

The Alliance

SUMMER 2017

INSIDE

- 2 Thank You!**
- 3 A Survivor's Story**
- 4 Working Together**
- 5 Child Abuse Prevention Month**
- 6 Spreading Hope in Recovery**
- 7 Mandated Reporter Training**

Honoring PA Blue Ribbon Champions for Kids

The 2017 observance of Child Abuse Prevention Month across Pennsylvania was an inspiring series of events designed to honor those who have helped children, encourage communities to watch out for kids and give a way to express child abuse prevention. In addition to public education events, PFSA's observance included the *PA Blue Ribbon Champion Awards and Rally for Kids*, our annual community event *Painting for Prevention*, and for the first time this year, *Working Together to Prevent Child Abuse*.

The voices of children at the State Capitol on April 5 made a powerful plea for child abuse prevention during the *PA Blue Ribbon Champion Awards and Rally for Kids* sponsored by PFSA and PSECU,® in Harrisburg.



The Philadelphia Girls Choir

Young performers and speakers asked that we all put children first and protect them from harm. They spoke amid 4,032 blue ribbon flags, each one representing a child scarred by abuse in Pennsylvania.

"We meet at this crosswalk of the State Capitol facing two startling realities. One, the terrible toll of innocence lost and lives claimed by child abuse, and two, the incredible opportunities each one of us has to be a champion for children," noted PFSA President and CEO Angela Liddle. "I pray that we listen to these young voices and answer their call to keep kids safe."

"PSECU was founded on the belief that everyone deserves opportunities for a better life. We support the ideal that all children can live and thrive in a safe and healthy environment," said PSECU Assistant Vice President Karen Roland. "Keeping the well-being of children as our focus today and every day, we build a tomorrow of which everyone can benefit and be proud."



Karen Roland

continued on page 4



Volunteers planted over 4,000 blue ribbon flags on the Capitol grounds

Mission

Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance educates, informs and leads communities to action to protect children from abuse and neglect.

pa-fsa.org



Blue Ribbon Champions for Kids

PFSA could not do the important work of preventing child abuse without the generous support of individuals, foundations and corporations. While space doesn't allow us to detail all of our Blue Ribbon Champions, we are especially grateful for the major sponsors of the *Blue Ribbon Champion Awards Ceremony and Rally for Kids*.

Corporate sponsors included Pennsylvania State Employees Credit Union (PSECU), Geisinger Holy Spirit Hospital, Giant Food, Weis Markets, Pinnacle Health and iHeart Media.

Visit our website for donor spotlights and to support our work. ●



PFSA President and CEO Angela Liddle and Samantha Krepps of Giant



PSECU was the presenting sponsor for the Blue Ribbon Champion Award Ceremony and Rally for Kids. Angela Liddle and Karen Roland.



For their generous support of The PA Blue Ribbon Champion Awards Ceremony and Rally for Kids, PFSA thanks:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
| Boyer & Ritter | Giant Food Stores | PinnacleHealth |
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| Capital Blue Cross | Harrisburg Academy | Joy Russell |
| Children's Resource Center at | Hershey Entertainment & Resorts | The Foundation for Enhancing Communities |
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| Emerald Strategies | Park Harrisburg, managed by SP+ | West Shore Christian Academy |
| Geisinger Health System | Pennsylvania Department of General Services | |
| Genentech | Philadelphia Girls Choir | |

A Survivor's Story of Hope



By Kayla Schneider

Darkness, fear and shame are what I felt when I told my mom on my thirteenth birthday, "He did it to me too." Those six words and the actions of a forty-two-year old family friend, firefighter and policeman changed my life forever.

I, like one in ten children in the United States, was sexually abused before my eighteenth birthday. I never thought something like this could happen to me. But, sexual abuse can happen to anyone—even a child you know and love. Even your own child.

Growing up in southern Lancaster County, my home was surrounded by farm fields. I enjoyed carefree days and thought I was safe. My mom role-played with me and my sister on how to react if a stranger was looking for their lost puppy. But she never talked to me about the possibility that someone I knew could molest me, which happened when I was twelve during a sleepover at a friend's house.

Like many victims, I've had a long, hard fight. I wish I could tell you it was easy. I had many dark days and even cut, and contemplated suicide. I felt worthless and ashamed. But through counseling, time, prayers and support from family, friends and child advocates, I started to believe that I could become whole again. This allowed me to slowly put together the pieces of my shattered childhood. I was determined to not let my past circumstances define me for the rest of my life. I was a survivor.

Today, I believe that my purpose in life is to promote prevention initiatives, provide hope, and empower child sexual abuse survivors. I never want anyone to feel alone. Breaking the silence and encouraging families and communities to talk about child sexual abuse will shine light on an issue that is many times uncomfortable to talk about.

I want to take away the stigma that child abuse only happens in broken homes, in cities, to girls, etc. Sexual abuse can happen to anyone, anywhere and at any time...even a woman wearing a crown. I'm proud to support the efforts of the Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance, whose mission is to educate, inform and lead communities to action in preventing child abuse. **Prevention is possible, but it is a community effort.** Let's stand strong together.

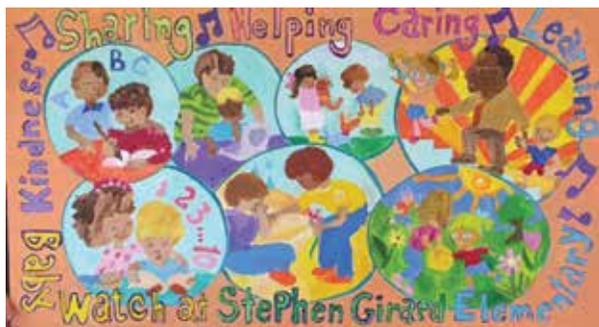


Kayla at PFSA's Painting for Prevention event in Williamsport

Kayla Schneider is a student at Lock Haven University and is Miss Pocono 2017. In June, Kayla will be competing for the title of Miss Pennsylvania 2017, a preliminary to the Miss America Scholarship Pageant. Kayla's platform is "Darkness to Light: Promoting Awareness and Empowering Child Sexual Abuse Survivors." Follow her journey at www.KaylaMarieSchneider.com. ●

Celebrating 10 Years of *Painting for Prevention*

PFSA's longest-running event for Child Abuse Prevention Month is Painting for Prevention, a series of murals created across Pennsylvania. For the past ten years, we have been working with communities to design and create artwork that reflects the area's commitment to supporting families and preventing child abuse; so far, 28 murals have been created in 19 counties. This year, we worked with folks in Williamsport (Lycoming County) to focus on **ways to help families in recovery** from Substance Use Disorder. We partnered with Lycoming County Drug and Alcohol Commission, Lycoming County Children and Youth Services and other organizations to create the mural, which will



be travel around the county to spread the word that child abuse is preventable when we all work together.

This year we produced the first mural **designed and painted entirely by children** – Mrs. Conti's second grade class at Stephen Girard Elementary School in Philadelphia. The children participated in a year-long program called "Baby Watch," learning about caring for others, empathy and kindness. They had some fantastic ideas about child abuse prevention! ●

Working Together to Prevent Child Abuse

How can we find a way for everyone to participate in Child Abuse Prevention Month? This year, we offered a new way to get involved through our hexagon project, “*Working Together to Prevent Child Abuse.*” Everyone from Head Start children to men returning home after incarceration made hexagon-shaped illustrations of how they work to prevent child abuse.

For example, one day in early April, an envelope arrived at PFSA from Tonya Sand in Pittsburgh. It contained a note and a hexagon for our “*Working Together to Prevent Child Abuse*” project. The note read:

Hello. I found out about the hexagon project while searching the internet for advice on how to help a child who is being maltreated in public. When I witnessed this recently, I wish I knew what I could have done. It bothers me every day.

Here’s my contribution to the project. It’s dedicated to the little girl who was being mistreated at the DMV yesterday. I hope that she will find her angel.”



Head Start teacher Michele Reiber (Lingle Avenue Head Start in Palmyra, Lebanon County) participated in a Kindergarten Transition Conference in which PFSA Program Director Beth Bitler asked workshop attendees to create hexagons for *Working Together*. Back in the classroom, Michele asked her young students do the same. The results were fantastic! ●



continued from page 1

Honoring PA Blue Ribbon Champions for Kids

As part of the ceremony, PFSA awarded the first PA Blue Ribbon Champion awards to five individuals who made a significant impact on child safety. They are:



Carlene Nicholas (right)

Carlene Nicholas is manager of EOTC Early Childhood Programs at EOTC in Scranton. For more than 20 years, Carlene has kept children safe from abuse and neglect, working on the front lines, educating parents about the safe care and nurturing of their children. EOTC has been an affiliate of PFSA for decades and partners with PFSA on many parent education and support projects.

Emily Huggins, manager of Forensic Nurse Examiner Program, WellSpan York Hospital is a sexual assault forensic nurse examiner. She led more than 600 hours of education last year to the community and other medical providers on the recognition of child abuse and services available to those who are impacted by crime.

Jan Harris, volunteer with the Police Athletic League of Abington Township, Montgomery County, brought the Darkness to Light program, which trains people who work with children to recognize the signs of abuse, to the Abington Township Police Department. She also is a victim’s advocate volunteer for the Women’s Center of Montgomery County.

Sarah Pesi is a community volunteer and advocate for children in Pittsburgh. When Sarah was 12 years old, she became the victim of stalking and harassment by a man in the community. Because she did not have an ongoing or former relationship with the man, there was no law to protect her. She advocated for legislation that passed in 2015, giving victims of sexual assault and minors who are victims of stalking a tool to keep them safe.

Reuben Martin, a resident of Richfield, Juniata County, saved the life of a little girl at a Harrisburg daycare in 2015. When an intoxicated, dangerous man threatened to kill the child, Martin intervened to shield her from harm. His heroism saved a young girl’s life.

In addition, the independent panel of award judges honored the state’s County Children and Youth caseworker staff and ChildLine staff for their diligent efforts to protect children. ●



Blue Ribbon Award winners, including a group of ChildLine workers, in the Capitol Rotunda

Here's what Child Abuse Prevention Month looks like...



Left Column

Top: Planting flags on the Capitol grounds

Middle: Kids and teenagers who have worked with the Children's Advocacy Center of McKean County shared their prevention ideas on hexagons

Bottom: PFSA President and CEO Angela Liddle and Dominik Cofield throw the first pitch at Harrisburg Senators game

Right Column

Top: Williamsport mural

Middle: Turkey Hill's cow welcomed visitors to the Capitol event

Bottom: Teens paint the Williamsport mural

Recovering Families Updated

Published by PA Family Support Alliance, *Recovering Families* is designed to **help parents in recovery** from Substance Use Disorder balance the demands of both recovery and children, and offer suggestions on how to parent in recovery. Topics include: talking with children about addiction and recovery; doing a moral inventory of parenting skills; making amends to children; balancing recovery and parenting; identifying feelings and healthy behavior; tips for parenting in recovery; visits with children, and using the twelve steps in parenting.

The participant workbook was recently updated, and can be purchased from our online store (www.pa-fsa.org) or by calling PFSA at 800-448-4906. ●

Family Recovery Conference

More than 100 people attended PFSA's *Family Recovery Conference* held in May in Westmoreland County. The conference offered information on current responses to opiate addiction, strategies for helping families within the recovery and family support community, and the varied options for treatment and recovery available in Pennsylvania.

Jason Snyder, Special Assistant to the Secretary, PA Dept. of Human Services, gave the keynote address, "From Addiction to Hope." Jason shared his journey of recovery and healing from the deaths of his two

brothers, as well as the state's response to the current opioid crisis. The agenda included a panel discussion with professionals in the medical, Substance Use Disorder treatment, child welfare and behavioral health fields, and six workshops provided information on a variety of topics. People living in recovery and their family members shared their experiences with participants.

Special thanks to the **Westmoreland Drug and Alcohol Commission, Inc.** for their support as co-sponsors of the conference! ●



Congratulations to Bob Brinker, Parent and Community Educator for PFSA affiliate Family Services of Western PA, for receiving a lifetime achievement award, given by Mental Health America of Westmoreland County. Bob has devoted decades to helping parents and children through parenting classes, support groups and in home visits. He is an active trainer for PFSA's professional development training as well as *Recovering Families* and *The Front Porch Project*. Kudos to Bob! ●

Spreading the Message of Hope

An empty storefront window doesn't usually mean "hope." But that's not the case with one window in downtown Johnstown, thanks to PFSA affiliate Beginnings, Inc. They offer PFSA's *Recovering Families* group and a weekly fatherhood program at the DOC Johnstown Community Corrections Center (JCCC), among many other support services.

Michelle Letosky, Program Director, came up with an idea to spread a message of hope by uniting *Recovering Families* and the men

returning home after incarceration in the creation of a mural on the windows of an empty storefront. "It was just a natural fit to express our hope for families in recovery and reunification," she said. "It turned out beautifully."



Using images from the cover of *Recovering Families* (originally one of the first *Painting for Prevention* works in 2008), the volunteers, mostly people in recovery and the JCCC residents, created the colorful message of hope in what was once an empty space. "This was a great way for JCCC residents to do something positive," says Michelle. We agree! ●

Growing the Mandated Reporter Training Program

Mandated Reporter Training En Español

PFSA is pleased to announce that its On-Demand Online Mandated Reporter Training is now available in Spanish! Participants are now able to select their language of preference (English or Spanish) when registering for the On-Demand Online Mandated Reporter training on PFSA's website. Plus—we are currently collaborating with Latino Connection to recruit qualified bilingual trainers to provide the Onsite/In-Person training in Spanish. We expect to have the bilingual onsite training available in early September.

Coming Soon: Train-the-Trainer Program for Mandated Reporters in Spanish!

PFSA's Train-the-Trainer Program for Mandated Reporter Training will offer the Spanish version of the training materials starting in September.

For more information on our bilingual programming, contact PFSA by calling 800-448-4906. ●



Trainer Update

Tom Trafalski retired from training for PFSA in May 2017. We appreciate all that Tom did during his time with PFSA and wish him the best with retirement!

Cindi Horshaw, MSW, LSW has joined the PFSA team as a trainer. Cindi has over 23 years experience in child welfare, beginning her career by providing direct service to children and families at a county children and youth agency. She is currently a child welfare program specialist within the federal Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families in Washington,

D.C., where she develops regulations and guidelines that improve child and family services programs. Prior to joining the Children's Bureau, Cindi served as the Bureau Director in the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, Office of Children, Youth and Families. In this role, she was involved with interpretation and implementation of the amendments to the Child Protective Services Law (CPSL), while also providing training and education to numerous entities on the changes to the CPSL, as well as overseeing ChildLine, Pennsylvania's 24-hour child abuse hotline call center and child abuse registry. Welcome Cindi! ●

Did you know....?

- PFSA offers its "Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse" curriculum to professionals (called organizational trainers) in a Train-the-Trainer program (TTT). This is the **only approved TTT model** for mandated reporter training in Pennsylvania.
- Organizational trainers are **fully prepared to provide training** after attending a two-day comprehensive training that includes instruction and practice sessions. These trainers then provide PFSA's curriculum to colleagues within their organization.
- PFSA offers **free updates** regarding changes to the CPSL, ongoing technical assistance and trainer development teleconferences to TTT participants.
- You can find out more about the TTT program by calling PFSA at 800-448-4906. A staff person will answer the phone and give you **all the information you need** to get started in providing our expert training to your staff and volunteers. ●

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**“We must accept finite disappointment,
but never lose infinite hope.”**

— Martin Luther King, Jr.

