed and led by LGBTQ+ youth in Allegheny County. Jason also published a book through Sacrosage Press in 2024 titled "Jesus Over the Rainbow: 10 Anti-LGBTQ+ Myths in the Christian Right."

Jason is also an ordained elder with the Presbyterian Church of the United States (PC USA) and serves as the chair for Youth and Young Adult Ministries within East Liberty Presbyterian Church. Jason is now pursuing a law degree in, and he hope to devote his career to church state separation endeavors and helping families through the coming out process.

**Jason Ware**

**Assessment County Casework Manager, Westmoreland County Children's Bureau**

Jason Ware serves as the Assessment County Casework Manager for Westmoreland County Children's Bureau and oversees all of the investigations conducted by the Children's Bureau. Jason has been with the Children's Bureau for 20 years and has held the positions of assessment caseworker, program specialist, and assessment supervisor. Jason is a 2023 Champion of Hope and Healing Award recipient. Jason holds a degree in Physics from St. Vincent College and resides in Scottdale, Pa with his wife, two kids, and bluetick coonhound.

**Brooke White, MSW**

**Independent Living Social Worker, Westmoreland County Children's Bureau**

Brooke White is an Independent Living Social Worker at Westmoreland County Children's Bureau. Brooke works to ensure all foster youth between the ages of 14 and 23 have the opportunity to successfully transition into young adulthood and become independent. Brooke has been with the Children's Bureau for six years, previously serving as a treatment caseworker. Brooke holds a master's degree in social work from PennWest University, obtained through the Child Welfare Education for Leadership (CWEL) program. Brooke leads the Resiliency Team at the Children's Bureau, a team who is dedicated to distributing Mental Fitness and Resilience skills within the agency. Brooke currently lives in Greensburg, PA, and is an avid world traveler who is passionate about immersing herself in new cultures to understand different ways of living.

**Staci Whitney, LMSW**

**Senior Director, Modell Consulting Group, LLC**

Staci Whitney, LMSW is the Senior Director for Modell Consulting Group, LLC. Since 2017, Mrs. Whitney has been responsible for teaching and co-authoring multiple trainings on interviewing individuals from vulnerable populations. Specifically, Mrs. Whitney led two projects which included contributions from other national experts to develop advanced Forensic Interviewing protocols for interviewing individuals with disabilities (Project FIND) and older adults (SAFE).

Prior to her work with Modell Consulting Group, Mrs. Whitney was the Senior Forensic Interviewer at Bivona Child Advocacy Center in Rochester, NY, and was responsible for developing Bivona’s Forensic Interviewing Program. During that time, Mrs. Whitney had extensive training and experience in the field of Forensic Interviewing including interviewing children and individuals with disabilities who are victims or witnesses of crime. She has developed and delivered numerous trainings to Multidisciplinary Team Members and other professionals on recognizing and responding to suspicions and reports of abuse, neglect and maltreatment.

**Karin Wickwire, DNP, AG-ACNP, SANE-A, SANE-P**

**CRNP/Forensic Coordinator, Departments of Emergency & Critical Care Medicine, UPMC Hamot  
CRNP/Division of Child Advocacy, Erie CARE Clinic**

Karin A. Wickwire, DNP, CPNP-AC, AG-ACNP, SANE-A, SANE-P is a Nurse Practitioner in the UPMC Health System. She currently works at UPMC Hamot with the divisions of Emergency and Critical Care Medicine and with UPMC Children's Division of Child Advocacy at the Erie CARE Clinic. She is the coordinator of the Forensic Nursing Team at UPMC Hamot. She currently serves as the President of the Board of Directors for the International Association of Forensic Nurses (IAFN) and the IAFN Foundation and as the Board Chair of the Crime Victim Center of Erie.

**Cheryl Wier, MSN (Forensic), RN, SANE-A, SANE-P, NYSAFE**

**Clinical Nurse Coordinator, Bradford Regional Medical Center, CAC McKean County**

Cheryl Wier, MSN (Forensic), RN, SANE-A, SANE-P, NYSAFE, 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 knowledge and clinical skills as well as offering essential support to nurses 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 individuals who have experienced violence or abuse.

**Jennifer Wolford, DO, MPH**

**Child Abuse Pediatrician, Child Advocacy Center, UPMC Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh**

Dr. Wolford joined the Division of Child Advocacy at the Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC in 2011, after completing her pediatric training at Children’s and serving as chief resident. She has a Master of Public Health degree at University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health, and a medical degree from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. Her primary interests are in health care for underserved children, and she is the faculty advisor for the Pediatric training program called CORE (Community Oriented Resident Education).

**Erin Work, Esq.**

**Director, Allegheny County Bar Foundation Juvenile Court Project**

Erin Work is the Director of the Allegheny County Bar Foundation Juvenile Court Project (“JCP”). Attorney Work holds a bachelor’s degree in marketing/management from the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown and received her Juris Doctorate from Duquesne University School of Law in 2009. She was admitted to practice law in Pennsylvania that same year. Attorney Work began representing parents accused of abuse and neglect in Juvenile Court as a Staff Attorney for the JCP in March 2011. In 2019, she was promoted to Managing Attorney and took over as the Director of the JCP in December 2024.

**Frederico Xavier, MD, MS**

**Physician, UPMC**

Dr. Xavier is an Associate Professor of Pediatric Hematology Oncology at the University of Pittsburgh with a joint affiliation at the Hemophilia Center of Western PA as the Pediatric Clinical Director. He joined both institutions in July 2017. Dr. Xavier completed medical school, a pediatric residency, and fellowship training in Brazil. He then completed a second pediatric residency in New York, a pediatric hematology/oncology fellowship at St. Jude Children’s Hospital, Memphis, TN, and a pediatric hemostasis fellowship at the Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto, Ontario, Canada in 2011. Following this, he completed a master’s degree in clinical research at the Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis in 2014. Dr. Xavier has published peer-reviewed articles and book chapters in the field of pediatric hemostasis. Since he finished his training, Dr. Xavier has been working with bleeding and thrombotic disorders in Children's Hospitals and Hemophilia Treatment Centers for more than 15 years.

**Samantha Yule, MSW, LCSW**

**Police Social Worker, Baldwin Borough Police Department**

Samantha Yule, MSW, LCSW works as the Police Social Worker for the Baldwin Borough Police Department in Allegheny County. In this role, she integrates social work principles and ethics within law enforcement to support individuals, children, and families in crisis. Samantha collaborates with community partners to enhance access to mental health, substance use, and social services, promoting a trauma-informed and holistic approach to public safety and community well-being.