



[Welcome](#) ..... 1

[Schedule at a Glance](#) ..... 2

[Venue Information](#) ..... 3

Sessions

[Holistic Care of Families and Children](#) .....

[Statewide Panel Discussion](#) .....

[Collaborating at the Community Level: What Works and Why](#) .....

[Community Collaboration: Having Difficult Conversations](#) .....

[Agency Poster Session](#) .....

[Collective Impact: Where Do We Go From Here?](#) .....

[Rise Above Student Achievement Awards](#) .....

We appreciate your feedback! Please complete [this survey](#) by the end of the day.

## Welcome

Welcome to the Children's Issues in a Changing World Conference. We are so glad you're here. Today's program brings together an engaging lineup of speakers from state, regional, and local organizations - including a dynamic afternoon panel discussion - all focused on the community-based systems that support children and families in our region.

Together, we will explore the system changes needed to strengthen those supports and take an honest look at the power of collaboration in making them happen. We'll also reflect on the impact of our last conference - what has grown from those conversations, what continues to move forward, and what work still lies ahead.

We are specially honored to recognize three remarkable high school students who will receive the Rise Above Achievement Award - presented to young people in our region who have faced significant challenges and adversity, and who have risen above them to achieve their goals and inspire their peers. We can't wait to introduce you to these extraordinary individuals and celebrate all they have accomplished.

Thank you for being part of this important work. Let's get started.



### Event Planning Committee

Lori Chaffers

*Outreach, President & CEO*

Chrissy Colon

*Outreach, SafeCare Home Visiting Team Supervisor*

Margaret Durkin

*Outreach, Community & School Liaison*

Tabitha El

*The Advocacy Alliance, Lackawanna County System of Care Coordinator*

Carlene Gula

*Keystone Family Alliance, Lackawanna County Coordinator*

Dr. Emily Hopkins, Ph.D.

*University of Scranton, Associate Professor of Psychology*

Sally Hopkins

*Outreach, Intern*

Dr. Fran Langan, Ed.D.

*Keystone College, Trustee Emerita*

Bridget Matyjevich

*Outreach, Home Visiting Program Director*

Lori Ryan

*Outreach, Community Outreach & Resource Development Manager*

## Today's Agenda

- 8:00 - 9:00 Registration and Light Refreshments  
Agency Poster Session
- 9:00 - 9:15 Welcome and Updates  
Dr. Fran Langan, Keystone College  
Carlene Gula, Keystone Family Alliance
- 9:15 - 10:15 Holistic care of families and children  
Dr. Stephen Long, Jr., M.D., *The Wright Center*  
Dr. Manju Mary Thomas, M.D., *The Wright Center*
- 10:15 - 10:30 Break
- 10:30 - 12:00 Statewide Panel Discussion  
Dr. Valerie A. Arkoosh, M.D., MPH, *PA Secretary of Human Services*  
Dr. Carrie Rowe, *PA Secretary of Education*  
Shante' Brown, *PA Deputy Secretary of Child Development and Early Learning*  
Facilitator: Dr. Fran Langan, *Keystone College*
- 12:00 - 12:30 Group A Lunch, Group B Networking and Agency Poster Session
- 12:30 - 1:00 Group B Lunch, Group A Networking and Agency Poster Session
- 1:00 - 2:00 Collaborating at the Community Level: What Works and Why  
Danielle Breslin, *Moses Taylor Foundation*  
Mike Castellano, *United Way*  
Elizabeth Hemphill, *Scranton School District*  
Facilitator: Lori Chaffers, *Outreach*
- 2:00 - 2:15 Break
- 2:15 - 3:15 Community Collaboration: Having Difficult Conversations  
Mickey Davis, *Maternal Family Health Services*  
Carlene Gula, *Keystone Family Alliance*  
Jill Lennon, *Lackawanna College*  
Facilitator: Elaine Donly, *Outreach*
- 3:15 - 4:00 Collective Impact: Where Do We Go From Here?  
Lori Chaffers, *Outreach*

## Thank you to the Theater at North for hosting this year's event.

The mission of The Theater at North is to enrich the life of our community by offering quality performing arts, as well as providing a venue for social, educational, and professional events.

The Theater at North is located in the former North Scranton Junior High School building atop the hill where Green Ridge Street meets North Main Avenue in Scranton, PA. This historic landmark was built between 1922 and 1924 in a late Gothic Revival style, featuring a four-story clock tower, and is on the National Register of historic places.

The building served as a junior high school until its closure in 1987. In 2015, with Gerald T. Langan at the helm, Goodwill Industries of Northeastern Pennsylvania fully renovated this historic landmark into 58 senior-living units. The building was aptly renamed, "Goodwill at North, Gerald T. Langan Apartments."



In the heart of the building lies the majestic Theater at North, a fully restored and renovated 800 seat performing arts theater, featuring state-of-the-art sound and lighting, and equipped for movie screenings and live feeds to a projection screen. The Theater is host to a variety of performances, concerts, recitals, films, lectures, and community/social events.

The Theater at North is owned by Goodwill Industries of NEPA whose mission is to provide supportive opportunities for individuals with disabilities or other barriers, to enhance their lives. All proceeds from ticket sales and venue rentals go to Goodwill Industries to support individuals in NEPA.

### [Address and Parking Information](#)

1539 North Main Avenue  
Scranton, PA 18508

Free off-street parking is available in our well-lit parking lot located directly behind our building. The parking area is accessible from Theodore Street off North Main Avenue. We ask that you kindly do not park in areas reserved specifically for residents, including the lower lot (which is reserved for handicap residents). Handicap parking spots are available in our main lot. Additional street parking is available on Theodore Street.

Food and drinks are not permitted in the theater. Drink stations will be available in the lobby, gallery, and community room. Please leave ALL drinks, including closed water bottles, in your vehicle or in the lobby.

## Meet Our Speakers

### Holistic Care of Families and Children

9:15 - 10:15 (Theater)

#### Description of panel



#### **Dr. Stephen S. Long Jr., M.D.**

##### **Associate Program Director, The Wright Center**

Dr. Long is a dually board-certified physician in internal medicine and pediatrics. After receiving his Bachelor of Science in biochemistry, cell and molecular biology, and philosophy from the University of Scranton and his medical degree from Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine in Scranton, Dr. Long completed his residency at MaineHealth Maine Medical Center in Portland.



#### **Dr. Manju Mary Thomas, M.D.**

##### **Deputy Chief Medical Officer, The Wright Center**

Dr. Thomas, board-certified in pediatrics and obesity medicine, serves as deputy chief medical officer and medical director of pediatrics and school- and community-based medical home services. Dr. Thomas, a physician faculty member of the family medicine residency pediatrics program at The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education, earned her medical degree from St. John's Medical College, Bangalore, India. She completed her residency in pediatrics at Brookdale University Hospital, Brooklyn, New York.

## Statewide Panel Discussion

10:30 - 12:00 (Theater)

### Description of panel



**Dr. Valerie A. Arkoosh, M.D., MPH**

Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Human Services



**Dr. Carrie Rowe**

Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Education

A visionary leader in public education, Dr. Carrie Rowe brings 25 years of public education experience to her role as Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Before taking a position with the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Dr. Rowe served as a Superintendent of Schools in the western region of the state. Both as a former Superintendent and now as the Secretary, her career has focused on ensuring fairness and justice in resource allocation and eliminating institutional barriers to access and opportunity.



**Shante' A. Brown, MS, Ed.S.**

Deputy Secretary, Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning

Shante' A. Brown is a dedicated early childhood education leader with over a decade of experience in leading child care programs. Shante' began her career with the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) in 2021 as the director for the Bureau of Certification Services. She has served as a leader in multiple positions within Philadelphia including Director of PHLpreK, Philadelphia's city-funded PreK Initiative, Education Field Administrator Early Childhood Coach, and PreK teacher with the School District of Philadelphia. Shante' holds a B.S.Ed. in Early Childhood - Elementary Education, M.S. in Reading Education, and an Ed.S. in Teacher Leadership.

## Collaborating at the Community Level: What Works and Why

1:00 - 2:00 (Theater)

Multi-sector collaboration is key to improving outcomes in our community. In this session, you will hear from three community leaders about local collaborative efforts: Age Friendly Lackawanna, the NEPA Workforce Funder Collaborative, and the Scranton School District's approach to aligning with collaborative partners. Panelists will share what works in these initiatives, the challenges they face, and why they are important for advancing solutions to complex social problems. While their respective initiatives may not directly align with the conference's focus on children's issues, their lessons learned and experience can help us understand what it takes to collaborate effectively to prioritize and meet children's needs.

Moderator: Lori Chaffers, Outreach



**Danielle Breslin**

**President and CEO, Moses Taylor Foundation**

Danielle Breslin is President and CEO of Moses Taylor Foundation, a private foundation with a mission to improve the health of people in Northeastern Pennsylvania. Before joining the Foundation in March 2022, she served as Vice President of Operations and Learning for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation. She earned a certificate in Nonprofit Management from Duke University, was a member of the first cohort of the Change Leaders in Philanthropy Fellows program at Grantmakers for Effective Organizations, and participated in the Leadership Lackawanna Executive Program. Danielle currently serves on the board of The Institute and is Co-Chair of the newly established NEPA Workforce Funder Collaborative.



**Mike Castellano**

**Special Projects Manager, United Way of Lackawanna, Wayne, and Pike Counties**

In his role, Mike works to improve the health and well-being of older adults while leading a collaborative of dozens of social service, health care, government, and other organizations. Prior to his work with The United Way, Mike co-founded a nonprofit to bolster youth workforce development in New Jersey. With nearly ten years of community engagement experience, Mike is eager and

driven to strengthen the local community in Northeastern Pennsylvania, where he was born and raised.



**Elizabeth Hemphill, LCSW, BCD**

**Supervisor of Mental Health Programs, Scranton School District**

Liz Hemphill, LCSW, BCD, is a seasoned mental health professional with more than 30 years of clinical experience across a range of settings. She began her career working with local social service agencies, including Outreach (formerly EOTC), and went on to own and operate a private practice for over two decades, providing outpatient services to children, adolescents, and families. Liz has extensive experience in school-based mental health, having developed and implemented programs in several local districts.

## Community Collaboration: Having Difficult Conversations

2:15 - 3:15 (Theater)

This is a deeply necessary conversation. It highlights a familiar paradox within the helping professions: we are trained to extend boundless grace to those we serve, yet we often struggle to offer that same grace to one another. This discussion invites us to reflect on how we engage with colleagues when perspectives differ, and challenges us to move toward greater understanding, respect, and collaboration—for the sake of the children and families we all serve.

Facilitator: Elaine Donly (Outreach)



### Mickey Davis

#### Senior Health Educator, Maternal Family Health Services

Michalene/Mickey Davis (she/her) is the Senior Health Educator at Maternal and Family Health Services. Her background includes 10 years of working with adolescents and adults to facilitate discussions around sexual and reproductive health with topics including safer sex methods, contraceptives, STD/STI prevention, healthy relationships, and LGBTQ Topics. She earned a Master's Degree in Clinical Psychology from Marywood University and a Master's of Education in Human Sexuality from Widener University. She is passionate about helping individuals make healthy choices for themselves. She is committed to promoting accurate, unabashed and comprehensive sexuality education for youth and adults in the NEPA area.



### Carlene Gula

#### Lackawanna County Coordinator, Keystone Family Alliance

Carlene Gula retired in June after a 26-year career with the Outreach Center for Community Resources. She now serves as the Lackawanna County Coordinator for Keystone Family Alliance, a statewide Christian organization, where she works to bridge the gap between the local Church and the child welfare system. Carlene holds a Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education and Family Studies from Keystone College and is deeply passionate about advocating for vulnerable children and their families.



**Jill Lennon, MSN, RN**

**Lackawanna College, Program Specialist in Maternal Child Care**

Jill is a registered nurse with 17 years experience working in obstetrics and pediatrics and nursing education. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Penn State University and Master of Science in Nursing from Western Governors University. She currently works as the Program Specialist in Maternal Child Care for the nursing program at Lackawanna College. She resides in Lackawanna County with her husband and four children.

## Collective Impact: Where Do We Go From Here?

3:15 - 4:00 (Theater)



### Lori Chaffers, MSW

#### Outreach Center for Community Resources, President & CEO

Since 2022, Lori Chaffers, MSW, has served as President and Chief Executive Officer of Outreach – Center for Community Resources, leading the organization with a deep commitment to family stability and community well-being. Under her leadership, Outreach has experienced remarkable growth: staff has more than doubled—from 41 to 88 employees—the annual budget has grown from \$1.8 million to \$6.2 million, and in 2023 the agency opened a second location in downtown Wilkes-Barre.

Ms. Chaffers holds a Bachelor of Social Work from Eastern University and a Master of Social Work from Temple University, and brings more than 15 years of experience in child welfare and human services. As Program Director at the Lackawanna County Office of Youth and Family Services, she grew the county's Independent Living Program from a single coordinator to a full unit. Her research has been published in *Research on Social Work Practice* and the *Journal of Public Child Welfare* (Nathans & Chaffers, 2022).

A collaborative leader and systems thinker, Ms. Chaffers was instrumental in establishing the Lackawanna County System of Care initiative and the Independent Living Collaborative. She continues to mentor emerging social workers as a field liaison for Marywood University's School of Social Work, and remains focused on early childhood systems linkage and multi-sector collaboration in support of Outreach's mission of "moving today's families forward."

## [Agency Poster Session](#)

Please visit the gallery to view informational posters about agencies at work in our community. Visit during the morning networking hour (8:00 - 9:00) or at lunch (12:00 - 1:00) to collect stamps on your Poster Passport. Collect four stamps and return your passport to the registration desk to be entered into a raffle. Winners will be drawn at the end of the day.

### Participating agencies:

- [The Aaron Center](#)
- [The Advocacy Alliance](#)
- [Catholic Social Services of the Diocese of Scranton](#)
- [Friends of the Poor and Catherine McAuley Center](#)
- [Keystone Family Alliance](#)
- [Lackawanna County District Attorney](#)
- [Maternal and Family Health Services](#)
- [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#)
- [NEPA Crisis Intervention Team](#)
- [Outreach - Center for Community Resources](#)
- [Scranton Counseling Center](#)
- [United Neighborhood Centers of NEPA](#)
- [WRC](#)

## Rise Above Student Achievement Awards

The [Rise Above Achievement Award](#) recognizes young people in our region who have overcome challenges and adversity to achieve their goals and become role models to their peers.



[Bella Hubert](#) is a senior at Scranton High School who is actively involved in a variety of activities, with a strong passion for cheerleading. Guided by her faith in Christ and supported by her grandfather, Bella has overcome challenges including drug abuse in her home and a shocking family discovery. She plans to study psychology in college, with the ultimate goal of becoming a loving wife and mother.



[Emily Atonal](#) is a senior at Scranton High School who participates in numerous activities. Despite her last name carrying negative connotations within her family, Emily has used that judgment as motivation to work hard and become her best self. She is inspired by her mother, who has always encouraged her. After graduation, Emily plans to enlist in the Marines, following in her cousin's footsteps, and later pursue a career in dentistry.

[Niamaya Amaro](#)