



Thaler Retires; Ahrens Named Acting Deputy

Nancy: "Dear friends and colleagues: I am writing to tell you that I am retiring from state government at the end of August. While it is difficult to walk away, it is time for me to make this change."

Kristin Ahrens will serve as Acting Deputy Secretary. Kristin is knowledgeable about all of ODP's programs and is well known to those in the service system. She has been instrumental in developing the *Everyday Lives* recommendations, the ODP waivers and fee schedule, and has been responsible for training, quality and communications



Deputy Secretary Nancy Thaler is shown with members and guests at the August meeting of Speaking For Ourselves, a self-advocacy group.

I thank Governor Wolf and Secretary Miller for their support of ODP and for making several achievements possible. In the past three years, we have expanded the program to everyone with autism, guaranteed everyone on the waiting list access to a support coordinator, and removed the fear of falling off the cliff after graduation for school graduates and their families. The waivers have expanded to promote employment and self-determination, and we provided one of the most significant rate increases in the program's history.

We are at the threshold of new and exciting developments. Studies in the brain and neurology are opening up new understandings about disability and the process of learning so we can be more effective at helping people. Building infrastructure to manage community services will improve accountability and make the system more effective at achieving *Everyday Lives* outcomes. Implementing the Life Course approach will strengthen the resilience of families and their ability to support their family members. Reaching people who have complex needs and are waiting to take their place in the community will complete the pledge to make it possible for everyone to have an Everyday Life."



KRISTIN AHRENS

Kristin: "I am honored to step into the role of Acting Deputy Secretary and especially honored to follow in the footsteps of Nancy Thaler, an extraordinary leader in the disability community. In 2016 under Nancy's leadership, we reaffirmed *Everyday Lives* as the vision and values that guide us. Following the recommendations and strategies outlined in *Everyday Lives*, our community has made incredible strides in employment, people connecting with their communities, supporting families, addressing the waiting list, self-directed services, expanding services to people with autism and building capacity to serve people with complex needs. As we continue our efforts in these areas, we will also be working to strengthen the system infrastructure and simplify the system for individuals and families. In my new role at ODP, I will continue to work tirelessly to further the ODP mission and to ensure *Everyday Lives* values are embedded in all aspects of our service system."

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CBI: A Powerful ODP-OMHSAS Collaborative

The ODP Capacity Building Institute (CBI) began in 2016 to increase capacity in supporting individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and behavioral health challenges, and to decrease the need for institutional services.

CBI is one of the collaborative capacity building initiatives between ODP and the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS). Other CBI initiatives include Mental Health First Aid: in-person training session to teach people how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders; a professional conference series providing education about the needs of individuals with dual diagnoses; and the dual diagnosis curriculum being accessible online.



Members of the Capacity Building Institute Spring Class of 2018 are pictured (not all participants are shown).

Each year at the institute, interdisciplinary members of the Mental Health/Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities service systems gather over nine months to examine system issues, focus on clinical best practices, and influence policy.

CBI staff include Dr. Greg Cherves, co-director; Dr. Beth Barol, co-director; Marlinda Smith, LCSW, Capacity Building grant coordinator; and Robin Levine of The Columbus Organization, MSW, Institute coordinator.

"The Institute's value stems from the combined experience of learning and collaborating: participants come to learn but they also bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to share with others," said retired ODP Deputy Secretary Nancy Thaler. "The collaborative relationships developed during the Institute last for years into the future."

A large benefit of participation in this inter-agency collaboration is the opportunity to network. The peer support established through CBI is invaluable, especially among direct care staff.

My experience at CBI was extremely beneficial," said Riki Geyer, Clinical Manager, PA IDD / DCIQ Resources for Human Development Inc.

"The knowledge gained from the sessions was expansive and served to enhance the depth and breadth of my skills with regards to supporting a population in need of thoughtful and intentional supports to sustain positive



A CBI graduate receives his certification and congratulations from Deputy Secretaries Nancy Thaler and Lynn Kovich.

"The knowledge gained from the sessions was expansive and served to enhance the depth and breadth of my skills"

***— Riki Geyer,
Clinical Manager,
Human Development Inc.***

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CBI: A Powerful ODP-OMHSAS Collaborative

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growth towards reaching their potential and maximizing their quality of life."

"CBI provided a community of practice amongst like minded professionals that created a means to develop partnerships across systems and regions. In the short time since graduating CBI, I have experienced several instances of collaboration and partnership made possible by relationships developed at CBI," added Geyer.

Sixty-six individuals made up the CBI Class of 2018 and earned certificates on July 15, part of a two-day culminating conference held in State College, PA. During the conference, teams presented case studies from the nine-month project, with emphasis on challenges and recommended policy/procedure changes specific to each case. Deputy Secretaries Thaler and Lynn Kovich of OMHSAS attended the conference and presented each participant with a certificate of completion.

"The 2018 CBI was a true example of the good work that can happen when people come together in the spirit of collaboration and purpose, all with a common goal to enhance services and supports to individuals we collectively serve," said Deputy Secretary Kovich. "It was amazing to see the camaraderie that developed, over the course of the Institute, that resulted in trust among the 2018 class participants. That trust led to real-life problem solving that will have lasting effects. Onward to the 2019 class!"

Overwhelming themes presented at CBI 2018 included the desire to have electronic records accessed across agencies, while adhering to HIPAA rules and individuals' privacy needs; a need for family therapies; a "step-between" site when transitioning an individual from a residential treatment facility (RTF) to another, more permanent placement; open communication between Supports Coordination Organizations (SCOs) and Managed Care Organizations (MCOs); use of technology to enhance services, and a standardized language between agencies and organizations to break down "silos."

CBI 2018-19 starts this month and will be held in State College. Classes take place two days per month, for nine months. Enrollment will be open for 70 participants. Contact Marlinda Smith, marlsmith@pa.gov, for more information.



A sweet tribute to CBI graduates.



From left, Robin Levine, MSW, Institute coordinator; Dr. Greg Cherpes, co-director; Dr. Beth Barol, co-director; former ODP Deputy Secretary Nancy Thaler; OMHSAS Deputy Secretary Lynn Kovich; and Marlinda Smith, LCSW, Capacity Building grant coordinator.

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Bill Krebs Wins 2018 Roland Johnson Award

Bill Krebs received the 2018 Roland Johnson Award at the national Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE) conference in Birmingham, Ala. Bill was nominated by ODP Deputy Secretary Nancy Thaler, who has known him for more than a decade.

"Bill is not just a friend or colleague, he is part of my family," Thaler said. "Bill speaks with words that are true to Roland Johnson's message about people being in charge of their own lives. He is motivational and encouraging to self-advocates in his audience and direct and challenging to professionals."

Bill's sense of humor and willingness to travel to advocate adds to his ability to affect change. He says his name is Bill "Trouble" Krebs because "if trouble gets in the middle, things get done." Indeed, the plaque he received reflects that very name.

You can view videos of Bill's self-advocacy messages on the National Gateway's YouTube Channel, including "Beyond Tokenism" and "Using Lifebooks for Self Advocacy," and his article "Speaking for Ourselves" is featured in The Family Forum. He is also featured in the WITF video, "[I Go Home](#)," which highlights the history of Pennhurst, when sending children with intellectual disability away to state institutions was common practice.

He helped form the Young Adults Club/Autism First Collaborative Group at Liberty Service, a cross-disability support and self-advocacy group for individuals with autism and intellectual disabilities. He is also a proud recipient of a Brighter Future Award and the Justin Dart award, among others. (Bill is available to speak to groups and organizations and can be reached at 267-257-0109.)

"Live the life you want to live," Bill emphasizes. "Never forget where you came from. Who's in charge? You're in charge."

Bill is now the advocacy coordinator at Keystone Human Services.

Roland Johnson, for which the award is named, was institutionalized throughout much of his childhood at Pennhurst, a state institution for people with developmental disabilities. When Pennhurst closed, Roland became an internationally known speaker and leader in the self-advocacy movement. His most prominent message was "Who is in charge of your life?" and he was a pioneer of the self-advocacy movement.

If your organization is hosting webinars that anyone can attend,
please send information to RA-PWODP_OUTREACH@pa.gov



BILL KREBS

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Information, Upcoming Events, & Training

Advocacy Songs

Did you know singer/songwriter Karl Williams has a CD of Advocacy songs? You can hear samples of his album [Respect: Songs of the Self-Advocacy Movement \(featuring SABE\)](#) at the online CD Baby Music Store. Karl is the husband of former ODP Deputy Secretary Nancy Thaler.

NADSP Effort

The National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP) launched a nationwide effort to Establish a Direct Support Professional Standard Occupational Code (SOC) to better represent the skill requirements of a Direct Support Professional in labor reports. Learn more about the [efforts to obtain a dedicated SOC for DSPs](#).

On Stage

Jillian Wert, 28, of Millersburg, performed in the [Twin Valley Players production of "Man of La Mancha."](#) Jillian, who has an intellectual disability, worked with Karen Meeks through PA Lifesharing to obtain an audition. She hopes it helps her get

involved in her community.

DD Conference

Save the Dates: Pennsylvania's Dual Diagnosis Conference, "Broadening Understanding, Strengthening Support," will be held Tuesday, Nov. 13-Thursday, Nov. 15, at the Blair County Convention Center, 1 Convention Center Drive, Altoona. Participants can register for the following three options (Registration fee includes lunch, break snacks and all materials):

Days 1, 2 and 3 - \$225.00

Day 1 and Day 2 - \$150.00

Day 3 - \$75.00

Hotel Information: A limited number of rooms will be available at a group rate. More details and registration information are coming soon.

Inclusive Water Park

Time Magazine named Morgan's Inspiration Island in San Antonio, a water park designed to be fully accessible to people with special needs, among the top 100 places in the world for 2018. Gordon Hartman, who has a daughter with disabilities, created the park so

that she and others like her could play. Read more in [this Disability Scoop article about the park's distinction](#).

Inclusive Higher Ed Committee Report

The Association of University Centers on Disabilities recently released the Inclusive Higher Education Committee (IHEC) report titled ["Addressing the Policy Tangle: Students with Intellectual Disability and the Path to Postsecondary Education, Employment and Community Living."](#) The report examines issues regarding needed alignment of services and collaboration among agencies and institutions of higher education (IHEs) to achieve the goal of supporting youth with intellectual disability (ID) to obtain increased academic learning, independent living, and competitive integrated employment through participation in postsecondary education.

[Video: CBS News: Companies open doors to talent with autism](#)

Film Collection Available for Educational Use

Sproutflix hosts a large, diverse assortment of films featuring people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. More than 250 artistic and personal films are available. For example, ["Winston's Ghost: The Photography of Ryan Gustman"](#) spotlights Gustman's photographic art and how his autism may play a role in how he captures his images. Sproutflix is programmed and supported by Sprout, a NYC-based nonprofit organization founded in 1979, dedicated to bringing innovative programming to people with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities. The films are available for streams, downloads, DVD's and playlists to be purchased and licensed for institutional and educational use. [Learn more about Sproutflix.org online.](#)

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Introducing the Special Populations Unit

ODP recently established a new Special Populations Unit within the Bureau of Autism. It will be led by Lea Sheffield and will be overseeing the management of the Harry M. Settlement and efforts to build system-wide capacity to support individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or who are deafblind. A focus of the work will align with the [EveryDay Lives](#) recommendation that emphasizes the need to build communication supports for the individuals assisted by ODP programs.

Michelle Swain-Perrine will fill the role of the Deaf Services Coordinator. The Special Populations Unit will also include two Communication Support Professionals who have knowledge of deaf culture and have American Sign Language (ASL) skills.

ODP Deaf Services Coordinator Michelle Swain-Perrine has more than 30 years of experience working in human services in a variety of positions that require American Sign Language and an understanding of Deaf Culture. Her most notable position was as a Mental Health Case Manager where she met Harry M. Harry desired a home and day program in his community where American Sign Language was the norm. Michelle became Harry M.'s next of friend (in order to settle a minors case, a legal guardian acting on his behalf) in the Harry M, settlement, which continues to have a huge impact on our Deaf and Developmental Disability population.



MICHELLE SWAIN-PERRINE AND LEA SHEFFIELD



ASERT Spotlight: Back-to-School Tips

Khylii Robinson is a blogger for #ASDNext and recently finished taking classes at the Community College of Philadelphia. Visit the ASERT website to read Khylii's "[back-to-school](#)" tips for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

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Giant Employee is also Hall of Famer

Derek Eshenour of Cumberland County has marked six years working as a bagger/ clean sweep at Dillsburg Giant, where he bags groceries, and checks each aisle for any product spills or potential tripping hazards.

It's a job that lets him meet new people, which he enjoys, and he earns a competitive wage. Derek works two to four days a week.

He trained for his job through The Arc of Cumberland and Perry Counties, learning social skills, job interviewing skills, and eventually practicing the skills needed for his current job. Employment Specialist Mary Norris of S. Wilson Pollock-Center for Industrial Training (CIT), helps him with continued job training and mentoring. Derek is a participant in the Person/Family Directed Services waiver.

Jared, a coworker and front end associate, says he'd take "10 Dereks" and hopes Derek remains with Giant for quite some time.

Most of Derek's coworkers and customers probably don't know that this 36-year-old is also a champion speed skater. Derek had the chance to meet Apolo Ohno, an eight-time speed-skating medalist in the Winter Olympics. Derek is a Global Ambassador for Special Olympics and a 2014 Pennsylvania Special Olympics Hall of Famer.



Derek Eshenour is shown (in red) speed skating. He was named a PA Special Olympics Hall of Fame athlete in 2014 for his speed-skating.



Derek has worked at Giant for six years.



Derek got to meet Olympian speed skater Apolo Ohno.

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Summary of ODP Communications Issued August 2018, With Links



1. [Money Follows the Person \(MFP\) Initiative Dual Diagnosis Professional Conference Series](#) September 28, 2018
2. 071-18 Addendum: [Request for Approved Program Capacity and Noncontiguous Clearance](#)
3. 072-18: [KEPRO to Administer SIS Assessments](#)
4. 073-18: [Updated Contact MyODP Resource Accounts and New Listing of Archived Communications](#)
5. [ODP News August 2018](#)
6. 046-18 : [College of Employment Services ACRE Supplement Update](#)
7. BAS Communication Number: BAW18-20: [Definition of Billable Units under the AAW](#)
8. 074-18: [Face-to-Face Medication Administration Classroom Training Sessions Scheduled Fall/Winter 2018](#)
9. 075-18: [Person-Centered Thinking Training Available](#)
10. 076-18: [Required Dual Diagnosis Training for Providers Newly Enrolling to Provide Residential Habilitation Services](#)
11. Health Alert-- [Choking: A Medical Emergency](#)
12. 077-18: [DHS Will Implement Electronic Visit Verification \(EVV\) by July 1, 2019](#)
13. 078-18: [Data Fix Scheduled to Adjust ISPs To Support Transition from Public Partnership, LLC to Palco, Inc.](#)
14. 079-18: College of Employment Services Webinar: [\(ACRE\) Basic Employment Certification Overview August 28, 2018](#)
15. [OMHSAS & ODP Statewide Positive Approaches & Practices Meeting](#) Sept 27, 2018



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RA-PWODP_Outreach@pa.gov