



# PAPRS Newsletter

Pennsylvania Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services

*"The struggle you're in today is developing the strength you need for tomorrow."*

*-Robert Jew*

## Officers

### President

Kim MacDonald-Wilson

### President Elect

TBD

### Secretary

Brittani Smerkar

### Treasurer

Ellwyn Andres (interim)

### Immediate Past President

Ellwyn Andres

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### Education Manager

Rochelle Reimert

rochelle.reimert@papr.org

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## New PAPRS Executive Director!

By: Debi Weisgerber



We are excited to welcome Denise Astaneh as the new PAPRS Executive Director!

Denise Astaneh joined the PAPRS team on July 10, 2023. She has worked in the mental health field for several years, many of them being in Psychiatric Rehabilitation. She is both a Certified Psychiatric Rehabilitation Practitioner (CPRP) and a Certified Family and Resiliency Practitioner (CFRP). She has worked with all age ranges and also teaches Psychiatric Rehabilitation at the University level.

While completing her undergraduate studies, she was working at a residential home for UPC and her career interests changed. She was able to combine both passions and pursued her Master's degree in Art Therapy and Psychology. She then took a job in a Community Mental Health Center and found her passion. She has worked in the field for 42 years and counting.

Denise knows personal medicine is important for everyone, and she is no exception. Her personal medicine is being with family and enjoying the four seasons Pennsylvania has to offer, with fall being her favorite. She enjoys going for walks and "listening to all the sounds of nature". She also loves to travel. She has traveled to Japan, stating it is "so rich in artistic beauty" with "such a beautiful landscape".

To know Denise is to love her, she is quite unique. She is a loving and caring individual who will go out of her way to help others. Knowing Denise personally, she can be a bit accident prone. Imagine my surprise when she expressed wanting to parasail one day. Time will tell if she can cross this off her bucket list.

Join me in welcoming Denise to her new role of leading us to greater achievements in our "next chapter!"

## Board Members:

Amanda Burke  
Aaron Burkhardt  
Marcie Cole  
Collette D'Angelo  
Skyler Deitrick  
Gwen DeYoung  
Virginia Dikeman  
Pamela Nabried-Abdullah  
Julie Sanders  
Holly Knoll  
Sara Dobson  
Debra Weisgerber  
Caitlin Needham

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## 2023 Board Meetings:

- September 21 & 22, 2023
- November 9 & 10, 2023

### Board Networking:

Thursdays from 4-6 PM

### Full Board Meetings:

Fridays from 9 AM - 1 PM

*\*Meetings are currently held through Zoom*

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## Annual Open Membership Meeting:

*2024 Virtual Conference*

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## Membership Networking:

Thursday, Sept 14th, 2023  
11:30 AM to 12:30 PM

[Registration Link](#)

## New PAPRS Education Manager!



In addition to hiring a new Executive Director, PAPRS is also pleased to announce the hiring of Rochelle Reimert on a part-time basis as the new Education Manager!

Rochelle is a graduate of Walden University, with a Master's degree in Human Services. She has over 30 years of experience in community behavioral health, and drug and alcohol services. Rochelle is a skilled trainer and has been a Certified Psychiatric Rehabilitation Practitioner since 2007.

In 2020 she also joined many other professionals and received her certification as a Certified Personal Medicine Coach. She is currently a Behavioral Health Manager with Salisbury Behavioral Health/RHA Health Services, responsible for the oversight of their psychiatric rehabilitation services. Through her work she can promote recovery-oriented principles and practices supporting individuals to be independent in the environments of their choice while gaining stability in their addiction. Rochelle is a strong advocate for mental health, and promoter of recovery for all. She has been involved with PAPRS since 2015, serving on the Board of Directors, Advisory Board, and a member of the Executive Team. In addition, she has been involved with many of the training activities as well as supporting the various efforts of the Education and Consultation Committee.

If you need to get in contact with Rochelle, her new email address is [Rochelle.reimert@paprs.org](mailto:Rochelle.reimert@paprs.org).

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## President's Update

By: Kim MacDonald-Wilson, ScD, CPRP

This summer, a lot of exciting changes have occurred since my last update in the June newsletter. We've hired very talented new PAPRS employees – on July 10, Denise Astaneh assumed the Executive Director position full time, and has hit the ground running learning all of our operations that will benefit PAPRS and our members. Denise was a member of the Board of Directors this year and brings with her many years of experience managing psychiatric rehabilitation programs and teaching psych rehab and art therapy at the University level.

On August 7, we welcomed Rochelle Reimert as our new Education Manager part-time. Rochelle has much experience managing psychiatric rehabilitation programs, chairing the Education and Consultation committee, conducting PRA-approved trainings for CPRP credit, and served for a

# Upcoming Training Opportunities!

2023 Course Calendar: [Link](#)

## Engagement Skills in Psychiatric Rehabilitation Process

September 18-19, 2023  
9:00 AM to 12:00 PM

## Orientation to Psychiatric Rehabilitation (4 Sessions)

October 2-3, 9-10  
9:00 AM to 12:00 PM

## PR Services

### Documentation (4 Sessions)

October 16-17, 23-24  
9:00 AM to 12:00 PM

## Ethics and Boundaries in Recovery Oriented

### Services (2 Sessions)

2024 Dates - TBD

## Hearing Voices

Available Upon Request

Save the Dates

4.11.24, 4.12.24

4.18.24, 4.19.24

2024 Conference

number of years on our Board, Secretary of the Board, and most recently as President-Elect.

Both Denise and Rochelle will be working with the Executive Team of the Board of Directors to define our other staff needs in the areas of member services, website management, and business operations support and help us to hire additional PAPRS employees. Given that we have been strong financially in the past few years, we have the resources to staff PAPRS. Look for announcements for new positions (most likely part-time) – these may be great opportunities to contribute your skills and knowledge to PAPRS and the field of psychiatric rehabilitation.

However, when we hired Denise and Rochelle, they were required to resign their Board positions. This, along with anticipated ending of terms of a few current Board members, we have some vacancies to fill. So, during the fall, we will be proactively recruiting new members of the PAPRS Board of Directors. We have some great volunteers working on Board committees that have the inside scoop – we'd love you to consider running for the Board in our fall elections. We also know there are a lot of talented people working in psych rehab – start talking to your friends, coworkers, and supervisors about running for the Board.

Stay tuned this fall for announcements on Board Nominations. Our current Board members and PAPRS staff would be happy to answer any questions you have – just call us, email us, or join the PAPRS Virtual Networking Forum on September 14th. Finally, enjoy our newsletter packed full of great information and stories.

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## 2024 PAPRS Conference - Call for Speakers!

We have begun planning for the 2024 PAPRS Conference, Psych Rehab: The Basics and Beyond! If you, or someone you know, would be interested in being a Keynote Speaker or presenter, please email Aaron at [aaron@challengectr.com](mailto:aaron@challengectr.com).

## 2024 PAPRS Board Nominations!

Each year, PAPRS looks for new, highly motivated individuals to join our Board of Directors. Be on the lookout for nomination forms and information within the next few weeks. We'd love to have you or someone you know join our team!

# PAPRS Committee Updates!

## Executive Committee

- **What does your committee do?** The function of the Executive Committee shall be to carry on the Business of the Chapter in the interim between the meetings of the Board of Directors. We plan Board meetings, oversee the staffing, systems, and operations of PAPRS, and develop and implement plans for growing the organization and serving the PAPRS membership.
- **What are some recent projects that your team is working on that you are excited about?** The Executive Committee convened a Search Committee for a new Executive Director early in 2023 – and Denise Astaneh was just hired in that role and started on July 10, 2023. We will be working with Denise to get PAPRS fully staffed in the near future, and look forward to building a new PAPRS in the coming years.
- **What are your future hopes and goals for your committee?** We would like to see PAPRS membership grow, continue our financial stability as we fully staff the organization and support our growth, continue to be a leader in recovery and psychiatric rehabilitation in Pennsylvania, and advocate for psychiatric rehabilitation services in PA. These are the goals in the PAPRS Strategic Plan.
- **What day/time do you regularly meet?** The Executive Committee meets the first Thursday of the month from 3:00-4:00pm and other times as needed.

## Education & Consultation Committee

- **What does your committee do?** The Education and Consultation Committee strives to continually develop new educational products, enhance current education products, and offer various opportunities for education and consultation in Psychiatric Rehabilitation. In our rapidly growing and changing field of recovery-oriented Psychiatric Rehabilitation (PR) services, PAPRS continues to offer opportunities for practitioners to improve skills and upgrade their PR knowledge base to our members or anyone interested in the field of psychiatric rehabilitation.
- **What are some recent projects that your team is working on that you are excited about?** Supporting the Executive Director with the PAPRS quarterly networking meetings, reviewing and revising current education and consultation policies, developing a team for facilitation, and identifying the educational needs of the PAPRS membership.
- **What are your future hopes and goals for your committee?** To continue to grow the educational opportunities for practitioners and PAPRS membership. Doing this will support and enhance the PR services and ultimately the valued roles our individuals strive to achieve on a daily basis.
- **What would you say to someone who is interested in joining your committee?** We are looking for individuals who are vested in supporting the knowledge, skills, and abilities of PR practitioners throughout the State. Members are not expected to be facilitators but we are always open to supporting growth in this area. Even individuals who are interested in helping to review material or assist in the development of new material are welcome. We welcome everyone driving home Principle #1: "PR practitioners convey hope and respect and believe that all individuals have the capacity for learning and growth".
- **What day/time do you regularly meet?** The 4th Tuesday of every month at 3 PM

## Conference Committee

- **What does your committee do?** The conference committee works year around creating the up and coming conference. We set up workshops based off of interest and needs throughout the state, Newest keynote speakers and advocate for mental health awareness, award scholarships for individuals with CPS's or individuals in recovery to attend the conference and gain the psych rehab education, award best program of the year/ best advocate of the year/ and the top career leader in the field of psych rehab across the state of pa, We also gather sponsorships for the conference and hold a poster contest annually for youth and young adults/adults to see the talent across the state.
- **What are some recent projects that your team is working on that you are excited about?** We are currently revamping the scholarship process to be able to give away one scholarship to a professional struggling to maintain their CPRP credentials and cannot afford to attend the conference.
- **What are your future hopes and goals for your committee?** Future hopes for the committee is to eventually work towards going back to in person conferences. Goal for this committee is to find a rising star in the psych rehab field that is willing to learn how to run the conference committee as Aaron's last term with the board will be ending in a year.
- **What would you say to someone who is interested in joining your committee?** We are all hard workers on our team. We are dedicated to holding a great conference and really work great together! We would love to have new people on our team to learn the ropes and inspire new ideas.
- **What day/time do you regularly meet?** The second Tuesday of every month from 12:30-2:00 pm

## Advisory Committee

- **What does your committee do?** The Advisory Committee exists to bring value and purpose to the Advisory Board. In the past, the Advisory Board members were comprised of past PAPRS Board members who had filled out their board terms, or very knowledgeable people in the field of Psych Rehab, but there was no structure to the Advisory Board beyond that. Many of the advisory board members do help out on other committees, but this Advisory Committee brings identity to the Advisory Board as a whole.
- **What are some recent projects that your team is working on that you are excited about?** The Advisory Committee was heavily involved in forming the committee to hire a new Executive Director. They, along with other regular board members, formulated questions for the candidates and participated in the interviewing, selection, and hiring process.
- **What are your future hopes and goals for your committee?** The main goal in my opinion would be to lift the ad-hoc status and have regular advisory board meetings where real issues in the field might be brought to them regularly. Some of the Advisory Board members have said that since this committee started, they feel much more visible within PAPRS and that is a very good thing. I envision a committee chair who would act as a liaison between the Advisory Board and the PAPRS Board and integrate them more within the organization. We are almost there!
- **What would you say to someone who is interested in joining your committee?** I would say that this committee gives you the chance to meet some real legends in the field of Psych Rehab, and help bring a sense of identity to the Advisory Board. It is really exciting.
- **What day/time do you regularly meet?** This committee meets on the 4th Wednesday of each month, and is currently in ad-hoc status.



## Budget and Finance Committee

- **What does your committee do?** The Budget/Finance Committee monitors all the financial aspects of PAPRS. We take a detailed look monthly at the revenue and expenditures of the organization. We read the spreadsheets prepared by our bookkeeper each month and ask questions when something seems unusual or out of place. At the monthly meetings, we compare line items to the budget for the year. The committee then takes what we have learned and prepare the budget for the coming year.
- **What are some recent projects that your team is working on that you are excited about?** We are excited by the challenge of developing a budget for 2024 that may include new positions, new employees, and new equipment (hardware and software). We are also excited to have an Executive Director who can take responsibility for more of the day-to-day decisions and tasks for our financial accountability.
- **What are your future hopes and goals for your committee?** First, we hope to work with the employees of PAPRS to develop processes that more efficiently track the revenue and expenses of the organization--our website (Memberclicks) and our finance software (Quickbooks) helps us do just that. Secondly, we have some recommendations from our Auditors that we will implement this year. And lastly, we look forward to working with our Executive Director to find a significant new source of revenue that is an addition to conference, education & consultation, and membership.
- **What would you say to someone who is interested in joining your committee?** "Economics drives the world!" Knowledge of finances is very important and powerful. I wish I had learned and understood the money matters earlier in my BOD career-- it is more interesting and influential than someone might think! Keeping the organization on sound financial ground makes all the good work we do possible. While it is a responsibility of every Board member, it is the Budget /Finance Committee that exercises that duty.
- **What day/time do you regularly meet?** We regularly meet on the third Wednesday of the month at 3pm.

## Policy Committee

- **What does your committee do?** We review upcoming policies regarding mental health as a state, write letters advocating to state officials to have psych rehab in the Medicaid State Plan, and assist with reviewing policies with PAPRS.
- **What are some recent projects that your team is working on that you are excited about?** We are currently preparing to send out letters to the Deputy Secretary Jen Smith OHMSAS and Dr. Valerie A. Arkoosh Secretary of DHS as well as the Senate Health and Human Services to advocate for Psych Rehab to be implemented in the Medicaid State Plan.
- **What are your future hopes and goals for your committee?** As a committee, I think it is safe to say that our biggest goal is to win this fight that we have been fighting to get psychiatric rehabilitation in the state plan. As we continue to do so, promoting the great outcomes that occur with psych rehab and educating people about what it is that we do.
- **What would you say to someone who is interested in joining your committee?** If you are interested in advocating for change across the state and putting in the volunteer effort to do so, this is the committee for you!
- **What day/time do you regularly meet?** The 2nd Monday of every month at 3PM

## Communication Committee

- **What does your committee do?** The Communication Committee has three main responsibilities, which include publishing this newsletter every three months, updating the social media pages (*if you aren't following us on Facebook and LinkedIn, you should!*), and assisting with updating information for the website. The committee also assists with creating marketing materials as needed, primarily in relation to the PAPRS Conference each year.
- **What are some recent projects that your team is working on that you are excited about?** One of the big projects that we have been working on is creating a regular posting schedule for our social media pages. By creating consistent content for the pages, it allows for more interactions and engagements, which will help us grow our followers. We are also in the process of reformatting the newsletter, so be on the lookout for a potential new template and style in the coming months!
- **What are your future hopes and goals for your committee?** One of the biggest goals for this committee moving forward is to be more involved in the management and upkeep of the website. The initial hope when we switched to our new website was that this committee would take the lead on managing the website. Some committee members are taking the training through MemberClicks, and will soon be able to assist with this! Our hope is to regularly update the website with useful tools, content, and resources.
- **What would you say to someone who is interested in joining your committee?** This committee can seem intimidating at first, especially for people who may not feel comfortable in their social media or graphic/web design skills. But what we actually need are creative minds! If you have an interest in helping us gather information for the newsletter, or coming up with new ideas to promote our social media, or finding resources for our website - please consider joining us!
- **What day/time do you regularly meet?** We meet the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 3 PM.

## Membership Committee

- **What does your committee do?** Outreach to all new members and telephonic outreach to new organizational members; Outreach to current organizational members as their memberships come due for renewal; Solicitation of feedback/evaluation of current and potential value-added member benefits; Hosting of membership events; Support and encouragement of current members to increase their role within PAPRS; Partnership with PRA to ensure that PAPRS can maximally address/meet the needs of its members; Board nominations and ballots for elections.
- **What day/time do you regularly meet?** We are scheduled to meet virtually monthly on the first Friday of the month at 8:00 AM. This time has presented a barrier the last couple months. We are working on identifying another time.
- **What are some recent projects that your team is working on that you are excited about?** We had been excited this past year with working with Meaningful Measurement around our membership database and new features allowing for timely and more productive outreach. Again, with not meeting the last couple months, a restart is needed!
- **What would you say to someone who is interested in joining your committee?** The potential positive impact of this Committee is significant and we need highly motivated, energetic members to fuel the efforts of the Committee and provide meaningful outreach to current and potential members!
- **What are your future hopes and goals for your committee?** As mentioned above, we need a refresh and a commitment to member outreach and engagement.

# Wellspring's 8 Dimensions of Wellness Painting Project!

**By: Marietta "Rita" Scouten, Psych Rehab Worker**

Wellspring's "The Endless Mountains Learning Center" has been part of Wellspring for the last 10 years. During most of those years, groups met one to three times a week with no more than 5 participants at any given time. In the last 2 years, it has grown to have a more robust 5 day-a-week program with 8 to 10 participants per group. The 3 facilitators, Aimee, Rita and Hazel, are focused on a hands-on approach to developing skills as they encourage participants to take ownership of the types of groups that are of interest to them. The 8-Dimensions of Wellness group is an example of that approach. The group is joyful and fun while creating a space for personal insight and skill development.

The participants at The Endless Mountains Learning Center have been learning about each of SAMHSA's 8 Dimensions of Wellness since April 2023. They review each dimension, discussing it in detail and painting what wellness in that area looks like to them. So far, they have finished 6 of the 8 dimensions, and the feedback has been wonderful. Each person in the art group has said that this project has expanded their knowledge of the dimensions and has made them think about what areas of wellbeing they can improve on in their life. Some consumers have even gone as far to say that painting for the project has made them feel as if they are a part of something, and how seeing their art hung on display makes them feel accomplished.

Each dimension is color coded, and each painting shares its own story. A favorite of the group so far is the financial dimension. Each person that painted a picture for that dimension described how they really understood the financial dimension much further after our discussion and it is one of their favorite paintings. Some other favorites have been the spiritual, emotional, and intellectual dimensions.



Future plans for this project are to finish up the final 2 dimensions, add some additional paintings to the other dimensions and make a final painting for them to take home, which summarizes what they feel they have learned from the information on the 8 Dimensions of Wellness. Several consumers have discussed how they enjoy seeing how much the paintings brighten up the room and that visually, it attracts their attention both before, during and after class time.

**\*If you have a program, intervention or event that you want to share with others, please reach out to Amy DeMay at [ademay@ycp.edu](mailto:ademay@ycp.edu) for inclusion in one of our upcoming newsletters!**



# PA IS LEADING THE WAY IN PSYCH REHAB!

CPRP Certification: 514 Members

CFRP Certification: 8 Members

PRA Membership: 57 Organizational Members / 59 Individual Members

**CONGRATULATIONS TO TRICIA FISHER ON RECENTLY PASSING HER CFRP!**

## *My Time at the 2023 PAPRS Conference*

By: Pamela Sutton, The Challenge Center, Franklin, PA



My name is Pam Sutton, and I'm a member of the Challenge Center in Franklin. I attended the PAPRS conference with a group from Hand in Hand because we were presenting about psych rehab services for older adults like me. I was able to illustrate the knowledge and skills we are gaining at the Challenge Center. I also got to demonstrate some well-known skills like grounding techniques.

I demonstrated the 5-4-3-2-1 grounding technique. You find five things you can see, four things you can touch, three things you can hear, two things you can smell, and one thing you can taste. Mindfulness skills like this are helpful in relaxing, changing your mood, and maybe have a better mindset and more positive behavior.

The PAPRS Conference was also a great learning opportunity for me. I learned a lot of new information and skills that I didn't know yet. I'm very grateful to PAPRS for this opportunity and want to say thank you to everyone who taught and who listened to our presentation.



BY: ADAM DEHNER, THE CHALLENGE CENTER

Smile, and I'll smile back at you.  
Laugh, and enjoy some fun times with me and you  
Enjoy life to the fullest and live a long time.  
Love, and I'll love you more.

# Lebanon County Mental Health Festival!

**By: Skyler Deitrick, Program Director (CSG)**

Mental Health Awareness Month is celebrated each May. How we each celebrate and recognize this month varies from county to county, program to program, and even person to person. In previous years, Lebanon County celebrated by creating an activity calendar, utilizing social media posts, and sending out helpful tips, videos, and website links.

When it came time to start planning for this past year's festivities, a new idea was pitched. Why not bring all of the mental health providers and resources throughout the county into one central location, and host a mental health festival?! So, that's what we did! A small committee of different agencies worked closely together on this project. We came up with a festival name, logo, and immediately started sending out invites to local providers. The idea quickly took off into something much larger than I could have imagined!

The event was held in our CSG Psych Rehab program's parking lot on Saturday, May 20th from 10 AM to 1 PM. We had close to 30 different vendors, which included agencies and programs such as music therapy, pet therapy, case management, peer support, crisis intervention, nutrition, and sleep services. We were even able to reserve the Mobile and Wellness Opportunity Center through AmeriHealth Caritas, which is a large bus that has been converted into a mobile art/yoga studio, dental/medical office, and employment center! Each vendor was encouraged to provide promotional materials, giveaways, and plan a mental health related activity at their booth.



The festival also included a DJ and a Wellness Walk on the nearby trail. Students from local schools help make inspirational posts that were placed along the walking path!



We had a great turnout for our first year, with over 125 individuals and families showing up! Guests included county commissioners Jo Ellen Litz and Mike Kuhn, as well as State Representative John Schlegel.

We look forward to making this an annual event here in Lebanon County. We already have begun to start planning for next year, with some new ideas and activities planned!



**OPPORTUNITY TO  
ADVOCATE!**

# **March On Harrisburg**

**March to promote  
increased funding  
for Mental Health  
Initiatives in PA!**



Capitol Steps  
Harrisburg, PA



Wednesday, September  
27, 2023 at 10:30am



**SCAN or CLICK QR  
CODE TO REGISTER!**

Email Owen with any questions:

[odougherty1964@icloud.com](mailto:odougherty1964@icloud.com)

**WE NEED YOU!**

***LOOK FOR OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER IN DECEMBER 2023!***