

# 2021 Pennsylvania Family Group Decision Making Statewide Conference



**“Adjusting Our Lens:  
Gaining Perspective by Challenging Perceptions”**

September 29-30, 2021



**Mission of Family Group Decision Making Leadership Team**

The mission of the Leadership Team is to expand Family Group Decision Making in Pennsylvania while assuring model fidelity.

**Vision of Family Group Decision Making Leadership Team**

The Leadership Team envisions the use of Family Group Decision Making as standard practice across all systems in Pennsylvania.

**Sponsors:** Office of Children and Families in the Courts,  
Office of Children, Youth and Families, Juvenile Court Judges  
Commission, Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network,  
Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center



# *You are invited*

You are invited to the 2021 Pennsylvania Family Group Decision Making Conference presented by the FGDM Leadership Team. The Pennsylvania FGDM Leadership Team is hosting this virtual conference between 9:00am and 12:00pm on September 29 & 30, 2021. FGDM is a strength-based model designed to join the wider family group, including relatives, friends, community members, and others, to collectively make decisions to resolve an identified concern. Currently, over 98% of Pennsylvania's counties are utilizing FGDM to engage families in planning and service delivery.

***“Adjusting Our Lens: Gaining Perspective by Challenging Perceptions”*** will showcase an array of possibilities for how you can use FGDM with children and their families. Please join us at this event to learn, re-energize, build on your existing strengths, and share ideas with others. The FGDM Leadership Team looks forward to seeing you there!



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## **Keynote Speaker**

### **September 29, 2021**

# **Jodi Pfarr**

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Since 2001, Jodi Pfarr has worked internationally-conducting impactful seminars that leave people learning and laughing. Her engaging style-and trademark humor-allow her to effectively connect with diverse audiences. Her ongoing clients represent a broad range of groups, including police departments, judges, teachers, religious institutions, social service workers and fire departments.

Jodi grew up in a rural area and lives in an urban city, giving her a keen understanding of both demographics as well as the diversity and unique dynamics within both. She brings audiences the knowledge she has gained from years of hands-on experience within the criminal justice system, social services, religious institutions and nonprofit organizations.



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## Keynote Speaker

September 30, 2021

Mary Montague

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Mary Montague has an established reputation gained over forty years, in peace building work across many of the most contentious interfaces in Northern Ireland both as a Mediator and Trainer. In 2000 she co-founded TIDES Training in order to design a range of accredited training up to level 4, in Mediation, Systemic and Restorative Peace Building Practice. This training has been delivered both locally and internationally.

Mary was a director on highly commended European projects such as TIDES Training of Trainers, Stepping into Diversity and Building Relationships in Communities. BRIC was one of the first using Systemic Mediative & Restorative Approaches project delivered across N. Ireland in partnership with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Rural Development Council.

Mary has developed and delivered mediation interventions and training programs in areas such as the Balkans, Afghanistan, Pakistan region and Sudan. She is a practitioner and tutor with Mediators Beyond Borders,

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# Keynote Speaker

September 30, 2021

Mary Montague

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International Institute for Women Leaders delivering mediation and restorative practice training to a range of global practitioners from North Africa, Middle East, Asia, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and South America.

Formally for TIDES she led the Restorative Practice Training into many areas, the most notable was for Leeds City Council as part of their program to create a Child Friendly City.

A published author of 'Relationships to Reconciliation', a manual for peace builders. She serves as a consultant to several organizations that are developing mediation and restorative practices. The most recent The Victims Centre, Pittsburgh.

In 2016 and 2017 she was a visiting Professor at Washington & Jefferson College Washington PA USA delivering classes on mediation and restorative approaches.

She lectures on mediation course for the Common Security and Defense policy programs held under the auspices of the European Security and Defense College at The Edward Kennedy Institute, Maynooth.

She is founder member of Women Waging Peace Harvard and winner of the Lifetime Exceptional Achievement Award in Peace Building from the Community Relations Council NI.

Mary received the Mediator of the Year Award in April 2015 from Mediators Beyond Borders at the congress in Bucharest. She has been awarded the 2015 International Bremen Peace Award for Public Engagement. She has also been nominated for the 2018 Fulbright Prize for International Understanding. Mary received an honorary doctorate in Humane Letters from Washington and Jefferson College, USA for her peace building work May 2018.

# SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

## Wednesday, September 29, 2021

9:00 – 9:15 **Opening Remarks**

**Maryrose McCarthy**, *Chief Clerk, Northumberland County*  
*Co-Chairperson: FGDM Leadership Team*

**Crystal Natan**, *Executive Director, Lancaster County CYS*  
*Co-Chairperson: FGDM Leadership Team*

**Jon Rubin**, *Deputy Secretary,*  
*Office of Children, Youth and Families, DHS*

9:15 – 10:45 **Keynote Speaker**

**Jodi Pfarr**, *President, J. Pfarr Consulting*  
*“The Urgency of Awareness”*

11:00 – 12:00 **Breakout Session A**

## Thursday, September 30, 2021

9:00 – 9:15 **Opening Remarks**

**Richard D. Steele**, *Executive Director,*  
*Juvenile Court Judges Commission*

**Honorable Kevin Dougherty**, *Justice,*  
*Pennsylvania Supreme Court*

9:15 – 10:45 **Keynote Speaker**

**Mary Montague**  
*“Knowing Me, Knowing You: Diversity Works”*

11:00 – 12:00 **Breakout Session B**

## WORKSHOP BREAKOUT SESSIONS

The following sessions will be offered both days. When registering, you will be asked to select one Workshop for each day attending.

<b>Breakout Session</b>	<b>Presenter(s)</b>
Finding Hope in Addiction and Recovery Through FGDM	Eliza White, Felicia Matriccino
The Parent and Parent Attorney Role as a Key Ingredient to FGDM Collaboration	Cathy Volponi, Esq., Kathleen Creamer, Esq.
Reducing Congregate Care in Pennsylvania	Honorable Dwayne Woodruff, Heath Brosius, Esq., Kerry Browning
Family Group Decision Making and Human Trafficking	Mary Tatum
Win with Kin!	Jennifer Eichenlaub, Jennifer Napp Evans
Navigating Family Connectedness	Honorable John Cherry, Marisa McClellan, Esq., Sanford Krevsky, Esq., Owen Hoover, Esq., Sarah Hoffman, Esq., Mylah Martin, Joshua Berra
Why Aren't We Doing That?	Sydney Cline

## WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

**Session:** Finding Hope in Addiction and Recovery Through FGDM

**Presenter(s):** *Eliza White, Felicia Matriccino*

Participants will hear from a FGDM professional about the FGDM process, the importance of engaging families at each step of the way, and the benefits of building a lifetime network of support. While learning about the process, participants will also hear from a parent who participated in FGDM conferences and about her experiences at each of those steps. We will be exploring engagement strategies with special consideration and discussion regarding the work with parents who experienced substance abuse issues which include the family dynamics and safety planning before, during and after the conferences.

**Session:** The Parent and Parent Attorney Role as a Key Ingredient to FGDM Collaboration

**Presenter(s):** *Cathy Colponi, Esquire, Director, ACBF Parent Advocates, Allegheny County and Kathleen Creamer, Esquire, Managing Attorney, Community Legal Services, Philadelphia*

Join two parent attorneys as they share their collective knowledge and experience representing mothers and fathers in child dependency cases, including successful communication tips when working with parents. Participants will also gain a better understanding of the parent through the eyes of their attorney and the attorney in their role as counselor, advocate and collaborator. Finally, participants will learn how parents and parent attorneys are the key ingredient to having a successful FGDM conference.

**Session: Reducing Congregate Care in Pennsylvania**

**Presenter(s):** *Honorable Dwanye Woodruff, Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County, Heath Brosius, Esquire, Union/Snyder Counties and Kerry Browning, Director, Lackawanna County Children and Youth Services*

With the impending implementation of Family First Legislation in Pennsylvania, reducing congregate care is a priority. This presentation will focus on the findings of the Congregate Care Workgroup of the Pennsylvania State Roundtable and the court and agency's critical role in achieving this goal. Participants will hear information about education, contact/visitation, and trauma/treatment services. Finally, you will learn about the tools created by the workgroup and the use of FGDM to reduce congregate care.

**Session: Family Group Decision Making and Human Trafficking**

**Presenter:** *Mary Tatum, Clearfield child Advocacy*

This presentation will provide participants with a baseline knowledge of human trafficking to assist in appropriately using the Family Group Decision Making approaches to better serve the victims of human trafficking and their families.

**Session: Win with Kin!**

**Presenter(s):** *Jennifer Napp Evans, Administrator, Snyder County Children and Youth and Jennifer Eichenlaub, Judicial Analyst, Office of Children and Families in the Courts*

"Win with Kin!" will provide evidence-based discussion of the pros and cons of utilizing kinship care in lieu of more traditional foster care when removal from a child's home becomes necessary. The focus will be on effective intervention strategies to support both Agency and Court leadership to minimize the trauma of removal by supporting the building of a network of support around the child, family and kin supports.

**Session: Navigating Family Connectedness**

**Presenter(s):** *Honorable John Cherry, Court of Common Pleas of Dauphin County, Marisa McClellan, Esquire, Adminsitrator, Dauphin County Social Services for Children and Youth, Sanford Krevsky Esquire, Dauphin County Juvenile Court Hearing Officer, Owen Hoover, Esquire, Dauphin County Solicitor, Sarah Hoffman, Esquire, Guardian ad Litem, Joshua Berra, Dauphin County Family Engagement Program Specialist, Mylah Martin, Manager, Dauphin County Social Services for Children and Youth.*

This presentation will demonstrate how even in complicated circumstances, the use of family finding in conjunction with regularly scheduled team meetings, pre-court meetings and ongoing family group conferences can create a supportive network of parents, family, the court, the legal system and the agency to achieve positive outcomes for children.

**Session: Why Aren't We Doing That?**

**Presenter:** *Sydney Cline, Family Group Decision Making Coordinator, Center for Community Resources, Butler, PA*

This presentation will outline the inclusive nature of Butler County to provide FGDM services to many non-traditional populations, in addition to child welfare families. This presentation will show how FGDM can be used in truancy, drug and alcohol, reentry populations and MH/ID/EI cases.

# REGISTRATION

\*Due to the virtual format of this conference, there will be  
NO REGISTRATION FEE.

Please register online at: <https://cvent.me/zP0xWM>  
Deadline for registration is September 27, 2021

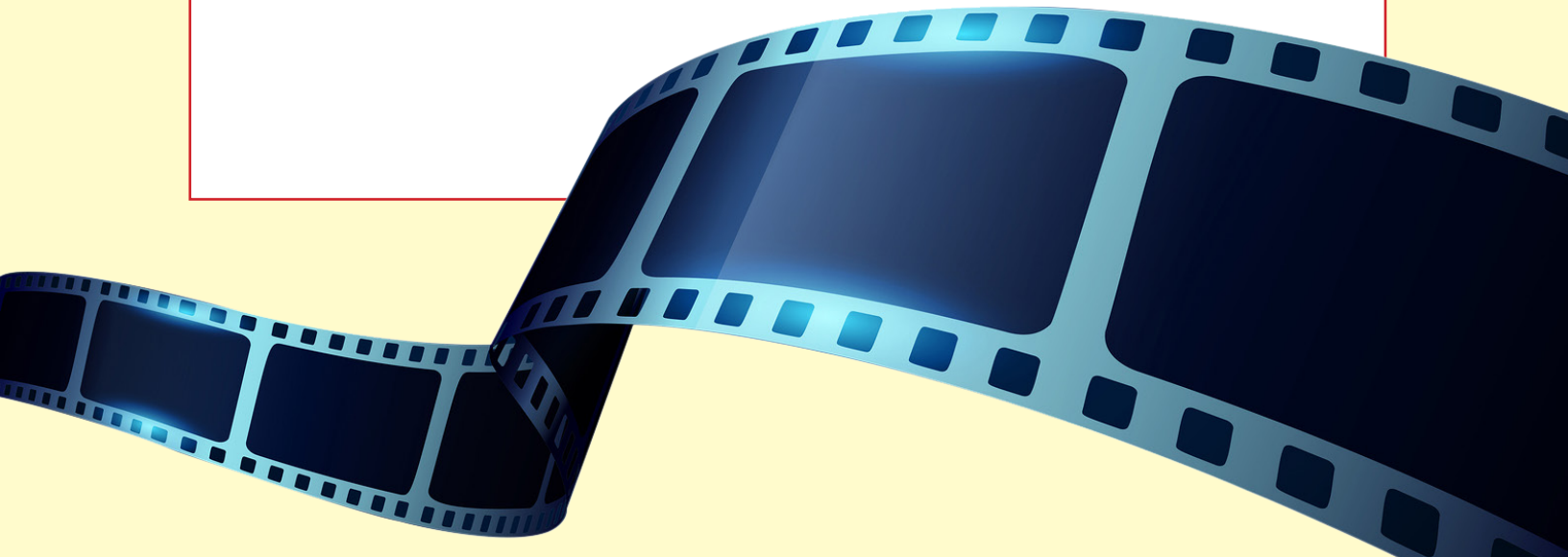
## CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS

Continuing Education credits (CEs) will be available.  
Continuing Legal Education credits (CLEs) have been requested.  
Continuing Judicial Education credits (CJEs) have been requested.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

All questions regarding the conference should be directed to:  
Christy Stanek at [Christy.Stanek@pacourts.us](mailto:Christy.Stanek@pacourts.us) or 412-616-1079.

*We look forward to seeing you.*





# BIOGRAPHIES

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*Joshua Berra* has been the Dauphin County Family Engagement Program Specialist since 2005. Prior to this role, he was an Ongoing, In-home Caseworker in Dauphin County for five years. Mr. Berra has a Master of Social Work degree from Temple University. He has participated in a variety of community outreach initiatives including Communities That Care and is a member of the Pennsylvania Central Region Family Engagement Committee.

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*Heath Brosius*, Esquire Heath graduated from Widener School of Law in Harrisburg (now Widener Law Commonwealth) in 2010. He became employed by Northumberland County as a Law Clerk to the Honorable William Harvey Wiest in the fall of 2010. In 2016, he became the law clerk to the first female Judge of Northumberland County, the Honorable Paige Rosini. He continues to serve as a law clerk for Judge Rosini. In addition to his service as a law clerk, Heath maintains a private office where he is engaged in the general practice of law. As part of that practice, he serves as the Guardian ad litem for all dependent youth in Union County and also in Snyder County. He has served in that capacity for the last ten and one half years. Heath serves as a member of the Pennsylvania State Roundtable, the Congregate Care Workgroup of the State Roundtable, and the local Children's Roundtable.

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*Kerry Browning* is a Licensed Social Worker who has worked at the Office of Youth and Family Services since 1999. In her 22 years there she has worked in various positions and is currently the Deputy Director. Kerry continues to lead Lackawanna's work as a Phase One Family Engagement Initiative County. In addition, Kerry is a member of Pennsylvania's State Roundtable and has participated on various Workgroups. Kerry is a current member of the Department of Human Service, Office of Children, Youth and Families Child Welfare Council, Family First Project Team and Safety Subcommittee. Most recently, Kerry was asked to be a member of the State Roundtable's Kinship Care Task Force, led by Pennsylvania Supreme Court Chief Justice, Max Baer.

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**Honorable John Cherry** Judge. Elected to bench November 1999. Retained November 2009. Born April 14, 1951, in DuBois, PA. Graduate of DuBois High School, Gannon University, and Dickinson School of Law. Served as teacher, coach, and high school administrator at Elk County Christian High School, St. Mary's, PA. Dauphin County Deputy District Attorney; Deputy Attorney General, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; partner at Goldberg, Katzman & Shipman. Appointed District Attorney in December 1993; elected District Attorney of Dauphin County 1994-99. Currently serving as Civil and Administrative Dependency Judge.

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**Sydney Cline** studied Criminology and Criminal Justice at Slippery Rock University and minored in Gender Studies. She works at Center for Community Resources in Butler PA and is the Family Group Decision Making Coordinator. The department consists of Prevention Education Outreach and the Student Assistance Program. Working so closely with these departments has encouraged growth and development of the FGDM Model.

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**Kathleen Creamer**, Esquire is the Managing Attorney of the Family Advocacy Unit at Community Legal Services, which represents parents in all stages of dependency proceedings. She joined CLS as a staff attorney in the Family Advocacy Unit in 2006. In addition to individual representation of parents in dependency court, Ms. Creamer has focused much of her advocacy on supporting incarcerated parents and their families. She recently served as a Stoneleigh Foundation Fellow dedicated to Improving Reunification Outcomes for Children of Incarcerated Parents. In that capacity, she engaged in policy advocacy to improve cross-system coordination between the Philadelphia Department of Human Services and the Philadelphia Prison System. This advocacy resulted in a video-conferencing pilot between the two facilities to ensure parental participation in important case planning meetings, and an updated joint policy and protocol for engaging incarcerated parents. Ms. Creamer also led the coalition that developed and lobbied for the successful passage of the 2010 Healthy Birth for Incarcerated Women Act, which curtailed the practice of shackling incarcerated women during childbirth in Pennsylvania's jails and prisons.

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**Honorable Justice Kevin M. Dougherty** graduated from Temple University, and then attended Antioch School of Law in Washington, DC. Following that he started his legal career as an assistant district attorney in Philadelphia, and later went into private practice. In 2001, Dougherty was appointed to the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas, and he won election to a full 10-year term later that year. Justice Dougherty requested to be assigned to Family Court because he felt that he could influence the lives of our most vulnerable citizens and help mold troubled youth into happy, healthy and productive members of society. In recognition of his administrative skills and commitment to reforming the juvenile justice system, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court appointed Justice Dougherty to be Administrative Judge of the Philadelphia Family Court in 2005 eventually serving as the longest Administrative Judge in Philadelphia history. In this capacity, Justice Dougherty initiated numerous diversionary programs benefiting the most at-risk and vulnerable children in Philadelphia including the Cross-Over Program, the Adolescent Medicine Initiative, and the Expungement Initiative. In 2014, Justice Dougherty was reassigned as the Administrative Judge of the Trial Division, First Judicial District, as such ran the largest court system in Pennsylvania while serving as Chair of the Administrative Governing Board.

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**Justice Dougherty** was elected to the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania on November 3rd, 2015. With a passion for the states 117 Problem Solving Courts and issues facing children and families, Justice Dougherty alongside his fellow Justices has taken a keen interest in making the Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania a model for the country when it comes to issues such as access to justice, alternative sentencing, transparency within the court system, and most importantly keeping an open dialogue between the various stakeholders within the judicial branch of government. In addition, he proudly represents the Supreme Court on both the Statewide Dependency Court Improvement Program and the Autism and the Courts Initiative.

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**Jennifer Eichenlaub**, MSW, MBA joined the Office of Children and Families in the Courts within the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts as a Judicial Programs Analyst in September 2011. Her primary responsibility in this position is the provision of technical assistance to 16 counties in the northeast region of Pennsylvania. Her efforts guide counties in her territory toward the overall goal of enhancing court practices to improve the safety, permanency and well-being outcomes for children who are the subject of child dependency proceedings. Technical assistance includes providing counties with resources for the implementation of the Court Improvement Program's Family Engagement Initiative and analyzing and synthesizing data from the judicial dependency data repository system. In addition, Ms. Eichenlaub is responsible for observing court proceedings and facilitating communication between Dependency Judges, Children and Youth Administrators and both local and regional Children's Roundtables. Ms. Eichenlaub holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology from St. Mary's College of Maryland, a master's degree in social work administration from Temple University, and a master's degree in business administration from the University of Phoenix.

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**Jennifer Napp Evans** is the Administrator of Snyder County Children and Youth Services. She was unanimously appointed to the position in 2017 by the Snyder County Commissioners. Evans is licensed with the State Board of Medicine as a Behavior Specialist Consultant. Her work history and experience are inclusive of twenty years of working with children and their families many of whom were trauma related cases. Evans came to Snyder County from Laurel Creek Counseling, located in Lewisburg where she was the BHRS Administrator, a Behavior Specialist Consultant and Mobile Therapist. She also worked with at-risk children and their families in several capacities including as a Regional Manager and the Treatment and Research Specialist for Bethesda Day Treatment Center/PA Treatment and Healing and has volunteered as a Court Appointed Special Advocate. Jennifer has earned her bachelor's degree in Political Science from Bucknell University, as well as her master's degree of Science in Education.

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**Felicia N. Matriccino** is a Parent Ambassador within the Statewide Quality Improvement Department at the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center, University of Pittsburgh. Felicia supports and provides a balance of representation between families and professionals in many statewide efforts to advocate for policy and practice improvements by ensuring the family perspective is integrated into products and services. Felicia was a constituent of the child welfare system roughly six years ago and has about two years of experience navigating services and supports from the child welfare system such as Family Group Decision Making. To this day, she still uses the resources and ideas from those experiences.

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**Marisa McClellan**, Esquire is the Administrator for Dauphin County Social Services for Children and Youth. Prior to her current position, she was the Lead Solicitor for Dauphin County Social Services for Children and Youth for nearly nine years. She was also formerly in private practice representing parents and children in dependency, adoption and family law cases. She was the Pennsylvania Bar Association's Child Advocate of the Year for 2017. She was the chairperson of the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Solicitor's Group from 2014-2017. She is a member of the State Roundtable of Pennsylvania, is the co-chair of the Leader's Roundtable of Pennsylvania, and the Dauphin County Roundtable. She is the current vice-chair of the Children's Rights Committee, of the Pennsylvania Bar Association. She is a member of the Dauphin County Bar Association, Cumberland County Bar Association and the Pennsylvania Bar Association. She is also a member of the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Council. She was also the co-chair of the Pennsylvania Permanency Committee. She is currently a member of the Juvenile Court Procedural Rules Committee. She regularly participates in State-wide workgroups on new juvenile legislation and implementation. She has written on dependency and termination practices in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. In 2017 she was published in the Pennsylvania Bar Association Quarterly. She earned her B.A. from Pennsylvania State University and her J.D. from the Dickinson School of Law, Pennsylvania State University.

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**Jonathan (Jon) Rubin** joined the Department of Human Services as the Office of Children, Youth, and Families' Deputy Secretary on November 4, 2019.

Before joining DHS/OCYF, Jon led Bucks County's Housing and Human Services division since 2014, overseeing the county's child welfare agency, behavioral and developmental health programs, drug and alcohol services, mental health and developmental programs, housing services, and Area Agency on Aging. In that role, Jon focused on created a more integrated approach to Housing and Human Services' work, encouraging two-generation, whole-family focuses and facilitating public-private partnerships and generative program development.

Jon started his career with 15 years spent in the Bucks County Children & Youth Social Services agency, beginning as a social worker and eventually serving four years as a child protective services manager. He has also worked to strengthen the child welfare system on a state level, working at the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center, providing technical assistance and training to children and youth agencies around Pennsylvania, and later with Deloitte as a senior consultant and child welfare subject matter expert, helping implement the Child Welfare Information Solution project. Jon has also worked at the national level supporting child welfare systems across the country when he served as an Organizational Effectiveness Consultant for the American Public Human Services Association.

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**Mary Tatum** is a graduate of Penn State University with a Bachelor of Science in Human Development and Family Studies. She went on to obtain her Master of Public Administration from Capella University. Over the past 13 years, she has obtained diverse experience working in the adoption and foster care field, afterschool program management for at-risk children, mental health programming, and the child advocacy center movement. Ms. Tatum is the current Director of the Child Advocacy Center of Clearfield County and sits as the Western Regional Representative for the Pennsylvania Chapter of CAC and MDT Board of Directors.

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*Catherine Volponi*, Esquire is the Director of the Allegheny County Bar Foundation Juvenile Court Project. The Juvenile Court Project is a nonprofit law office that represents indigent parents in Dependency and Termination of Parental Rights cases in Allegheny County. In addition to in court advocacy the Juvenile Court Project provides out of court advocacy attending various agencies' meetings concerning the educational, medical, psychological, and other needs of clients' families. Ms. Volponi has worked at the Juvenile Court Project for the past 21 years as a staff attorney, managing attorney and director and has participated on several panels and statewide workgroups to provide a parent attorney perspective on various child welfare issues. She is passionate about child welfare law and the need to ensure that all families, regardless of status, receive due process and fundamental fairness under the law.

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*Eliza A. White*, MSW is the Family Engagement and Safety Assessment and Management Process Program Development Specialist with Statewide Quality Improvement Department at the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center, University of Pittsburgh. Eliza supports statewide efforts to advocate for policy and practice improvements, provide consultation and support, and coordinate team efforts. Eliza has been practicing in the Pennsylvania child welfare system since 2003

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*Honorable Dwayne Woodruff* is a Judge on the Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County, presiding in the Family Court Division since 2005 and appointed by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court as Supervising Judge of the Juvenile Court in February 2019. His dedication derives from his belief that he can make the greatest impact serving our youth. Prior to being elected a judge, Woodruff played for the Pittsburgh Steelers as a defensive back (#49) for 12 seasons. He was fortunate to play in Super Bowl 14 as a rookie in 1980 and was chosen Steelers MVP in 1982. He earned his law degree in 1988 from Duquesne University School of Law, during his professional football career, which afforded him the unprecedented distinction of a dual career for three years; simultaneously practicing law with the Meyer Darragh law firm and playing football for the Pittsburgh Steelers. In 1997, Woodruff partnered with Shawn Flaherty to found his own law firm.

Judge Woodruff serves on the board of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and is chair of Pittsburgh's SAFE Workgroup (Shared Accountability for Education), while also serving on the Educational Success & Truancy Prevention (ESTP) Committee. Additionally, Judge Woodruff and his wife Joy are the Pittsburgh co-chairs of "Do the Write Thing Challenge" - a unique initiative of the National Campaign to Stop Violence, which gives middle school students the opportunity to write their thoughts on the impact of violence in their lives and to make personal commitments to reduce violence. He was previously appointed by the PA Supreme Court to the Interbranch Commission on Juvenile Justice, making recommendations to the state following the Luzerne County "kids for cash" scandal. Woodruff considers it a privilege to be in a position to give guidance to youth, especially the young Black males who come before him in court. He feels his work with youth is a divine calling with responsibilities that don't end with the job.

Woodruff has been married for 42 years to Joy Maxberry Woodruff and they worship at Allegheny Center Alliance Church where he has served as an Elder, Growth Group Facilitator and a Marriage Ministry Mentor. He has 8 awesome grandchildren and 3 grown, successful children: Jillian, a medical doctor, Jenyce an attorney and John, also an attorney and Captain in the US Marine Corps. Lastly, on MLK Day 2020, the Allegheny County Bar Association honored Judge Woodruff and his wife as the "Drum Majors for Justice", which is an award which encapsulates his long-standing servant leader relationship with the Pittsburgh community.



**FGDM State Leadership Team**  
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