

2024 Children's Justice Act Task Force Members and Advisors



Tarassa Froberg, Grant Administrator

Tarassa is the Children's Justice Task Force Program Manager. She has worked in Child Welfare for 26 years with 19 of those as a direct line social worker and supervisor. She has formerly been the Child Protective Services, Family Volunteer Services, and Child and Family Welfare Services Program Manager. She has a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and a Masters degree in Social Work. Tarassa has presented at the Children's Justice Conference on various subjects. She is passionate about working as a community to preserve families while keeping children safe.



Karen Winton, Child Victim Advocate

Ms. Winston is the former Program Director and Forensic Child Interview Specialist at Partners with Families & Children in Spokane. Ms. Winston worked for Child Protective Services in King County for 10 years before moving to Spokane. In addition to interviewing and testifying, Ms. Winston supervises the Kids' Court/Teen Court. She is a Board Member of the Child Advocacy Center of Washington and an Executive Board Member of the American Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC) of Washington. Ms. Winston is a member of the American Humane Society and a Multidisciplinary Team.



Jeffrey Bassett, Superior Court Judge

Judge Bassett has many years' experience in both dependency and juvenile offender law. His current position as Superior Court Judge has him handling all types of cases. Over the past three years he was specifically assigned as the juvenile treatment court judge; handling both mental health and drug court units. Most importantly is his role as a foster parent and an adoptive father of three boys through the WA State Division of Children, Youth, and Families. Since he attended several annual Children's Justice Conferences and his work experience encompasses all aspects of juvenile law; this makes him a valuable member on the CJ Task Force.



Lisa Lyndon-Former, Former AAG Child Advocate

Lisa worked for the Office of the Attorney General from 1990 to 2023 in the DSHS (Department of Social and Health Services) section of the Spokane Division. She represented several DSHS agencies and mainly handled child abuse work in Spokane and Whitman counties with a focus on termination of parental rights cases. She was a team leader in the SHS section of the Spokane Division and assisted in supervising nine other attorneys and two paralegals. Ms. Lydon was a founding member of the Spokane Family Treatment Court, a drug court for substance abusing parents whose children are dependent.



Larrain Lynch, Mental Health Representative

Larraine Lynch is the Chief Program Officer at King County Sexual Assault Resource Center (KCSARC). She began her work in 2007 as the Clinical Manager, overseeing and supervising KCSARC's trauma-focused therapy program until joining the leadership team in 2022. Prior to KCSARC, Larraine provided specialized evaluation and therapy services for children and adolescents demonstrating problematic sexualized behaviors. She has over 20 years experience working as a clinician in the field of sexual violence. Larraine is also a Child Mental Health Specialist.



John Nowels, Sheriff -Law Enforcement

Mr. Kinney has been a Police Officer for over 33 years, currently with the Edmonds Police Department. He has previously been assigned to the crimes against children/sex crimes unit. He has been a member of the state task force for over 15 years. During that time he promoted numerous projects to help train patrol officers in the proper investigative techniques as a first responder. He works closely with DCYF/CPS and was a member of the local Child Protection Team. Mr. Kinney has lectured at the Washington State Children's Justice Conference for several years on working relationships between Law Enforcement and Social workers.

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Megan Winder, Prosecutor

Prior to attending law school at the University of Washington, Megan Winder taught at a high school in inner-city Baltimore, Maryland with Teach for America, earning her Masters in Teaching from Johns Hopkins University. Megan is currently the Assistant Team Leader for the Special Assault Unit with the Pierce County Prosecuting Attorney's Office. Prior to joining Pierce County, Megan practiced for over 10 years as a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney in Thurston County. As a special assault prosecutor, she handles adult felony cases involving sexual abuse, child abuse and abuse of vulnerable victims. Megan collaborates with law enforcement and other agencies for prevention, investigation, and prosecution of sexual abuse in the community.



Emily Stochel, Former Foster Child

Emily Stochel earned her BA and the title of "Outstanding Graduate" for Human Services from Western Washington University in March of 2017. She has been working and volunteering in the child welfare field for over ten years in different capacities, starting after she was placed into foster care at 16 years old. Emily is the former Program Manager of Government Relations & Advocacy at the College Success Foundation (CSF). Emily contracts with Think of Us (a national systems-change organization), serves on the Supreme Court Commission on Children in Foster Care, and was the Co-Chair of the Children's Representation Standards Work Group.



Patrick Donahue, Foster Child Liaison

Mr. Donahue received his B.S. in Psychology with a minor in Child and Family Studies from Washington State University in 1992. Mr. Donahue has over twenty years of experience working with children and families as they encounter the justice system. He is the Community Partnership Manager and Foster Liaison for the Spokane School District. Patrick also serves on a number of related boards to improve children's justice outcomes for children and families encountering judicial systems.

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Lorraine A. Parlange J.D. M.Ed.

Lorraine Parlange joined the Kalispel Tribe of Indians as the in-house Tribal Attorney in 2006 and currently serves as the Senior Tribal Attorney. Lorraine has over 25 years' experience as an attorney representing public and private sector clients in a variety of issues, including employment law, education, social work, taxation, public relations, criminal law, administrative, regulatory, and Indian law cases. Lorraine has taught classes in several areas including parent advocacy, social work, counseling, education, investigating and interviewing techniques. Prior to her legal career, Lorraine worked as a counselor in New York with at-risk youth and survivors of sexual abuse. She has her Master's degree in education with an emphasis on Special Education and Applied Behavioral Analysis. Lorraine is also a former foster parent.



Bailey Zydek, Child Representation Attorney

Bailey Zydek is a licensed attorney currently serving as the Program Manager for the Washington State Office of Civil Legal Aid's Children's Representation Program. Prior to assuming this position, Ms. Zydek was in private practice in Tacoma, WA where she owned and operated the firm Wildwood Legal. For eight years Ms. Zydek had the honor of representing children and parents in dependencies at Pierce County Juvenile Court, the last 3 of which were dedicated exclusively to children's representation.



Ryan Murrey, Child Victim Advocate

Ryan is the Executive Director of WA Association of Child Advocate Programs. He has been with the WA CASA/Child Advocacy State Association since 2000. During his years as Exec Director, Ryan has overseen the development of numerous technical assistance achievements. He serves on numerous committees as the statewide CASA/Child Advocate representative, including the Supreme Court's Commission on Foster Care and the statewide Family and Juvenile Court Committee.

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Brett Ballew, Parent Representative

Brett has 25 years experience as an attorney focusing on criminal law and child welfare law. In 2007 he began working at the Office of Public Defense which includes planning training for parent attorneys and social workers. Mr. Ballew has spoken at conferences throughout the state and country on a variety of topics related to child welfare, and legislative and case law changes. He has been an attendee or speaker at nearly every Children's Justice Conference since 2006. He said, "It is one of my favorite trainings every year because it is an opportunity for people from every profession to train together and share their perspectives on child welfare."



Kevin Stewart, Court Commissioner

Kevin Stewart was appointed to the Spokane County Superior Court bench in May 2016. Prior to becoming a court commissioner, he practiced law with Cooney and Associates for 4 years with an emphasis on criminal defense. Commissioner Stewart was then a sole practitioner for 6 years with an emphasis on family law. He was also Title 26 guardian ad litem. He became a Judge Pro Tem in Spokane Municipal and District Court from 2004 to 2011. Aside from practicing law, Commissioner Stewart serves as a member on multiple committees as well as the Children's Justice Task Force.



Darcy Johnson, Child Disability Advocate

Darcy Johnson received her Bachelor of Education in 1995, and later her Master of Education degree from Washington State University. Mrs. Johnson has over 20 years of leadership and teaching experience, focused on advocacy for students with disabilities. She is currently the Associate Director of Student Success at North Central Educational Service District and an adjunct professor at Eastern Washington University.

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Eric Richey, Prosecutor

Eric Richey is in his second term as the Whatcom County Prosecutor. He began his career almost thirty years ago in the Whatcom County Prosecutor's Office where he focused on crimes against children. As a deputy prosecutor, Eric was a regular member of Whatcom County's local sexual assault response team (SART) and when he became the Chief Criminal Deputy Prosecutor, he led the meeting. He is the chair of the Sexual Assault Committee for the Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys and he serves on several other boards and task forces associated with criminal justice. Eric graduated from Western Washington University and the University of Oregon School of Law.



Ricki Peone, Indian Child Welfare Act Specialist

Ricki Peone is the Executive Director of Health and Human Services for Spokane Tribes. She has 20 years work experience leading organizations in achieving their strategic goals. She is well known for developing and managing high performance teams along with establishing strong relationships with stakeholders. Ricki is passionate about making a positive impact in the community by being a visionary leader and driving organization growth. Her extensive knowledge, experience, energy, passion to serve, and advocacy for children are an asset to the Children's Justice Task Force.



Paula Reed, CACWA Director

Paula Reed is the Executive Director of Children's Advocacy Centers of Washington (CACWA), an accredited State Chapter of the National Children's Alliance. She and her team support the work of Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) and their multidisciplinary team (MDT) partners. Paula's career reflects a dedication to improving the lives of children and families. Her tenure at United Way of Greater Duluth (MN) showcased her leadership in driving community-focused initiatives, and her transition into governmental roles provided her with a holistic understanding of the challenges facing vulnerable populations. Paula moved to Washington in 2018 with her husband, Mark. In addition to her work with CACWA, Paula enjoys spending time with family, traveling, and taking in the beauty of the Pacific Northwest.

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Theresa Forshag, Health Professional

Teresa Forshag has worked for Partners with Families and Children since 2004, evaluating children for physical or sexual abuse. She is also employed by Seattle Children's Hospital for medical consultations.



Joy McClendon, Special Ed. Transition Teacher

Joy has over 30 years of combined experience working in a State Group Home, as a Juvenile Parole Officer, Child Protective Services/Foster Home Licensing and as an after hours CPS Supervisor. In 2015, she changed her career path and now works as a Special Education Teacher. She has a Masters in Social Work from Eastern Washington University and a Masters in Special Education from Grand Canyon University. Joy was a licensed foster parent for several years and adopted her incredible boys through the foster care system. Joy created and currently runs a 18-21 year old transitional program (The Summit) for the Moses Lake School District.



Krystal Ruiz, Court Appointed Special Advocate

Krystal Ruiz is a very capable and qualified member of the Children's Justice Task Force due to her education and experience working with children and families within the Dependency Court Systems. The bulk of her experience has been obtained during her employment with the Spokane County Juvenile Court. Prior to becoming a staff Guardian ad Litem, she held a position as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) while also working as an administrative assistant in the Dependency Unit under the Racial and Ethnic Disparities Grant. Throughout all her hired and volunteer positions, Krystal takes pride in her attention to detail and efficiency while always being an empathetic, understanding and compassionate person.

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Tonia McClanahan, Parent with Lived Experience and Parent Representative

Tonia McClanahan is the Parent Voice Advocacy Manager with the Washington State Office of Public Defense Parent Representation Programs and formerly contracted Social Service Worker and Parent4Parent Program Director for Thurston, Mason and Lewis Counties. Tonia sits on various committees and boards at the state and local levels including the Family Recovery Drug Court Team, State Safe Babies Design Team, Executive Dependency Advisory Group, Drug Court Foundation, State Background Check Workgroup, and Statewide Reunification Steering Committee. She is the first Birth Parent who sits on the Washington State Supreme Court Commission on Children in Foster Care since 2013. She is a champion of the Protein for All program, the Hangry Carts, and the Mockingbird Society Chapter. If nothing else Tonia believes in helping parents regain hope in rebuilding their families.



Unhoused Representative

Currently Recruiting



Child Welfare Representative

Currently Recruiting

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Andrew Miller, Prosecutor (Advisory Member)

Andy Miller was elected Benton County Prosecutor in 1986. He helped start KidsHaven, a Child Advocacy Center for Benton and Franklin Counties. For over 30 years he served as Chair of the Special Assault Committee for Washington State's Prosecutors which involved training Washington State's prosecutors in how to prosecute Child Abuse cases, developing best practices for child abuse cases, and lobbying the State Legislature on laws to protect children. He also argued two cases from other counties before the Supreme Court to help maintain the admissibility of statements from child victims to their medical providers.



Karen Kirk-Brockman, CASA (Advisory Member)

Karen began working for the Council for Children in 1991. She implemented the volunteer Guardian ad Litem Program for Family Court involving cases of abuse, neglect, domestic violence, substance abuse and mental illness through Benton/Franklin County Superior Court. Ms. Kirk Brockman coordinated the Guardian ad Litem Program for 15 years, and she was the Court Investigator for two years. She was a County Juvenile Court CASA volunteer for 20 years, a foster parent for 14 years, and an adoptive parent. Karen was the former Executive Director of Safe Harbor Family Support Center.



Carissa Greenberg, AAG (Advisory Member)

Carissa is an Assistant Attorney General who has represented the state's public child welfare agency since 2011. Her experience includes representing the agency in dependency and termination of parental rights cases at the trial and appellate level. In her current role, part of her responsibilities include serving as the statewide juvenile litigation coordinator and advising the Department of Children, Youth, and Families Headquarters.