

# Keeping it **REAL**



STATE OF  
**NEBRASKA**  
JUDICIAL BRANCH  
Court Improvement  
Project

2022 CIP Children's Summit  
September 13-14 | Kearney, Nebraska  
Younes Conference Center

**R**elate | **E**ngage | **A**ffirm | **L**isten

## September 13 - Day 1 Tuesday

|             |                            |
|-------------|----------------------------|
| 8:00-9:00   | Registration               |
| 9:00-9:15   | Welcome                    |
| 9:15-10:45  | <b>Keynote: Josh Shipp</b> |
| 10:45-11:00 | Break                      |
| 11:00-12:15 | Breakout Session 1         |
| 12:15-1:15  | Lunch                      |
| 1:15-2:30   | Breakout Session 2         |
| 2:30-3:00   | Break                      |
| 3:00-4:15   | Breakout Session 3         |

## September 14- Day 2 Wednesday

|             |                             |
|-------------|-----------------------------|
| 8:30-9:45   | Breakout Session 4          |
| 9:45-10:00  | Break                       |
| 10:00-11:15 | Breakout Session 5          |
| 11:15-12:30 | Lunch and Awards            |
| 12:30-1:45  | Breakout Session 6          |
| 1:45-2:15   | Break                       |
| 2:15-3:45   | <b>Keynote: Hasan Davis</b> |
| 3:45-4:00   | Closing Remarks             |

# Agenda, Day 1

## Tuesday, September 13

| Time/Location                | Title/ Topic and Speaker(s) | CEUs |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------|
| 8:00am - Lobby               | Registration                |      |
| 9:00am-9:15am<br>Crystal 1-4 | Welcome and Opening Remarks |      |

### 9:15am-10:45am | Keynote Crystal 1-4 | Josh Shipp

#### The Power of One Caring Adult

Josh Shipp was a foster kid, class clown, a trouble maker. He was written off, kicked out, and every adult's worst nightmare. Until one caring adult changed everything. In his trademark playful yet authoritative style, Josh delivers practical ways that your audience can make a difference in a kid's life.

As a foster kid, class clown, and troublemaker, Josh knows what it's like to be left out and left behind by almost everyone. And yet, thanks to just one caring adult, he turned his life around and learned to thrive. Equal parts empathy, instruction, and inspiration, this unforgettable talk will move your audience to action.

10:45am-11:00am Break

| Time/Location                               | Title/ Topic and Speaker(s) | CEUs |
|---|-----------------------------|------|
| <b>11:00am-12:15pm   Breakout Session 1</b> |                             |      |

#### Breakout Session 1 11:00am-12:15pm Navigating Trafficking and Exploitation of Native Youth in Nebraska Tribal Communities

**Diamond 1** *Misty Flowers, Kirby Williams*

Participants will receive a brief overview on the dynamics and factors associating with trafficking and exploitation of Native American youth in Nebraska's Tribal Communities.

- Demonstrate understanding of how crime victimization affects Native American populations, including human trafficking and child sexual exploitation.
- Understand vulnerabilities and risk factors for Indigenous youth and tribal communities (both rural and urban), especially in relation to child welfare, systems response, and historical trauma.
- Identify how to best advocate for Native American youth and crime victims, including communication techniques, cultural considerations, and unique needs of this community.
- Understand the historical significance of relevant tribal law and basic tribal jurisdiction in Nebraska

#### Breakout Session 1 11:00am-12:15pm Using Adolescent Development and Risk Reduction to Guide Case Closure

**Diamond 3** *Amoreena Brady, Martin Malina, Danelle Reed*

Description TBA

#### Breakout Session 1 11:00am-12:15pm Nebraska 988

**Diamond 4** *Michelle Nunemaker*

988 went live across the nation on July 16, 2022. In this session, participants will learn about the three key pillars of 988 and the implementation of 988 in Nebraska to include what we've learned so far and where we plan to go moving forward.

#### Breakout Session 1 11:00am-12:15pm Barriers to Permanency

**Diamond 5** *Judge Randin Roland, Judge Vernon Daniels*

Judges discuss barriers to permanency, and identify solutions

#### Breakout Session 1 11:00am-12:15pm Addressing Youth Homelessness in Greater Nebraska: the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program

**Diamond 7** *Alex LaBenz, Andra White*

Breakout facilitators will present historical background and current areas of need for greater Nebraska's youth at risk of or experiencing homelessness. The YHDP's implementation, statewide strategies, and community collaboration during its two and a half years of growth will be discussed, including the YHDP's innovative approaches to meet specific needs across communities, and how that has led to better results for young people throughout the state. Session attendees will learn about the impact the YHDP has had through youth experiences and testimonials, along with analysis of the outcomes young people have achieved. Facilitators will guide a conversation among attendees focused on fostering collaboration between professionals, young people, and communities as the YHDP model continues to grow and improve the lives of Nebraskans.

#### Breakout Session 1 11:00am-12:15pm Addressing the Needs of Youth with Developmental Disabilities

**Diamond 8** *Julie Smith, Tony Green*

This session highlights the complex needs of justice involved youth with developmental disabilities and the efforts to collaborate across agencies at the local and state level to create meaningful interventions. DHHS-DD will define what is a developmental disability, how it is diagnosed and their role in supporting disabled individuals. This will include funding, service coordination and how statute impacts their services. Probation will focus on the relationship between developmental disabilities and crime, community-based resources and case management strategies for maximizing success. This will include the impact of detention, utilization of out of home placement and the response to aggression and non-compliance.

Participants will be provided tools to support further work with individuals with disabilities and should:

- Develop a base understanding of what is a developmental disability and how it impacts communication and behaviors.
- Take away specific resources and case management strategies to utilize in their daily work
- Be able to identify gaps or barriers within their own communities that are pulling individuals deeper into the justice system in response to their disability
- Be provided ideas of how to develop of community-based alternatives to meet the needs of this population

#### Breakout Session 1 11:00am-12:15pm What's new with DHHS

**Diamond 9** *Dr. Alger M. Studstill, Jr., Stephanie Beasley*

Breakout facilitators will present historical background and current areas of need for greater Nebraska's youth at risk of or experiencing homelessness. The YHDP's implementation, statewide strategies, and community collaboration during its two and a half years of growth will be discussed, including the YHDP's innovative approaches to meet specific needs across communities, and how that has led to better results for young people throughout the state. Session attendees will learn about the impact the YHDP has had through youth experiences and testimonials, along with analysis of the outcomes young people have achieved. Facilitators will guide a conversation among attendees focused on fostering collaboration between professionals, young people, and communities as the YHDP model continues to grow and improve the lives of Nebraskans.

#### Breakout Session 1 11:00am-12:15pm Foundations of Youth Engagement

**Diamond 10** *Bobbi Taylor*

Authentic Youth Engagement is an approach that values the wisdom and expertise of young people. It brings to life a philosophy, that policies and practices will be fundamentally better when we partner with young people who have lived experience. In this session you can expect foundational principles of youth engagement and how to begin to apply these principles to your efforts.

12:15am-1:15pm  
Crystal 1-4

**Lunch - SOUTH OF THE BORDER**  
Chicken Fajitas, Taco Meat, Cilantro Lime Rice, Refried Beans, Tortilla Chips, Salsa, Pico De Gallo, Guacamole, Diced Tomatoes, Shredded Cheeses, Jalapenos, Onions, Shredded Lettuce, Sour Cream, Sliced Black Olives, Hot Cheese Sauce and Flour Tortillas



# Agenda, Day 1

## Tuesday, September 13

| Time/Location   | Title/ Topic and Speaker(s)  | CEUs |
|---|--|------|
| <b>3:00pm-4:15pm   Breakout Session 3</b>   |  |      |
| <b>Breakout Session 3</b><br>3:00pm-4:15pm  | <b>Immigration Issues for Children in Family Court Practice</b>  |      |
| <b>Diamond 1</b>  | <i>Jenna Ripke, BriAnn Campos</i>  |      |
| <p>This presentation will discuss potential forms of immigration relief for children involved in state court proceedings, with a focus on Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS). Presenters will discuss eligibility for SIJS, obtaining the necessary factual findings, and other concerns in working with immigrant youth in the family court system.</p>  |  |      |
| <b>Breakout Session 3</b><br>3:00pm-4:15pm  | <b>Reactive Attachment Disorder and Related Disorders</b>  |      |
| <b>Diamond 2</b>  | <i>Deb Wesselman</i>   |      |
| <p>The presenter will describe the generational transmission of attachment disturbances and the negative impact on the development of the brain and nervous system, the capacity for self-regulation and self-reflection, and risk for mental disorders, substance abuse problems, aggression and other behavioral problems in adolescence and adulthood. The presentation will discuss therapeutic needs for both adults and youth impacted by attachment related disorders and early childhood trauma.</p>  |  |      |
| <b>Breakout Session 3</b><br>3:00pm-4:15pm  | <b>Dealing With Differences</b>  |      |
| <b>Diamond 3</b>  | <i>Christine Henningsen</i>  |      |
| <p>In this session, service providers will understand the importance of culturally competent service delivery and will discuss considerations when working with youth from different backgrounds than the provider and/or other institutional players in the juvenile court system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss common points of difference (such as class, language, culture and sexual orientation) between youth and institutional actors in the juvenile court system.</li> <li>• Focus on the particular impact of racial and cultural differences at all stages of the court system.</li> <li>• Learn to help other institutional actors understand the relevance of recognizing difference at every stage of the court process.</li> <li>• Learn strategies for advocating for the cultural needs of youth in the juvenile court system.</li> <li>• Identify resources and strategies to aid in the service delivery to youth of color and non-English speaking youth.</li> </ul> |  |      |
| <b>Breakout Session 3</b><br>3:00pm-4:15pm  | <b>Working with Families Toward Greater Things</b>   |      |
| <b>Diamond 4</b>  | <i>Amy Champoux, Jody Busse, Jason Warnke</i>  |      |
| <p>Our District's work around enhanced family engagement included a literature review of model and evidenced based practices for family engagement in juvenile justice systems; including the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), Center for Juvenile Justice Reform and Pennsylvania State's Models for Change to name a few. District 3J's Ad Maiores Family Engagement Work Group in partnership with community stakeholders, Probation Officers, youth and families then developed tools to strengthen family engagement along multiple points of contact. This work included the development of a Family Brochure, Colloquies, Youth and Parent/Guardian Satisfaction Surveys and a Family Orientation. Technical Support for this work was provided by the Mondoro Project partners which included, the Robert F Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill Impact Center and the National Juvenile Defender Center.</p>    |  |      |
| <b>Breakout Session 3</b><br>3:00pm-4:15pm  | <b>Menu for Authentic Youth Engagement</b>   |      |
| <b>Diamond 5</b>  | <i>Shelby Rice, Hanna Burdese</i>  |      |
| Description TBA   |  |      |
| <b>Breakout Session 3</b><br>3:00pm-4:15pm  | <b>Building Capacity Through Advocacy: The impacts of civil legal services for children and families impacted by substance use</b> |      |
| <b>Diamond 7</b>  | <i>Lawrence Gendler, Jennie Cole-Mossman</i>   |      |
| <p>Legal Aids participating in the Office for Victims of Crime's Enhancing Community Responses to the Opioid/America's Addiction Crisis grants demonstrated that civil legal services delivered to caretakers and family members of children impacted by crime and the nation's substance use crisis could not only help short term, but build the capacity for appropriate treatments, stability and permanency for these children. This session will focus on how stakeholders and attorneys can use civil legal services to serve this population of at-risk children. Funding mechanisms to support this work will be part of the presentation.</p>   |  |      |

| Time/Location  | Title/ Topic and Speaker(s)                       | CEUs |
|--|---|------|
| <b>3:00pm-4:15pm   Breakout Session 3</b>  |   |      |
| <b>Breakout Session 3</b><br>3:00pm-4:15pm   | <b>Family Run Organizations</b>                   |      |
| <b>Diamond 8</b>   | <i>Jamie Legates, Karla Bennetts</i>              |      |
| <p>Coming to grips with having a behavioral or mental health challenge often causes feelings of fear, shame, or isolation. For parents of children diagnosed with a mental health challenge, those feelings can be the same. Parents often feel self-blame, denial, and isolation.</p> <p>As Family Peer Support providers, we offer someone with similar lived experiences in their own parenting journey.</p> <p>Certified Family Peer Support Specialists offer a glimpse of hope, a listening ear without judgment and help navigating needed supports</p> <p>Join us to learn more about the Family Run Organizations of Nebraska &amp; how Family Peer Support assists families and youth as they navigate the various systems of care, and some of the outcomes that can be achieved.</p> |   |      |
| <b>Breakout Session 3</b><br>3:00pm-4:15pm   | <b>Motion Practice</b>                            |      |
| <b>Diamond 9</b>   | <i>Gail Steen, Katy Reichert</i>                  |      |
| <p>This breakout session will focus on motion practice in juvenile court. Gail and Katy will discuss motions they have utilized in all areas of juvenile practice and the purpose of those motions. They will share insight from judges about things attorneys should and should not do in motion practice. This session will be interactive and the speakers encourage questions and collaborative brainstorming to problem-solve issues attorneys face in juvenile court.</p>  |   |      |
| <b>Breakout Session 3</b><br>3:00pm-4:15pm   | <b>How We Arrived at Safe and Together</b>        |      |
| <b>Diamond 10</b>  | <i>Judge Chad Brown, Katie Hansen, Ray Curtis</i> |      |
| <p>The focus of this presentation will be Douglas County (Omaha), Nebraska's journey to identify a need for systemic change when working with child welfare cases involving domestic violence. This presentation will show how we identified: What is services are available in our community, what is working, what needs improvement, what additional considerations do we need to account for (barriers, buy in, etc.), what can we do better as a community and what we are doing to make change happen.</p>   |   |      |

# Agenda, Day 2

## Wednesday, September 14

| Time/Location  | Title/ Topic and Speaker(s)  | CEUs |
|--|--|------|
| <b>8:30am-9:45am   Breakout Session 4</b>  |  |      |
| <b>Breakout Session 4</b><br>8:30am-9:45am   | <b>The Other Side of the Rainbow: Impacts of anti-LGBTQ+ legislation</b> |      |
| <b>Diamond 1</b>   | <i>Chelsea Schutter</i>  |      |
| <p>This session will cover the basics of LGBTQ+ terminology and culture. It will also build upon this baseline information to address special considerations of recent movements to introduce legislation limiting LGBTQ+ identification, access to activities, and healthcare. The intention of this session is to expand your current understanding of these issues and provide perspective on the likely impact of imposing similar legislation in Nebraska.</p>  |  |      |
| <b>Breakout Session 4</b><br>8:30am-9:45am   | <b>The Impacts of Trauma Across Development</b>                          |      |
| <b>Diamond 2</b>   | <i>Sarah Dunham</i>  |      |
| <p>As a long-time provider within the Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare Systems, it appears that trauma is often an overlooked or uneducated area among workers. I am constantly explaining the basics of the effects of trauma on development in children throughout their lifespan and in addition how it can impact their lives into adulthood. There is an intense deficit on education on trauma and how this manifests throughout childhood and adolescence to impact behavior, their belief system, and future success. Not only are we lacking as a System to recognize the impacts of trauma on a child's development, but we are uninformed on effective screening techniques to identify when trauma is a part of the child's story. As the System continues to be uninformed about who they are serving, this results in a lack of awareness for the impacts of working within trauma for our workers and how they are managing their experiences. More than 80% of juvenile justice-involved youth report experiencing trauma, with many having experienced multiple, chronic, and pervasive interpersonal traumas. This exposure places them at risk for emotional, behavioral, developmental, and legal problems. Unresolved posttraumatic stress symptoms can lead to serious long-term consequences across the entire lifespan, such as problems with interpersonal relationships; cognitive functioning; and mental health disorders including PTSD, substance abuse, anxiety, disordered eating, depression, self-injury, and conduct problems—all of which can increase the likelihood of involvement in delinquency, crime, and the justice system. The prevalence and severity of traumatic stress reactions among juvenile justice-involved youth, caregivers, families, professionals, and providers, necessitates a system-wide response to prevent, identify, address, and minimize further traumatic stress.</p> |  |      |
| <b>Breakout Session 4</b><br>8:30am-9:45am   | <b>Foundations of Youth Engagement</b>                                   |      |
| <b>Diamond 3</b>   | <i>Bobbi Taylor</i>  |      |
| <p>Authentic Youth Engagement is an approach that values the wisdom and expertise of young people. It brings to life a philosophy, that policies and practices will be fundamentally better when we partner with young people who have lived experience. In this session you can expect foundational principles of youth engagement and how to begin to apply these principles to your efforts.</p>  |  |      |
| <b>Breakout Session 4</b><br>8:30am-9:45am   | <b>Reflective Practice: Looking at Your Work from the Inside Out</b>     |      |
| <b>Diamond 4</b>   | <i>Jamie Bahm</i>  |      |
| <p>Reflective Practice is a relationship-based practice that helps enhance communication and build authentic relationships with colleagues, supervisees, and families. The FAN (facilitating attuned interactions) is a model for reflective practice that generalizable to the helping relationship and can be used in a variety of settings, including direct work with clients, the supervisory setting, and communication between professionals. Since 2016, reflective practice has been utilized in Nebraska across a spectrum of disciplines, including child welfare, the court system, various early childhood systems, home visiting, behavioral health, and more. During this session, participants will learn more about how reflective practice can be applied in their everyday work; they will be provided with an overview of the FAN model for reflective practice; and be presented with promising program evaluation findings supporting the integration of reflective practice.</p>  |  |      |

| Time/Location   | Title/ Topic and Speaker(s)  | CEUs |
|---|--|------|
| <b>8:30am-9:45am   Breakout Session 4</b>   |  |      |
| <b>Breakout Session 4</b><br>8:30am-9:45am  | <b>Social Security Benefits for Youth in Care</b>  |      |
| <b>Diamond 5</b>  | <i>Rhonda Serrano</i>  |      |
| <p>Many youth in Nebraska's foster care system receive monthly Social Security benefits, either due to their own disability or their parents' disability or death. However, the majority of youth don't know they've received these benefits, as the state receives them on their behalf then uses them to pay for their care, without notification. This practice is not unique to Nebraska, with a 2021 NPR and Marshall Project article reporting that well over a majority of states do this. In response to this report, advocates nation-wide began taking actions to mitigate this practice, including in Nebraska, with the legislature passing LB 1173 (2022) to add protections for foster youth receiving these benefits. This presentation, provided by Nebraska Appleseed, will provide an overview of Social Security Benefits for youth in foster care, including a general overview of the benefits, current state practice, law, and rights, and how attorneys, case managers, and others can better support youth's access to these benefits through affirmative engagement and right enforcement. It will also cover how to find out if youth have or are receiving these benefits, and what to do next.</p> |  |      |
| <b>Breakout Session 4</b><br>8:30am-9:45am  | <b>Understanding and Implementing Tribal Customary Adoption in Iowa</b>                          |      |
| <b>Diamond 7</b>  | <i>Diane Murphy Smith; Travis Heaton; Rosalynn Koob; Renae G Wolf; Diane Foss; Lexi Zendejas</i> |      |
| <p>Tribal Customary Adoption (TCA) is a permanency option which can be recommended by Iowa DHHS and pursued in child in need of assistance actions involving native children to whom ICWA applies. TCA allows Indian children to achieve permanency in a manner consistent with their tribal heritage in cases where reunification efforts have been unsuccessful despite the provision of active efforts. TCA requires concurrent jurisdiction in both the Iowa juvenile court and a partnering tribal court. Through this cooperation, the Indian child can receive the benefits of adoption, including applicable IV-E subsidies, without the culturally unsuitable requirement of an accompanying termination of parental rights. This Session will highlight the details of how we developed the idea for the process, and all the many details we have had to work through to effectuate the culturally appropriate goal of safe case closure without a termination of parental rights when reunification with a parent is not viable.</p>  |  |      |
| <b>Breakout Session 4</b><br>8:30am-9:45am  | <b>Thriving Families; Safer Children</b>   |      |
| <b>Diamond 8</b>  | <i>Jennifer Skala</i>  |      |
| <p>As juvenile justice stakeholders, we have a responsibility to continue to improve the system in ways that directly and positively impact youth and promote their success &amp; in school and within their families and communities. In this session, you will learn about restorative interventions that demonstrate effectiveness for reducing later law violations. Participants will hear from Tyler C. about his participation in a restorative justice (RJ) process and the impact RJ had on his life's trajectory. Participants will also learn about the expanded RJ services available through an Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) grant and discover the benefits of surrogates when the victim is unable or unwilling to participate. This session will also interactively explore attendees' perspectives on RJ.</p>   |  |      |
| <b>Breakout Session 4</b><br>8:30am-9:45am  | <b>Education Rights Counsel 201</b>  |      |
| <b>Diamond 9</b>  | <i>Lauren Micek Vargas</i>   |      |
| <p>Education law is not well understood by a majority of advocates, parents, lawyers, judges, and even school staff. This especially applies to special education. For families, it can be daunting. This session aims to broaden a general understanding of special education law and how to appropriately incorporate it into various aspects of advocacy. In this session practitioners will receive an introduction to special education issues arising in general advocacy of students and families, how to identify education barriers in a student's life, and what questions to ask while advocating for a child.</p>   |  |      |
| <b>9:45am-10:00am</b>   | <b>Break</b>   |      |

# Agenda, Day 2

## Wednesday, September 14

| Time/Location   | Title/ Topic and Speaker(s)  | CEUs |
|---|--|------|
| <b>10:00am-11:15am   Breakout Session 5</b>   |  |      |
| <b>Breakout Session 5</b><br>10:00am-11:15am  | <b>Show Me the IV-E Money (The importance of Court Orders for Child Welfare funding)</b> |      |
| <b>Diamond 1</b>  | <i>Neleigh Boyer, Manuel Escamilla Cindy Reed</i>  |      |
| <p>This is an interactive session with an open discussion of required title IV-E court order language specifically for foster care, guardianships, adoptions, Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA), and the Bridge to Independence programs. A general overview of title IV-E requirements will be followed with examples of good court order language that will meet IV-E guidelines. This session will provide a better understanding of the court order language required, the timing of the court orders, and real dollars and cents of how a correct court order can result in increasing resources through title IV-E funding to support child welfare services for children in Nebraska.</p> |  |      |
| <b>Breakout Session 5</b><br>10:00am-11:15am  | <b>Understanding Neurodevelopment and Why It Matters to Child Advocates</b>              |      |
| <b>Diamond 2</b>  | <i>Briana Woodside, Hayley Huyser, Jessica Schlegelmilch</i>                             |      |
| <p>It is important for all team members supporting children and families with trauma histories to be empowered to see their impact on helping to create new neural networks that support felt safety, earned secure attachment and support healthy brain development. Participants will be supported to understand the basics of neurodevelopment and how trauma affects age typical development. Presenters will provide opportunities for participants to consider the perspective of the child as well as the caregiver and how their respective neurodevelopment impacts attachment and communication patterns. In addition, various forms of treatment utilized in healing trauma will be explained.</p>       |  |      |
| <b>Breakout Session 5</b><br>10:00am-11:15am  | <b>Indian Children, Culturally Connected, Rights Protected</b>                           |      |
| <b>Diamond 3</b>  | <i>Jill Holt</i>   |      |
| Description TBA   |  |      |
| <b>Breakout Session 5</b><br>10:00am-11:15am  | <b>Upstream: A Court and Community-Based Approach</b>                                    |      |
| <b>Diamond 4</b>  | <i>Teri Deal, Nora Sydow</i>   |      |
| <p>Upstream is a community-based approach that leverages court resources, judicial leadership, and child welfare agency partnerships to enhance community collaboration through state and local coordination, community mapping, and action planning. Adapted from the Sequential Intercept Model and informed by research-based social determinants of health and risk and protective factors for child maltreatment, Upstream offers a structured process for identifying how communities can better support families. Join us to learn more and hear how communities in Nebraska can become involved.</p>  |  |      |
| <b>Breakout Session 5</b><br>10:00am-11:15am  | <b>"Nothing About Me Without Me": Uplifting Youth Voice in Court</b>                     |      |
| <b>Diamond 5</b>  | <i>Rhonda Serrano</i>  |      |
| <p>Life and family altering decisions are made in dependency court proceedings yet, historically youth have not been invited to participate in this decision making process. Authentic engagement of youth in their court proceedings is imperative for the best decisions and outcomes. This presentation will discuss why we must engage youth and explore how best to ensure that their voice is being heard.</p>  |  |      |

| Time/Location   | Title/ Topic and Speaker(s)  | CEUs |
|---|--|------|
| <b>10:00am-11:15am   Breakout Session 5</b>   |  |      |
| <b>Breakout Session 5</b><br>10:00am-11:15am  | <b>Thrive Mentoring Program</b>  |      |
| <b>Diamond 7</b>  | <i>Anne Paine; Emily Schoenleber</i>   |      |
| <p>The science of Resiliency is overwhelming. If we can bring at least one stable adult into a youth's life, we can dramatically improve that youth's chance of being successful. The Thrive Mentorship program is a simple grassroots program which focuses on allowing the youth to take control and start setting goals and making connections to achieve success in school and the community. There will be an overview of the program as well as mentors and youth talking about their experiences with the mentorship program.</p>  |  |      |
| <b>Breakout Session 5</b><br>10:00am-11:15am  | <b>Juvenile Restorative Justice and Family Intervention Program</b>  |      |
| <b>Diamond 8</b>  | <i>Dr. Anne Hobbs; Kelly Riley; Lisa PytlíkZillig</i>  |      |
| <p>As juvenile justice stakeholders, we have a responsibility to continue to improve the system in ways that directly and positively impact youth and promote their success in school and within their families and communities. In this session, you will learn about restorative interventions that demonstrate effectiveness for reducing later law violations. Participants will hear from Tyler C. about his participation in a restorative justice (RJ) process and the impact RJ had on his life's trajectory. Participants will also learn about the expanded RJ services available through an Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) grant and discover the benefits of surrogates when the victim is unable or unwilling to participate. This session will also interactively explore attendees' perspectives on RJ.</p> |  |      |
| <b>Breakout Session 5</b><br>10:00am-11:15am  | <b>Education Rights Counsel 201</b>  |      |
| <b>Diamond 9</b>  | <i>Lauren Micek Vargas</i>   |      |
| <p>Education law is not well understood by a majority of advocates, parents, lawyers, judges, and even school staff. This especially applies to special education. For families, it can be daunting. This session aims to broaden a general understanding of special education law and how to appropriately incorporate it into various aspects of advocacy. In this session practitioners will receive an introduction to special education issues arising in general advocacy of students and families, how to identify education barriers in a student's life, and what questions to ask while advocating for a child.</p>   |  |      |
| <b>Breakout Session 5</b><br>10:00am-11:15am  | <b>Pages from the Hope Dealers Handbook</b>  |      |
| <b>Diamond 10</b>   | <i>Hasan Davis</i>   |      |
| <p>Hasan believes that each person has the opportunity, and the responsibility, to influence and change the way youth encounter the education, justice, and social service systems. With the help of courageous and committed Hope Dealers, Hasan has managed to navigate many challenges and overcome major social, emotional, and physical challenges. Hasan will share the framework and strategies his personal champions (Hope Dealers) used to help him complete the JD shuffle and go from Hasan Davis, Juvenile Delinquent, to Hasan Davis, Juris Doctor. Come ready to journal, create, imagine and explore your work and experience as Hope Dealers.</p>  |  |      |
| <b>11:15am-12:30pm</b><br><b>Crystal 1-4</b>  | <b>Lunch and Awards Presentation - Assorted Pizza (Cheese, Sausage, Pepperoni), Chicken Penne Alfredo with Broccoli, Baked Four Cheese Ravioli with Pesto Cream Sauce, Caesar Salad, Seasonal Vegetables, Assorted Italian Bread</b> |      |

# Agenda, Day 2

## Wednesday, September 14

| Time/Location   | Title/ Topic and Speaker(s)   | CEUs |
|---|---|------|
| <b>12:30pm-1:45pm   Breakout Session 6</b>  |   |      |
| <b>Breakout Session 6</b><br>12:30pm-1:45pm   | <b>Human Trafficking: Exploring Exploitation</b>  |      |
| <b>Diamond 1</b>  | <i>Jessica Vandercoy, Amber Smith</i>   |      |
| <p>This session seeks to change the conversation around “vulnerabilities” and exploitation of commercially sex trafficked children.&amp;nbsp;It explores why transactional power and lack of resources create exploitative relationships. This session offers opportunities to notice and dismantle power structures that mirror trafficker tactics and challenge service providers and decision makers.&amp;nbsp;Participants will reflect on how structural power and control are built by systems and maintained and strengthened by the people within these systems. Participants will explore how service providers and “doing it the way its always been done” gets in the way of building trust and relationship and adequately responding to the needs of young people who experienced sex trafficking.</p> |   |      |
| <b>Breakout Session 6</b><br>12:30pm-1:45pm   | <b>Sibling Connections</b>  |      |
| <b>Diamond 2</b>  | <i>Cindy Reed</i>   |      |
| <p>Siblings are not only important, they’re NECESSARY. Supporting this natural bond increases protective factors that buffer against trauma. 100% of our campers have experienced trauma - our job is to meet them where they are, navigate the weekend with them focusing on the connection between siblings! In this session we will talk about why this is NECESSARY work, how far we’ve come as a state and what still needs to be done! We’ll share strategies that support sibling bonds including how you can engage with Camp Catch-Up.</p>   |   |      |
| <b>Breakout Session 6</b><br>12:30pm-1:45pm   | <b>Away From Home: Engaging and Co-Designing Participatory Research with Lived Experience</b> |      |
| <b>Diamond 3</b>  | <i>Bobbi Taylor</i>   |      |
| <p>Initiated in September 2020, this study used qualitative social research methods that aimed at putting the foster youth experience front and center. The research team conducted in-depth research interviews and cultural probes in a mutualistic, traumainformed, and participatory way in order to value current and former foster youth as the owners of their own stories. In this session you will learn how Think of Us centered Lived Experience throughout the participatory research study, and how systems and leaders may start to incorporate this level of engagement in their own work to help inform the decisions they make on behalf of young people.&amp;nbsp;</p>  |   |      |
| <b>Breakout Session 6</b><br>12:30pm-1:45pm   | <b>Legal Services for Prevention/Poverty</b>  |      |
| <b>Diamond 5</b>  | <i>Nathan Busch, Jennie Skala</i>   |      |
| <p>Discussion about private / public partnerships for the provision of legal services for families as an alternative to filing in the juvenile court system.</p>  |   |      |
| <b>Breakout Session 6</b><br>12:30pm-1:45pm   | <b>Working with LGBTQ+ Youth in the Juvenile Justice System</b>                               |      |
| <b>Diamond 7</b>  | <i>Niki Svik</i>  |      |
| <p>This is a foundational training for increased knowledge about SOGIE issues and will lead to safe, inclusive, affirming and welcoming environments for all LGBTQ+ youth who are justice involved. LGBTQ+ youth are overrepresented in both detention and probation populations. There are a number of factors that impact how individuals identifying as LGBTQ+ are brought to the attention of the juvenile justice system. This session will highlight how we should be working with these individuals and how we can be both allies and supports for the LGBTQ+ community.</p>   |   |      |
| <b>Breakout Session 6</b><br>12:30pm-1:45pm   | <b>Creating the “Secret Sauce” Improving Outcomes in Domestic Violence Cases</b>              |      |
| <b>Diamond 9</b>  | <i>Judge Elise White, Jamie Bahm, Beth Buhr</i>   |      |
| <p>The child welfare system has long struggled with developing a holistic and trauma-informed approach to working with families who experience domestic violence. It can be difficult for professionals to work together. Best practice identifies a collaborative team approach achieves this objective. Reconciling divergent roles is difficult for professionals in child welfare domestic violence cases. This session will provide an overview of Lancaster county’s journey from a needs assessment to the development and implementation of Nebraska’s first domestic violence-centered family dependency problem solving court, known as the Safe and Healthy Families Court.</p>  |   |      |
| <b>1:45pm-2:15pm</b>  | <b>Break - Rice Krispie Treats, Assorted Cookies, Fresh Fruit</b>                             |      |

| <b>2:15pm-3:45pm   Keynote</b>   |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| <b>Crystal 1-4   Hasan Davis</b>   |                        |
| <b>Calling All Hope Dealers! Everyone Has a Story, Every Story Deserves Heroes</b>   |                        |
| <p>Hasan Davis will share his experience of often interrupted transitions through education, justice, and social support systems. Throughout Hasan’s journey outliers and resisters found ways to engage, encourage and empower him. With the support of these “Hope Dealers,” Hasan transcended his mounting list of “failures” to become an advocate for himself and eventually a champion for others.</p> <p>Through story and poetry, Hasan will share how his champions (Hope Dealers) helped him complete the “JD shuffle” going from Hasan Davis, Juvenile Delinquent to Hasan Davis, Juris Doctor.&amp;nbsp;&amp;nbsp;Come ready to celebrate, recharge and recommit to being the Hope Dealers that you are.</p> |                        |
| <b>3:45pm-4:00pm</b>   | <b>Closing Remarks</b> |

# Keeping it **REAL**



STATE OF  
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JUDICIAL BRANCH  
Court Improvement  
Project

2022 CIP Children's Summit  
September 13-14 | Kearney, Nebraska  
Younes Conference Center

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## 2022 Speakers

### Biographies

#### Jamie Bahm

Jamie Bahm is a Project Manager with the Nebraska Resource Project for Vulnerable Young Children at the University of Nebraska's Center on Children, Families, and the Law. She also provides training and consultation for the Children's Justice Clinic at the University of Nebraska College of Law. Prior to her current position, she worked for the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services as the Supervisor for the Family Treatment Drug Court program, as well as specializing in casework with adjudicated youth with high behavioral health needs. Jamie earned her Master of Science and Bachelor of Science degrees, both in criminology and criminal justice from the University of Nebraska.

#### Stephanie Beasley

"Stephanie Beasley is the Director of the Division of Children and Family Services in the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services.

Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts appointed Stephanie to the position effective February 24, 2020.

Beasley most recently served as the Chief Operating Officer of Adult & Child Health serving central Indiana.

She is a graduate of Indiana University where she received her Bachelor of Science in in Criminal Justice and Sociology and her Master of Social Work. She began her career in child welfare providing direct services to children and families in Indiana. During her tenure with Indiana Department of Child Services, she served in many roles over more than 13 years. She oversaw programs for Indiana in Independent Living, Foster Care, Special Needs Adoptions, Policy, Quality Assurance and was lead for the Indiana Child and Family Services Review (CFSR).

She later served as the Director of Child Welfare for Marion County (Indianapolis) and then was the Deputy Director for Field Operations leading the provision of child welfare services in 92 counties."



**Karla Bennetts**

"Karla Bennetts is the Executive Director for Families CARE and a Certified Peer Support Specialist. She has worked at Families CARE for over 11 years. She and her husband have seven children. They have also been foster-parents to over forty children. One of her passions is to help youth and parents identify their strengths and set achievable, personalized goals to help them achieve their dreams, and live their best lives. Karla lives in Wilcox, a small rural town, with her husband. She loves baking, photography, travel and doing crafts and playing games with her 12 grandchildren. A memorable opportunity she had in recent years was to become a non-traditional student obtaining her Associates of Applied Science Degree in Human Services. Along with that she has earned certifications in Supervisory & Management and Chemical Dependency Technician."

**Neleigh Boyer**

Neleigh Boyer is the Lead Children and Family Services Attorney for the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, overseeing the juvenile courtroom attorneys across the state. Neleigh has provided legal counsel to CFS since 2012, assisting with the implementation of Alternative Response and the Bridge to Independence Program. Neleigh also provides legal support to the Youth Rehabilitation Treatment Centers. Prior to employment with DHHS, Neleigh was the County Attorney in Kearney County and the Deputy County Attorney in Keith County.

**Amoreena Brady**

Amoreena Brady is the Juvenile Justice Reform Specialist in the Juvenile Service Division of the Office of Probation Administration for the State of Nebraska. She began serving in this capacity in March 2019. Ms. Brady has an extensive history of probation experience in various state settings, systems, and has served a wide variety of probation populations. In 1996, Ms. Brady began her career with the Orange County Probation Department in California. While at the Orange County Probation Department, Ms. Brady worked as a juvenile probation officer. In her capacity, Ms. Brady worked in various institutional setting developing case reviews and release plans for several special population programs. In 2003, Ms. Brady began field supervision in the 8% Solution Program. Ms. Brady worked in this program as a leader of a large team of professionals from various backgrounds to provide youth and families' day and evening reporting center programming, education, and counseling. In 2006, she began her career with the Nebraska State Probation System as a high risk juvenile probation officer in Sarpy County, Nebraska. In 2009, Ms. Brady was assigned to the supervision of high risk felony drug and DUI adult probationers in a prison alternative program called SSAS, Specialized Substance Abuse Supervision. There she would also work with the Nebraska State Department of Corrections and supervise parolees released still in need of supervision and treatment. Ms. Brady moved to the administrative office in 2013 and focused on ensuring best practice juvenile case management techniques were in place in all probation districts. In Ms. Brady's current role, she works closely with national juvenile justice experts and is charged with the coordination and implementation of statewide enhancement efforts for the juvenile justice system in Nebraska. She is a trainer and curriculum developer for the Nebraska Probation System, helping to educate new and existing probation officers regarding best practices in the fields of juvenile and criminal justice. In June of 1996, Ms. Brady earned her Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice from Chapman University, Orange, CA. In June 2014, Ms. Brady completed a certificate program and is a fellow of the Georgetown University Center for Juvenile Justice Reform. Ms. Brady has presented on a variety of juvenile justice topics at statewide conferences, as well as at the national level.

**Deanna Brakhage**

**Chad Brown**

**Beth Buhr**

Beth has been with the department since 2012 when she started as a supervisor covering the 7 southeastern rural counties of the service area. She transitioned into her current position in 2017. Beth started her work in Child Welfare in 2009 during privatization as a service coordinator, she then became a trainer until her transition to HHS. Beth has her bachelors degree in Human Relations and her Masters degree in Management, both achieved from Doane College. Beth has been trained in the Safe & Together Model through completion of their CORE training.

**Hannah Burdess**

Hannah is an active member of the Dodge County Youth Voice Chapter where she is a passionate advocate for youth and young adults. Hannah's advocacy experience includes Nebraska Juvenile Justice Association Presenter 2021 and Heartland Juvenile Services Association Presenter 2022. Hannah's personal experience has made her passionate about assisting professionals in how to authentically engage with youth and young adults. Hannah is a junior at the University of Nebraska Omaha where she is majoring in criminal justice and pursuing a career in law enforcement.

**Nathan Busch**

Nathan has been with the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation since 2016 where he supports communities in the development of community-based resources. Nathan received his Juris Doctorate in 2003 from Creighton University School of Law and has worked in the private legal field and DHHS, Division of Children and Family Services in legal, administrative and policy development roles. Nathan has served on the Scotts Bluff County Court Appointed Special Advocates Board, Nebraska Indian Child Welfare Coalition Board of Directors and the Gering Board of Education.

**Jody L. Busse**

Jody L. Busse, MSW, currently serves as a Juvenile Justice Resource Supervisor (JJRS) with Lancaster County Juvenile Probation District 3J in Lincoln, NE. Jody also serves as Co-Chair of the Ad Maiora Family Engagement Work Group. Jody earned her Bachelors in Human Services from Midland Lutheran College; now Midland University, and her Masters in Social Work from the University of NE-Omaha. Ms. Busse joined the Office of Probation Administration in 2010; remaining there until August of 2013 when she transitioned to her current role in Dist 3J. Prior to joining Probation, Ms. Busse worked for twenty years in the community, providing services and support to youth and families from primary prevention through clinical therapy; including intensive home based services to youth and families within both rural and urban communities. Ms. Busse believes it is a privilege to serve, support and walk alongside youth and families in this journey we call "life", and is firm advocate about the immeasurable value of high quality home based services which she also views as a significant service gap within our communities.

**BriAnn Campos**

BriAnn, a Scottsbluff native, is one of two Lead Attorneys specializing in Special Immigrant Juvenile Status with the Immigrant Legal Center. She provides pro bono legal services to immigrant youth in Nebraska who have been abused, abandoned, and neglected by one or both parents. BriAnn graduated summa cum laude from Chadron State College in 2017 with a degree in Legal Studies and Psychology. She received her Juris Doctor from the University of Nebraska College of Law in 2020. Since then, BriAnn has worked with the Immigrant Legal Center to help serve underrepresented immigrant communities in Nebraska.

**Jennifer Carter**

"Jennifer Carter serves as the Inspector General of Nebraska Child Welfare. She was appointed to the role in September 2020. The Office of Inspector General of Nebraska Child Welfare (OIG) provides accountability for the child welfare and juvenile justice systems through independent investigations, inquiries, reviews, and recommendations for system improvement. The OIG is housed within the Office of Public Counsel (Ombudsman's Office) which is part of the legislative branch.

Ms. Carter received her undergraduate degree from Columbia University and her juris doctorate from Boston University School of Law. Following law school, Ms. Carter worked at the law firms of Cravath, Swaine & Moore and Sidley & Austin in New York City. She also served as law clerk to the Honorable Lawrence L. Piersol, Chief Judge for the U.S. District of South Dakota. In 2003, Ms. Carter moved to Nebraska and began her public interest career, spending 11 years at Nebraska Applesseed with various titles and duties, including staff attorney, Director of the Child Welfare and Health Care Programs, and Director of Public Policy. In addition to litigation, consulting, and lobbying experience, Ms. Carter most recently served as legal counsel to the Health and Human Services Committee of the Nebraska Legislature."

**Amy Champoux**

Amy Champoux, currently serves as a Supervisor with Lancaster County Juvenile Probation District 3J in Lincoln Ne. Amy serves as a Co-Chair of the Ad Maiora Family Engagement Work Group. Amy earned her bachelor's degree in political science and Associates in Criminal Justice from Buena Vista University. In 1999 she became a Juvenile Probation officer with District 3J and remaining there until 2005. After a hiatus she returned in 2013 again being hired as a Juvenile Probation Officer and was promoted to a supervisor in 2014. She is a proud wife to her husband Chris of 26 years and a mother to 3 adult sons.

**Kristin Chandler**

"Kristin Chandler is the Statewide MDT Coordinator with Nebraska Alliance of Child Advocacy Centers. Kristin is responsible for facilitating comprehensive and unique services appropriate for Child Advocacy Centers (CAC) and their Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) Members across the state of Nebraska. She oversees MDT enhancement including training, technical assistance, and support to CAC Coordinators and partner agency affiliations. She also helps to ensure that protocols and statutes are being followed and national accreditation standards on a MDT level are being fulfilled in order to ensure child safety and quality investigations, especially in underserved areas of the state.

Kristin is a graduate of the University of Nebraska at Omaha where she received both her bachelor's and master's degrees in Criminology and Criminal Justice. Prior to the Nebraska Alliance, Kristin worked in the child welfare field both as a case manager and a case manager supervisor. Kristin is active in the Greater Omaha Community, serving on the Tri-City Food Pantry board and the Young Nonprofit Professional Network of Greater Omaha board as the Membership and Engagement Co-Chair. In her spare time, Kristin enjoys volunteering in her community, reading, spending time with her husband and two dogs, shopping, and traveling."

**Jennie Cole-Mossman**

Jennie Cole-Mossman is a Technical Expert Lead for the JBS Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance project (OVC TTA). She is a mental health specialist whose expertise spans child-parent relationships, family drug courts, dependency court system work, opioid and other drug use disorders, and trauma screening and treatment for young children (ages 0 to 5). She is also a specialist in the use of reflective practice to decrease secondary trauma and assist with implementation of trauma informed care for judges, attorneys, and a range of victim service providers.

**Ray Curtis**

"Raymond Curtis has served as the Court Administrator for the Separate Juvenile Court of Douglas County since 2010. He has more than 15 years of court leadership experience, and is in his third decade of public service.

From 2007 to present, Mr. Curtis served in multiple court administration roles beginning at the largest trial court in Nebraska, the Douglas County District Court, drafting local rules and refining monthly reports to help the court become more efficient at processing cases. As Juvenile Court Administrator and overseeing a \$6 million budget that consists mostly of attorney fees, he developed an automated attorney billing system that has significantly reduced paper filings and associated workload to free up resources for other projects with the additional benefit of taxpayer savings.

Since 2016, by Chief Justice appointment, he serves on the Nebraska Supreme Court's Technology Committee, to proactively represent the computing, communications, and information technology concerns of the judicial branch and legal community in visioning, policy setting and strategic planning.

He currently serves on numerous other juvenile court-related committees aimed at improving the lives of children and families in his community.

Mr. Curtis earned a juris doctorate with a concentration in dispute resolution at the Creighton University School of Law. He also has earned the professional certifications of Certified Court Manager (CCM) and Certified Court Executive (CCE) through the National Center for State Courts."

**Vernon Daniels**

Hon. Vernon C.R. Daniels, a University of Nebraska College of Law graduate, has served as a judge of the Separate Juvenile Court of Douglas County, Nebraska, since 2001. He was a member of the Nebraska Supreme Court Commission on Children in the Courts as well as the Governor's Children's Task Force. He has also served on the Supreme Court-Nebraska State Bar Association's Minority and Justice Task Force and now serves on the Implementation Committee of that Task Force. Judge Daniels is also a member of the steering committee of the "Building Bright Futures" initiative. He was a member of the Commission on Juvenile Diversion, Detention, and Probation Uniform Standards, as well as a board member for the Boy Scouts Diversion Program. He also co-chairs the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative for the Annie E. Casey Foundation for Douglas County. Judge Daniels enjoys mentoring new attorneys and law students.

**Hasan Davis**

"Hasan has a vision to see all children achieve their dreams, no matter the odds. His career began as a counselor and a teaching artist, and through his years as a youth development specialist, Hasan has transformed the attitudes and strategies of school and facility staff, parents, and members of the community to help hundreds of children graduate from high school and earn degrees from colleges and universities. Hasan has also served as Commissioner of Juvenile Justice for the Commonwealth of Kentucky and Vice Chair of the Federal Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice. He has transformed organizations and public systems to ensure they meet the needs of the children and families they serve."

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**Teri Deal** Teri Deal, M.Ed. joined the National Center for State Courts in 2019 after several years of experience working in juvenile and family court research settings and in direct service to system-impacted youth and families. Her work at NCSC focuses on child, youth, and family justice with a specific emphasis on implementing and evaluating court practices, continuous quality improvement, and systems change efforts. Prior to joining NCSC, Ms. Deal spent nearly a decade as a researcher at the National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ), where she focused on supporting juvenile justice systems, courts, agencies, and programs to collect and use data to improve outcomes for youth and families. She is currently pursuing her Ph.D. and is researching school-justice partnerships.

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**Allison Derr** Allison Derr is the Senior Staff Attorney for Nebraska Appleseed's Child Welfare Program, which works to improve Nebraska's child welfare system through policy advocacy, impact litigation, and community organizing. Before her time as staff attorney, Allison clerked for Appleseed's child welfare and health care access programs. As senior staff attorney, she manages the program's impact litigation docket and provides policy advocacy support, having advocated on a wide range of issues including rights for immigrant youth, Medicaid enforcement, child welfare privatization, and increased equity within the system. She also manages Appleseed's Foster Care Reform Legal Resource Center, which provides resources and support to juvenile court practitioners, helping them to address systemic issues in their individual cases. Allison received her undergraduate degree from Creighton University in theater and neuropsychology, and law degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

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**Sarah Dunham** Sarah Dunham is a therapist and owner of Bloom Counseling LLC. She contracts with the Nebraska Resource Project for Vulnerable Young Children to facilitate trainings related to Trauma and the Child Welfare Trauma Tool. Sarah also provides Clinical support for Focused Behavior Solutions who work with children with autism and their families. She was previously the Clinical Director of Jenda Family Services for the past three years where she developed multiple different programs and providing supervision to their therapists. Prior to that she was working as an Intensive Family Preservation therapist with Jenda working within the family home and with referral sources such as the Department of Health and Human Services and Juvenile Probation. Sarah worked as a Child and Family Services Specialist before being a licensed therapist conducting child safety assessments in the Initial Assessment Unit. She has been trained in and has a wide variety of experience in early childhood trauma and is trained in Child Parent Psychotherapy, Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, and Play Therapy, among other modalities. Her specialization is in trauma and mental health in young children and adolescents.

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**Becky Eckhardt** "Rebecca Eckhardt, Student Services Director  
Rebecca has been at South Sioux City Community Schools since 2001. She is a University of South Dakota graduate in 1997 majoring in Communication Disorders. Rebecca graduated with her master's in Speech Language Pathology from the University of Minnesota Duluth in 1999 and earned her Administrative endorsement from Wayne State in 2003. Rebecca is an advocate of school based mental health services and inclusionary practices. Rebecca and husband Jim have two wonderful children, Josie and Wyatt and reside in Dakota Dunes, SD."

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**Manuel Escamilla** Having worked with the Department of Health and Human Services for 41 years and last 35 years working with Title IV-E funding for foster care, adoption, and guardianships brings a knowledge base that has been evolving with title IV-E. Leading a team of twenty-three Income Maintenance Foster Care workers and supervisors as the Program Manager in the last five years has honed the title IV-E information skills over the years. The team is responsible for making title IV-E determinations for the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services as the sole title IV-E Agency in Nebraska.

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**Misty Flowers** Misty (Thomas) Flowers is a member of the Santee Sioux Nation of Nebraska and a descendant of the Tlingit of Alaska. She is currently the Executive Director of the Nebraska Indian Child Welfare Coalition (NICWC) an Indigenous-led non-profit organization since July 2018 and currently serves as the chairperson of the Nebraska Children's Commission. Prior to that, she was the Director of the Dakota Tiwahe Service Unit, the Social Services Department for the Santee Sioux Nation for 12 years. For her tribe, she administered the Child and Adult Protective Services, Indian Child Welfare Act, Independent Living, BIA Social Services, Native Employment Works Program, AmeriCorps, Tribal Youth Program Grant, and the Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Program. Misty received both of her degrees from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (a bachelor's degree in Human Resources and Family Sciences in 2001 and a master's degree in Sociology in 2006). She has been recognized as a Champion of Change by the White House. Misty has also been recognized with the Early Achiever Award from the University of Nebraska Alumni Association in 2013 and the DV program received an award from the Nebraska Crime Commission in 2012 and was inducted into the University of Nebraska Jackie Gaughan Multicultural Center Wall of Fame.

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**Diane Foss** Diane Foss, Executive Officer 1, is the Community Liaison for the northern half of the Western Iowa Service Area. The Community Liaisons are the service area's direct link to a number of community organizations. Diane is often the WISA's go-to when schools, community organizations, and individuals have general questions about the Department. Diane has been with the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services for the past four years, serving previously as a contract employee for twenty years.

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**Tana Fye** Tana M. Fye is the principal attorney at Fye Law Office, in Holdrege, Nebraska. She practices predominantly in the areas of juvenile law, criminal defense, and public health law. She graduated from The University of South Dakota School of Law and then clerked for the ten judges of the Second Judicial Circuit of South Dakota after graduation and before starting her own law practice. In addition to private practice, Tana spent six years as a Deputy Public Defender in Buffalo County, where she had the opportunity to represent adults and juveniles in felony, misdemeanor, juvenile, and mental health board cases.

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**Lawrence Gendler**

"Judge Lawrence Gendler (ret.) was Sarpy County's (NE) first, full-time juvenile prosecutor and only the second juvenile court judge appointed in the county. Since his appointment, he has served on several committees and initiatives across NE. In 2006, he was appointed to the NE Supreme Court Judicial Ethics Committee, became Vice Chair in 2010, and was appointed Chair in the final year of his term. Judge Gendler is an inaugural member of the Supreme Court Committee on Problem-Solving Courts and oversaw the establishment of NE's first juvenile drug court. In 2006, the Supreme Court established a state-wide project called "Through the Eyes of the Child." Judge Gendler was the Project Chair since its inception until his retirement in 2021, overseeing the establishment and ongoing work of 25 judge-led, multidisciplinary teams across the state, focused on improving outcomes for youth and families in the court system. As Project Chair, he was appointed as an initial member of the Supreme Court Commission for the Protection of Children in 2006. As part of his Commission duties, he chaired an education subcommittee. Seeking to improve educational outcomes for court-involved youth, the subcommittee designed and implemented an education court report form, which has become a mandatory part of all child welfare and juvenile justice court reports."

**Tony Green**

"Tony Green has served as the Director of the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) for Nebraska's Department of Health and Human Services since August 2020. Tony has been advocating for and supporting Nebraska's children and families for over 30 years. Tony's early career began as a Direct Support Professional during college. He moved into roles with the DDD in their Service Coordination system across the state. Tony also held the role of Executive Director with a national developmental disability provider based in Nebraska. In 2016, he later returned to State Government with Nebraska's Division of Children and Family Services overseeing child welfare, juvenile services and adult protective services.

Tony returned to the Division of Developmental Disabilities on August 29, 2016 as the Deputy Director over Policy & Communications, before accepting the position of Deputy Director for Community Based Services within the division August 21, 2017 overseeing the statewide delivery of community-based services and service coordination for the Medicaid Home and Community Based Services Waivers.

Tony assumed the Interim-Director role in March 2020, and Governor Pete Ricketts appointed Anthony "Tony" Green as the Director of the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DD) at the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) on August 24, 2020. Tony holds a Bachelor degree in Human Service Counseling, Psychology and Criminal Justice from Wayne State College."

**Monika Gross**

Monika has extensive experience working in Nebraska's child welfare system. Before her position with the FCRO as Executive Director, she spent over eight years as an attorney with NDHHS and nine years with PromiseShip, most recently as Interim President & CEO. Monika has exceptional knowledge along with a strong passion and commitment to improving conditions for Nebraska's children in out-of-home care. Monika earned her bachelor's degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and her J.D. from the University of San Diego School of Law. She is licensed to practice law in Georgia and Nebraska.

**Rebekka Hampton**

Since February of 2019, I have worked in the Omaha Police Department's Child Victims Unit as part of the Missing Person's Squad as a Data Analyst and Missing Persons Research Specialist. I research, record data and maintain a profile on each juvenile that is reported missing to the Omaha Police Department. I am also a team member of multiple MDT's at Project Harmony that serve our high risk and missing youth.

**Katie Hansen**

Katie has been working in the child-welfare field for 12 years. She was a Child and Family Services Investigator and Supervisor for 8 years. During that time, Katie was responsible for establishing the Domestic Violence Specialized Unit for Child Protective Services. She was introduced to the Safe & Together Model 7 years ago and has been diligently working to bring the Model to Omaha to help train other professionals. Katie currently works at Project Harmony, which is a child advocacy center that works closely with CPS, Law Enforcement, County Attorneys and Judges on child welfare cases involving, trafficked and missing youth, domestic violence, sexual & physical abuse, substance abuse, mental health, etc. The Safe & Together Model is something Katie strongly believes in both personally and professionally, and she continues to work towards training as many of her community members as possible in the Model.

**Travis Heaton**

I graduated from Morningside College in 1995 with a degree in Social Work with a minor in Psychology. I started with the Iowa Department of Human Services as a case worker in 1997. Since that time I have supervised ongoing case workers and Child Protective Assessors. In 2017 I began my current position as Social Work Administrator.

**Sarah Helvey**

"Sarah Helvey is a Staff Attorney and Director of the Child Welfare Program at Nebraska Appleseed. Since joining Appleseed in 2006, Sarah has authored or co-authored several amicus briefs before the Nebraska Supreme Court in cases addressing the Indian Child Welfare Act, sibling placement, and the authority of juvenile courts in Nebraska. She has also litigated several precedent-setting cases related to Medicaid access on behalf of children and youth in foster care and with behavioral health needs. In partnership with Project Everlast, Sarah has had the great honor of working with young people with foster care experience to improve the system for older youth, including advocating for the passage of state legislation in 2013 to extend foster care services and support to age 21 and establish the Bridge to Independence (B2I) program. She is a member of the Nebraska Supreme Court Commission on Children in the Courts and the B2I Advisory Committee under the Nebraska Children's Commission. Sarah received her undergraduate degree, magna cum laude, from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and her master's degree and law degree, cum laude, from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She previously practiced juvenile and family law at Community Justice Inc. in Madison, Wisconsin."

**Christine Henningsen** "Christine Henningsen Christine Henningsen is an Associate Director at UNL's Center on Children Families and the Law (CCFL). After graduating from Creighton Law in 2003, she clerked for the Honorable Robert W. Pratt in the United States District Court for the Southern District of Nebraska. She then practiced in Iowa and Illinois representing immigrant survivors of domestic violence and tenants in fair housing and eviction cases. She moved back to Nebraska in 2008 where she served as an Assistant Public Defender in Douglas County primarily in juvenile court. Since joining CCFL Christine has worked on a variety of projects including the Court Improvement Project, DHHS training grant, and she also serves as Project Director for Nebraska Youth Advocates focusing on policy and practice initiatives to improve access to and quality of youth representation. Christine serves on a number of statewide working groups including the Commission for the Protection of Children and the Statewide Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI)."

**Dr. Anne Hobbs** "Dr. Anne Hobbs is a licensed attorney, published research faculty, as well as the Director of the Juvenile Justice Institute at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Dr. Hobbs began utilizing restorative practices 25 years ago, as the director of Juvenile Diversion for Lancaster County, and continues to promote restorative practices in her state. Dr. Hobbs has seen firsthand the impact that restorative practices have on the lives of youth and the wellbeing of a community.

She has presented on the importance of implementing restorative practices, and she is a firm believer that the obstacles faced in our juvenile systems can be overcome with a restorative approach.

Her other research interests include inequality in the juvenile system, juvenile re-entry after incarceration, and mentoring youth who have been involved in juvenile justice system. Dr. Hobbs has served on a variety of Advisory Groups and is a 2022 Fulbright Scholar to Singapore."

**Jill Holt** Jill Holt served as the Assistant Director of the Nebraska Indian Child Welfare Coalition (NICWC) for two years before transitioning to the Training and Education Director position in July 2021. She has more than thirteen years of experience with ICWA compliance; first as the ICWA Specialist for the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska for nearly eight years, then as the ICWA Program Coordinator for Nebraska DHHS for three years before transitioning to NICWC in June of 2019. She previously served on the NICWC Board and has been an active Coalition member since the grassroots organization was founded in 2008. Jill earned a bachelor's degree in social work from Kansas State University in 1994 and masters' degrees in social work and public administration from the University of Nebraska at Omaha in 2004.

**Hayley Huyser** Hayley Huyser is a partner with Hart, Huyser & Miller, PC, LLO, in Cozad, Nebraska, pursuing a broad rural practice focusing primarily in the areas of juvenile law as a guardian ad litem, estate planning and probate, tax and business planning, municipal law, agricultural law and real estate. She earned her B.S. degree from Texas A&M University in 2008 and her J.D. from Texas Tech School of Law in 2011. Hayley lives in Elwood, Nebraska with her husband, Daron, and their three sons.

**Jennifer Jackson** Jennifer is a Siouxland native, growing up in South Sioux City. Jennifer is a LIMHP, ATR-BC that graduated with her master's in art therapy from the University of Louisville in 2001. She stayed there for ten years working at the state hospital and co-founded an arts based day program for adults with mental illness and intellectual disabilities called Mariposa Place that is still going today. Jennifer has been the Executive Director at Heartland Counseling Services, Inc., a 501 (c)3, non-profit, for the past ten year. They serve 11 counties in northern Nebraska and all of Siouxland. Jennifer and husband Rory have three children and if she is not in the office, she's on the golf course or at a sports event watching her children.

**Laurel Johnson** Laurel Johnson has worked at Legal Aid of Nebraska for 9 years as an attorney representing children and parents in Juvenile Court proceedings. Her prior exposure to Legal Aid in both an undergraduate social work practicum as well as during law school as a legal clerk solidified her passion for the work Legal Aid does and the clientele they serve. Currently, Laurel works as the Project Manager for the Children's Justice Attorney Education program, which provides training, education and support to attorneys practicing in Juvenile Court in rural Nebraska.

**Lisa Jurens** Lisa Jurens graduated from York University and Hastings College. She has spent 33 years with the Department of Health and Human Services working with Protection and Safety Teams. Lisa has extensive experience in many aspects of child welfare and well-being services within DHHS. Lisa spent 7 years as a Child and Family Service Specialist in rural south central Nebraska. She has spent time providing adoption services, training and recruiting foster families and working with DHHS's external partners. Lisa most recently has been promoted into the role of the IV-E Administrator addressing issues that impact Nebraska's ability to maximize IV-E funding.

**Christine Kiesel** "Christine S. Kiesel, Esq.

Christine is an attorney with a consulting and training practice in the areas of child welfare law and systems change. She is a Child Welfare Specialist with JBS International supporting the Federal Government efforts to integrate legal and judicial systems into the Child and Family Services Reviews. She formerly was the Coordinator of the New York State Child Welfare Court Improvement Project within the State's Office of Court Administration. Prior to this appointment, Christine served as a Court Attorney Referee in Oneida County Family Court where she presided over a best practices permanency part. She also served as a Court Attorney to two Family Court Judges. Christine represented parents as the First Assistant Public Defender for the Oneida County Public Defender's Office - Civil Division as well as representing children independently. Christine regularly presents around the country on child welfare topics."

**Rosalynd Koob**

"Roz enjoys a diverse practice of providing counseling and representation to individuals, companies, and Native American Tribes. Part of Roz's practice includes advising individuals, companies, and insurance carriers in personal injury, products liability, construction defects and contractual disputes.

Roz specializes in tribal law, including tribal representation in employment law, real estate transactions, contracts, administrative law, litigation, the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), taxation law, sovereign immunity and providing general oversight on legal matters. Roz has represented tribal interests in state courts, federal courts, tribal courts, and the United States Supreme Court. Roz has also lectured frequently on the Indian Child Welfare Act.

Rounding out Roz's diverse practice is her work in family law representing individuals in divorces, custody, paternity determinations, child support recovery issues, adoptions, and juvenile court matters. Roz is certified in Collaborative Law (an alternative approach to the traditional divorce process), Mediation and as a Parent Coordinator."

**Alexandria Labenz**

Alexandria Labenz currently serves as the Continuum of Care Planning Manager working with the Lincoln and Nebraska Balance of State CoC's. Ms. Labenz has a passion strategically braiding and maximizing resources to create an equitable system response towards ending homelessness and housing instability. This passion is driven by the desire to enhance community well-being for all populations, especially youth and young adults and those most disproportionately affected by homelessness. Alexandria has Bachelors in Child and Family Studies from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and is currently completing a Masters of Public Administration at the University of Nebraska-Omaha.

**Jamie Legates**

**Felipe Longoria**

Felipe lives in Lincoln, NE, and has been with Central Plains for 12 years in which he has worked directly with youth in rural and urban areas and is now in administration. Felipe is currently pursuing a Doctorate in Educational Administration with a focus on higher education and leadership from the University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

**Dennis Marks**

Dennis Marks holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Briar Cliff University and a Juris Doctorate degree from Creighton University School of Law. He has been representing juveniles in adult, juvenile and appellate courts since September 1996 as a Deputy Public Defender for Sarpy County, Nebraska. During this time, he has also been a member of numerous local, state, regional and national boards, committees, subcommittees and task forces dedicated to juvenile justice. Mr. Marks represented the Sarpy County Public Defender Office in the creation of both the juvenile and adult drug treatment courts in Sarpy County. He has testified before the Nebraska Senate Judiciary Committee on numerous legislative bills involving criminal justice reform. Mr. Marks has been an Admiral in the Nebraska Navy since 2002.

**Lauren Micek-Vargas**

Lauren started her career in New York City as a special education teacher and development coach. After graduating from Creighton Law school in 2015, Lauren practiced as an Assistant Public Defender in Douglas County focused on juvenile law and criminal defense. Her experience in the education sector and juvenile court has cultivated her passion for working to improve education outcomes and legal access for all children. She became a founding member of Education Rights Counsel in 2017, bringing her vigor and urgency to our mission.

**Martin Molina**

"Marty Molina is a Specialized Probation Officer for District 3J Juvenile Probation in Lancaster County, Lincoln Nebraska. Mr. Molina has almost 7 years of experience with District 3J Probation. Prior to his role with Probation, Mr. Molina started his career with the State of Nebraska in August 2013 at the Youth Rehabilitation Treatment Center in Kearney, Nebraska, working as a Youth Security Specialist. He worked there for 6 months as he was finishing his bachelor's degree at the University of Nebraska-Kearney. Upon graduation, he moved to Lincoln where he was hired at the Lincoln Regional Center as a Mental Health Security Specialist. After 2 years in that role, Mr. Molina started his career with Probation in January 2016.

He began serving as a Community Based Resources Officer (CBR), working with lower risk youth on Juvenile Probation. He then began serving as a Community Based Interventions Officer (CBI) in 2018, working with higher risk youth on Juvenile Probation. Mr. Molina's role has expanded into different subcommittees within District 3J Probation, including taking an active role with the Gang committee as well as the Case Closure committee. Participating on the gang committee has allowed Mr. Molina the experience of meeting with Sergeant Jeff Sorenson of the Lincoln Police Department Gang Unit on a monthly basis to discuss the population of youth on Juvenile Probation and whom LPD has identified as gang affiliated. This has also allowed the experience of brainstorming different strategies and programming to offer that population of youth. Mr. Molina also worked with the Case Closure committee to develop a new process and format for Case Closure's. District 3J was selected as the front runner for this project and was responsible for implementing the new process and format, as well as seeking to implement this process statewide. Mr. Molina will take part in presenting on this topic at the upcoming CIP Children's Summit alongside JCBi Officer Danelle Reed and Juvenile Justice Reform Specialist Amoreena Brady."

**Michelle Nunemaker**

Michelle Nunemaker is the System of Care Administrator with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Division of Behavioral Health. Michelle has worked with children and families involved in the Child Welfare System since graduating from college in 2004. Michelle began by working as a child protection worker for 10 years in various roles to include as a crisis response worker in Jefferson County Colorado. Michelle was the Training Program Specialist for DHHS, Division of Child and Family Services (CFS) and oversaw all training for CFS staff as well as led the Trauma Informed Care Strategic Plan and the Healthcare Oversight Strategic Plan before transferring to the Nebraska Administrative Office of the Courts and Probation as a Program and Services Officer on the Rehabilitative Services Team. Michelle worked with service providers and other Probation divisions related to service development and implementation. Michelle managed the training for behavioral health topics for new probation officers and was awarded the Diversity Leadership Award for the development of LGBTQ curriculum for probation officers. Michelle also co-chaired the collaborative Justice and Behavioral Health Conference held in 2019. Michelle's history of working with children and families in multiple systems speaks to her passion about the importance for behavioral health services for children and families.

**Alyssa Nystrom**

Alyssa Nystrom is currently pursuing a PhD at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. She earned her Master of Arts from the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Her research interests include victim centered policy creation and evaluation, campus sexual harassment and assault, Title IX and related policies, domestic violence intervention programming, and missingness. Alyssa is currently working as a graduate research assistant in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice as part of the Victimology and Victim Studies Research Lab(VVSRL).

**Keenan Page** "Keenan Page joined Nebraska Children as Director of Opportunity Passport in February 2022. Keenan was born and raised in Omaha and has spent most of his career within the older youth systems community. He has focused his work on helping youth find their path. This transformational growth is the guiding premise behind the energy he brings each day.

Keenan earned his bachelor's degree in Geography from the University Nebraska at Omaha. Prior to joining Nebraska Children, Keenan was part of the Branching Out Program at OHB. During that time, he worked as an independent living coach and eventually manager of Branching Out and the Supportive Housing program, which provides affordable housing to youth, young adults and families that have experienced foster care. As a champion for Youth Mart, Keenan worked with community partners to serve the metro area and was a founding member of the Truck Brigade and Partnership 4 Hope, a mentoring program for youth who have aged out of the foster care system."

**Anne Paine** "BA Kearney State College, 1984  
JD UNL College of Law, 1988  
Private Attorney, Sherwood Law Office, 1988-2007  
County Judge, 11th Judicial District 2007-present"

**Michelle Paxton**

**Lisa PytlikZillig** Dr. PytlikZillig is an Associate Research Professor at the Public Policy Center at the University of Nebraska, Interim Director of the Social and Behavioral Sciences Research Consortium at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln, a University of Nebraska-Lincoln Ombuds, and a community mediator. Her primary research areas involve trust in institutions and public engagement around public policy decisions or controversial issues.

**Edison RedNest, III** Owner of Native Futures. A For-profit business operating out of Alliance, NE.

**Cindy Reed** "Camp Catch-Up is a sleep away camp for siblings separated by foster care and adoption (out-of-home placements). We reunite campers for a weekend of adventure, fun and connection opportunities! While we can't put siblings together in the same home we can offer them opportunities for safe and exciting weekends to share memories, laugh together and rekindle new connections.

Siblings are our first friends in life  
#siblingLOVE"

**Danelle Reed** "Danelle Reed is a Specialized Probation Officer in District 3J, Nebraska State Probation. She began serving in this capacity in October 2020. Ms. Reed has a lengthy history within the probation system and has served in numerous roles. In 1998 she graduated from Peru State College with a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice. From there she moved into a role as a Life skills/Aftercare/Youth Diversion Specialist with CJ's Young Futures in Council Bluffs, Iowa. In her capacity Ms. Reed worked with a small caseload facilitating a life skills group, ensuring youth accountability and assisted in the reintegration of youth into their communities. In March of 1999 Ms. Reed moved into the role of Social Service Worker with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. While in this role Ms. Reed managed a large caseload of Medicaid recipients and helped determine eligibility for economic assistance.

When first beginning at Nebraska State Probation, Ms. Reed took on the roles of a supervising officer as well as in an intake role and investigation writer. Eventually, the structure within probation changed, leading to more specialized roles. Ms. Reed became one of the district's first Community Based Intervention (CBI) officers in which she supervised high risk youth, to include, at one point, a case load of gang involved youth. This role provided Ms. Reed the opportunity to participate in the beginnings of the program Operation Tipping Point, and networking with the Lincoln Police gang taskforce. In addition, during this period of time, Ms. Reed took the organizational lead in the district with the Project Safe Neighborhood details led by the Lincoln Police Department. Ms. Reed has also worked within the district as a Community Based Resource (CBR) officer as well as a Predisposition Investigation Officer. Ms. Reed is a trainer within the Nebraska State Probation district and has trained new probation officers on various topics including intake, predisposition investigations and currently the YLS. Ms. Reed has been on numerous committees throughout her time with probation and currently has been involved with the Robert F. Kennedy, Dennis Mondoro Project in Lancaster County by sitting as the chair on the Case Closure committee as well as serving on a trauma sub-committee of the Adolescent Brain Development group."

**Katy Reichert** Katy has practiced law in Nebraska since 2013. In that time, she has devoted a large portion of her practice to juvenile law. She has represented juveniles, parents, and grandparents. The majority of her work in juvenile court is as a Guardian ad Litem. Katy has been recognized for her work in the juvenile court system and "Through the Eyes of the Child" Initiative by the Nebraska Supreme Court and was recently appointed to the Commission for the Protection of Children by Gov. Ricketts. Katy serves on several boards within the Scottsbluff community. She is married to Ryan and they have two children, Kace (3) and Karsen (1), who serve as her muses in her juvenile court practice.

**Peggy Reisher** "Peggy Reisher has worked in the field of brain injury for over 25 years. She helped establish the Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska (BIA-NE) in 2009 and became the executive director in July 2013. BIA-NE's mission is to create a better future for all Nebraskans through brain injury prevention, education, advocacy, and support. Reisher has a master's degree in social work and worked 14 years on the traumatic brain injury unit at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital in Lincoln, Neb. where she helped patients and families identify community resources upon discharge from the hospital. Reisher is currently the chair of the United States Brain Injury Alliance and on the Munroe Meyer Institute Board of Directors."

**Brady Rhodes** Brady is a long-time educator, non-profit administrator, facilitator and community organizer with 30 years of teaching, management, development and implementation experience. Much of his work with schools, community organizations and nonprofits has focused on developing collaborations that grow individuals and communities.

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**Shelby Rice**

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**Dr. Tara N. Richards**

"Dr. Tara N. Richards is a Distinguished Associate Professor in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Nebraska Omaha. Richards' research and teaching focuses on prevention, intervention, and system responses to sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and child abuse and neglect. Richards has authored more than 100 peer reviewed journal articles and book chapters and her research has been utilized in outlets such as The New York Times, Mother Jones, Huff Post, and The Boston Globe. Richards has received external research funding from the Bureau of Justice Assistance, National Institute of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women, Office of Victims of Crime, and National Institutes of Health.

Dr. Richards is a Faculty Lead for SCCJ's Victimology and Victim Studies Research Lab (VVSRL) – the mission of the VVSRL is to conduct research related to crime victims and crime victimization, inform policy and practice, and help shape prevention and intervention efforts. She serves on the Douglas County Sexual Assault Response Team, Domestic Violence Community Response Team, and the Sexual Assault Kit Initiative Working Group. Richards also coordinates the Nebraska Victim Assistance Academy, a 40-hour accredited training for victim advocates and allied professionals across the state."

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**Kelly Riley**

Kelly Riley is the Director of the Office of Dispute Resolution and serve as the Project Director for the Nebraska Juvenile Restorative Justice and Family Intervention Initiative, a grant funded under the OJJDP System Reform Initiative. She is a trained mediator, restorative justice facilitator, trainer, Immediate Past President of the Association for Conflict Resolution, and past Board Chair of the National Association for Community Mediation. In her current position, she provides oversight to the six ODR-approved mediation centers ensuring their compliance with policies, and grant and contract requirements. Ms. Riley also staffs the Nebraska Supreme Court's Dispute Resolution Advisory Council and oversees the quarterly reviews of the approved centers. Previously, Kelly served as the Director of the Nebraska Mediation Association and was the Executive Director of The Resolution Center, one of the ODR-approved mediation centers serving 16 counties in southeast Nebraska.

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**Jenna Ripke**

Jenna, who is originally from Seward but has lived in Lincoln for the past five years, is one of two Lead Attorneys specializing in Special Immigrant Juvenile Status with the Immigrant Legal Center. She provides pro bono legal services to immigrant youth in Nebraska who have been abused, abandoned, and neglected by one or both parents, representing them both in state court proceedings and before various immigration agencies. Jenna graduated summa cum laude from Northwestern College in Orange City, Iowa in 2014 with a double major in History and Spanish. She received her Juris Doctor with distinction from the University of Nebraska College of Law in 2017, where she participated in the Immigration Clinic during her 3L year. Prior to joining ILC, she worked at a business immigration law firm serving corporate clients and their foreign-born employees. Since 2018, Jenna has worked with ILC to help serve underrepresented immigrant communities in Nebraska.

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**Randin Roland**

B.S.B.A. Northern Arizona University 1988; J.D. Creighton School of Law 1993; Cheyenne County Attorney's Office 1995 - 2016; Appointed 12th Judicial District County Judge based in Sidney and covering Cheyenne, Kimball, Deuel, and Garden Counties; Nebraska Supreme Court Commission on the Children in the Courts; Co-Chair for Nebraska's Through the Eyes of the Child Project; and incoming President of the Nebraska County Judges' Association.

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**Antoinette Rucker**

"Antoinette Rucker is a child welfare consultant based out of Atlanta and is currently a Master of Public Administration candidate at Clayton State University. She is also the founder of Fostering Through College (FTC), a comprehensive support program that strives to empower foster youth transitioning into post-secondary education at Albany State University. Zealous about youth voice and dedicated to ensuring that all young people make healthy and successful transitions from the child welfare system, Antoinette has a myriad of child welfare experience spanning over 10 years.

As a result of both her professional and lived experience, Antoinette understands the unique and delicate needs of transition age foster youth and strives to empower agencies and organizations to rethink the ways in which they service young people impacted by the child welfare system. Speaking truths to power, recognizing data as a nexus and authentic/adult partnerships are essential to Antoinette's mission and as a result she has partnered with several state, national and even global organizations to provide technical assistance and insight on best practices helping agencies optimize practice. Some of these organizations include Accenture, Cetera, Inc., LGC Core, The Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative via The Annie E. Casey Foundation, The Multi Agency Alliance for Children, Embark Georgia, The NSORO foundation and Foster Club to name a few.

Because of her versatility, passion and tenacity, Antoinette was presented with the "2016 Shinning Star" award from the Multi Agency Alliance for Children, the "2014 Advocate of the Year" award by the Georgia Conference on Children and Families, and the "2017 Mary Church Terrell Public Servant" Award from the East Point College Park Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated. Antoinette has proudly served as a member of the National Foster Care Youth & Alumni Policy Council and as a board member for a girls empowerment initiative out of Atlanta called G.E.M.S (Girls Empowered and Motivated to Succeed). She believes that giving back is a universal opportunity regardless of a person's background and she holds that anyone who cares has the capacity to create change."

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**Kari Rumbaugh**

"Kari Rumbaugh has served as Assistant Deputy Administrator with the Administrative Office of the Courts and Probation, Juvenile Division, since October 1, 2014. She began her Probation career as a juvenile probation officer for the Lancaster County Separate Juvenile Court in November, 2000. In 2006, she joined Probation Administration as Deputy Interstate Compact Administrator, serving as the Juvenile Interstate Compact Commissioner from 2012 to 2014. In 2007, she developed the Rural Improvement for Schooling and Employment (RISE) Program which was recognized for outstanding innovation nationally, in collaboration with AmeriCorps as the Program Director. Additionally, in June 2012, Kari took on the role of Compliance Officer creating and conducting Probation district evaluations.

Recognition for Kari's work includes, receiving the 2018 Advanced Coaching for Excellence (AC4E) Recognition for Leadership in Development award. Then in April, 2014, Kari was the recipient of the 2014 First Lady's Outstanding Community Service Award in the Professional Commitment of Service. Other awards include, the 2012 Outstanding Team award and the 2011 Interstate Commission for Adult Offender Supervision (ICAOS) Executive Directors Award.

Kari earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Family Science with a Minor in Psychology and Sociology from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1998. She sits on multiple juvenile justice focused boards and committees, currently serving as the vice president for the Nebraska Juvenile Justice Association (NJJA) board. As well as, is a certified trainer, "Real Colors" facilitator and has trained locally and nationally and for the Nebraska probation system since 2009."

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**Jessica Schlegelmilch**

Jessica Schlegelmilch graduated from the University of Nebraska at Kearney with her master's degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. She is a provisionally licensed mental health practitioner who has a passion for helping children, adolescents and families. Jessica has worked in suicide prevention for the past six years. She is a certified trainer for QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer), Mental Health First Aid (MHFA), Youth Mental Health First Aid (YM-HFA), WRAP (Wellness, Recovery Action Plan) and Connect Suicide Postvention Training. Jessica also serves as a member of the Central Nebraska LOSS (Local Outreach to Suicide Survivors) Team. Jessica is, also, a therapist trained in Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, (TF-CBT), Neurosequential Model of Therapy (NMT), and Child Parent Psychotherapy (CPP), specializing in the treatment of young children and bridging the parent child relationship.

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**Emily Schoenleber**

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**Brett Schrage**

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**Chelsea Schutter**

Chelsea Schutter, LMHP, CPC is the owner of Sea Change Therapy Services in Norfolk, NE. She specializes in working with LGBTQ+ individuals and recently began a therapy group for gender expansive adults, the first of its kind in the Norfolk area. In addition to her practice, Chelsea is an adjunct instructor at Northeast Community College, a contracted trainer for Probation Administration, and the current Vice President of Norfolk Area Pride. Chelsea previously worked for the State of Nebraska in both Probation and the Department of Correctional Services. She also has experience in non-profit agencies serving survivors of domestic and sexual violence, as well as working for a mental health crisis line. This summer Chelsea played in a weekly golf league, spent time with friends, and purchased an acreage. She is in the middle of home renovations right now so she is grateful to have the opportunity to be somewhere not covered in dust!

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**Rhonda Serrano**

Rhonda Serrano joined the ABA Center on Children and the Law in January 2020 as senior attorney working with the State Permanency Barriers, Trial Skills Training, Legal Response to COVID-19, and other Center Projects. She comes to the Center directly from the Maryland Legal Aid Bureau where she was a supervising attorney representing children in child welfare cases. She has spent more than 20 years dedicated to improving the outcomes for her clients and their families and has enjoyed collaborating with other child welfare professionals to accomplish that goal.

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**Josh Shipp**

"Statistically, Josh Shipp should be dead, in jail, or homeless. But his success as a preminent author, speaker, and global youth empowerment expert is living proof of the power of one caring adult. A former at-risk foster kid turned youth advocate, Josh is renowned for the documentary TV series on A&E that followed his groundbreaking work with youth and families.

He has written two national bestsellers to date, "The Grown-Up's Guide to Teenage Humans" – winner of the Nautilus Gold Award for Parenting & Family – and "The Teen's Guide to World Domination."

Thanks to the support of teachers, counselors, and a wonderful set of foster parents, Josh went on to be listed on Inc. Magazine's 30 under 30 list, and is now a postgraduate student at Harvard himself, further honing his skills in persuasive communication.

Josh is regularly called on by OPRAH, CNN, FOX, The New York Times, 20/20, Good Morning America, and others to provide commentary on common challenges faced by parents and teachers. Over the years, Josh has keynoted events for countless groups of parents, educators, and social workers – with audiences as large as 55,000 – and to date has spoken live in front of more than two million people. Viral clips of his acclaimed presentations have been viewed an estimated 50 million times online through platforms such as UpWorthy, Goalcast, and BuzzFeed.

To serve his ultimate goal of reaching as many youth as possible, Josh trains other speakers through Youth Speaker University, helping them use their own stories to make an impact. His social and emotional learning curriculum, Year of Awesomeness, is in use in hundreds of classrooms all around the world, while his free newsletter offers practical strategies to 200K+ parents, educators, and social workers."

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**Jennifer Skala**

"Jennifer Skala is Senior Vice President at Nebraska Children and brings her previous experience from multiple arenas including non-profit, school, nursing home, daycare, University, local public health department and other organizations to promote community solutions for child well-being. At Nebraska Children, she is focused on improving collective impact for child well-being working with internal and external partners to develop a collaborative prevention system for Nebraska. She works to align key partners, utilize data and leverage relationships for funding, advocacy, sustainability and system improvements in carrying out the mission of the organization. In addition, she works to ensure that communities have a voice in decisions and opportunities to engage in processes for decisions that are community owned. She and partners have developed a nationally recognized model for community change and built private-public partnerships for policy and practice changes in foster care and prevention.

Prior to her current position, she was the Manager of Education and Training at CityMatCH, a national Maternal and Child Health organization (based at the University of Nebraska Medical Center).

She is married to Steve Skala and has one daughter."

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**Amber Smith** "Amber Smith is the Outreach Coordinator with the Nebraska Alliance of Child Advocacy Centers. As the Outreach Coordinator, Amber supports existing and developing CACs with organized training and outreach efforts statewide. Through this role, she looks forward to supporting and encouraging teamwork to increase collaboration and coordination throughout Nebraska.

Amber originally entered the realm of nonprofits in 2013. It was then she discovered her passion for people. Amber has been blessed with the ability to embrace and influence her peers. She recognizes the power that each individual holds and delights when those around her discover that power within themselves.

As a Survivor Leader, Amber seeks to empower youth through social change and responsible living. She also enjoys speaking to audiences of all ages and educating them on human trafficking, substance abuse, healthy relationships and social media safety. Amber is currently pursuing her Bachelor's Degree in Sociology at the University of Nebraska Omaha."

**Diane Smith** Diane is an Assistant Attorney General representing the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services. Before joining the Attorney General's Office in 2021, Diane worked as an Assistant Woodbury County Attorney focusing on juvenile law for thirteen years. Through this work, Diane has gained extensive experience with the Iowa and federal Indian Child Welfare Acts. Diane was born and raised in Des Moines, and she now resides in Sioux City with her husband and son. She graduated with honors and distinction from University of Iowa in 2004 and obtained her law degree from Drake Law School in 2007.

**Julie Smith** Julie Smith has more than 20 years' experience working with high-risk youth and families in the State of Nebraska. She began her career in school-based prevention efforts with at-risk youth and families, has provided family support services, and worked with young mothers in residential group home programs. Julie worked for the Department of Health and Human Services prior to beginning her Probation career in 2013. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in Human Development from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and began a master's program in Education also from UNL before beginning her career with the Department of Health and Human Services. Julie has been the Out-of-Home Program Specialist with the Administrative Office of Courts and Probation since 2016 focusing on supporting the implementation of best practice around the utilization of out-of-home placements and reentry and transition planning. This role includes overseeing access to services for special populations who are often overrepresented in congregate care facilities including youth who sexually harm and youth with cognitive disabilities. She is the Probation liaison to the Nebraska Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services- Division of Developmental Disabilities.

**Gail Steen** B. Gail Steen, J.D., is a graduate of UNL College of Law. She began her career representing clients at Legal Aid in the Norfolk and Omaha offices. In 2000, she joined the Nebraska Dept. of Health and Human Services Legal Department, Protection and Safety Division. In 2008, Ms. Steen entered private practice, often representing clients in Lancaster County as a Guardian ad Litem. She is on the the Governor's Commission for the Protection of Children.

**Dr. Alger M. Studstill, Jr.** "As a proven leader in business and faith-based organizations, Dr. Alger Studstill, Jr. has the extensive experience in strategic management, managing multidisciplinary teams, innovative leadership, facilitating charismatic trainings, and motivating individuals/team to fulfill their PURPOSE.

With over 10+ years of Child Welfare leadership service in Florida and currently in Nebraska as Deputy Director of Protection and Safety for Children and Family Services Division with DHHS. As Deputy Director he oversees operations for child protection, adult protection, independent living, and abuse hotline, which includes personnel of 900+ staff across 93 counties. With an eye for innovation and efficiency, Alger has led efficiency project in Florida which identified over 2 million work hours that could be reinvested in families and an estimate of \$3 million in cost savings; as a Lean Six Sigma Executive Green Belt he sponsored an efficiency project in 2021 that identified over \$100,000 in cost savings and approximately 1,200 works hours annually.

Alger has a special tact for operational management, public policy, innovative approaches, and leadership development through creative presentations. He is an active member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Incorporated, where he serves as chapter Polemarch; member of Black Administrators in Child Welfare; National Co-Chair of racial equity committee with Child Welfare League of America. Dr. Studstill has served on several community taskforces and boards, an adjunct faculty member, and recently completed his Doctorate in Business and Public Administration where his research focused on the "Impact of Secondary Traumatic Stress on Retention of Child Welfare Staff in Florida".

Powered by his personal vision and purpose to "Empower people to walk in their PURPOSE on PURPOSE!". Alger has spoken to audiences of 5-5,000+ young people, college students, and professionals alike, motivating change and bridging the gap between current positioning and desired direction. With his experience, academic knowledge, skills, passion for empowering others, combined with being member of the John Maxwell Team, allows him to add value and empower you to walk in your POTENTIAL and PURPOSE."

**Niki Svik** "Niki Svik is a Trainer with the Nebraska Administrative Office of the Courts and Probation (AOC) – Judicial Branch Education. She has been with Nebraska Probation system since 2002, spending 16 years of her probation career supervising high risk youth and adults. In 2017 she transitioned to training with Judicial Branch Education where she trains probation and court staff. Mrs. Svik is a certified trainer for Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI), Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (LS/CMI), Advanced Coaching for Excellence (AC4E) and a Master Trainer for Real Colors.

In March 2020, Mrs. Svik and Michelle Nunemaker developed and implemented the training "Understanding Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE)" for the AOC. This training is offered to all probation and court staff throughout the state of Nebraska. In December 2020, Mrs. Svik and Ms. Nunemaker received the Diversity Leadership Award. Mrs. Svik and her team at Judicial Branch Education also received the Outstanding Customer Service Award the same year. Mrs. Svik currently serves as the Juvenile Corrections Director for the International Association of Correctional Training Personnel (IACTP)."

**Ivy Svoboda**

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**Mona Tarin**

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**Bobbi Taylor** Bobbi Taylor is a local and national consultant that specializes in lived experience engagement. For the past seven years she has worked closely with Nebraska and its partners to strengthen authentic relationships with lived experience partners. She is an Executive, Operating, and Design team member for the National Thriving Families Safer Children movement, and is also the co-chair for the Thriving Families Safer Children Lived Experience work group. She sits as a State Support Team member to support Nebraska's efforts, and is a Cetera Consultant specializing in authentic youth engagement. Bobbi is also the mother of four beautiful children, and her efforts are driven of her own lived experience in higher end system, and also to see a thriving community for her children to grow in.

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**Chris Turner** In 13 years of prosecution, Chris Turner has litigated a wide variety of criminal cases: murder, sexual assault, internet crimes against children, drug distribution, motor vehicle homicide, child abuse, and more. Chris has spent over six of those years intensely focused on the juvenile justice system, the last four as Chief Deputy of his office's Juvenile Division. This division includes seven prosecutors who are responsible for handling all of the child abuse/neglect and termination of parental rights filings in a jurisdiction of over 300,000 citizens. Chris routinely presents on juvenile justice topics at high schools, universities, and law enforcement academies. He has been an Adjunct Professor at local universities teaching Policing, Ethical Issues in Criminal Justice, and Juvenile Justice; as well as an Adjunct Law Professor at the Nebraska College of Law where he taught courses on Trial Advocacy.

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**Lindsey Turner** Lindsey Turner has been working with Voices of Hope, a crisis center for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, trafficking and other forms of abuse, in Lincoln for almost 6 years. She is currently the Program Services Director but previously the Children's Services Coordinator. In her previous role, she worked directly with survivors of domestic assault involved in the child welfare system. She currently serves on the management and training teams for the Safe and Healthy Families Initiative. Lindsey is also a Licensed Mental Health Practitioner and has experience working in the child welfare system and youth mental health services.

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**Jessyca Vandercy** Jessyca has spent the last 20 years as a social worker in various roles, as an administrator, a clinician, an educator, and a policy advocate. In each of these roles Jessyca prioritizes the development of responsive infrastructures, through the exploration of every aspect of an organization or systems' history, programming, policies, environment, norms, and values. Jessyca has experience working with humans who have experienced incarceration, sexual and domestic violence, people with chronic health conditions, children, and families. She insists on the challenge of dismantling what is not working and creatively and collaboratively building something new. Jessyca is co-founder of Whole Collective, an agency that operates from the belief that well people nurture well relationships, well workspaces, and well communities. She is an adjunct instructor for Metropolitan Community College and a full-time Lecturer for University of Nebraska at Kearney.

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**Schalisha Walker** As the Program Coordinator for the Child Welfare program, Schalisha works closely with young people, families, and community partners to advocate for better policies and legislation within Nebraska's child welfare system at the state and federal levels. She's worked directly with young people with the foster care and juvenile justice experience to ensure they had the resources and support services they need to successfully transition into adulthood. Prior to joining Applesseed, Schalisha served as the Youth Engagement Specialist at Project Everlast Omaha for eight years. "Be the change you wish to see in the world" is a quote that drives her to be the advocate that she is today and to always have compassion as she does this work.

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**Deb Wesselmann** Debra Wesselmann, MS, LIMHP has specialized in treating trauma and attachment problems in adults and children in private practice in Omaha, Nebraska for 33 years and co-founded The Attachment and Trauma Center of Nebraska. She is a trainer with the EMDR Institute and serves on the editorial board for The Journal of EMDR Practice and Research. Wesselmann has co-authored articles, chapters, and books related to attachment and trauma, including a clinical manual for treating attachment trauma in adults and a manual for treatment of attachment trauma in children. She provides specialty workshops in the area of attachment with children and adults, and she has been invited to give workshops and keynotes at numerous conferences both nationally and internationally.

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**Andra White** Andra White serves as the Chief Executive Director of Central Plains Center for Services. Central Plains, a statewide non-profit social services agency and based out of Broken Bow, Nebraska, has over 25 years' experience of delivering individualized transitional and independent living coaching and educational services to unconnected youth and young adults all across Nebraska. Andra has been with Central Plains for 25 years and has a bachelor's degree in Community Health from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She has extensive experience in program development and implementation, most notably with the state-wide Nebraska Education and Training Voucher Program and the Youth Homelessness Demonstration (YHDP) Coaching and Rapid Response Projects in the Nebraska Balance of State. As Chief Executive Director, Andra oversees all Agency programs including the administration of the Nebraska Balance of State YHDP Coaching and Rapid Response Projects and through a contracted partnership with the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation the State-wide Connected Youth Initiative, the John H Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood, the Education & Training Voucher Program, Opportunity Passport™ Program (excluding Douglas and Sarpy Counties), Office for Victims of Crime (trafficking), the Social Services Block Grant for pregnant and parenting youth and an early childhood Sixpence Program. As of October 1, 2022, Andra will also oversee the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) Coaching project in the city of Lincoln. Through formalized best practices and evidence-based approaches, Central Plains provided coaching and educational services to over 1,700 of Nebraska's most vulnerable youth and young adults last year alone.

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**Elise White** Hon. Elise M .W. White has served as Judge of the Separate Juvenile Court of Lancaster County, Nebraska since April of 2020. Prior to her judicial appointment, Judge White ran a small firm for 14 years, specializing in family, juvenile and elder law as well as mediation services; serving as parents attorney and Guardian ad Litem in a variety of juvenile and domestic relations cases. She is currently the lead judge for the Lancaster County Safe and Healthy Families Problem Solving Court, the child welfare lead judge for the Lancaster County Through the Eyes of the Child Initiative and serves on a wide variety of Nebraska Supreme Court committees and commissions. She is a 2006 graduate of the Nebraska College of Law.

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**Kirby Williams**

"Kirby Williams (Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma) is the outreach coordinator for the Native American Program with Legal Aid of Nebraska. She holds master's and bachelor's degrees in Clinical Psychology from Missouri State University. Since 2014, she has worked in her professional and personal life to raise awareness and promote prevention of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, and stalking. She currently focuses the majority of her work on serving Native American survivors of these crimes. Kirby has conducted numerous trainings addressing violence dynamics, including for the Missouri Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Training (SANE), Coalition to Abolish Slavery & Trafficking (Cast), Nebraska State Patrol, the Nebraska Victim Assistance Academy (NEVAA), the Mayor of Omaha's Native American Advisory Board, and other agencies and organizations throughout the United States. She is a Class 5 graduate fellow of the National Human Trafficking Leadership Academy (HTLA), in which she and 11 other Indigenous fellows addressed how culture can be used as a protective factor in the trafficking of all Indigenous youth. For her work in violence prevention, she was named an inaugural recipient of the Cherokee Phoenix's Seven Feathers Award and the Nebraska recipient of the 2022 National Sexual Violence Resource Center's (NSVRC) Visionary Voice Award.

In addition to her understanding of violence against Native Americans, she has a background of knowledge in psychological diagnostics, statistical analysis, the impact of trauma from a physical and psychological perspective, and healing from a culturally relevant perspective. She currently serves on the board for the Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs (NCIA)."

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**Renee Wolf**

"I graduated from the Nebraska Indian Community College with an Associates in General Liberal Arts, then attended Wayne State College and received my Bachelors in Criminal Justice and Minor in Psychology, after applied and was accepted into the University of South Dakota where I obtained my Masters in Interdisciplinary Studies with the focuses being Political Science, Native American Studies, and Criminal Justice.

During college I completed an Internship for the Santee Sioux Nation by created a Diversion Program known as ""Teen Court"". I am currently working as the Indian Child Welfare Specialist for the Santee Sioux Nation, I have been the ICWA Specialist for 3 years. I want to continue my education into Law school some day. I appreciate every opportunity and moment that I get to help our tribal children and families. My heart will always be with our Native Nations and the enrichment of our future. Pidamiya"

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**Heather Wood**

Heather Wood is the FCRO's Research Director. She has over 20 years of experience working in the area of assessment and outcome measurement. Heather began her professional career working in direct care coordination to improve the lives of youth with developmental disabilities and in out-of-home placements. Prior to the FCRO she served 9 years as the state of Nebraska Quality Improvement and Data Excellence Administrator for the Division of Behavioral Health within DHHS where she used data analytics in new and dynamic ways to drive improvements and service outcomes across the public serving systems of Nebraska. She is a Nebraska native with a BA in Psychology and MS in Survey Research and Methodology.

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**Briana Woodside**

"Briana Woodside is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. She received her Bachelor of Science Degree in Social Work from the University of Nebraska at Kearney and her Master's Degree in Social Work from the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Briana joined MECC with 10+ years of experience working with children and families, specifically in the field of adoption. Through this work she supported all members of the adoption constellation in navigating their roles and understanding and honoring the child's perspective and experiences. Briana has received certification in TAC (Training for Adoption Competency) and enjoys working with birth parents, adoptive parents and adopted persons. Briana is trained in CBT (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy), CPP (Child Parent Psychotherapy), PCIT (Parent Child Interaction Therapy) and is a trained facilitator of COSP (Circle of Security of Parenting).

Briana provides individual and family therapy. She has a passion for helping families to strengthen their connections with one another and heal attachment injuries. She has experience working with young children, adolescents and young adults experiencing a range of challenges including anxiety, depression, grief and loss, trauma, and divorce of caregivers. Briana strives to provide support tailored to the needs of each individual child and family and to do so in an environment that promotes safety, respect, and belonging. She values a collaborative approach with clients and caregivers to reach the goal of helping children heal and grow. Briana has a passion for the work she engages in with children and families in the therapeutic setting, and she is equally as passionate about providing information through presentations to educators, caregivers, and other community partners to further strengthen the support network available to children and youth in Kearney and the surrounding areas."

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**Lexi Zendejas**

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