

NJJA | Nebraska Juvenile
Justice Association

connections

2022 NJJA Conference

May 4-6 | Kearney, Nebraska | Younes Conference Center

Presenter Bios

Joe Beckman

As cofounder of Happy Caveman and Till 360 Consulting, Joe Beckman has shared his infectious energy, humor, and passion in over a thousand schools, positively impacting over one million people worldwide. Joe resides in Minneapolis with his three children and exceptionally beautiful/patient/strong/kindhearted wife, Jess.

Dan Bechtol

Dan Bechtol has served as the Executive Director of the Concord Mediation Center (CMC) for four years. CMC is approved by the Nebraska Office of Dispute Resolution and is a non-profit agency serving people in Douglas and Sarpy counties who are experiencing conflict in their families, at home, at work, or in the community. He has extensive experience in mediation, facilitation and training, as well as policy and program development. Dan is an approved Parenting Act mediator and is trained and experienced in facilitating Specialized ADR cases involving domestic intimate partner abuse, unresolved parental conflict, or child abuse and neglect. Dan holds a Bachelor's degree in Law, Politics and Society (LPS) and Sociology from Drake University (IA) and earned his Master's in Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation from Abilene Christian University (TX). He served on the Board of Directors of the Iowa Association of Mediators and Nebraska Mediation Association, and was a member of the Iowa Family Law Case Processing Reform Task Force. Prior to joining Concord Mediation Center, Dan owned and managed Southwest Iowa Mediation Services, LLC, in southwest Iowa. At Southwest Iowa Mediation Services, Dan developed and provided a full range of mediation services and trainings in family law, elder decision making and care, civil disputes, employment, and organization conflict.

Presenter Bios

Cyntoia Brown-Long

Cyntoia Brown-Long is an author, speaker, and advocate for criminal justice reform and victims of trafficking. Cyntoia had a difficult start in life. She was born to an alcoholic, teenage mother who was a victim of sex trafficking. Cyntoia experienced a sense of isolation, low self-esteem, and alienation that drove her straight into the hands of a predator. Cyntoia was trafficked during her early teenage years and, at the age of 16, was arrested for killing a man who solicited her for sex. She was tried as an adult and was sentenced to life in prison without the chance of parole for 51 years. Her trafficker was never arrested. In prison, Cyntoia's life took a dramatic turn when the prison education principal took her under her wing and introduced her to a spiritual path. She encouraged her to build a positive life in prison and to resist the negative influences that lead to despair. Cyntoia's journey was a roller coaster ride that included a documentary about her life, a profound encounter with God, an unlikely romance, and, eventually, a commuted sentence by Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam. She received unprecedented national and international support from social media advocates, pastors, and celebrities and was released from prison in Nashville, TN, on August 7, 2019. Her memoir, *Free Cyntoia: My Search for Redemption in the American Prison System* (Atria Books), written while in prison, documents her early years and the 15 years she was incarcerated and takes readers on a coming-of-age spiritual journey. Set against the shocking backdrop of a life behind bars and the injustice of sentencing sex-trafficked juveniles as adults, Cyntoia struggled to overcome a legacy of birth-family addiction and a lifetime of being ostracized and abandoned by society. Of her time in prison, Cyntoia says, "I was just a teenager when I was sent to live behind a razor-wire fence. My entire coming of age was within the walls of the Tennessee Prison for Women." She was a 2020 Nominee for the NCAAP Literary Image Award and has been featured as a guest columnist for the *Washington Post*. Cyntoia hopes her story will not only inspire others but also shine a light on the injustice many people still face on a daily basis, especially the injustice to women and children in American prisons. She, with her husband, Jaime, is the founder of the Foundation for Justice, Freedom, and Mercy. In January of 2020 the Vera Institute of Justice recognized Cyntoia as one of the Best of Justice Reform honorees. As a thought leader for legislative and societal reform, Cyntoia is available to speak to a wide variety of organizations. Her recent keynote appearances include presentations at Georgetown Law School for The Janet Reno Forum, Broward County Children's Services, the Ohio Attorney General Office's Human Trafficking Summit, and the State of Louisiana's Anti-Trafficking Initiative hosted by First Lady and Governor Edwards. Cyntoia has been nominated for the Juvenile Law Center 2022 Leadership Prize and is currently the Assistant Director of The Center for Business as Mission at Lipscomb University College of Business in Nashville.

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.

Presenter Bios

Dr. Abby Carbaugh

Dr. Abby Carbaugh is currently the Data Administrator for Douglas County's Juvenile Justice Initiative. She graduated from the University of Nebraska Omaha in 2013 with her doctorate in Criminal Justice, with focus areas of institutional corrections, research methods, and quantitative data analysis. In her dissertation, she used propensity score matching to examine the effectiveness of parole supervision. In 2012, she was hired by the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services to serve as the agency's Research Manager, and subsequently promoted to Research Administrator, then Research Director. In these positions, she played a key role in implementing and monitoring the performance of newly adopted risk and need assessments and classification tools, collaborating with external research partners, evaluating the effectiveness of clinical and non-clinical programs, and measuring the degree to which operational changes produced their intended effects. In her current role with Douglas County, Dr. Carbaugh partners with a number of agencies and organizations to collect and analyze data about at risk, system-involved, and non-system-involved youth, with the goal of using these research findings as the basis for future decision-making. She is also working to establish standardized and comprehensive data tracking systems to increase data transparency and accessibility.

Dr. Megan Davidson

Dr. Megan Davidson has over 10 years of experience conducting applied research in the public sector, with specific content expertise in the juvenile/adult justice systems, behavioral health system, and child welfare system, as well as the intersectionality of these systems. In her role as Director at OMNI, Megan manages teams of researchers to develop and implement applied research and evaluation projects across these content areas. In addition to working on complex projects across the country, Megan has cultivated a substantial body of work in Omaha, Nebraska (where she currently resides) focused around enhancing the juvenile justice system responses to behavioral health issues as well as community-wide responses to youth and family needs. Other key areas of expertise for Megan involve supporting with the development and evaluation of Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) programs, co-responder programs, and problem-solving courts- all of which involve a partnership between the criminal justice and behavioral health systems. Throughout Megan's career, she has been focused on using research and facilitation strategies to help public sector organizations better understand and meet the needs of youth and adults in various systems of care.

Dr. Julie Garman

Dr. Julie Garman is special appointment faculty and a Research Associate with the Juvenile Justice Institute (JJI) at the University of Nebraska Omaha. She conducts research in the topics of special populations and program and policy evaluations, primarily in the areas of juvenile justice and correctional treatment. Julie is passionate about examining the effectiveness of policies and programs in the criminal justice system and how these impact the lives of individuals. As a Research Associate for JJI, Julie works primarily on the Evidence-Based Nebraska project, collecting and analyzing data on the effectiveness of various programs for youth throughout Nebraska. She is also part of the Nebraska Collaborative for Violence Intervention and Prevention (NeCVIP), which seeks to address the factors contributing to gun violence and violent injury.

Presenter Bios

Adolphus Graves

Adolphus Graves currently serves as the Court Administrator for the Cobb County Juvenile Court; a suburban metro-Atlanta jurisdiction in Georgia, with approximately 750,000 residents. He previously held the role of Directory of Probation Services for the Fulton County Juvenile Court, which encompasses the city of Atlanta and multiple county municipalities. Adolphus is a dedicated public servant with over two decades of continuous professional advancement in court administration and probation service arenas. He currently serves on Georgia's Juvenile Justice State Advisory Group and in 2019 was appointed to the Federal Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Adolphus is committed to contributing to the overall efficiency and efficacy of juvenile and criminal justice systems as demonstrated by his history of work with numerous rural and urban jurisdictions across the nation. He consistently promotes organizational adherence to evidence-based principles and multisystem integration efforts that include maximizing community stakeholder engagement. A firm believer in the necessity of both science and practice, Adolphus is an adjunct professor in the Department of Criminal Justice for the American Intercontinental University's Atlanta campus. He is a highly sought-after lecturer and mentor because of his experiential education approach and his highly interactive engagement with students and professional audiences alike. Adolphus holds a B.A. in sociology with a concentration in criminal justice from Morehouse College and a M.S. in criminal justice with a concentration in public administration from Liberty University. He is a devoted husband and proud father of four wonderful children.

Kim Hawekotte, J.D.

In January of 2020, Kim Hawekotte was hired into a newly created position within Douglas County, known as the Deputy County Administrator over Juvenile Justice Reform, to oversee the operations of the Douglas County Youth Center and the Juvenile Justice Center in Douglas County, aid in coordinating and providing guidance for all of the current juvenile justice reforms, and to create a strategic plan for the future. Kim's professional background includes working in the field of child welfare and juvenile services for over 30 years. As a private practice trial attorney for over 14 years, she was extensively involved in juvenile court as a parent's attorney, a defense attorney, and as a Guardian ad Litem. As the Deputy Chief of the Juvenile Division of the Douglas County Attorney's Office, she prosecuted abuse/neglect, status offense and delinquency cases. As the Governor-appointed Administrator for the Office of Juvenile Services, she was responsible for all aspects of the Nebraska Juvenile Justice System including the Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Centers in Kearney and Geneva. She also has served as the President and General Counsel for KVC Behavioral Healthcare Nebraska, a foster care and in-home service provider. For over 8 years, she was Executive Director for the Nebraska Foster Care Review Office, an independent State agency responsible for the oversight of all children placed in out-of-home care. Kim obtained her B.A. in Sociology from Creighton University and her Juris Doctorate from Creighton University. Kim has been extensively involved in various State commissions and committees impacting Nebraska children and families.

Presenter Bios

Julie Hebenstreit, J.D.

Julia Hebenstreit is the Executive Director of The Kim Foundation. She received her J.D. from Creighton University in 2005, and her BS in Journalism from the University of Nebraska Omaha in 2002. She has been with The Kim Foundation since December of 2011, and prior to that focused on development, strategic planning, communications and advancement in non-profit organizations. She has a passion for helping people and improving lives, and currently serves as the Past President for the Nebraska Association of Behavioral Health Organizations, as the National Council for Behavioral Health's Hill Day State Captain and Ambassador since 2015, and as an active member of the Nebraska Suicide Prevention Coalition, Metro Area Suicide Coalition, BHECN's Advisory Committee, co-chair of the Nebraska School Mental Health Conference, and a number of other initiatives focused on mental health and suicide prevention.

Dr. Anne Hobbs

Anne is a licensed attorney, special appointment faculty, and the Director of the Juvenile Justice Institute at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. She serves as Co-Chair of the Nebraska Juvenile Alternatives Racial & Ethnic Diversity Initiative. She is involved in many statewide initiatives and through her research and active involvement, she is able to effect changes in the areas of juvenile justice reform, restorative practices and child welfare. She has also worked in a variety of international settings. She has volunteered in Haiti, taught criminal justice in China, presented at the international youth dialogue in Malaysia, and serves on the Lutheran Community Care Services Board based in Singapore. Most recently she received a Fulbright to Singapore.

Martin Jensen

Martin Jensen is a Juvenile Justice Resource Supervisor with District #3J Probation in Lincoln, Nebraska. He began in this role in August 2013, and provides supervision and oversight to juvenile probation officers and staff around effective case management strategies, best practice, and service provision. Mr. Jensen previously worked for the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Juvenile Services as a caseworker and later a supervisor, working with youth engaged in the juvenile justice system. During his time with DHHS he also worked with children and families experiencing abuse and neglect. Mr. Jensen's prior work includes at-risk youth and adults experiencing severe and persistent mental illness. Mr. Jensen received his Bachelor's Degree in 2006 with a major in Psychology from the University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

Laurel Johnson

Laurel Johnson is an attorney at Legal Aid of Nebraska where she has practiced in juvenile court since 2013, handling child welfare and juvenile justice cases. She has served as the Lancaster County Through the Eyes of the Child Initiative Coordinator, working closely with judges and community stakeholders to identify and address issues within the juvenile court system. In a partnership with University of Nebraska College of Law, Laurel is currently serving as the Children's Justice Attorney Education Fellowship Program Project Manager, where she provides mentorship and learning opportunities to attorneys handling juvenile court cases in rural Nebraska. Laurel received her bachelor's in social work from Nebraska Wesleyan University and her J.D. from Creighton University. She maintains that representing children and parents in juvenile court cases is the ultimate use of her bachelor's degree, which she is especially passionate about.

Presenter Bios

Elizabeth Eynon Kokrda

Elizabeth Eynon-Kokrda is founding co-counsel and the Managing Attorney for Education Rights Counsel, a non-profit advocating for educational equity for PK-12 school student in Nebraska. Elizabeth also is a private practitioner, focusing on education issues, labor and employment, and general corporate law. As an education attorney for 20 years, Elizabeth has served as the Chair of the National Council of School Attorneys and President of the Nebraska Council of School Attorneys. Her extensive legislative experience has developed her passion for working to improve education laws at the state and federal level. Elizabeth is licensed in Nebraska, Iowa and to practice before the United States Supreme Court.

Denise Kracl

Denise Kracl has served as the Colfax County Attorney since 2011. She holds a bachelor's degree in Education from Wayne State College and a Juris Doctorate from the University of South Dakota. In addition, Denise serves as the City Prosecutor for the City of Schuyler, serves as a Special Prosecutor in other counties; she is the Secretary of the Northeast Nebraska Human Trafficking Taskforce, and teaches American Government at Central Community College, Columbus Campus. Denise is the Vice Chair of the Nebraska Coalition on Juvenile Justice where she leads the State Diversion Subcommittee and sits on the Grant and Community Planning Subcommittees. Denise is the Board President of the Nebraska Mediation Center, a board member of the Colfax County Food Pantry, and leads the Colfax County Food and Toy Drive which served over 150 children with food and warm clothing in 2021. Denise loves to travel and serve others; she led three mission trips to interior Alaska and has traveled to Alaska 6 times, Europe 5 times, and Africa once. In 2017, Denise was honored to receive the Nebraska Juvenile Justice Association Commitment to Excellence in Leadership award.

Charles A. Lieske

Charles currently serves as the Executive Director of Mediation West in Scottsbluff where he has worked to expand programming in restorative practices that help prevent and repair harm that has taken place between individuals and in the community. Charles first became actively involved in restorative justice in 2009, but pulls from his experience working for school districts, probation, and with religious organizations to inform better ways to help people successfully engage conflict by addressing underlying issues. Charles is a member of the NACRJ (National Association for Community and Restorative Justice) and NAFCM (National Association for Community Mediation).

Michelle Lindhart

Michelle Lindhart is a Juvenile Probation Officer with Lancaster County Juvenile Probation (District #3J) in Lincoln, Nebraska. Serving as a Truancy Officer, Ms. Lindhart conducts investigations for post-adjudicated youth and provides supervision for status youth. Prior to her acquiring this position, Ms. Lindhart served as a RISE (Recognizing Increased Skills in Education) Specialist with AmeriCorps in District #3J. Facilitating educational-based groups for adjudicated youth, Ms. Lindhart's service as a RISE Specialist resulted in the discovery of her passion for Juvenile Justice and youth empowerment and advocacy. In addition to sharing with others the importance of Adolescent Brain Development and its application within the Juvenile Justice System, Ms. Lindhart aided in the creation and implementation of the Adolescent Brain Development Curriculum within District #3J. Ms. Lindhart received her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology and Spanish from Central College in Pella, Iowa.

Presenter Bios

Michele Lueders

Michele has 20 years of experience working with young people and their families in Nebraska. Michele has worked in the field directly with youth and their families, worked as a supervisor supporting front line staff in their work as well as working in an Administrative role to improve outcomes for young people. Currently, Michele is the Executive Director for the Nebraska Mediation Center (NMC), a non-profit agency serving individuals in conflict in their homes, schools, family setting, work or the community in general. NMC supports 24 counties and the four tribal nations in Northeast Nebraska. Michele's background includes working on the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative in Nebraska. Within this role Michele provided technical assistance to local JDAI jurisdictions in Nebraska and worked diligently to expand JDAI framework across Nebraska. Michele has lead multiple initiatives to improve outcomes for young people in Nebraska. Michele has also worked within child welfare, behavioral health, juvenile justice and management. This background has assisted Michele in advocating for system changes in Nebraska. Michele earned her bachelor's degree through the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in Human Resources and Family Sciences and her Master's degree in Management with a Leadership emphasis through Doane College.

Dennis Marks

Dennis Marks has been representing juveniles in adult, juvenile and appellate courts since September 3, 1996 as a Deputy Public Defender for Sarpy County, Nebraska. During this time, he has also been a member of numerous local, state and regional 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 served as the co-chair of the Legal Education Committee of the Juvenile Law section for the Nebraska Bar Association, is one of the Nebraska representatives on the Board of the Midwest Region of the National Juvenile Defender Center and has testified before the Nebraska Senate Judiciary Committee on criminal justice reform. Mr. Marks was appointed as an Admiral in the Nebraska Navy by Governor Michael Johanns in 2002. Dennis holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Briar Cliff University and a Juris Doctorate degree from Creighton University School of Law.

Monica Miles-Steffens

Monica has spent her career of over 20 years as a leader in juvenile justice reform. Her experience began in direct care work in juvenile detention followed by state-level leadership in community and state strategic planning, federal and state grant management, training and curriculum development, and consulting. Monica has led numerous state-level initiatives, most recently coordinated the Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative for Nebraska, and co-coordinated an agency-wide equity and inclusion training initiative for the Administrative Office of the Courts and Probation. Currently, Monica is a Juvenile Justice Coordinator for the Juvenile Justice Institute at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. In this role, she is coordinating a grant project to examine the feasibility of Nebraska coming back into compliance with the Federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act. Monica is also a certified mediator and an affiliate with the Mediation Center in Lincoln. Monica holds a bachelor's degree from Doane University in Sociology and Criminal Justice, a Master's Degree in Public Administration from the University of Nebraska at Omaha, and is currently pursuing a Master's in Legal Studies from UNL College of Law. Monica lives in Lincoln with her husband and two teenage children."

Presenter Bios

Eric Nation

Lieutenant (Retired) Eric Nation began his career in law enforcement in 1994 where he has held numerous positions, Correctional Officer, Police Officer, Deputy Sheriff, Lieutenant Deputy Sheriff, as well as 6 years in an undercover narcotics unit and then was Commander of that unit for 5 years. Nation helped Nation's efforts towards Drug Endangered Children in Jasper County earned him the 2009 "On going Victims Service Award," the 2011 National Drug Endangered Children Collaborative Leadership Award, participant in the Defending Childhood Initiative and Working Group Meeting on Law Enforcement and Children's Exposure to Violence – United States Attorney General Eric Holder – Washington D.C., and participated in the development of IACP's Enhancing Law Enforcement Response to Children Exposed to Violence project tools and deliverables as a Children Exposed to Violence Advisory Working Group member in Alexandria, VA. start and develop the Jasper County Drug Endangered Children Alliance, is a member of the National DEC Criminal Justice Working Group. Nation is a Certified Core DEC Instructor that has been involved in the training of thousands of professionals across United States as a Trainer for the National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children.

MaKayla Parriott

MaKayla Parriott is a Probation Officer with District #3J Probation in Lincoln, Nebraska. She began in this role in November 2020, working in the Predisposition Investigation Unit providing supervision to pre-adjudicated and predisposition youth, writing investigations and making recommendations to the court. Ms. Parriott also serves on the Intake team for District #3J, partnering with law enforcement and other agencies in order to find the least restrictive placement while ensuring community safety is being upheld. Prior to her role as a Probation Officer, Ms. Parriott worked as an Investigation Assistant for District #3J Probation and as an attendance interventionist within the Crete Public School system, diverting youth from the probation system in regard to truancy matters. Ms. Parriott is a trainer for the Adolescent Brain Development Curriculum, which she helped create and implement into District 3J. She is heavily involved in reform efforts through The Dennis M. Mondoro Probation and Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Project and serves on a statewide officer discussion group for the Juvenile Justice System Enhancement for Nebraska. Ms. Parriott received her Bachelor's Degree in 2019 from Doane University, double majoring in Sociology - emphasis in Criminology and Philosophy.

Michelle Paxton

Michelle Paxton joined Nebraska Law in April, 2017 to create and lead the newest clinical program, the Children's Justice Clinic (CJC). Previously Ms. Paxton served as the Director of Legal Training at University of Nebraska's Center on Children, Families, and the Law (CCFL). Through her work at CCFL, she came to realize that effective advocacy in juvenile court requires both an understanding of the law and appreciation of the complex dynamics of children, families, and stakeholders comprising the child welfare system. Ms. Paxton initiated the University of Nebraska College of Law and CCFL's partnership to create a new clinical program wherein law students develop the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively advocate for young children utilizing the training, support, and consultation from experts at CCFL. The CJC's impact in her local community prompted Ms. Paxton to explore opportunities to ensure all children and families have access to high-quality representation in juvenile court. Ms. Paxton secured additional funding from private foundations to launch the Children's Justice Attorney Education program. This new program targets attorneys in rural communities interested in working in juvenile court.

Presenter Bios

Stacey Read

Stacey Read is currently the Director of DEC Network Development and the Child Welfare Expert for National DEC where she is responsible for the development and oversight of State and Tribal DEC Alliances, providing technical assistance to the National DEC network, and curriculum and publication development. Stacey is also a lead trainer and has trained thousands of professionals and community members on topics involving child welfare issues, collaboration and multidisciplinary teams, community development, evidence/information collection, local alliance development, and other specific drug issues. Stacey is co-author and developer of the DEC Approach Training Curriculum, Local DEC Development Facilitation Curriculum, National DEC's Roadmap and Toolkit, DEC Briefing Training, DEC Guide for Law Enforcement, DEC Guide for Law Enforcement: Key Insights for Partnering, and more. Stacey's background includes a career within the child welfare field at various levels and in various states. Her experience includes work as a Child Abuse and Neglect Investigator; Associate Ombudsman; Safety Specialist; Institutional Abuse Review Team Leader; and Fatality Review Team Facilitator; and Supervisor, Manager, and Crisis Counselor. Her depth of experience in child welfare issues made her a key member on a number of committees and workgroups such as the Substance Exposed Newborns Steering Committee, the Rural Law Enforcement Meth Initiative, CO Child Protection Ombudsman Advisory Board, and the CDHS Prone Restraint Workgroup. Stacey is most proud of her current work with communities, helping them develop DEC alliances to address the impact of the opioid and substance abuse epidemic on children and families. Stacey works collaboratively with professionals in communities on community assessments, protocols, MOU's, DEC promising practices, community development and community change.

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 for 14 years on the traumatic brain injury unit at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital in Lincoln, NE, where she helped patients and families identify community resources upon discharge from the hospital. In 2022, Reisher will begin serving as the chair of the United States Brain Injury Alliance and is on the Munroe Meyer Institute Board of Directors. Reisher has received the following awards: 2021 Safe States Advocate of the Year, 2018 Lincoln Inspire Award for Excellence in Healthcare, and 2013 Nebraska Social Worker of the Year.

Shelby Rice

Shelby Rice is a University of South Dakota graduate and began her social work career in 2017 with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. Shelby served as a Child and Family Services Specialist as an ongoing worker for approximately two years, before transitioning to the Bridge to Independence Program. In her nearly four years at the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Shelby was able to work with families and a wide range of ages, finding her specialty working with young adults. Shelby services as the adult supporter for the Fremont Youth Voice and is a central navigator with the Fremont Family Coalition. Shelby is also active in the Blair Tech Campus, the former Dana College that has been renovated for housing for young adults.

Presenter Bios

Laura Schutte-Lundy

Laura has worked in Omaha since 2013 as a therapist. Since 2013, she has worked at a residential treatment facility where she worked with at-risk youth with co-occurring diagnosis. She worked as and Intensive Outpatient and outpatient therapist within the community working with adults that have Co-Occurring diagnosis. Laura started working with Nebraska Medicine in 2019 as a Therapist in the outpatient department. She provides individual therapy for the youth using Cognitive Behaviors Therapy (CBT) and Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT). Laura has been named the Co-Chair of the Psychiatry Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) committee, and Laura is the volunteer coordinator for the LGBTQIA committee. Therapy interests include: personality disorders, addiction issues, motivation and change process, relationship issues, anger management and problematic sexual behaviors .

Tami Soper

Tami Soper, is an experienced children, youth and families professional with passion for social justice and the elimination of bias. Ms. Soper has a BA in Public Administration, an MA in Organizational Management, and is currently a Public Administration Doctoral Candidate. She serves as Youth Care Policy Advocate for Boys Town, where she works as a member of the organization's Advocacy and Public Policy team to influence child welfare and juvenile justice policy and practice. In her personal time, she lends her expertise as a speaker, facilitator, and self-defined life theorist. Soper has presented on a diverse range of public health and social topics throughout her career, including HIV/AIDS Prevention, Substance Abuse Prevention, Diversity and Anti-bias, Domestic Violence, and Alzheimer's Caregiving. She has been a contract facilitator with the ADL since 1995, and a Bridges Out of Poverty trainer since 2018. Ms. Soper is a servant leader who believes we all gain when we give back.

Sarah A. Steele, M.A.

Sarah A. Steele, M.A . is a doctoral candidate in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Her research interests are criminal justice policy—particularly those pertaining to juvenile justice and individuals who have committed a sexual offense. Her research has been published in *Deviant Behavior* and the *American Journal of Criminal Justice*.

Dr. Donna Stewart

Dr. Donna Stewart, the Behavioral Health Manager for DCYC, is a licensed psychologist with clinical experience in Juvenile Justice, Behavioral Pediatrics and Psychological Assessment Services. For over 20 years, she has worked with numerous populations of children, adolescents and adults in a variety of settings, including schools, hospitals, adult corrections, juvenile detention, residential programs and outpatient clinics. Her clinical interests and expertise are in conduct disorders, oppositional defiant disorders, juvenile delinquency and criminal behaviors, behavioral pediatrics, learning disabilities, psychological assessments, applied behavior analysis and cultural diversity issues. She earned her doctoral degree in School Psychology from the University of Iowa in 2002 and completed her clinical internship and postdoctoral fellowship at the Boys Town Center for Behavioral Health in 2002 and 2004, respectively. Dr. Stewart also worked with Boys Town as a licensed clinical psychologist from 2004 to 2021 in both the Assessment Program and Behavioral Health East Omaha Clinic. Presently, Dr. Stewart is the Mental Health Services Manager with the Douglas County Youth Center, a Juvenile Detention Facility located in Omaha, Nebraska. She joined the detention staff in May 2021.

Presenter Bios

Patrick Tyler, PhD, LIM-HP, LPC

Dr. Patrick Tyler has over twenty-five years of clinical, administrative, and research experience in residential and community-based treatment services for children and families. He earned his doctorate from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln in Education with an emphasis in emotional and behavioral disorders and is an Independently Licensed Mental Health Practitioner and Licensed Professional Counselor in the state of Nebraska. He began his career in 1995 in Arizona as a clinician working in juvenile sex offender programs. He started at Boys Town in Nebraska in 2001 and has served in several clinical roles at Boys Town including Clinical Director of the Family Home Program and Director of the On the Way Home aftercare program. His research experience includes both neuroimaging and applied research at Boys Town with a specific interest in translating research into practice to improve the design, implementation, and dissemination of effective treatment interventions. Over the last few years, Dr. Tyler has also been involved in several international collaborations focused on preventing violent extremism. Currently, Dr. Tyler is the Senior Director of the Child and Family Translational Research Center at Boys Town. In this role, he applies a translational research framework to direct research activities to support Youth Care staff and programs in a manner that moves from practice related needs to research and then back to practice so that research is used to improve services for children and families.

Lauren Micek Vargas

Lauren Micek Vargas is Executive Director and founding co-counsel for Education Rights Counsel, a non-profit advocating for educational equity for PK-12 school students in Nebraska. Lauren started her career in New York City as a special education teacher and development coach. While in New York she received her Masters in secondary special education at PACE University. 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.

Katie Zimmerman

Katie Zimmerman has been the Project Coordinator at The Kim Foundation since June 2019. She earned her Bachelor's Degree in Communication Studies and Sociology from Central College in Pella, Iowa. Katie's role at The Kim Foundation includes running the social media accounts, assisting in the Youth Advisory Council, and providing mental health awareness and education to the community through A Voice for Hope and Healing presentations.



Kenneth Zoucha, MD

Dr. Kenneth Zoucha is a recognized leader in addiction medicine for the State of Nebraska and serves as Director of Addiction Medicine for the Department of Psychiatry at UNMC. Board certified in Pediatrics and Addiction Medicine, Dr. Zoucha has extensive experience that includes his almost 20 year career as a general pediatrician in Hastings, Nebraska and now specializes in the treatment of Substance Use Disorders in adolescents. He has also served as medical director for several adolescent secure care placement facilities throughout the state, serving youth with a broad array of experiences, backgrounds and trauma. Dr. Zoucha is a clinical educator of medical students, residents, and other health care providers. Responding to the escalating national need, he championed the establishment of an Addiction Medicine fellowship at UNMC. He also led the development of an innovative executive addiction fellowship, featuring one-month immersive experiences for residents and providers already in practice. Through this work, he enjoys lifting up learners to become the best clinicians, educators, and advocates that they can be. Dr. Zoucha's awards include Reba Benschoter UNMC Department of Psychiatry Inspirational Leadership Award, Volunteer Faculty Clerkship Teaching Award from the UNMC Department of Pediatrics, Commitment to Excellence in Leadership from the Nebraska Juvenile Justice Association and the Deborah Munson Barger Pediatric Resident Award.