

The Alliance

WINTER 2016-17

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Making a Difference for Kids: 2016 in Review

A new year gives us the chance to look back over the past year, and renew our commitment to preventing child abuse in Pennsylvania. For the 2015-2016 fiscal year, we are proud to share these key accomplishments.

- PFSA received a contract from the PA Department of Human Services to provide additional training for mandated reporters. This enables PFSA to offer more face-to-face trainings at no charge to local organizations. We increased the number of mandated reporters trained by over 4,000 between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016, a record number of participants. **Over 25,000 mandated reporters were trained this year.**
- Our Front Porch project continued to increase the number of people who are equipped to help a child. The percentage of participants who say they actually will step in to help “often or very often” increased from 33% to 89% following training. Participants who say they would “never or almost never” step in before training averaged 31%; after training only 1% say they will not get involved. As of November 2016, **we have reached more than 1,300 Pennsylvanians who are now looking out for kids.** See page 5 for more.
- We partnered with 58 local organizations, operating more than 175 programs in 33 counties. **These programs impact more than 6,500 families each year.** In our most recent survey, all of our local partners rated PFSA services between “5 and 10

(good and excellent),” with 85% rating the state office quality at between “8 and 10 (excellent).”

We have lots of plans for 2017: expanding our Mandated Reporter Training to new audiences and more organizations, increased access to our resources for parents in recovery from substance use disorder and parents returning home after incarceration and continuing to grow The Front Porch Project with online sessions and a focus on rural areas.



Margaret Delmonico, Public Relations Administrator for PSECU (left) and Angela Liddle, PFSA President and CEO at WGAL.

Spreading the message that everyone has a role to play in preventing child abuse, you’ll see PFSA in a variety of media outlets in 2017. Through the generosity of PSECU, we will be reaching thousands of Central Pennsylvanians through WGAL’s “The More You Know” messages. The thirty-second messages will encourage viewers to join PFSA in the fight to prevent child abuse and make communities safe for PA’s kids.

To read the complete Annual Report, visit our website; you’ll find it with “About Us” information. ●

Mission

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

pa-fsa.org

True Blue Fans: Meet Jarret Forst and Shawn Piatek

Earlier this fall, Pitt and Penn State squared off for their annual football in-state rivalry. Jarret Forst, 41, of Carrolltown, PA, watched the game at home, while his childhood friend, Shawn Piatek of Johnstown, was at the game. Although he did not attend Penn State, Jarret was rooting for the Nittany Lions while Shawn supported the Panthers. As loyal fans often do, they ribbed each other over social media quite a bit before and during the game. It was all in good spirits until much of the social chatter turned to bashing Penn State over the Jerry Sandusky matter. Some of the online commenters said Penn State's football program should not succeed because of the scandal.

"The online conversation became less about football and the game and veered off into some nasty comments," Jarret said. "I posted, 'Look, this discussion has no relevance to today's game. It's a different coaching staff, different players, not the same administrators. Child abuse shouldn't be trivialized as a barb.' At that point, Shawn wrote, 'Put your money where your mouth is'. He said he'd match a contribution to a child abuse prevention charity."

The Panthers beat Penn State that September day, one of only two PSU losses this season. About a week later, Shawn sent Jarret a screenshot of his generous donation to Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance. Jarret quickly followed suit. "I don't want folks to think I did this just to settle a football bet," Jarret said. "That donation was long overdue for me. I have wanted to do something about child abuse and this was the right opportunity to give."

Child abuse is a social issue and, as Jarret noted, no one and no organization, business, religious institution, or volunteer program

is immune from its heartache and violence.

"Child abuse is a black mark on our society," Jarret added. "It's a serious matter that should not be referred to antagonistically in a sports competition or at a game. It is a discussion we need to have regarding the greater good of what we can do personally and socially to make the world a better place for kids."

We want to acknowledge the extraordinary generosity of both Jarret and Shawn. Their kindness and caring spirit exemplify the opportunity each one of us can have as PA Blue Ribbon Champions for Kids! ●



Jarret and Karen Forst.

Be A Blue Ribbon Champion for Kids

PSECU This year PFSA will kick off Child Abuse Prevention Month with a **PA Blue Ribbon Champion for Kids** event on Wednesday, April 5 at the state Capitol in Harrisburg. PSECU has agreed to be our leading PA Blue Ribbon Champion Sponsor, in the effort to help make Pennsylvania a safer place for our children. In addition to raising community awareness for child abuse prevention, the event will recognize four outstanding Pennsylvania citizens who were selected as "Blue Ribbon Champions" for their extraordinary efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect. For more details on the event, the Blue Ribbon

Champion award or to nomination someone who has made a difference in the lives of our most vulnerable citizens, complete and submit the nomination form available online at **www.pablueribbonchampion.org/nominate** by February 27.

Nearly 4,300 blue ribbons will be displayed on State Street and on the Capitol grounds in Harrisburg, representing the number of reports of suspected child abuse that were made last year. The exterior front of the Capitol and the fountain behind the building will be illuminated in throughout April. **Mark your calendar for April 5** and join us to be a Blue Ribbon Champion for Kids! ●

Be a Blue Ribbon Champion by helping PFSA cover PA with blue ribbons for Child Abuse Prevention Month (April)

If you can't join us for our kick-off event in April, you can still help! Your contribution to PFSA offsets the cost of more than 15,000 blue ribbon pins that we distribute across the state at prevention events during April. Tax-deductible donations of any size are important, and 100% of your donation goes to support our Child Abuse Prevention Month activities. To make a donation, mail your check with the form below or visit our website to donate with a credit card.



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Mailing address: PFSA • 2000 Linglestown Rd. • Suite 301 • Harrisburg, PA 17110 • **Website:** www.pa-fsa.org

Meet PFSA's Director of Training



Haven Evans joined the staff of PFSA in November as our Director of Training. Haven has more than eight years of experience in the child welfare field, as a caseworker, ChildLine supervisor and most recently, ChildLine Manager. She was responsible for managing the state's 24/7 intake unit that responds to a large volume and variety of calls regarding the care of children, particularly reports of suspected child abuse or neglect. Haven also supervised Background Checks Units responsible for child abuse history clearances. She brings to PFSA an extensive

knowledge of Pennsylvania's Child Protective Services Law and has conducted many training sessions and written procedural manuals to ensure that legal requirements are met. On a personal note, Haven enjoys arm knitting and spending time with her husband and three young children.

Assisting Haven with the Mandated Reporter Training is **Charmaine Kingsland**, who is PFSA's Scheduling Administrative Assistant. Charmaine comes to PFSA with more than ten years of customer service and administrative experience. When she's not at PFSA, she's taking care of her amazing children, cooking, reading and changing her hairstyle. Welcome Charmaine! ●

Child Protection Policies: What You Need to Know

PFSA has developed a **sample child protection policy** which has been designed specifically to include requirements under the PA Child Protective Services Law (CPSL). It can be adapted for use by child-serving organizations and faith-based programs, among others. Here is some of what you'll find in our Sample Child Protection Policy:

Providing a Safe Environment for Children by:

- **Adequate supervision and accountability** (it is important to have two staff or volunteers present with the children for accountability). At minimum, two approved staff or volunteers must be present with the children during programs and activities, and remain present until all children are back with their parent/guardian. At least one staff or volunteer must be an adult (age 18 or older).
- **Discipline** (it is recommended that your agency have a discipline policy in place which is age-appropriate and effective without the use or threat of use of corporal punishment.) No physical discipline (hitting, slapping) may be used. When a child misbehaves, an adult may use redirection and/or verbal means to guide the child's behavior.
- **Diapering and bathroom help** (guidelines for diapering and helping children use the bathroom). Diapers should be checked once per hour and done at the diapering stations. Never leave a child unattended on the changing table. Wipe down the changing pad after each change with disinfectant wipes. Bathroom help: Children who use the bathroom must be accompanied by an adult. The adult should make sure the restrooms are unoccupied by non-participants before allowing children in the restroom, and then remain outside the door. If the child requests help or the



parent has noted that the child needs help, leave the door open and assist him or her.

Selecting Staff and Volunteers by:

- **Screening and Background Checks:** All persons who desire to work/volunteer with the children participating in our programs and activities will be screened, including written application that requires basic information from the applicant, including previous experience with children, references, as well as disclosure of any previous criminal convictions.
- **Background Checks:** The following certifications are required: report of criminal history from the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP), Child Abuse History Certification from the Department of Human Services (Child Abuse), a fingerprint based federal criminal history (FBI) submitted through the Pennsylvania State Police or its authorized agent. See the sample policy for legally-required screenings and exclusions to the FBI clearance requirement.
- **Personal Interview:** Upon completion of the application, a face-to-face interview may be scheduled with the applicant to discuss his/her suitability for the position.

You can review the sample policy on our website, www.pa-fsa.org, with our Resources for Mandated Reporters, and adapt it for your organization's specific needs. ●

Across the Commonwealth



CVC staff with the mural, left to right: Kristina Bradigan, Andrea Hibbs, Pat Mowen, Courtney Downey, (behind Pat), Kaitlin Craft and Michelle Shumar.

Fayette County

Visitors to the Crime Victim's Center (CVC) in Uniontown, an affiliate of PFSA, get a powerful message about child abuse prevention when they approach the front door. In 2009, Uniontown was one of the locations for our **Painting for Prevention murals**. The murals have been a part of Child Abuse Prevention Month for a decade; this one was created by community members, including a number of teenagers, and placed in the CVC conference room after the event. When the Center moved its offices last year, the mural got a new home, at the entrance to the office where it is seen by everyone who enters. Executive Director Michelle Grant Shumar considers the mural an important part of the center. "We get so many people coming in who comment on how striking the painting is, and they remember it when they leave us," she says. "It keeps our message literally in front of people."

Berks County

A family member's incarceration often affects many loved ones in the community. Family and friends on the outside may feel the impact in many ways - financial hardships, child care issues, feelings of anger or despair. **Berks Connections/ Pretrial Services** offers a monthly support group for the families and friends of individuals who are incarcerated, on

probation or parole or currently involved in the criminal justice system; it provides mutual support in a non-judgmental, confidential environment. Members have a safe place to discuss frustrations and concerns with others who are struggling with similar issues. "Hearing others share about their experience can offer a lot of understanding, especially when it comes to navigating the criminal justice system," says Michelle Tomczak of BC/PS. Guest speakers also provide information to group members.

Lancaster County

The Front Porch Project came to New Holland and Paradise, two communities in Lancaster County, with the help of the Lancaster County Community Foundation. PFSA partnered with the New Holland Public Library and The Factory Ministries to provide community members with strategies for helping children in the neighborhood or a public place.

Franklin County

Children and Youth Services offered space and recruitment of participants for The Front Porch Project in Chambersburg in December, and the Franklin County Foundation provided PFSA with financial support for FPP.

Philadelphia

PFSA affiliates work with some of the most vulnerable parents, and the Mercy Hospice in Philadelphia, part of our

affiliate, Catholic Social Services, is a great example of meeting people where they are. Mercy provides shelter, food and case management services to homeless women in recovery and their children. They will soon be using PFSA's "Recovering Families" curriculum as part of their services. ●

Changes to the Child Protective Services Law (CPSL)

On October 28, 2016 Pennsylvania Act 115 of 2016 was passed, **adding "engaging a child in a severe form of trafficking in persons or sex trafficking" as a form of child abuse.**

This type of child abuse includes both sex trafficking and labor trafficking of children. Specifically:

- Child Sex Trafficking: Any child under the age of 18 who is induced to engage in commercial sex is a victim of sex trafficking. Examples of sex trafficking of children includes prostitution, pornography, and sex tourism.
- Child Labor Trafficking is the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection in involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery. Examples of labor trafficking include agricultural or domestic service workers who are underpaid or not paid at all, physically abusive traveling sales crews that force children to sell legal items (e.g., magazines) or illegal items (e.g., drugs) or to beg, and workers in restaurants and hair and nail salons who are abused, confined, and/or not paid.

For more information, visit PFSA's website or www.childwelfare.gov.



Faith, a past resident of Mercy Hospice, and her son Zaid.

Five Years on The Front Porch

In 2010 PFSA President and CEO Angela Liddle and Program Director Beth Bitler attended a community forum in York; the meeting was part of an ongoing conversation that started after the death of two-year-old Darisabel Baez, a victim of extremely savage child abuse. Community members from the neighborhood and beyond gathered to look for answers to the question “What can I do to prevent another child from dying at the hands of an abusive adult?”



*Darisabel Baez, April 5, 2006
– April 7, 2008*

Driving back to Harrisburg, Angela and Beth talked about PFSA’s programs that educate parents and caregivers of children, as well as mandated reporter training. These programs certainly helped to prevent child abuse (or re-abuse) but didn’t really answer the questions in York. As a result of that car ride home, The Front Porch Project (FPP) was developed.

FPP is a research-supported, community-based initiative built on the belief that people who are concerned about the well-being of children in their communities are more likely to step in and help a child when they are encouraged and provided strategies for making a difference. The training includes information on how and why bystanders step in (or not) to help, ways to increase comfort level with diverse parenting styles and how societal issues influence today’s families. Participants also watch video clips and discuss “what would you do?” in real-life situations. PFSA held its first FPP session in York, in memory of Darisabel, in May of 2011.

Since then, over 60 sessions have been held across the state, reaching more than 1,300 Pennsylvanians from all walks of life who have two things in common – they care about creating a culture that values its children and they’re willing to do what they can to

help a child or a struggling parent. No matter how big or small the action is, it is important!

While the positive impact of FPP training is immediate, with a large majority of participants learning more about child abuse, feeling more comfortable intervening and believing that they have a role to play in preventing abuse. The Front Porch Project is designed to have a “ripple effect” in communities. Participants are surveyed at one year, three years and (for the first time this year) five years after training to see whether the outcomes achieved at the end of the training day continue over time. Our September 2016 survey revealed that **75%**



of participants have actually used the FPP training to help a child during the first year post-training; at three years and five years after training, more than 60% of participants are continuing to use the FPP material in their interactions with children. FPP information was shared with at least one other adult; many people have shared the information with more than five other adults.

Here’s to another five years of creating communities that care about kids! ●

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“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.”

— Anne Frank