

A photograph of a man with a beard and a young boy smiling together in a field of sunflowers. The man is wearing a denim shirt, and the boy is wearing a grey and green raglan shirt. The background is a bright, sunny field of yellow sunflowers.

2021 COLORADO CASA **ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

PROGRAM DETAILS

[COLORADOCASA.ORG/CASACONFERENCE](https://coloradocasa.org/casacconference)



COLORADO CASA

2021 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

FULL SCHEDULE



TUESDAY, OCTOBER 5

9:30 – 10:00 am	Welcome and Kickoff.....	Stage
10:00 – 11:00 am	Adverse Childhood Experiences, Toxic Stress, and Resilience	Sessions
10:00 – 11:00 am	Understanding HB21-1094 – Foster Youth in Transition Program	Sessions
11:00 – 11:30 am	Live Vendor Chat.....	Expo
12:00 – 1:00 pm	Keynote: Tori Hope Peterson.....	Stage
2:00 – 3:00 pm	Spreading HOPE: The Importance of Positive Childhood Experiences	Sessions
2:00 – 3:00 pm	Adolescent Mental Health: Building a Framework for Connection and Resilience	Sessions

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 6

10:00 – 11:00 am	Volunteer Recruitment; Community Engagement & DEI.....	Sessions
10:00 – 11:00 am	Cultivating Resilience through the Lens of Neurobiology.....	Sessions
11:00 – 11:30 am	Live Vendor Chat.....	Expo
12:00 – 1:00 pm	Keynote: Jacari Harris	Stage
2:00 – 3:00 pm	Sowing the Seeds of Volunteer Retention.....	Sessions
2:00 – 3:00 pm	Relationship Building Panel Discussion	Sessions

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 7

10:00 – 11:00 am	Motivational Interviewing: A Guide to More Effective Communication	Sessions
10:00 – 11:00 am	You Can Move Mountains! Effective Health Advocacy for the Children & Youth We Care For	Sessions
11:00 – 11:30 am	Live Vendor Chat	Expo
12:00 – 1:00 pm	Keynote: Savanna Smith & Jacki Cunningham.....	Stage
2:00 – 3:00 pm	2020 Statewide Summary & Award Ceremony.....	Stage

DAILY SCHEDULE

TUESDAY OCTOBER 5TH

WELCOME AND KICK-OFF: 9:30 AM – 10:00 AM

BREAKOUT SESSION 1: 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES, TOXIC STRESS, AND RESILIENCE

SPEAKER: Nichole Wallace, MD, Medical Director of the Child Protection Team at Children’s Hospital Colorado in Colorado Springs, Board Certified Child Abuse Pediatrician, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics with University of Colorado School of Medicine

Nichole is a board-certified Child Abuse Pediatrician and has been working in the field of child maltreatment for 18 years. She has been in Colorado for 7 years and enjoys working with non-medical professionals who are also part of child maltreatment recognition, response, and prevention efforts.

SESSION DESCRIPTION: Children who experience adversity in childhood are exposed to toxic stress in their bodies. This toxic stress impairs the growth and development of the brain and also causes other negative physical and mental effects through changes in the expression of our DNA. Children who are exposed to many adverse childhood experiences go on to have higher rates of a variety of physical and mental health problems in adulthood. We can better serve those with high ACE scores by implementing trauma-informed practices.

Objectives of this session are to understand the relationship between childhood adversity and physical and mental health outcomes in adults; recognize the role of toxic stress in poor health outcomes from adversity and consider the importance of trauma-informed practices in our communities and specifically within the judicial system.

UNDERSTANDING HB21-1094 – FOSTER YOUTH IN TRANSITION PROGRAM

SPEAKER: Kristin Melton, Youth Services Manager in Division of Child Welfare

Kristin started her career as an Equal Justice Works Fellow at the Rocky Mountain Children’s Law Center, where she represented the best interests of children as their guardian ad litem and focused her practice on the intersection of child welfare and education. She is currently the Youth Services at the Division of Child Welfare, where she has led multiple policy reform efforts on behalf of foster youth.

SPEAKER: Trevor Williams, Youth Services Administrator and Pathways to Success Project Director

Trevor has worked in the helping professions for 21 years, with 17 years of that being in child welfare. His work is focused on improving outcomes and supports for transition age youth who are involved with child welfare through meaningful practice improvements.

SESSION DESCRIPTION: Attendees will develop a basic understanding of HB 21-1094, Foster Youth in Transition Program including the new practice requirements and opportunities eligible youth will have under the law.

KEYNOTE: 12:00 PM / TORI HOPE PETERSEN



TORI HOPE PETERSEN is a former foster youth, biological mom, foster mom, foster care advocate, author, and national speaker. You can find her memoir being published through B&H in August of 2022. She founded the non-profit Bring Beloved which aims to give foster youth a voice. Her and her husband, Jacob, founded the Fostering the Good Scholarship at Hillsdale College specific to youth aging out of the system. She has been named Mrs. Minnesota and will be competing for Mrs. Universe in July!

BREAKOUT SESSION 2: 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM

THE IMPORTANCE OF POSITIVE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

SPEAKER: Amanda Winn, HOPE West Coast Project Manager

Amanda, macro-level MSW, received her degree from UC Berkeley with a joint focus on Health and Children & Families. She has spent her professional career working at the intersection of parenting, gender, and resilience.

SESSION DESCRIPTION: The presentation will cover the importance of positive childhood experiences (PCEs) and the research showing their mitigating effects on adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), the biologic basis for these effects, the four building blocks of HOPE and type 1 vs. type 2 thinking. The presentation will introduce some ideas of how to incorporate the HOPE Framework into practice. Interaction will consist of audience polling and sharing (virtually in the chat box) plus a Q&A.

ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH: BUILDING A FRAMEWORK FOR CONNECTION AND RESILIENCE

SPEAKER: Leah Krusich, PsyD., LP, Licensed Clinical Psychologist, Behavioral Health Consultant for the 1st Judicial District Juvenile Behavioral Health Court, and Family Services Assessment Specialist.

Dr. Krusich is greatly invested in helping professionals from various disciplines more effectively support children, youth, and families through increased awareness and understanding of behavioral health and systemic influences. Her relevant

previous experience includes providing therapy, prevention, and consultation in school and integrated care settings.

SESSION DESCRIPTION: Participants will learn some key points of interaction between adolescent development and mental health and how to recognize them, strategies for building culturally humble connections that foster resilience, tips for handling difficult moments, and why taking care of oneself is essential to the process.

DAILY SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 6TH

BREAKOUT SESSION 1: 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT; COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & DEI

SPEAKER: Abbie Foley, Associate Development Director for CASA of Adams & Broomfield Counties

Abbie was sworn-in as a CASA Volunteer with Advocates for Children in July 2018. She joined the CASA of Adams & Broomfield Counties team as the Outreach & Recruitment Coordinator in April 2019. In July 2021, she stepped into the role of Associate Development Director, with a focus on Community Engagement and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI).

PANELIST: Arlene Brugal, Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion | Kids in Court Program Manager for Boulder Voices for Children

Arlene has a master's degree in counseling education and currently seeking licensure to become a licensed professional counselor. She has been involved with Boulder Voices for Children for four years and is passionate about child welfare and the mission of the CASA program.

PANELIST: Josefina Raphael-Millner, Executive Director for Advocates for Children

Josefina holds a MBA and a B.B.A. in Accounting & Finance. Josefina started her career in the public sector as a Certified Public Accountant and Data Analyst but soon after decided to apply her business acumen knowledge to fulfilling a passion in child welfare. Josefina has a personal connection to the mission of Advocates for Children CASA, she understands firsthand the importance of keeping children safe and supported. Josefina has spent the last 22 years helping to provide a voice for children who are in the most difficult of situations. Over the years she has served on several Local, State, and National Committees focusing on advocacy and systems improvement.

SESSION DESCRIPTION: Attendees will learn how to:

- Build well-rounded community partnerships and how this translates into successful volunteer recruitment
- Identify what opportunities for engagement are available in their own community
- Integrate diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) into their volunteer recruitment efforts

After the presentation, attendees will hear from a panel of individuals from local CASA programs about their community engagement, DEI, and volunteer recruitment efforts.

CULTIVATING RESILIENCE THROUGH THE LENS OF NEUROBIOLOGY

SPEAKER: Ruby Jo Walker, Expert in the Neurobiology of Trauma and Resilience

With 30 years of experience, Ruby, LCSW is an expert trainer and therapist specializing in the neurobiology of trauma and resilience. She is the founder of Post-Traumatic Growth Somatic Therapy—a unique blend of cutting-edge somatic therapy practices rooted in the fields of neurobiology, trauma healing, attachment, resilience and polyvagal theory. She works with helping professionals and clients to incorporate interpersonal neurobiology for deep change and transformation.

SESSION DESCRIPTION: The presentation will cover understanding the neurobiology of trauma and resilience, identifying biological states connected to behavior and emotions, using regulation skills to support self-regulation and skills to support resilience in self and others.

KEYNOTE: 12:00 PM / JACARI HARRIS



JACARI HARRIS is a native of Tallahassee Florida and the current Executive Director of the George Floyd Memorial Foundation. Jacari is a social justice activist, inspirational speaker, and the author of *“Lost and Found: Finding Success in The Search for Self”*. Jacari earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from Bethune Cookman University. During his time as an undergraduate student, Jacari served in numerous leadership positions including Student Body President. He went on to receive his MBA and Master of Arts in

Emergency Management from Florida International University. Jacari was also an intern for former California Senator, now U.S. Vice President-Elect Kamala Harris.

Jacari's diligent efforts have led him to receive numerous awards including BCU's 40 Under 40 Award and The United Negro College Fund College President of the year award. He has been able to study abroad in Senegal, West Africa and study community policing and criminal justice reform. In his spare time, Jacari advocates for foster and adoptive children. Having grown up in the foster care system and being adopted, Jacari brings messages of inspiration and encouragement to many young children.

BREAKOUT SESSION 2: 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM

SOWING THE SEEDS OF VOLUNTEER RETENTION

SPEAKER: Lisa Briggs, Coaching and Advocacy Development Lead, Texas CASA, Inc.

Lisa is the Coaching and Advocacy Development Lead at Texas CASA, Inc. in Austin, Texas. Before moving to Austin in 2017, she was worked at a local CASA program as a Volunteer Supervisor and then served as the Program Director.

SESSION DESCRIPTION: Session objectives are to define retention – measuring & setting goals, what motivates a volunteer to stay and shifting to coaching – get curious & stay curious!

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING PANEL DISCUSSION

PANELIST: Meg Harlow, CASA Volunteer at Boulder Voices For Children CASA

Meg began volunteering for BVFC CASA 11 years ago, the same month that she retired from her 30+ Early Childhood teaching career with BVSD. She has had three cases, each unique and with young boys. Her current case which opened in 2017, is happily moving towards a positive closure for this 16-year-old. In between her own CASA cases she has been a Peer Coordinator.

PANELIST: Nancy Steele, Training Coordinator for Advocates for Children CASA

Nancy is a Colorado native who worked as an educator and professional developer in two large school districts and consulted with districts and schools across the state. After becoming a CASA Volunteer at Advocates for Children she started working there five years ago and now is the Training Coordinator who gets to prepare new volunteers for this great experience.

PANELIST: Melanie Griffin, CASA Volunteer at Child Advocates – Denver CASA

Melanie is from St Louis, Missouri. She and her husband moved to Colorado about four years ago for his job. They have three grown daughters; two in social work and one special education teacher. Melanie enjoys camping, hiking, cooking, and reading. Mostly, she loves being a CASA volunteer. Her passion are children—they are our future.

PANELIST: Katherine Kauk, CASA Volunteer at CASA of the Continental Divide

Katherine is a mother of three young adults and formerly worked in healthcare with an background in engineering. She and her husband moved to the Colorado mountains in recent years and enjoy a wide range of outdoor activities including skiing and hiking.

SESSION DESCRIPTION: In this session, hear from a panel of CASA volunteers discussing their experiences and best practices in relationship building on a case; with the youth, placement providers and other professionals.

DAILY SCHEDULE

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 7TH

BREAKOUT SESSION 1: 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING: A GUIDE TO MORE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

SPEAKER: Greg Saiz, Implementation Specialist

Greg is a specialist in facilitating group training and brings a wealth of knowledge and experience on the science of implementation, ongoing fidelity practices, and process improvement.

SESSION DESCRIPTION: This interactive session will introduce the Spirit and Skills of Motivational Interviewing (MI) while equipping attendees with the ability and confidence to immediately implement the practice in their work and personal lives.

YOU CAN MOVE MOUNTAINS! EFFECTIVE HEALTH ADVOCACY FOR THE CHILDREN & YOUTH WE CARE FOR

FACILITATOR: Angie Goodger, CDPHE Pediatric Care Coordination Systems Consultant

Angie is the Pediatric Care Coordination Systems Consultant within the Children, Youth & Families Branch at the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment (CDPHE). She partners with communities to build systems that support Colorado children & youth with special healthcare needs. She supports efforts to improve access to coordinated care for children and youth with special health care needs and their families through policy and systems improvements across three areas of focus: improving coordinated care, enhancing access to pediatric specialty care, and increasing access to information and resources.

PANELIST: Lisa Franklin, Parent to Parent Colorado

Lisa is a mom of three adult children, one of whom had mental health needs as a child/youth that have continued into adulthood. She is a kinship caregiver for her eight-year old granddaughter who was born prematurely and has special health care needs. She is the Program Manager for Parent to Parent of Colorado (P2PCO) and previously worked in special education for many years. She also serves as the Title V family delegate for Colorado. P2PCO works closely with the Maternal Child Health (MCH) program at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) to promote the inclusion of community members with lived experiences in priorities and projects.

PANELIST: Veronica Perra, CDPHE HCP Consultant

Veronica is an HCP Consultant for the CYSHCN section at the Colorado Department of Public and Environment. Her role is to support Local Public Health Agencies with HCP care coordination and other program activities for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs.

PANELIST: Megan Bowser, Family Voices Colorado Parent Consultant

Megan is a mom to four children, two typically developing girls and two boys with special health care needs. She is also the founder of the Denver Special Needs Parent Community group and a parent consultant with Family Voices Colorado. Previous to having kids, she was a high school teacher.

Family Voices CO provides public awareness of the challenges and barriers of children and youth with special health care needs and their families; works to improve health equity, access and quality of care for children and youth with special health care needs, through: Policy Work, Education/Training, and Collaboration; and assists vulnerable families in Colorado to navigate today's healthcare and service systems, understanding their rights and services available to them.

SESSION DESCRIPTION: Healthcare is a complex system to navigate, especially for those coordinating care for children and youth who need more services than their peers! Join this virtual info session to learn how to constructively - and successfully - identify and navigate health care services and resources for children in Child Welfare, engage care teams, and advocate to remove barriers to access. CASA staff and volunteers can move mountains and provide the best possible health advocacy.

KEYNOTE: 12:00 PM / SAVANNA SMITH



SAVANNA SMITH is a former foster youth and former CASA youth. She has a passion for sharing her story to help raise awareness about the importance and necessity of programs like CASA for children and young adults involved with the child welfare system. Looking back at the years of her life in foster care, the one thing she always remembers is the incredible care and attention she received from CASA. This pushed her through one of the toughest journeys she has had to

endure. Savanna's overall goal is to spread her appreciation and help CASA get the recognition that is much deserved for all that they do. CASA volunteers are a big part in shaping young lives to have a better future.

KEYNOTE: 12:00 PM / JACKI CUNNINGHAM



When **JACKI CUNNINGHAM** went to an informational meeting for CASA of Pueblo 16 years ago, she had no idea how much that decision would change her life. Being a CASA volunteer has challenged and encouraged her in ways that only a fellow CASA could understand. Although she is not a gifted speaker by nature, she loves sharing her experiences with just about anybody who will listen! Her heart's desire is to inspire other CASAs and to encourage her audience

to see the importance of the organization. The tasks they are given are not always fun, in fact sometimes they are so difficult they can hardly bear it. But that's when CASA kicks into high gear, to protect the children they are so privileged to serve and to inform caseworkers, judges and GAL's what is in the best interest of our children. Jacki is so grateful for the decision she made 16 years ago and will continue to be a CASA as long as she has life and breath flowing through her body.

2021 STATEWIDE SUMMARY & AWARD CEREMONY: 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Join us for this final session, Colorado CASA Awards Ceremony and a 2021 Statewide Summary by Colorado CASA Executive Director, Jenny Bender. There are so many outstanding people who are involved with CASA, help us celebrate the award winners for volunteer, advocate, employee, professional partner, and judicial partner of the year!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to our generous sponsors and amazing conference planning committee for making this year's event happen. To our staff, volunteers, and community supporters; the work we do in CASA programs across the State of Colorado is not possible without your dedication and commitment to serving children. Thank you for all you do!

AWARD WINNERS

CASA ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR

Jack Cregan | Advocates for Children CASA

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Jan Podoll | Board Chair – CASA of Jefferson and Gilpin Counties

PROFESSIONAL PARTNER OF THE YEAR

Pricewaterhouse Cooper's Skills for Society Program Consulting Team, Alexis Steinard; Tim Latham; Tyler Steffensen, Connor Schraff, Aaron Tinkham | Child Advocates – Denver CASA

JUDICIAL PARTNER OF THE YEAR

Judge Kathy Delgado | CASA of Adams and Broomfield Counties

STAFF MEMBER OF THE YEAR

Andrea Tagtow | Advocates for Children CASA

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Jenny Bender, Colorado CASA

Tisa Kunkee, Colorado CASA

Karci Lockwood, CASA of Mesa County

Maddy Wellum, CASA of Jefferson and Gilpin Counties

SPONSORS



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