



## End-of-Year Message from PFSA's CEO, Angela

As I write this article, Governor Tom Wolf is holding a press conference to announce and explain new restrictions for all of us as the number of COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and fatalities rise. Calmly, he explains that if we do not unite and follow all public health guidelines — basic mitigation measures — our hospitals will run out of beds sometime in December, if they haven't already.

Each day, there are virus-related statistics offered through a variety of media outlets. We've become almost numb to the numbers from one day to the next, one week to the next. This is usually the time of year when we start counting days; the number of shopping days left, the number of sleeps until the "big guy" arrives. This year, I think most of us

are just counting the days until we can bid farewell to 2020 and embrace the concept of "hope springs eternal" as we welcome 2021.

It seems most of us have less bounce in our step, a little less joy in our days, a little less singing. I don't know about you, but I still want to skip. I want the joy that comes with anticipating something good that is sure to arrive, and I want to sing, even if I can only sing off-key!

I have been reminded so many times during the pandemic that happiness and gratitude are available to each of us. Life is never going to be just as we want. It will always have the imperfections that draw us with temptation to think, "I would be so happy if only..."

And, let's face it, this year has its fair share of "if only." Most of us did not have family and friends around the Thanksgiving table, no Black Friday shopping, no neighborhood parties, office parties, holiday lunches, or children's school plays.

But, let's also face it, we are a creative people — especially those of us who are parents and grandparents! I swiped through Facebook yesterday and saw our granddaughter with sparklers in her backyard, and I laughed out loud. She was smiling ear to ear, and it made me beam.

I also admit to thinking how wonderful it was of her mom to think of something so simple, and usually designated for July, to do on a brisk November evening to bring joy to her children and make a memory that even I will not soon forget. It is the smallest of things that can bring us happiness. The smallest of things for which we can feel gratitude and that can make all the difference at a time like this.

I'm not asking you to make a "gratitude journal," though, honestly, it's not a bad idea. I'm just suggesting we each pause several times a day and take notice of the super small stuff — the "sparkler moments."

Maybe it's that we get to have our favorite cup of coffee or tea. Maybe it's that we still have employment or are blessed enough that we can help others who are less fortunate during the holiday season. Maybe it's that we are still healthy, and so are our children.

It can be easy to focus on what's going wrong or on our list of "if only." But if we shift our focus to the positive things, to the blessings, we can all feel a little bounce in our step and a measure of joy.

From all of us at PFSA to each of you, may your holiday season be one that brings you simple pleasures, safety, and good health.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Angela M Liddle".

**Angela Liddle, MPA**  
**PRESIDENT & CEO**

## Welcome Kaitlyn Keller to PFSA!



We are elated to introduce our new team member, Kaitlyn Keller. Kaitlyn joined PFSA on Oct. 14, 2020, as the administration support specialist.

With a master's degree in creative writing and a bachelor's in teaching English as a second language, Kaitlyn brings not only an eye for detail and editing but a passion for helping children. She has over seven years of experience working in the public education system, as well as nonprofits, publishing firms, and prevention organizations.

Over the years, Kaitlyn has crafted and maintained relationships with athletic leagues, superintendents, and principals across the commonwealth of Pennsylvania. She has also worked closely with other countries in Central and South America both in teaching and administration. Throughout her career, she's assisted in leading the way for technology, policy, and procedures. Her skillset for writing and editing has been an essential asset, as she's used it to not only proofread but also aid in marketing strategies.

Kaitlyn enjoys spending time with her husband, Josh, and their two young children. When she's not wrangling her kids, she spends her time reading, writing, and playing video games.

# universal human rights day



**DECEMBER 10TH**

Dec. 10 is Universal Human Rights Day, which is recognized not just in the United States but all across the globe. This day raises awareness for issues such as equality, justice, and dignity, which are inalienable rights that everyone is entitled to. It's a time for all people to come together and stand up for fellow humans, proclaimed as a "common standard or achievement for all peoples and all nations."

But what exactly are human rights? The word "rights" literally means "a moral or legal entitlement to have or obtain something or to act in a certain way." So, things like life, liberty, and freedom are all rights, and we're more than familiar with those. They're part of the pledge of allegiance most of us have been reciting since kindergarten. They're basic commodities that allow us to flourish in an environment that is healthy and functioning.

Yet rights go beyond that. Sure, there's freedom of opinion and expression, but there's also the right to work and receive proper education — without discrimination.

**That means regardless of gender, sexuality, race, religion, income, skin color, or any other status, every person should be given the same opportunities and privileges, no matter who they are or what they identify as.**

## Issues and Affected Groups

As a whole, the United States has made great strides and progress when it comes to human rights, but there are still a number of issues. Specifically, certain groups of people, such as women, people of color, and the LGBTQ+ community, are often denied these rights because of who they are and how they are viewed in society.

*"Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home — so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. [...] Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world." —Eleanor Roosevelt*

There are over 126 million women over the age of 20 in the U.S., 123 million people of color, and 14 million in the LGBTQ+ community. Since the pandemic started back in March 2020, it's grown harder for schools and businesses to offer these groups essentials, such as education, livable wages, and benefits.

In fact, the deepening poverty level, entrenched discrimination, and gaps in human rights protection has impacted millions of people.



## Women

Up until the 1900s, women in the U.S. did not have the same rights as men. They were unable to vote, to hold certain jobs, to control if or when they had kids. Still to this day, those same rights aren't explicitly recognized in the constitution, making it harder for women to provide for their families, rise the ranks in the workforce, and receive proper education while in school.

Within the work environment, sexual harassment is aimed at women more often than not, and many businesses won't take action to help the problem. If the harassment came from women, however, targeted at men, the same company might arguably lash out, either firing or suspending the woman at fault.

On top of that, women are denied positions of power or even the same amount of income as men purely based on their gender. For every \$1 that men earn in a given field, women earn anywhere from 57 cents to 79 cents. Although there are a number of reasons why the wage gap exists, it often comes down to gender discrimination.

Women are often discouraged from getting their fallopian tubes tied or pursuing other types of permanent birth control because

they could "end up changing their mind and want kids." Some women in the workforce are forced to quit their jobs when they become pregnant, offered neither paid leave nor the opportunity to return to the job once the baby is delivered.

In education, after-school programs, school clubs, and classes traditionally give preference to boys. In fact, a study in the United Kingdom showed that families still favor having male children, and when those families had female children instead, they scored 3% lower on standardized test scores than their male counterparts.

Another test done by the American Association of University Women showed that females receive less attention from teachers. Often, girls are praised for being "neat" and "quiet" whereas boys are praised for their ability to "think independently" and "speak up."

Even on sports teams, women find it difficult to achieve parity. In the 1970s, the U.S. passed a law that required gender equality in education programs or activities that get federal funding. While about 2 in 5 females participate in school sports, there's still a large gap in the percentage of females who play sports versus the percentage of males who do.

Studies have shown females quit playing sports at a higher rate than males, which can lead to decreased academic success. Females who play sports have a greater chance of attending a college for a degree.

## People of Color (POC)

People of color make up about 40% of the U.S. population, yet most do not receive the same basic human rights as those who are white. Throughout history, skin color and ethnic origin have caused catastrophic events and unfair, inhumane treatment.



Despite the fact that there are laws and amendments in place to make sure such treatment doesn't continue, there is still widespread discrimination and racism toward those of color.

While there's a wage gap between men and women in the workforce, there's an even bigger one between whites and people of color. People of color are often offered low-paying jobs or wages, earning anywhere from two-thirds to three-quarters what the average white male makes, according to Pew Research.

With less income, they are forced to live in low-income housing, where almost half of residents are Black or Hispanic, according to the National Low Income Housing Coalition. In these areas, there is not only a high crime rate but also struggling school systems with low graduation rates, as well.

Schools in low-income areas, often in the inner city, don't receive the same financial support as those in high-income areas. Less funding means there are fewer opportunities for sports, art, music, and after-school programs. And without those programs where kids receive attention and reassurance, grades slide and behavior problems rise, resulting in more suspensions, expulsions, and a low rate of college acceptance.

Research shows children of color in inner-city schools were three times more likely to be suspended and expelled than students in high-income area schools.

Because the dropout rate for inner-city schools is so high, there's a tendency for those same kids to turn to gangs or illegal practices in order to provide for themselves and for families. A higher crime rate means more police involvement, and skin color often influences how police treat people of color. When polled, 7 in 10 people of color said that they are treated poorly by the cops, most because of the color of their skin.



Simply entering a store such as Target or Walgreens can result in discrimination for people of color, who say other shoppers avoid them, workers follow them to ensure they won't steal, and both may make a snide comment or racial slur, which could escalate.

In inner-city schools and stores, you are more likely to see metal detectors or extra security, reflecting a lack of human rights afforded to Black, Asian, Hispanic, or Native American people.

## LGBTQ+

Sexual orientation and gender identity are integral parts of each person and help define who they are. Over the past several decades, we have seen a big shift toward equality and acceptance for the LGBTQ+ community. Where many people once felt they had to hide their orientation and gender to protect themselves, those who identify as LGBTQ+ are finding more safe spaces.

Prior to 2004, same-sex marriage was not recognized by states. This meant that same-sex couples could not adopt, claim each other on taxes, or enjoy the same rights as heterosexual married couples. If they wanted to adopt, they were often not considered or passed over for other, more "qualified" couples. From 2004 to 2015, more U.S. states allowed same-sex marriage, but couples were not given basic human rights from state to state.

Legalizing marriage at the federal level was a huge win for the LGBTQ+ community, but it doesn't solve everything. There are tens of thousands of kids and teenagers in school who face bullying, inequality, and discrimination because of their identities.

Before and during COVID, schools have recognized the need to protect LGBTQ+ students, though many have not yet implemented gender-neutral bathrooms or locker rooms for transitioning transgender students. However, there is a growing need to ensure that these students receive the same academic and extracurricular support as non-LGBTQ+ students.

Some schools prohibit teachers and faculty from talking about LGBTQ+ issues, making it harder for school to be a safe place for them to come, especially if they have a difficult or abusive home life. LGBTQ+ students are three times more likely to contemplate attempting suicide than heterosexual students and five times more likely to attempt it.

The bullying taking place in school buildings has now transitioned online, where kids may feel more comfortable calling out LGBTQ+ students and harassing them. Less than half of the states in the U.S. have specific laws protecting students from bullying based on their sexual orientation and gender identity. However, in Pennsylvania schools all across the state have employed a safety protocol tool called Safe2Say Something, which is

a violence prevention program run by PA's Office of Attorney General. This program gives students a voice to speak up against the signs and signals of bullying, especially within social media. Safe2Say Something allows teachers and students to submit an anonymous report via text or online form, which crisis centers assess and respond to.

Regarding the workforce, there are only 31 states that have laws protecting the LGBTQ+ community. Though most employment applications require you to identify gender and lack an option for nonbinary, gender fluid, or gender queer. This often causes unnecessary stress, obstacles, and discrimination, which can lead to suicide attempts resulting in injury, poisoning, or overdosing.

With the addition of pronouns into social media profiles (such as noting a preference for being called she/her, he/him, they/them), gender identity is receiving more visibility, but we're still a long way from granting universal human rights. Regardless of what anyone identifies as, they deserve the same rights, protections, and freedoms.

## What You Can Do to Help

Discrimination isn't advertised with a neon sign, and often it can be hard to identify, especially in public situations or situations where you don't know the person and/or



people affected. There are, however, still ways you can help. No one deserves to have their rights and freedoms taken from them because of who they are.

**Promote the importance of human rights.**

Whether on social media or in person, you can speak up on behalf of people facing inequality. Posting a status, uploading a picture, signing a petition, or organizing an event can prompt other people to think about their own actions and highlight the importance of acceptance.

**Encourage solidarity.** We're all in this together. Whether you're an individual or you represent a company, nonprofit, or small business, you can reach out to those in your community and build bonds to ensure no voice goes unheard.

**Raise money.** There are plenty of programs and businesses supporting human rights for

women, people of color, and the LGBTQ+ community. Even during COVID, you can choose to shop at stores that give back or use [gofundme.com](https://www.gofundme.com) to raise donations on behalf of an organization or specific person.

**Start a conversation.** No matter how old your kids, grandkids, friends, neighbors, or family members are, you know at least one person affected by discrimination and inequality. Whether you are at school, the workplace, or the local doctor's office, inform yourself on who's affected and how they're affected, and see if you can be a pillar of support for someone in your community by talking about your concerns.



## FBI Background Check Deadline is Dec. 31

Those required to obtain an FBI background check must obtain it by Dec. 31 to remain in compliance.

Under Act 18 of 2020, individuals who are required to obtain an FBI background check were given additional time to meet this requirement because of closures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The extension for new hires to obtain the FBI background check lasts until 60 days following the expiration of the disaster emergency declaration issued by Governor

Wolf or Dec. 31, 2020, whichever is sooner. Individuals seeking a renewal of the FBI Criminal History Background Check have until Dec. 31, 2020, to obtain the check.

A map of all open IdentoGO locations is available [here](#), and this map is updated as new offices begin to reopen. Anyone seeking fingerprinting services should call IDEMIA's customer service at 844-321-2101 to ensure the location is still operating, schedule an appointment, and discuss necessary COVID-19 safety precautions.

All individuals required to obtain additional clearances, including the Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Record Check and the Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance, must still obtain these clearances prior to employment. Both of these clearances can be obtained online.





# UPCOMING VIRTUAL TRAINING

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## Families in Recovery Train-the-Trainer (TTT) Program

Organizational trainers will be fully prepared to provide training after attending a two-day comprehensive training consisting of content education and application instruction of the curriculum. TTT contracts include ongoing technical assistance, development and coaching webinars, and assistance with outcomes-driven data collection. TTT cohorts remain in contact with each other to share program implementation experience, ideas, and insights following initial training.

**Cost:** \$1,000 per trainer entering into a three-year contract with PFSA.

**Dates:** Specific dates to be determined for late January 2021 • 8:30 a.m.—3 p.m.  
Both days include a half-hour lunch break.

**Register:** You must pre-register for this virtual training by emailing Justin Donofrio at [jdonofrio@pa-fsa.org](mailto:jdonofrio@pa-fsa.org).

## Mandated Reporter Train-the-Trainer

For curriculum titled “Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse”

This is an opportunity for organizations to develop their own quality, cost-efficient, in-house training program on child abuse recognition and reporting for employees. With the three-year contract, PFSA provides two days of initial instruction for approved applicants, reporting of CEs directly to the PA Departments of State and Education, and offers ongoing technical assistance.

**Cost:** \$1,000 per trainer entering into a three-year contract with PFSA. (Payment can be broken down by year: \$400/year one, \$300/years two and three.)

**Dates:** January 20th & 21st, 2021 • 8:30 a.m.—3 p.m. Both days include a half-hour lunch break.

**Register:** You must pre-register for this virtual training by emailing Haven Evans at [hevans@pa-fsa.org](mailto:hevans@pa-fsa.org).