

transitionsNews

EMPOWERING YOUTH: CHILD ADVOCATE PROVIDES COMPASSIONATE SUPPORT AND COUNSELING TO OVER 100 CHILDREN



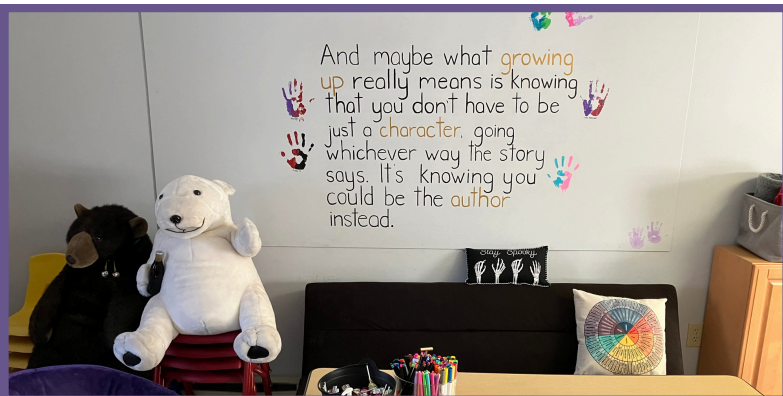
**Written by: Morgan S.,
Counselor Advocate**

As the Child Advocate my primary responsibility is to provide supportive, empowerment counseling to children between the ages of 5 and 18. I provide counseling sessions for children in our safe houses or in the community, and provide childcare and social recreational activities for

younger children when their caregivers are working on goals or meeting with a counselor.

I try to make my office as welcoming as possible. I make sure I always have toys and fidgets available, and I let the child have control of their session. I can see children for their counseling appointments at any of our office locations in Lewisburg, Selinsgrove, Sunbury, and Shamokin. In my almost 3 years at Transitions, I've been assigned over 100 children for counseling and offered over 900 appointments to them.

The most important aspect of my job is to let kids and teens know that they are not alone in whatever they are going through. I want them to know that they have someone willing to listen to them and advocate for them. I want to provide my clients with the tools they need to continue to heal and reach their goals, even after their counseling services with me have ended.



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DESK OF THE CEO

As we embark on a new fiscal year and celebrate Transitions of PA's 49th year of dedicated service to survivors and our community, we are already gearing up to tackle the challenges that the next year will bring. A main area of focus remains funding. It likely comes as no surprise that funding for victim services is in crisis, with both state and federal levels struggling to meet the growing needs of survivors.

Programs like ours work tirelessly each year to ensure victims and survivors in our community have access to voluntary, free, confidential, and often lifesaving services. Over the last fiscal year, Transitions advocates provided 7,520 hours of direct services to victims and survivors, a 10% increase from FY22-23. However, funding for victim services has not kept up with the increasing cost of providing these services. As the demand for services continues to rise and the complexity of individual survivor needs changes, the need for funding to effectively meet those needs increases. Because of this, funding advocacy is a constant, ongoing effort at both federal and state levels.

Victim service programs have not seen a substantial increase in available federal funding since 2015. In fact, there have been notable cuts in federal funding over the past several years due to the instability of the Crime Victims Fund (CVF). The fund's balance has fluctuated significantly, leading to significantly reduced allocations for victim services. State funding has seen minimal fluctuations over the last decade. The last meaningful increase for sexual assault services occurred in the 2019-2020 budget, with funding remaining flat since that time. Domestic violence services received a similar increase in 2019 and another small increase in 2021.

This year, both the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence (PCADV) and the Pennsylvania Coalition to Advance Respect (PCAR) each advocated for five million dollar increases to each line item for the 2024-2025 state budget.



I had the privilege of speaking at the Capitol in Harrisburg about the challenges of providing services in a rural community and the need for increased funding. I was grateful for the opportunity to meet with some of our local legislators to discuss the need for an increase in funding for victim services.



Mae-Ling Kranz, CEO supporting advocate and survivor Billi A. during PCADV's press conference while advocating for a funding increase for domestic violence services at the PA state capital.

With a short delay past the July 1 deadline, the Pennsylvania state budget has now passed and been signed by the governor for 2024-25. This budget includes a significant victory for domestic violence services, with a \$2.5 million increase in funding. Initially, the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the governor's office had proposed a \$5 million increase, but the final budget settled on the lower amount. This boost is a crucial step in supporting the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence (PCADV) and its network of 59 local programs, including Transitions.

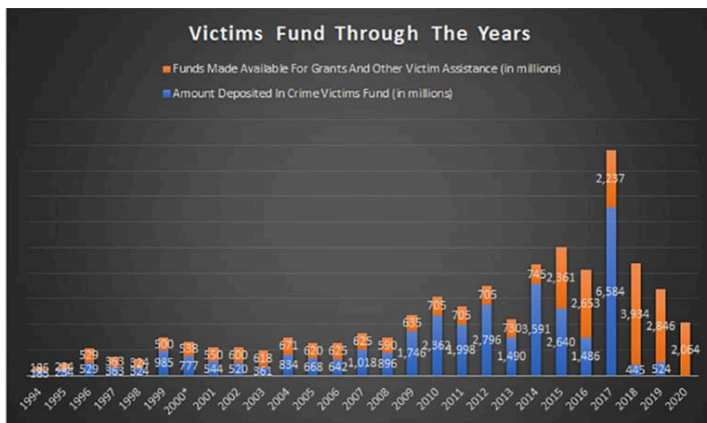
However, the budget also highlights a concerning issue: flat funding for sexual assault services. The Pennsylvania Coalition to Advance Respect (PCAR) has expressed the urgent need for increased funding, as rape crisis centers have been struggling with level funding for over five years. These centers provide critical services, including 24-hour hotlines, medical accompaniment, and counseling, yet they are continually asked to do more with less.

Without a meaningful increase in funding, the ability of these centers to support survivors of sexual violence remains at risk. **(cont.)**

DESK OF THE CEO CONTINUED

Adding to these concerns is the broader issue of federal funding for victim services. The Crime Victims Fund (CVF), a major source of federal support, has seen a substantial decrease in available funds, dropping by \$700 million this year to \$1.2 billion. This reduction has raised alarms among states and local organizations that rely on these funds to support victims of crimes, including sexual assault and domestic violence.

The decrease is attributed to a multi-year decline in deposits into the CVF, which primarily comes from fines and penalties paid by federal offenders. As a result, many programs are facing the possibility of having to set up wait lists or turn victims away due to insufficient resources.



Efforts are being made to restore VOCA (Victims of Crime Act) funding to more sustainable levels, with advocates calling for an increase to \$1.9 billion in FY25. However, until these issues are resolved, the stability and availability of victim services remain at risk.

While the budget's increase for domestic violence services is a positive development, the flat funding for sexual assault services and the federal funding shortfall underscore the ongoing challenges in ensuring comprehensive support for all victims of violence in Pennsylvania. Advocacy efforts continue at both the federal and state levels to address these funding gaps and ensure that all survivors receive the support they need.

Despite the challenges we face, our dedication to ensuring that our services remain at full capacity for our community is unwavering. We are committed to providing the highest level of support to all survivors who seek our help. We are deeply grateful for the continued support from our community throughout the year. From successful fundraisers like our annual appeal, and charity auction, to private donations,

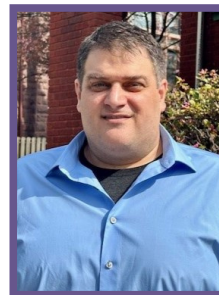
support from local businesses, and local foundations, we couldn't do this without the support of our community.

As this year moves forward, we look forward to continuing this journey, sharing our progress, our successes, and even our challenges as we strive to support survivors on their journeys. Together, we can continue to build a safer and more supportive community for everyone.



Mae-Ling Kranz is the Chief Executive Officer of Transitions of PA and has been with the organization since 2016. Mae-Ling previously held the position of the Chief Operating Officer of and has more than 20 years of non-profit experience.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHTS



Paul Muscarella has recently assumed the role of Finance Director here at Transitions of PA. Paul brings a wealth of experience to our organization, particularly in the realm of taxation and financial management. Paul has an educational background in business administration and specialization in small business management. Paul's goal is to ensure the finance department is able to support the needs of our clients and our mission effectively.



Kim K. joined Transition in March 2024, as an advocate/counselor in our Northumberland County safe house. As a safe house advocate, Kim is part of a team that helps individuals heal and begin a fresh start in their lives. "It is both a privilege and an honor to be a part of a person's life and to be able to watch that person become independent and empowered. I am truly blessed to be part of a great organization that does so much for others."



Sydney D. started as the new Counseling Coordinator on June 24th, 2024. Sydney will supervise our counseling department and provide direct services to victims. She was born and raised in Milton, PA. Sydney graduated from Bloomsburg University in 2021 with a degree in Criminal Justice and a minor in Public Relations. She began her career in the drug and alcohol field, serving both men and

women, which started her love of helping others. Sydney's goal is to help survivors feel like they have the support they need during this challenging time in their lives. She is very excited to start this new journey and assist any survivors along the way.

JUNE: LGBTQIA+ PRIDE MONTH

Written By: Skylar L., Campus Advocate

June marked the 25th anniversary of the national recognition of Pride Month. Initially recognized as Gay and Lesbian Pride Month in 1999 by former President Bill Clinton, the movement became more inclusive in 2009 as LGBT Pride Month by former President Barack Obama. Pride Month celebrates LGBTQIA+ voices and individuals who are living their lives as their authentic selves, in addition to remembering those who served the community in acts of grand activism in hopes of stopping the persistent discrimination. While Pride Month is a celebration of the voices of past, present, and future in this community, it is important to recognize the many events that paved the way for this month to exist as it does today and those who sacrificed their well-being.

The inaugural Pride walk and parade took place on June 28, 1970, in New York City, the first anniversary of The Stonewall Uprising. While commonly referred to as “The Stonewall Riots,” many Stonewall veterans have denounced this term as it implies that the force they were met with by the police was rationalized. Instead, they prefer to recognize the events as an uprising or a rebellion. In 1969 in New York City, homosexual acts were illegal and frequently prosecuted, but this changed with the 1980 case of New York v. Onofre, which ruled such statutes unconstitutional.

On June 28th, 1969, New York City police raided the Stonewall Inn, a popular gay hangout, to arrest people for public homosexual acts and illegal drinking, as the Stonewall Inn did not have a liquor license. Although not the first raid of its kind, as the Stonewall Inn was raided mere days before, this event sparked a significant uprising that transformed LGBTQIA+ activism. The police brutality faced by patrons was met with fierce resistance from the bar’s clientele, nearby neighborhoods, and gay activists. The uprising lasted six days and nights, with crowds ranging from hundreds to thousands. Activists used this moment to highlight discriminatory laws and police violence. In the aftermath of the Stonewall Uprising, organizations like the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) and the Gay Activists Alliance (GAA) were formed in NYC, setting a precedent for the establishment of similar groups across the country and worldwide. **(cont.)**



Skylar L., Campus Advocate, and Tracy S., Outreach Coordinator celebrating pride on the campus of Susquehanna University.



JUNE: LGBTQIA+ PRIDE MONTH CONTINUED

It is important to note that while The Stonewall Uprising is a vital and centralizing event that Pride Month surrounds, the initial outcomes and organizations that were established strictly benefited the white population. There was a clear disparity in how other populations were marginalized within mainstream gay liberation. However, through these events, two activists emerged to lead the way for intersecting marginalized communities, Martha P. Johnson and Silvia Rivera. Both Johnson and Rivera participated in the Stonewall Uprising and went on to create a pivotal organization to bring light to the cultural and ethnic disparities that are felt throughout the LGBTQIA+ community while serving those most in need. They established Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries, later Street Transgender Action Revolutionaries (STAR). The primary goal of STAR was to help those most in need in the community, providing food, clothing, and shelter to homeless transgender youth in New York City and eventually in chapters in Chicago, California, and England. Rivera made it clear that although the organization was transgender-based, she would not turn anyone away if they were in need, and that they served the homeless gay population, the general homeless population, and anyone in need.

Transitions of PA has been actively participating in Pride events in our local community and will continue this involvement. For example, we supported the SUN Pride event in Lewisburg on June 1st, where we demonstrated our commitment to the LGBTQIA+ community while educating attendees about the inclusive work done at Transitions of PA. We highlighted how our services can benefit communities that often underreport domestic violence and sexual assault. Additionally, we showed support at Susquehanna University's student Pride event in April and continue to serve the LGBTQIA+ community on campus.

Pride today strives to amplify LGBTQIA+ voices and encourage the community to speak out on LGBTQIA+ rights and live authentically, as openly and loudly as they choose. Although Pride celebrates authenticity and pride in one's identity, recent years have seen a rise in negativity surrounding these events. There has been an increase in violent threats, cancellations of events due to safety concerns, and both private boycotts and statewide bans on certain public Pride events. These challenges underscore the ongoing need for Pride: the community continues to fight for equal rights and respect. Pride provides a platform for individuals to express their true selves and not be silenced, while also educating others about past progress and future needs. It remains a symbol of justice and social justice for a community that has been historically targeted and marginalized.

TRANSITIONS AWARDED VIOLENCE INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION (VIP) GRANT THROUGH THE PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY

Written By: Heather O., Grants and Compliance Director

Transitions of PA is pleased to announce that we are the recipient of a three-year Violence Intervention and Prevention grant through the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency. Through this project, Transitions will launch a new education program for justice-involved youth in Union, Snyder, and Northumberland Counties in fall 2024.

Through the Positive Action program, trained Education Specialists and Counselors/Advocates from our organization will connect directly with individuals at risk of perpetrating violence, including gun violence. Positive Action is an intervention program that has been rated "Effective" at reducing violent and bullying behavior in addition to other behaviors that may lead to violence. Transitions' project efforts will focus on implementing Positive Action with adjudicated and justice-involved youth in Union County, PA, during year one and expand the project in Snyder and Northumberland counties in years two and three. Positive



Action is an evidence-based program, and Transitions will measure the project's effectiveness using the evaluation tools provided by Positive Action and the CDC Violence Prevention Assessment tools. **(cont.)**

TRANSITIONS AWARDED CONTINUED

Specifically, our goal is to measure the following:

- Reduce beliefs that support aggression
- Reduce bullying behaviors
- Reduce the number of incidents of violence
- Reduce the likelihood of participants to carry/use a weapon
- Improve self-control

In addition to the intervention program, Transitions will also provide transformation and healing through the provision of trauma-informed counseling and advocacy services to youth identified in the program who have experienced trauma, including victimization of domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, human trafficking, child abuse, and bullying. Services are strengths-based and focus on safety, healing, and strengthening resiliency and connection.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT- AMY



On July 1, 2024, Amy Gronlund began serving as the Development Director for Transitions. Amy's deep knowledge of the organization stems from her nine years on the Board of Directors (2014-2023), during which she held the offices of Vice President (2016-2019) and President (2019-2021). Amy's tenure as a staff member began a year ago when she joined

as the Executive Assistant. Her passion for the organization started long before her board involvement, having helped on Campaign Committees and organized showers to outfit safe houses with needed items. In her new role, Amy hopes to bring her energy and enthusiasm to help community partners, corporations, individuals, and foundations understand Transitions of PA's mission and the demand for services, thereby securing Transitions' presence for years to come. Amy shared, "I'm excited to focus on garnering support for the organization so that we can provide the best comprehensive services for all victims and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, and other serious crimes. I look forward to contributing to this amazing team on another level."



ANNUAL AUCTION BREAKS RECORDS WITH \$133K RAISED, CELEBRATES ADVOCACY AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

Transitions' 36th Annual Auction, themed "A Path Forward," was held on June 5, 2024, at the Degenstein Center at Susquehanna University. The evening was spectacular, with 255 attendees enjoying food, drinks, raffles, and auctions. Thanks to the support of attendees, sponsors, virtual auction bidders, and donors, we raised over \$133,000 for the organization, making this our most successful event yet! A highlight of the evening was the Dessert Dash, where attendees bid for desserts, raising over \$10,000 alone!

The featured speaker of the evening was Officer Rachel Shear, a dedicated advocate for victims and survivors of domestic and intimate partner violence, sexual assault, and trauma. A survivor herself, Officer Shear's passion for protecting the vulnerable has guided her throughout her career. Through her advocacy, she has made a meaningful impact in her community and empowered countless survivors to connect with services and find safety.

Annually, the Pete Macky Awards are announced at the auction. Pete was the epitome of a victim advocate. As an attorney with North Penn Legal Services, Pete forged the definition of Protection from Abuse laws from their inception in Pennsylvania. This year, Nancy Macky (Pete's wife) presented the 8th Annual Pete Macky Awards to two recipients: Mary Louise Schweikert and D. Peter Johnson Esq. **(cont.)**

ANNUAL AUCTION CONTINUED

Mary Louise Schweikert dedicated her life to public service and advocacy, leaving behind a remarkable legacy. She was connected to Transitions of PA for longer than anyone can remember, having served most recently as Board President. She understood the critical role of access to services and education for survivors. Her passion was ensuring that others had every opportunity to live their best lives, regardless of the circumstances they faced.

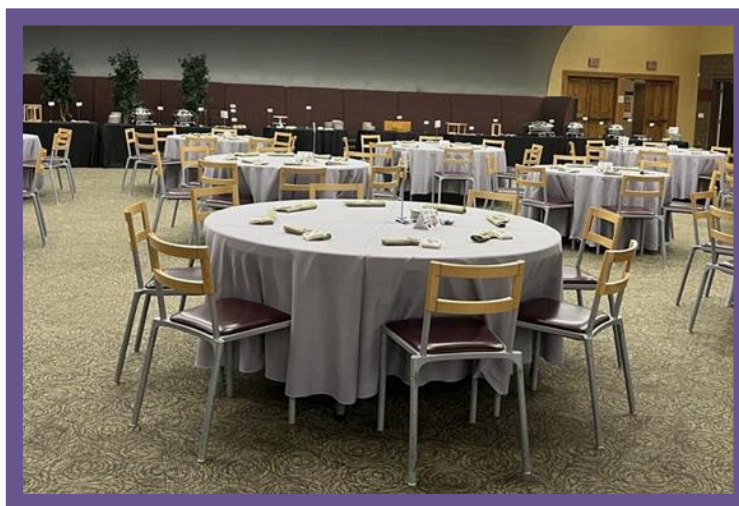
D. Peter Johnson, the late Union County District Attorney, was an unwavering advocate for victims during his remarkable 28-year tenure. Pete tried thousands of criminal cases, always focusing on the most important part of the case: justice for victims. Pete's professionalism and dedication to crime victims left a lasting impact on Union County. He was a steadfast supporter of Transitions; his legacy continues to inspire those who fight for justice and support victims.

Also speaking were Mae-Ling Kranz, CEO of Transitions, and Kendra Aucker and Helen Nunn, Transitions Board of Directors Co-Presidents. The evening was hosted by Drew Kelly and Chris Markle, with Lori Hess Lauver rallying the live bidders!

It was a night to remember, and we are grateful for each supporter, as we need you all to continue to meet the demand for services in our area.



Officer Rachel Shear, Featured Speaker



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SUMMER TOUCHPOINTS

The Education Specialists have presented Transitions' I Am B.R.A.V.E. program to area summer camps this season. The team spent an hour a week with each camp, reaching upwards of 190 students for this Prevention Program weekly.



UPCOMING EVENTS

- **August 6, 2024:** National Night Out: Lewisburg 5-9pm, Watsontown 5-8pm, Sunbury 5-8pm
- **August 13, 2024:** National Night Out: Snyder 4-7pm

September is Suicide Prevention Month

- September, TBD - QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) Training at Local Libraries

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

- **October 17, 2024:** Purple Thursday: Show your support of Domestic Violence Survivors
- **October 24, 2024:** GiveforDV Day of Giving