



## Reflections on 40 Years of PFSA: Growing Up, Moving Forward & Changing Lives



Angela Liddle, PFSA President & CEO,  
speaking at the PA Blue Ribbon Champions for Safe Kids Awards Ceremony

The start of a new year usually brings a bit of reminiscing about the year just passed and looking forward to goals, wishes, plans, and special events in the year ahead. PFSA celebrates its 40th anniversary this year, and I realize I have spent the past 25 of those 40 years as the organization's president and CEO.

In many ways, we have "grown up" together. Looking back to my beginning with PFSA, then called Parents Anonymous of Pennsylvania, brings me smiles, laughter, and even a few head shakes.

Truth be told, I was not the top candidate for this job; I was the runner-up. I got the gold ring by default since the organization could not pay relocation costs for the first



pick and his family. The organization had less than \$40,000 in the bank, no fax machine (remember those?), and a ledger book for accounting. My first day saw me bringing my own desk chair and reminding myself not to ask, "Where is the computer?" Seriously?!

Back in the day, there were a few typewriter-produced and -copied handouts given to agencies for parents explaining the importance of not spanking or hitting their children. Training was limited to "how to facilitate a self-help support group," and there was one program staff member. Another truth — taking this job was a hard decision. Maybe it was not my first choice, either. But I was young, very determined, and we have indeed managed to grow together. And grow this organization has!

PFSA has always held the cornerstone belief that consistent, positive parenting is the

best step in preventing child abuse. It rings true today just as it did 40 years ago. Our commitment to educating and supporting parents and kinship care providers is as strong as ever.

***Healthy and strong families are key to ensuring children are healthy, resilient and reach their full potential, and that's why PFSA family support and education programs, administered by community-based child abuse prevention agencies, can be found in every region of our state.***

## **Creating Stronger Families Through Education and Support**

Most families share commonality with their struggles and challenges, but no two are identical, and the same is true of the communities in our state. That's why each

PFSA family support and education program has individual characteristics reflecting cultural relevancy of the community and its strength.

***Prevention programs are most effective when they are flexible and responsive to the needs and strength of the community in which they are located.***

Today, dozens of agencies statewide turn to PFSA for high-quality parenting publications, our acclaimed Families In Recovery parenting curriculum, and training to provide the evidence-based parenting program ACT: Raising Safe Kids. We welcome the opportunity to work with all child- and family-serving agencies dedicated to helping parents be their child's hero for a lifetime.

***The safety of Pennsylvania's children is not just the child welfare system's responsibility; it is also mine – and yours!***

PFSA encourages individuals, the public and private sector, and all faith communities to understand and demonstrate that safeguarding vulnerable children is not just the job of an already-struggling parent or overburdened child welfare system.

We change the mindset of many through our comprehensive training program on child abuse recognition and reporting for volunteers and professionals. We impact the behavior of community members through an educational program, The Front Porch Project<sup>®</sup>, designed to teach folks how to safely intervene when a child in their midst is not safe.

We shift the culture in Pennsylvania through PFSA's Blue Ribbon Champion for Safe Kids Campaign. This brings together media efforts, primary prevention messaging and blue ribbon events that help all citizens realize the magnitude of child abuse and neglect in the state they call home – and how they can make a positive impact!



## New Programs Ahead in 2019

As we look ahead in this new 40th-anniversary year, here are just a few things in the works:



**PFSA will launch Families In Recovery**, a parenting program for parents who are in recovery from substance use disorder. This program is being piloted in 12 sites across our state, and Train-the-Trainer sessions are scheduled statewide. Visit [www.pa-fsa.org](http://www.pa-fsa.org) to learn more and register!



**PFSA will introduce parenting publications** to help families establish their own social media policies and parents set healthy boundaries for their children around screen time and handheld electronic devices. Our parenting series will expand to include topics such as parenting transgender youth and support for same-gender parents.



**PFSA has joined with PA Dept. of Human Services** to develop and pilot a specialized training program for residential child care facilities to address potential over-reporting to ChildLine without reasonable suspicion of child abuse.



**PFSA 40th Anniversary Celebration** Sept. 18, Harrisburg Hilton, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., featuring Victor Vieth, founder and senior director of the Gundersen National Child Protection Training Center. Save the date, and plan to attend!

# Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow: Let's Work Together to #ProtectPAKids

For as much as things change, there are so many that remain steadfast. PFSA has updated semantics and graduated from a fax machine and typewriter as the years have passed, but our mission and our vision are the same. Our program services, advocacy, and public relations – all we do is aimed at preparing and encouraging every individual who comes into contact with children to safeguard them.

Another steadfast at PFSA is the remarkable staff, colleagues, board members, volunteers, donors, and stake holders who give of their



resources day in and day out to make sure PFSA's quality training, support, and education programs are available to those who need them most. There is always room for more to join our efforts, so if I am "preaching to the choir," please share our message with others you know.

As for me, I have gray hair, and I am now a grandmother myself. I don't make as many trips to and from Pittsburgh in the same day as I once did. I definitely know all 67 PA counties, and I have a much deeper understanding of and appreciation for how much progress can be made when we all join together and build upon our strengths.

And I finally threw out the typewriter!

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

Angela Liddle, MPA  
PRESIDENT & CEO



## PFSA'S TRAINER SPOTLIGHT SHERRI IRVIS-HILL

Sherri Irvis-Hill has been a trainer for the Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance since 2014. She has trained over 100 organizations on how to recognize and report child abuse. In addition to being a trainer, Sherri is a supervisor with the PA Department of Human Services, Office of Children, Youth and Families. She has worked for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for over 30 years in various management positions and over 15 years in the child welfare field. Sherri earned her master's degree in public administration from the University of Pittsburgh and resides in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, with her husband. She is the proud mother of two children. Sherri plans to retire from the state in April 2019 and is excited to have more time to train for PFSA!



# A **THANK YOU** To My Own Blue Ribbon Champion & All Champions For Kids

## Greetings and Happy New Year!

I hope our newsletter finds you in warm post-holiday spirits and well on your way to achieving your New Year's resolutions — whatever they may be!

Did you know that January is National Mentor Month? The annual month-long event:

- ▶ Promotes youth mentoring
- ▶ Raises awareness of the positive impact a mentor has on outcomes for youngsters
- ▶ Highlights the rewards mentorship holds for individuals, businesses, schools, neighborhoods, and communities of faith

Mentoring can occur directly or indirectly. Any time you show your commitment to the wellbeing of others, you have touched someone's life through mentorship!

## My Mentor: Gammie

For me, January is a month of contemplation and reflection. We receive the chance for moments of meditation and self-awareness at the start of each new year. Time to consider the experiences of the year past, how we have grown from challenges, and the memories we cherish and hold in our hearts — all reminders of what we value most.

As I prepare this newsletter, the first of 2019, I want to share my most treasured of reflections with you: a note of gratitude to my own Blue Ribbon Champion.

My person shares a January birthday with another very special individual, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Like Dr. King, my grandMother worked as an activist, an example of non-violent protest to promote change,



Kayla Kressler, PFSA Director of Prevention Programs, with her (grand) Mother at her graduation.

and called on fellow citizens to contribute to public service and the well-being of her Pennsylvania community.

Like many grandParents today, my grandMother unexpectedly found herself in the reversed parenting role due to the crack-cocaine epidemic of the 1980s and early '90s. She received a startling call in the middle of the night during a record-breaking blizzard. At 49, she exchanged the experience of grandparenting to assume full supervision of me, singlehandedly caring for all the needs of a 5-year-old child and seeing that responsibility through to my adulthood.

Without her profound resourcefulness, commitment to my well-being, and extraordinary personal sacrifices, I may not have grown into a nurtured and contributing member of society.

***It is my credo now that "I am, because she was."***



In March 2018, Gammie (as all endearingly called her) finally received her long-overdue angel wings. Just one month later, I joined the PFSA family, and as I approach my first anniversary here, I am filled with humility and gratitude.

Every day, I am gifted opportunities to cross paths with remarkable individuals — our team, passionate child welfare and family support professionals, community members, grandparents and kinship caregivers, and volunteers from various walks of life.

Through these first nine months, a page has turned, and though I feel sad at times, this new page has given me a new lens through which to experience grief: With grace, gratitude, and countless opportunities to pay it forward to my Blue Ribbon Champion.

## Won't You Tell Us About Your Blue Ribbon Champion?

As we journey into the new year here at PFSA, I am especially looking forward to the high-energy planning, activities, and experiences during National Child Abuse Prevention Month in April — when PFSA honors individuals from across the commonwealth

for their exceptional contributions to the prevention of child abuse and neglect. These Blue Ribbon Champions for Safe Kids serve by example, working in Pennsylvania to protect children. We deeply value those professionals, volunteers, and everyday heroes.

I encourage you, from time to time, to consider those individuals who have had a profound impact on your life! Keep space for them in your heart and your daily work. On days where repetition, stress and the unappealing demands of life and work pull on your energy, pausing to consider those who have contributed to your development can reset your momentum and shift your perspective.

Consider an individual you admire today, whose character and actions represent your idea of a Blue-Ribbon Champion, and nominate them for their efforts. May we all commit to a shared 2019 resolution: To continue paying it forward to each other and, most importantly, to our PA kids!

***Please visit our Blue Ribbon Campaign website at [pablueribbonchampion.org](http://pablueribbonchampion.org) to submit your nomination today.***

## SAVE THE DATE!

**Saturday, March 30, 2019**

Flag planting on Front & State Streets in Harrisburg

**Wednesday, April 3, 2019**

Annual PA Blue Ribbon Champions for Safe Kids Awards & Child Abuse Prevention Month Ceremony in Harrisburg

**Monday, April 8, 2019**

Painting for Prevention Community Mural in Wilkes-Barre, PA

**Wednesday, April 10, 2019**

Flag Planting & First Annual PA Blue Ribbon Champions for Safe Kids Ceremony in Pittsburgh

## BRAVA, NELL: PR AWARDS HONOR BLUE RIBBON CAMPAIGN



Nell, President of Nell McCormack Abom Communications, with one of her awards from the Central PA PRSA.

For the second year in a row, PFSA and our public relations firm, Nell McCormack Abom Communications, earned two 2018 Keystone Awards from the Public Relations Society of America, Central PA Chapter, for the 2018 Blue Ribbon Champions for Safe Kids Campaign.

The Central PA PRSA awards recognize excellence in media and public relations work in a variety of categories. This year, Nell earned awards for Special Events/Observances and Media Relations/Media Placement.

Additionally, PR Daily recently announced the winners of the 2018 Nonprofit PR Awards. PFSA and Nell McCormack Abom were once again recognized for work around the PA Blue Ribbon Campaign, receiving an award in the Event PR category for media coverage – which included more than 250 articles, numerous radio and TV appearances, and a significant social media presence.

A big thank you and congratulations to Nell McCormack Abom Communications for its hard work and PFSA CEO and President Angela Liddle for her strong leadership. Thank you to our incredibly generous sponsors, dedicated board and staff members, and committed volunteers. Together, we continue to spread the message that all Pennsylvanians can and must be champions to #ProtectPaKids!

## PFSA LAUNCHES FAMILIES IN RECOVERY TRAIN-THE-TRAINER (TTT) PROGRAM

Throughout early 2019, PFSA will conduct four Families In Recovery TTT Sessions across Pennsylvania.

Organizational trainers (TTT) will be fully prepared to provide training after attending a two-day comprehensive training consisting of content education and application instruction of the curriculum. These trainers then provide PFSA's Families In Recovery curriculum training to colleagues within their organization.

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.

Please be sure to visit our website for training details and registration at [www.pa-fsa.org](http://www.pa-fsa.org).

### TRAINING DATES & LOCATIONS BY PA REGION

Central Feb. 7 & 8 • Western Feb. 21 & 22 • Northeast Feb. 26 & 27 • Southeast Mar. 14 & 16

# MANDATED REPORTER TRAINING

► **Training Type:** Mandated Reporter Training (for curriculum titled “Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse”)

► **Description:** This training is for individuals who are mandated by law to report suspected child abuse, as defined in the Child Protective Services Law (CPSL). This training provides supportive information in the form of workbooks and reference documents. Curriculum is approved by Departments of Human Services, Education and State for **Act 48 credits (under Act 126 requirements for schools) and Act 31 for health-related licenses under the Department of State.** Certificates are provided to each participant upon completion of the training.

► **Cost:** Free

► **How to Register:** You must pre-register for this training by going to [www.pa-fsa.org/calendar](http://www.pa-fsa.org/calendar) and filling out the webform for the training you want to attend. You will receive a confirmation email once your registration has been processed, which will include the address for the training location.

## UPCOMING DATES

**Dates:** February 22, 2019 & April 12, 2019

**Time:** 9 a.m.—12 p.m.

**Location:** PFSA Office in Harrisburg

# TRAIN-THE-TRAINER PROGRAM

## for Mandated Reporter Training

► **Description:** PFSA’s “Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse” Train-the-Trainer (TTT) Program helps organizations build and expand in-house expertise and capabilities to offer Mandated Reporter Training. Your organization chooses which staff will become the in-house resource; these professionals are called “organizational trainers.”

The organizational trainer teaches PFSA’s “Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse” course content to his/her colleagues within their organization. The trainer helps participants complete the activities and answers questions, especially regarding specific situations that come up within their organization. Staff with experience working with the child welfare system and who possess a high comfort level training colleagues makes excellent candidates for TTT.

The TTT training is two full days of instruction, practice sessions, and review of our comprehensive Trainer’s Guide. In addition to the comprehensive training session and guide, we provide update trainings whenever there are amendments to the CPSL. By signing the contract, your organization will enter into a three-year partnership with PFSA to ensure continuity of training and availability of resources.

► **Cost:** \$1,000 per trainer entering into a 3-year contract with PFSA (payment can be broken down by year — \$400/year 1, \$300/year 2 and \$300/year 3)

► **How to Register:** You must pre-register for this training by going to [www.pa-fsa.org/calendar](http://www.pa-fsa.org/calendar) and filling out the webform for the training you want to attend. You will receive a confirmation email once your registration has been processed, which will include the address for the training location.

## UPCOMING DATES

**Date:** March 7 & 8, 2019

**Time:** 9 a.m.—4 p.m. both days (1-hour lunch break)

**Location:** Westminster Presbyterian Church  
Pittsburgh, PA

**Date:** April 16 & 17, 2019

**Time:** 9 a.m.—4 p.m. both days (1-hour lunch break)

**Location:** Turning Points for Children  
Philadelphia, PA

**Date:** May 20 & 21, 2019

**Time:** 9 a.m.—4 p.m. both days (1-hour lunch break)

**Location:** Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance  
Harrisburg, PA