



NCJSA
SPRING
CONFERENCE
MAY 1-3, 2024

Soaring High:
EMPOWERING YOUTH THROUGH
CHALLENGING TIMES

NCJSA 2024 SPRING CONFERENCE



President's Message

Greetings NCJSA Membership Body and Juvenile Justice Professionals:

We are excited to host our Spring Conference "Soaring High: Empowering Youth Through Challenging Times" May 1-3, 2024, here in Greensboro, NC at the Embassy Suites-Airport. As we continue to strive for achievement and excellence in every field of human endeavors; we thank you for your service, passion, and continued commitment across the state to improve outcomes in challenging times.

Best regards,

Randy L. Jones

Randy L. Jones
NCJSA President

NCJSA 2024 SPRING CONFERENCE

“Soaring High: Empowering Youth through Challenging Times”

“Agenda Subject to Change”

Wednesday, May 1st

10:00am - 12:30pm

**Registration Check-in/Business Networking
(Boxed Lunch Provided)**

1:00pm - 1:30pm

Welcome/Conference Opening
**NCJSA President Randy L. Jones
and Members of the NCJSA Board of Directors**

1:30pm - 2:45pm

Opening Speaker and Presentation
*Understanding the Effects of Stress and
Compassion Fatigue*
Dr. Kendra Davis

3:00pm - 4:15pm

Session: *Childhood Sexual Abuse*
Michelle Viscuse

4:30pm - 7:30pm

Hotel check in and Dinner on Your Own

7:30pm - 10:30pm

Lip Sync Battle and Dance
(360 Photo Booth open from 6:30pm-10:30pm)

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Friday May 3rd

9am-10:15am

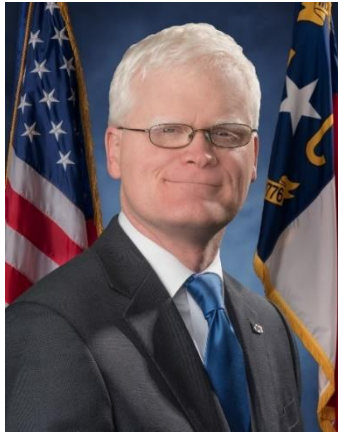
Closing Session
Danya Perry

10:30am-11:30am

NCJSA Updates and Conference Closing

Thank You!
NCJSA Members

NCJSA 2024 SPRING CONFERENCE



William L. Lassiter, MPA

Deputy Secretary, Division of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
NC Department of Public Safety

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Mr. Lassiter plans and directs operations of the Juvenile Justice Division and serves as a member of the Department's senior leadership team. As Deputy Secretary of Juvenile Justice, he oversees juvenile facility operations, juvenile court services, juvenile community programs, and juvenile intervention and treatment programs.

Mr. Lassiter received his master's degree in public administration from North Carolina State University; and in January 1998, he began working as a researcher for the Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in the Center for the Prevention of School Violence. In 1999, he became the project coordinator for North Carolina's statewide school safety tip line and its accompanying educational campaign: *Working against Violence Everywhere (WAVE)*. By 2001, Mr. Lassiter had been promoted to the Center's School Safety Specialist. In this position, he coordinated a number of projects for the Center, including the "*What We Want to be is Bully-Free*" awareness campaign, North Carolina's annual census of school resource officers, the North Carolina portion of the National Institute of Justice-sponsored national evaluation of school resource officers, North Carolina's critical incident response kit project, North Carolina's pre-service teacher conflict management project, and the Center's character education effort. In 2005, Mr. Lassiter was called upon to lead the Center and help it realize its vision of "*every student attending a school that is safe and secure, one that is free of fear and conducive to learning.*"

In 2010, Mr. Lassiter was called upon to serve as the State Contracts Administrator for Juvenile Community Programs. In 2013, he was promoted to Director of Juvenile Community Programs, where he worked to develop a comprehensive service delivery model for youth in the state's juvenile justice system.

In 2015, Mr. Lassiter was appointed to the Governor's Task Force on Mental Health and Substance Use, for which he co-chaired the Work Group on Children, Youth and Families.

Gov. Roy Cooper appointed Mr. Lassiter as chair of the N.C. Task Force for Safer Schools in May 2019. This task force serves as an advisory board to the Center for Safer Schools, and provides guidance and recommendations to the Governor, Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the General Assembly to improve statewide policy to enhance statewide and local capacities to create safer schools.

Mr. Lassiter was honored to receive the prestigious National Service Award from the Hamilton Fish Institute on School and Community Violence, for his exemplary service to children, youth, and communities. Lassiter has co-authored Preventing Violence and Crime in America's Schools: From Put-Downs to Lock-Downs, which takes an in-depth look at the causes and solutions of youth violence. He has been featured on a number of major news networks and national publications including CNN, Fox News, the BBC, USA Today, the Los Angeles Times, the New York Times, and many others.

Other published works by Mr. Lassiter include:

Lassiter, William and McDaniel, Joanne. "...*School under siege....*" Reality Checking the Security of Our Schools." Campus Safety Journal.

Lassiter, William and McDaniel, Joanne. "Time to put your Child's School to the Test." Southeastern Education Network. Spring/Winter 2005, volume 7 issue 2.

Finn, Peter, Lassiter, William, McDevitt, Jack, Rich, Tom, and Shively, Michael. Comparison of Program Activities and Lessons Learned among 19 School Resource Officer Programs. National Institute of Justice. Feb 28, 2005

NCJSA 2024 SPRING CONFERENCE

Featured Presenters



Dr. Kendra Davis has been described by many as a vitamin B12 shot, “There is no way to be in her presence and not be ENERGIZED, EDUCATED & EMPOWERED.” Dr. Davis has served many organizations as both a keynote speaker & trainer. Organizations include (NCFADS) The NC Foundations For Alcohol & Drugs Studies: Summer School & Winter school, State Employees Association of NC (SEANC) Emerging Leaders Luncheon & The Advanced Leadership Training Institute, The NC Department of Public Safety, NC Division of Prisons, NC Department of Community Corrections, Administrative Office of Courts – Drug Treatment Court & Family Court, Experiment In Self-Reliance (ESR), YWCA Hawley House, Hosanna House of Transition, The Mcleod Addictive Disease Center, Addiction Recovery Care Association Inc (ARCA), UNC-Chapel Hill, South Central Recovery, The Bethesda Center for the Homeless, and Samaritan Ministries for the Homeless (just to name a few). Dr. Davis eclectic presentation style of teaching including but not limited to audio / visual aids and activities make learning fun and practical for everyone.” Dr. Davis is a graduated of Winston-Salem State University. She earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Sociology & a Master of Science Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling. She is also a graduate of Apex School of Theology where she earned a Master of Divinity degree and a Doctor of Ministry degree in Biblical Studies. \Dr. Davis is an Internationally Certified, Advanced Alcohol & Drug Counselor, licensed by the International Certification & Reciprocity Consortium, the NC Addiction Specialist Professional Practice Board, the NC Problem Gamblers Program, and the National Association of Forensic Counselors. Dr. Davis holds the following credentials: Master Addictions Counselor (MAC), Licensed Clinical Addiction Specialist (LCAS), Certified Criminal Justice Addiction Professional (CCJP), Certified Clinical Supervisor (CCS), and Certified Sex Offender Treatment Specialist (CSOTS).

In 2010, Kendra established K*METAMORPHOSIS, a counseling and professional development firm. This organization was birthed out of Kendra’s desire to fill a much-needed treatment and training gap in the community. Kendra is committed to empower individuals with the necessary tools and resources required to make their dreams become a reality. Her life mission is built on the belief of the butterfly effect, where small changes can make a big difference.

In 2016 Kendra published, ***It’s ONLY a Test: “Mastering the Addiction Counselors Exam”*** a power packed study guide for participatory learners. This workbook is filled with practical exercises, worksheets and written assignments that engage the reader in a wide range of independent study sessions. In addition, Dr. Davis facilitates Exam Prep Courses, her hands-on approach to learning will empower the participants with the key concepts required to “MASTER” The Addiction Counselors Exam.

NCJSA 2024 SPRING CONFERENCE



Michelle Viscuse is the founder of Journey Pink, a ministry dedicated to helping women and teens who have experienced the trauma of sexual abuse to find courage, hope, and freedom. She graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a BS in Biology and owned an insurance agency in Durham for 23 years. She sold her agency back in 2020 to pursue her passion of raising awareness and helping those who have experienced sexual abuse. She received her MA in Pastoral Counseling with an emphasis in Crisis Response and she is also a Certified Professional Trauma-Informed Life Coach. *Journey Pink: The Story of a Princess In Need of a King* is her memoir of healing from Childhood Sexual Abuse. She is also the author of *The Garden*, a short story featured in *Blessings in Disguise* (2019), and a speaker at conferences and retreats. Michelle and her husband, Anthony, live in North Carolina with their three kids and a sweet beagle named Maisy Jane. To find out more, please visit her at www.JourneyPink.com.

Shantel Hargrove was a dynamic and dedicated Youth Service Outreach Administrator with a strong commitment to empowering young people and fostering community engagement. Passionate about creating inclusive and supportive environments for youth. Driven by a commitment to fostering inclusive and accessible recreational opportunities for all, Shantel holds a master's degree in criminal justice and is deeply invested in promoting the health, happiness, and quality of life of community members.

Throughout her career, Shantel transitioned from the Youth Service Outreach Administrator to *Recreation and Parks Assistant Director*. She has demonstrated a proven track record of success in connecting with diverse communities, building strategic partnerships, and implementing impactful outreach initiatives. She has spearheaded numerous campaigns, events, and programs aimed at raising awareness, promoting youth participation, and advocating for positive change. With 10 years of experience in youth advocacy, program management, recreation management and community development, she brings a wealth of proficiency in program development, facility management, and strategic planning.

Shantel has played a key role in planning, implementing, and evaluating a wide range of recreational programs and park services aimed at meeting the diverse needs and interests of residents. She has demonstrated proficiency in managing budgets, supervising staff, and engaging stakeholders to ensure the success and sustainability of recreational initiatives.

In her role as Assistant Director of Recreation and Parks, Shantel is responsible for providing leadership and oversight in the planning and delivery of recreational services, facilities, and programs. She works collaboratively with departmental staff, community organizations, and local partners to develop innovative strategies for promoting physical activity, social connection, and environmental stewardship.

NCJSA 2024 SPRING CONFERENCE

Committed to fostering a culture of wellness and community engagement, Shantel strives to create welcoming and vibrant recreational spaces where individuals and families can gather, play, and thrive. She is dedicated to promoting equity and access to recreational opportunities for residents of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.

Outside of her professional pursuits Shantel is actively involved in outreach for the City of Henderson, Church youth leader, and continually works hand and hand with Youth Services Department. She is passionate about the youth in the community and enjoys working with the youth in her church.

Shantel is excited to continue serving the community and contributing to the enhancement of recreational opportunities and park services that promote health, happiness, and community vitality.

Darius Pitt is a passionate and dedicated Youth Service Program Coordinator committed to empowering young people and creating positive change in their lives. With 10 years of experience in youth development and community engagement, he brings a wealth of expertise in designing and implementing innovative programs that address the diverse needs and aspirations of today's youth.

As a staunch advocate for youth empowerment, Darius Pitt believes in the transformative power of education, mentorship, and community involvement in shaping the future leaders of tomorrow.

Throughout his career, Darius has demonstrated a track record of success in fostering positive youth outcomes through strategic planning, program coordination, and collaboration with stakeholders. He has facilitated numerous programs aimed at building essential life skills, enhancing academic achievement, and promoting social and emotional well-being among youth.

In his role as Youth Service Coordinator, Darius is responsible for PYO (Project Youth Outreach), Chess Club, Teen Court, youth financial literacy program, and, previously worked in the Recreation Athletics department. Darius has worked closely with schools, community organizations, and government agencies to ensure comprehensive support and resources are available to youth from diverse backgrounds. He is dedicated to creating inclusive and supportive environments where all young people feel valued, heard, and empowered to reach their full potential.

Outside of his professional pursuits Darius is passionate about art, music, and family events. He enjoys painting and reading.

Darius is excited to continue making a meaningful impact in the lives of youth and looks forward to leveraging his skills, knowledge, and passion to create positive change in the community.

NCJSA 2024 SPRING CONFERENCE

Tammy Hernandez is a Regional Director for Pinnacle Family Services covering the Central and Western parts of North Carolina. Tammy has 18 years of experience working in the Mental Health field. She received her bachelor's in criminal justice from Pembroke University in 2010, and her master's in criminal justice from Capela University in 2017. Tammy has been certified in the Family Centered Treatment Model since 2017. She has completed her FCT supervisor certification, Level 2 trainer certification and currently completing her Level 3 trainer certification. Tammy is committed to ensuring that at-risk youth and their families receive not only quality services but positive treatment outcomes as well.

Zaydee Cordova is currently a State Trainer at Pinnacle Family Services. She has worked in a variety of positions from in home field work with families and as an FCT/Clinical Supervisor in Fayetteville, Raleigh and West End Programs and her experience data 19 years with Family Centered Treatment Model. She has a degree in Psychology, Education and Philosophy from the University of Puerto Rico. She also has a FCT Certification on Level 3.

Zaydee relocated from Miami, Florida in 2005, where she worked 12 years in collaboration with the University of Miami and The Village South SA Residential Programs developing research and implementing evidenced based practices within various residential programs for youth at risk. She also worked in collaboration with Dade Court System in their diversion program funded by the DJJ to promote education and keep teens out of jail. Previously, she worked seven years as a Senior Vocational Counselor with Florida Labor and Employment Program and received various recognition for success stories in their Mental Health Department from the Fl. Secretary of Labor.

Quanya Eaton is Licensed Clinical Social Worker Associate who obtained a master's degree in social work at the Joint program between North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University and University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Her goal since joining Pinnacle and earning her degree has been to provide support to new clinicians and help families understand mental health. One of her many passions is to support families who have a desire to learn better ways to manage their mental health symptoms, develop coping skills as well as increasing resiliency. She can do this using trauma informed treatment, aspects of cognitive behavioral therapy, solution focused therapy, motivational interviewing, as well as person-centered approaches that assist clients with meeting their goals.

NCJSA 2024 SPRING CONFERENCE



Brandy A. McPherson is a proven community leader with over ten years of nonprofit experience. She currently serves as an executive consultant and program manager for Molding Young Moguls, a restorative justice leadership development program for at-risk juveniles. Over the last decade Brandy had helped to develop, manage, and scale a number of philanthropic projects. Using those experiences, she developed the 4-Tiered Methodology for Effective Change Makers ©. This methodology implies that regardless of the mission, there are 4-steps that must be taken to maximize any nonprofit project's effectiveness: (1) Evaluation (2) Equity (3) Exposure (4) Elevation. Using these steps Brandy has: Increased a program's active membership by 50% during the Covid-19 Pandemic; Built a community of 130+ invested stakeholders in 6-months; Organized and facilitated a national memorial with federal organizations, elected officials, law enforcement, public education and more When asked about her upbringing,

Ms. McPherson states, "I'm a southern belle, hailing from a small town in NC, but thanks to my parents, I have a NYC hustle. My mom is a Brooklyn bred changemaker who I've watched selflessly pour into my hometown for years. My father, a Jamaican immigrant, worked his way to 6-figures with a 'third world' 4th grade education.



Nikki Croteau-Johnson, MA, LPA, is a psychologist with over 24 years of clinical experience working with children, adolescents and their families in outpatient and forensic settings. She has specialty training in several evidence-based treatments. Currently, she is the Clinical Director for the Problematic Sexual Behavior Program for Children and Adolescents at the North Carolina Child Treatment Program, where in addition to providing direct clinical services, she oversees the implementation of a statewide PSB program; developing a clinical workforce as well as clinical policy and procedures; stakeholder education and engagement, and other sustainability initiatives.

NCJSA 2024 SPRING CONFERENCE



Pastor Randi Francis acquired an associate degree in computer science back in 1993. While at Monroe College, she received tutoring awards for helping students in their coursework. She worked for the Mayor's Office in the City of New York for four years. She was promoted to LAN administrator almost instantaneously. After not being selected for a promotion, she realized that she reached the glass ceiling. With her own funds, Randi started a youth program in the Bronx to keep the kids off the street. The city gave her the key to the park, buses and access to drivers to take the kids on field trips. In 1997, Randi volunteered at a local non-profit helping with workforce development and basic computer training. After three months, she was hired as Program Director and received the Community Achievement Award for her efforts in educating low-income families in computer technology.

Randi and her family moved from the Bronx, NY looking for a better environment to raise her three children and the one that was on the way. Upon arriving in NC, she applied for and received grant funding to attain her A+, Net+, MCSA & MCSE Certifications in 2002. Through her course of study and desire to give back, she developed a passionate interest in helping at-risk youth, teens and adults to attain STEM, Robotics and I.T. exposure and career exploration. In 2003, she started her own consulting business setting up computer camps at area parks & rec centers in the Greensboro area.

Randi's most recent accomplishments: developed a minority teen robotics team with funding from NASA, took a rookie team and won district event and went to state championship. They recently won their 3rd district win in a row. Ms. Francis was highlighted in honor of Martin Luther King Jr.'s commitment to service from Truliant Credit Union's - Community Impact Award, received the Non-profit Diversity Award from the Triad Business Journal in 2022, a finalist for Greensboro's Future Fund 10 where she received the Mentor's Award, #1 best-selling author on Amazon in the self-help/motivational category where she co-authored in an anthology project - Women Inspiring Nations - Vol. 3 entitled "I'm Still Standing" Over the past 16 years of community leadership and experience in non-profit management, Randi Francis always ensures the viability of accomplishing their mission: "Rebuilding & Restoring Communities & Families". Randi always says that her greatest reward is seeing other people's lives transform and guiding them towards fulfilling their purpose.

NCJSA 2024 SPRING CONFERENCE



Joshua Colon graduated from East Forsyth HS in Winston-Salem. Likes to ride motorcycles and play video games. Received ITF+ certification at the Nehemiah Center's Apprenticeship program. Currently work as System Services Admin and STEM coordinator at Lincoln Academy exposing middle school students to STEM and robotics. His goal is to retire at 40. He enjoys working with kids and have discovered some things about himself in becoming a leader with the Nehemiah Center



Darlene Waritay has a bachelor's degree in information systems. She is from Charlotte, NC.

Darlene received her ITF+ certification with Nehemiah Center Apprenticeship program and currently works as their Lead Software Analyst. Darlene also volunteers with Nehemiah as a FIRST robotics mentor helping with programming with the team. Her goal is to be a data scientist.

NCJSA 2024 SPRING CONFERENCE



Danya Perry serves as the Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusivity with Wake County. In this role, Perry leads Wake County's efforts to advance diversity, build equity and accelerate inclusion. From creating a clear vision and providing strategic direction, Perry seeks to promote belonging and support working environments where all have an opportunity to succeed.

Prior to joining Wake County, Perry held two critical leadership positions for the Raleigh Chamber of Commerce. He served as Vice President of Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity, where he led the Triangle DEI Alliance, and as Director of Equitable Economic Development. In these roles, he supported efforts to build inclusive prosperity and support our historically underrepresented businesses and residents.

Before joining the Raleigh Chamber, Perry worked for Communities in Schools of North Carolina for 12 years, most recently serving as Vice President of Youth Development. Perry is native to North Carolina, hailing from New Bern before earning a BA in Political Science and MA in Public Administration from North Carolina State University. He is also a passionate social justice activist and youth advocate who capitalizes on any opportunity to volunteer and facilitate positive change in the community. Perry loves music and laughs and seeks every opportunity to work across differences.

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