

Bridging the Gap for Pennsylvania's Children and Families.

Welcome to the 55th Annual Training Conference of the Domestic Relations Association of Pennsylvania in the Steel City, Pittsburgh, PA. Pittsburgh has always held a special place in my heart. Having grown up in Western PA, the city has been a part of many events in my life. I hope that your experience here leaves you with fond memories and a desire to visit the city again.

Planning for this event takes an army of volunteers and I've been very fortunate to work with an amazing group of people on the Annual Conference Committee. If you see anyone wearing a conference committee tag on their name badge, please take the time to thank them for all of their hard work. And to our President Carla Smith, it has been great to work with you while planning this event. I appreciate all of your encouragement, patience, support, and belief in me.

Before I acknowledge the committees that made this conference come together, I want to express my appreciation and gratitude to the staff of the Butler County Domestic Relations Section. Without their hard work and dedication, I would not have been able to chair this committee. I also want to thank our Court Administrator, Candace Graff, for continually supporting my involvement with DRAP. Thank you, thank you.

To Carla Szalewicz and the entire Agenda Subcommittee, thank you for putting together such a full and complete agenda. It didn't take long for the first draft of the agenda to be created, and from there, it has grown into an exceptional and all-encompassing educational opportunity for our attendees. Thanks also to Margaret Kaiser-Collins for arranging our CLE accreditation.

To Sari Love, Jaime Trupp, Andy Henderson, Julia Parker Greenwood, the Registration Subcommittee, DRAP's Public Relations Committee, the admin@drap-pa.org team, and the "DRAP App" team, thank you all so much for your collective efforts to incorporate conference registration for the first time via the DRAP website, and for coordinating the Mary Kunkel Award of Excellence voting through the website. And extra special thanks to Mr. Andrew Henderson for the immense effort you've performed, both during and outside of "normal" business hours, to make sure our online registration worked properly, and to ensure that DRAP has fully functioning "DRAP Apps."

To our Vendor & Sponsor Chairs, Vonda Huffman and Chris Dunham, you continue to outdo yourselves. This year you managed to raise over \$19,000.00 in funds to help offset conference related expenses. Thank you so much for what you do!

To our Entertainment Subcommittee led by Tricia Sorg, Joe Zalar, Kim Maenz, Karyn Leonard, Daniel Elsass, Brittany Robinson and many other Allegheny County staff members, thank you for putting together our week's entertainment. On Sunday, enjoy the Steeler game watch part at the Bigelow Kitchen & Bar located at the DoubleTree, and later on listen to live music while we enjoy our Sundae Dessert bar. On Monday we can either explore the city using any of the [reference guides](#) put together by the Entertainment Committee or enjoy a relaxing evening by the pool during DRAP's pool party. On Tuesday evening a bus tour of the city will be available or you can participate in a cornhole tournament. Wednesday we'll get to enjoy a comedian during our meal and a DJ after the awards ceremony has concluded.

Thank you to Robin Kelly, who not only dove in when necessary for last minute changes to the conference agenda, but also for organizing this year's conference gift that involves DRAP, Pittsburgh, and a locally owned and operated business, Wendell August Forge.

To our partners at BCSE, OCSE, PACSETI, and the AOPC, thank you for your contributions to this year's event and for your continued support of DRAP and our commitment to help Pennsylvania's children get the support they so desperately need and deserve.

To our Sponsors, thank you for continually supporting DRAP, not only through your financial generosity, but also through the products that you offer which help Pennsylvania's Child Support program continue to be the best in the nation. Conference attendees, please take the time to visit with and speak to our sponsors and vendors near the registration area.

A special thanks to Christine McKelvey for donating this year's eco-friendly reusable conference registration bags. Please note that the bags are made of recycled plastic bottles, support DRAP staying "green", and, most importantly, are in honor of her nephew Michael David McKelvey, aka Mike the Nomad, who was an American artist, environmentalist, and outdoor adventurer.

This year's slogan was created by Carl Ciglar from Philadelphia – Bridging the Gap for Pennsylvania's Children and Families. Congratulations Carl! Fun fact – Did you know that at 446, Pittsburgh has more bridges than any other city in the world?

Lastly, I want to recognize the DRAP Board of Directors for supporting two different and highly personal ideas to me at this year's conference: Hosting a blood drive and supporting the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. On May 1, 2020, at the age of 10, my nephew Noah was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (also referred to as ALL), and since that time, he has required a total of 49 blood and platelet transfusions. After Noah was diagnosed, I became a blood and platelet donor immediately when I saw firsthand the positive impact blood, plasma, and platelet transfusions had on him. DRAP is an association focused on improving the well-being of children and families. Having a blood drive (Tuesday from 1:00 PM to 6:00 PM) gives us yet another tangible opportunity to aid children in need. Whether you're a long-time donor or a first-time donor, please consider the incredible impact donating blood can have on those who need it. Throughout Noah's journey, he and his family have also been recipients of services from the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. Their mission is to cure leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease, and myeloma, and improve the quality of life of patients and their families. In an effort to give back and support other families in similar situations, all proceeds from this year's DRAP Board Basket raffle will be donated to the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. Thank you for your support!

Adam J. Fencil
Annual Conference Chair
Butler County Domestic Relations