






# PAPRS NEWSLETTER

PENNSYLVANIA ASSOCIATION OF PSYCHIATRIC REHABILITATION SERVICES

## 2024 BOARD MEETINGS

-  JANUARY 25-26
-  MARCH 21-22
-  JUNE 13-14
-  SEPTEMBER 19-20
-  NOVEMBER 7-8

## QUARTERLY NETWORKING EVENT:


THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12TH  
11 AM - 12:30 PM

[REGISTRATION LINK](#)



STAY UP-TO-DATE WITH  
PAPRS ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

 62 Dallas Shopping Center  
PMB 176 Dallas, PA 18612

 717-655-7662

 [www.paprs.org](http://www.paprs.org)



## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

BY: DENISE ASTANEH - MA, CPRP, CFRP

I'm absolutely loving this crisp, autumn weather! While I know not everyone may share my enthusiasm for fall, I find this season to be truly magical. Sure, some might view it as a time when flowers fade and trees shed their leaves, but I see it as a canvas painted with vibrant hues of red, orange, and gold—a reminder of the beauty in change.

Fall is not just about the stunning colors; it also symbolizes new beginnings. For many, this season marks the start of a new school year or the beginning of exciting projects and personal goals. It's a time for fresh starts and growth, making it a wonderful period for reflection and planning.

With this in mind, I have a special request for all our Organizational members' key contacts. I know everyone's schedules are packed, but your attention to this matter is crucial. Please take a moment to review and update your linked profiles associated with your PAPRS membership.

Keeping your profiles up to date is vital for us to ensure that you receive the resources and information your programs are entitled to as members of PRA and PAPRS. Accurate and current information helps us better serve you and provide you with the most relevant support.

The key contact(s) for your organization have the ability to update organizational members. Through [paprs.org](http://paprs.org), click on the Membership tab, and select Member Landing Page. Next, click on Organizational Profile in the center of the screen. In the green toolbar, select My Organization, and then Org. Members. We are asking that you unlink any staff that may no longer be with your organization.

If you need any assistance with updating your profiles, please don't hesitate to reach out. I or one of the PAPRS staff members will be more than happy to help you through the process.

Thank you so much for your time and cooperation. Let's embrace the spirit of fall together and ensure our organizational resources are in top shape!

## PAPRS STAFF

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

- Denise Astaneh  
denise.astaneh@papr.org

### EDUCATION MANAGER

- Rochelle Reimert  
rochelle.reimert@papr.org

### OPERATIONS ASSISTANT

- Aaron Burkhardt  
aaron.burkhardt@papr.org

## PAPRS LEADERSHIP

### PRESIDENT

- Kim MacDonald-Wilson

### PRESIDENT-ELECT

- Sara Dobson

### SECRETARY

- Allyson Chludzinski

### TREASURER

- Vacant

### IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

- Ellwyn Andres

## BOARD MEMBERS

Collette D'Angelo  
Skyler Deitrick  
Virginia Dikeman  
Pam Nabried-Abdullah  
Julie Sanders  
Holly Knoll  
Debra Weisgerber  
Caitlin Needham  
Karen Yob  
Katelyn Ivanac  
Corinne Schnee  
Laura Gardner  
Kimberly Wilson-Roberson  
Janelle Eberhardt  
Nancy Micocci

## ADVISORY MEMBERS

Jen McLaughlin    Amy DeMay  
Susan Poznar      Rita Kraus  
Maureen Walsh    Lu Mauro  
Eileen Joseph  
Donna Duffy Bell

# PAPRS BOARD NOMINATIONS: CLASS OF 2027

**The PAPRS Class of 2027 Election of the Board of Directors is underway!**  
**Nominations close November 1, 2024. [Click here for nomination form.](#)**

PAPRS makes every effort to maintain diverse representation on the Board from various regions of the state, and the perspectives of Providers, Persons in Recovery, Families, Managed Care, and Government.

Anyone may make a nomination. You may nominate yourself or a colleague. If nominating someone other than yourself, please discuss the nomination with your nominee and ensure his/her/their agreement to be nominated. The nominee must be a member of PRA/PAPRS or agree to join by December 31, 2024.

### Minimum PAPRS Board Responsibilities:

- Serve a term of 3 years. (If elected, nominees will serve from January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2027)
- Attend all Board meetings held four (4) to six (6) times a year, unless excused in writing before the meeting by the President or their designee. Meetings are to be held both virtually and/or in person. In-person meetings held in State College, PA
- Serve on at least one Committee of the Board. Attend all committee meetings and contribute to the committee's work (usually held monthly) unless excused in writing by the Committee Chair or their designee in advance of the meeting. Serving on a Committee includes completing tasks or activities between meetings.
- Register for and participate in the Annual Conference to support the success of the conference. Beyond attending conference sessions, participation includes assisting with on-site registration, including processing on-site registration fees, hosting and monitoring conference sessions (whether in-person or virtual), assisting speakers, conducting raffles, baskets, or other fund-raising activities, or other assistance as requested by the Conference Committee and Executive Team. Absences may be excused if requested in advance and in writing with a legitimate reason to the President or their designee, allowing recordkeeping and planning for coverage of these responsibilities in the Board member's absence.
- Attend the Annual Membership Meeting, held during the PAPRS Conference. At a minimum, all Board of Directors are expected to be present for the Annual Membership Meeting and participate in any votes put before the Membership. Committee Chairs/Co-Chairs and Officers are expected to update the Membership on Committee and Board activities of the past year.

**\*PAPRS IS ALSO LOOKING FOR A NEW TREASURER, WHICH IS PART OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. IF YOU HAVE AN INTEREST IN FINANCES, OR A DESIRE TO LEARN, WE HIGHLY ENCOURAGE YOU TO JOIN THE BOARD!**

**NEW**

## PAPRS Creativity Contest



Recovery

How do you see “your” Path to Recovery through Art?  
Painting, drawing, sculpting, poetry, music.  
All forms of creativity are welcome.

# CREATIVITY CONTEST

**NOVEMBER 1 - DECEMBER 31**

PAPRS has decided to make alterations to the previous R.E.S.P.E.C.T Poster Contest, which had been held annually during the PAPRS Conference. Moving forward, the contest will be held prior to the Conference, and is now open to any form of art and creativity!

The theme this year coincides with the Conference theme, “Path to Recovery.” We want to see what YOUR recovery looks like! Rap lyrics, write a poem, paint a picture, sculpt an object, etc.

We will continue to have two categories: Young Adult (14-26), Adult (27+). Winners will receive a virtual gift card!

# 2025 PAPRS CONFERENCE

## CALL FOR PRESENTERS, KEYNOTE SPEAKERS!

PAPRS is currently looking for Keynote Speakers for the 2025 Conference. If you have any recommendations/connections, please email Aaron Burkhardt ([aaron.burkhardt@paprs.org](mailto:aaron.burkhardt@paprs.org)).

If you are interested in presenting a workshop during the upcoming Conference, be sure to check [www.paprs.org](http://www.paprs.org) for more information in the coming weeks!

**PSYCHIATRIC REHABILITATION:  
PATH TO RECOVERY!**

**APRIL 3RD, 4TH, 10TH, & 11TH**

# 2024 PAPRS CONTINUING EDUCATION

## ORIENTATION TO PSYCHIATRIC REHABILITATION

» October 24, 25, 31, & Nov 1  
9 AM - 12PM

## PSYCH REHAB SERVICES DOCUMENTATION

» November 5, 6, 12, & 13  
9 AM - 12PM

## HEALING VOICES DOCUMENTARY

» Available upon request

TO REGISTER FOR A SESSION OR BROWSE ADDITIONAL DATES:

[Course Calendar](#)

## **NEW!** PAPRS Instructor Application

PAPRS is pleased to announce a new process to apply to become a PAPRS instructor.

If you are interested in joining our team of Instructors, please complete the [PAPRS Instructor Application](#).

CPRP CERTIFICATIONS  
522 Members

PA IS LEADING THE WAY IN PSYCH REHAB!

CPRP CERTIFICATIONS  
9 Members

## PAPRS CONSULTATION PROGRAM

PAPRS offers a consultation program, which is a unique opportunity to acquire skills, resources, and guidance from experienced psychiatric rehabilitation providers regarding the development and implementation of a variety of psychiatric rehabilitation programs.

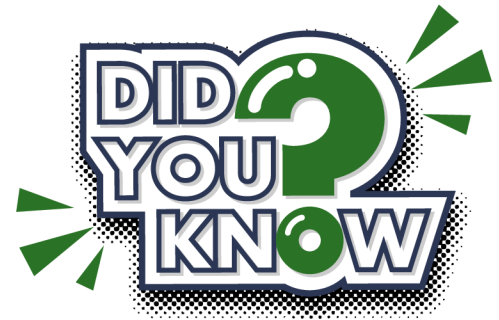
The Consultation experience provides on/off site consults regarding psychiatric rehabilitation services. This might include assistance with program development, documentation, administrative issues, and preparation for licensing and responding to MCO audits.

### Here's how we provide our Consultation services:

- Once a Consultation request is received, PAPRS will review the request and arrange for an initial consultation with the agency
- PAPRS will arrange for the formal consult with an expert in the field
- Additional individualized consultation is available with contracted agreement.

### Who is eligible for Consultation Services?

- Members of PAPRS/PRA are eligible for one hour of free consultation each year. Complete the [Free Consultation Request Form](#).
- If a member request for more than one hour of consultation is submitted, staff will verify and develop a contract with fees.
- All Organizations are eligible for contracted Education/Consultation. Complete the [Consultation Request with Fee](#).



# OMHSAS UPDATE

On September 19th, 2024, IRRC (Independent Regulatory Review Commission) approved amendments to the Chapter 5230 Psychiatric Rehabilitation regulations. Some highlights of the approved changes include:

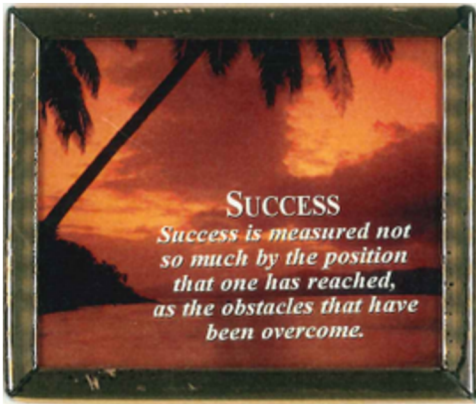
**Expanded Eligibility:** Broadening the criteria for mental health diagnoses to include a wider range of conditions without needing exception requests.

**Youth Participation:** Allowing youth aged 14-17 to participate in PRS services, with new requirements for staff credentials and clearances.

**Documentation Change:** Shifting from a daily entry note to a weekly note, along with tracking daily/group attendance.

Official implementation of the regulations is tentatively planned by December 2024.

## MEET BOARD MEMBER, PAMELA NABRIED-ABDULLAH



Pamela has been a member of PAPRS for 6 years, and will be finishing her second term on the board at the end of 2024. She has served on the Membership Committee during her time with PAPRS.

Pamela is currently the Director of Employment, Education and Community Integrated Programs for Horizon House, located in the Philadelphia area. Pamela directs the operations of the Career Planning Division and Supported Employment Services, overseeing staff's employment activities that lead to direct competitive job placement of program participants.

She is also responsible for data collection and reporting to funders (Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disabilities Services, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation), as well as negotiating employment support and job coaching contracts that would best support the need of the participants.

**Fun Fact:** Pamela loves British TV shows, with her favorite being Doc Martin!

*"Psychiatric Rehabilitation can bring about change, hope and recovery in helping individuals to live a better quality of life. With support, individuals can self determine the manner in which their personal goals can be visualized and met."*

### What made you join PAPRS?

My first introduction to PAPRS was through former Board Member Arlene Solomon (passed away recently), who would tell me about her organizational activities in promoting psychiatric rehabilitation services. Arlene once took me to a board meeting, where I got to see other members talk about their activities in promoting education, policy and training. I was impressed by the dedication each member showed in demonstrating their commitment to bring about change, leading to a better understanding of what psychiatric rehabilitation could do in the lives of so many individuals. During that time, Horizon House was in the process of training and educating staff regarding best practices, and a big push through the agency was the attainment of the CPRP. I was curious to learn more about psychiatric rehabilitation and decided to take classes, and would ultimately pass the test. In 2018, Arlene retired from the agency and was leaving the board. Arlene submitted my name for consideration and I was accepted to serve as a board member.

# THE REDCO GROUP: TAY PSYCH REHAB

## RECOVERY ACHIEVED ONE DAY AT A TIME

BY: KELSIE BARTHOLOMEW, CPRP, TAY PSYCH REHAB/SILP DIRECTOR

The ReDCo Group's Transition Age Youth Psych Rehab Program, most commonly known as TAY, has been a staple in Monroe, Carbon and Pike Counties community mental health services since early 2013. TAY also offers a Supported Independent Living Program (SILP) where members are able to live and learn with guidance through adulthood. TAY staff Kelsie Bartholomew (Director), Alexis Sebring (Specialist/SILP Coordinator), Jonathan Dunniehigh (Worker) and Isiah Pellecchia (Assistant) conduct groups, workshops and individual sessions Monday through Friday, geared towards what the program members want to learn. TAY has made recovery possible to it's program members by teaching real life skills on how to be a successful adult, while managing mental health through a hands-on approach in the transference of skills.



**LEFT TO RIGHT:**

**KELSIE BARTHOLOMEW,  
TAY PR/SILP DIRECTOR**

**ALEXIS SEBRING, PR  
SPECIALIST/SILP  
COORDINATOR**

**JONATHAN DUNNIEHIGH,  
PR WORKER**

**ISIAH PELLECCCHIA, PR  
ASSISTANT**

Though there have been many success stories over the program's existence, one is important to highlight - Isiah, the program's Psych Rehab Assistant, who was once a member of the program himself. He originally came to TAY to learn how to cope with his mental health symptoms better. Isiah states that he learned time management skills, responsibility as an adult and even got help with getting back into college, which was put on hold due to his first mental health break. He was able to graduate in May 2022 with an Associate's degree in Social Work, and decided to give back to where he got the most help. TAY was hiring shortly after, and he came on as the program's Psych Rehab Assistant. Isiah shares that "[TAY] helped me understand myself and my symptoms better, and how to cope with them effectively. I'm very grateful for my time at TAY as a member."

The program's admission rate is currently at an all-time high, admitting two to three new members per month. The TAY program and it's staff are determined to make a difference in it's members lives, one day at a time, to continue to create life successes much like Isiah's.

# SPOTLIGHT: ROBBIE DEVIGILI'S STORY

*"The goal of recovery is not to become normal. The goal is to embrace the human vocation of becoming more deeply, more fully human." -Dr. Patricia Deegan.*



For a long time I felt less than human. I've always had a high respect for animals, so I won't compare myself to them, but I was similar to a ghost; an afterimage of who I once was. If I'm being honest I might be able to count the times I felt "human" on my hands. My time being less-than was a deep depression brought on by burnout and a self-hatred that I just couldn't seem to shake.

At a point I was tired of feeling less-than, and I returned to therapy. My therapist, of whom I am eternally grateful and continue to see to this day, suggested that I go in for a formal evaluation to become formally diagnosed with mental health challenges. One of the interventions they provided stuck out to me as I've never heard of it before: Psychiatric Rehabilitation (PR). I had my intake with PR and was blown away by how many dimensions of humanity they cover. From life skills to mental health awareness, I was surprised this wasn't a better known option for recovery.

Still, I was unsure that it could help me. As less-than, how could they possibly build me back up to being human again? But that was my big misconception. I was never less-than, I was always human. I just forgot what being human meant. PR helped me to remember the things I already knew; the things I already liked about myself.

Pretty early on in my recovery journey at PR, a staff member approached me and presented me with the idea of becoming a Certified Peer Specialist (CPS). She said that from what she knows about me, I'd be a perfect fit. Little did she know, part of my reasoning for going to PR was to get back into the workforce. I didn't even know working at a place like this was a possibility for me. I was thrilled, to say the least. I immediately agreed and started my journey to becoming a CPS, and remembering what it's like to be human.

My first step was to attend the PAPRS 2024 Virtual Conference to learn more about what PR does and how I will fit into it. The timing of this group was perfect, as I had just learned about the CPS role and that I could be part of the staff one day. I applied for and received a scholarship to attend the conference, for which I am extremely grateful. Learning about what the state-wide PR organizations do was a crucial step to becoming an employee and having a purpose again.

Next, the director of my Liberty House Psychiatric Rehabilitation told me about a training through the Copeland Center to become a CPS. The timing worked out perfectly for me, and the training was free, which was great since I hadn't worked for almost two years at this point. The training was also held in Scranton, which is close to me and I was grateful to be able to commute. I went through the training and gained even more knowledge about what a CPS does and what my role will be after I get my certificate. Once again everything seemed to work out perfectly for me to continue my pathway to becoming a CPS.

Right after my training, I returned to my PR to great news. The state had been strongly suggesting that a specific role be filled at Liberty House. They recently changed the rules so that a CPS could apply for the opportunity. This was once again perfect timing for me as I had just completed my training and, with my newly acquired knowledge of PR programs and CPS skills, felt more confident than ever in my abilities to fill this role.

I applied for the position and received a job offer within a week! I was elated about the news. I couldn't wait to share the success of my opportunities with the staff member (Nancy) that first suggested all of this to me months ago. Our hard work and insight were finally paying off.

Through the process of attending Psychiatric Rehabilitation, going through all of their dimensions, and training to become a Certified Peer Specialist, I remembered what it meant to be more fully human. I like to think that Dr. Deegan would be as proud of me as my future coworkers are and, more importantly, I am of myself. I like to think that I've become more deeply human and a living example of hope, and that's all because Psychiatric Rehabilitation helped me along my recovery journey.

## IN MEMORY OF GWENDOLYN "GWEN" DEYOUNG

**MAY 22, 1949 - AUGUST 4, 2024**



PAPRS is saddened to share the passing of Advisory Board member Gwen DeYoung. On behalf of PAPRS, we extend our deepest sympathy to Gwen's family and friends, and the staff and individuals of Wellspring Community Support Services.

### **Remembrance by Hazel Guild-Smith, Gwen's colleague:**

Gwen was the mother of three daughters, Susannah, Emily and Noelle. Her granddaughters, Flora and Lucy were the love of her life. Every new photo on her phone was an opportunity for her to share her love and devotion to them. Her family was the most important accomplishment in her life. In conversations she often praised each of her daughters for their talents and strengths. Her face would light up with pleasure as she talked about her grandchildren. She wore her love for her family on her face.

Gwen was a driving force for mental health services in Tioga County, PA. Her enthusiasm, determination and passion for equal opportunities for individuals with the lived experience of a mental illness were apparent in all aspects of her life. She was the director of a mental health community residential rehabilitation services (CRRS) where she took every opportunity to encourage, teach and sometimes console those who needed some stabilization in their lives before they moved into



apartments in the community. Group homes were not always looked upon as a good place to be but with Gwen's guidance the staff was able to create an atmosphere of support and encouragement. To this day many of the people who once resided in the CRRS remember it fondly and wish that it was still available.

Gwen worked for Tioga County Department of Human Services for over 10 years as a Crisis worker. She had a calm, caring voice that helped many an individual get through the situation they were facing. Gwen believed in Peer Support before Peer Support was a job opportunity. Her focus on people's strengths and her belief that anyone can use their skills to help others prompted her to hire individuals who had previously been in services.

Gwen's belief in recovery from mental health symptoms prompted her and three other individuals to separate from a parent agency to create Wellspring Community Support Services, an agency that each year serves about 150 individuals in Tioga County who experience mental illness. Upon the initial CEO's retirement, Gwen took over the position and continued to guide the company with a hands-on approach.

Gwen was a staunch believer in the power of Psychiatric Rehabilitation. During the time when she was the director of the CRRS she would talk with state inspectors about mental health needs across the state. When Psychiatric Rehabilitation was being introduced as a possible in-plan service Gwen became excited and started introducing the concept to the CRRS staff. Goals began to include objectives related to interests, vocations and spirituality. When Psychiatric Rehabilitation became available as a service Gwen was prepared to take on the task of creating a program in Tioga County. Gwen received her CPRP in November of 2006.

Throughout her career Gwen has been honored with several recognitions of achievement. She was honored by Tioga County Partnership for Community Health for her outstanding performance and lasting contributions. In 2013 she was presented a plaque from NAMI Tioga County for her contributions towards helping individuals who have a mental illness and for helping the family members of those individuals. She facilitated several Family to Family Trainings on mental illness and trainings for providers of services on mental illness.

Gwen understood that all parts of a person's life could be affected by their mental health so when opportunity arose to include a health component to Wellspring's services, Gwen led her staff as they created a Health Home. Thus physical health became integrated into Wellspring's services and individuals could work on skills to improve their physical health along with their mental health.

Gwen participated as an elected board member and eventually as an advisory board member for PAPRS. In her final months, Gwen received a lifetime achievement award from PAPRS, in recognition for her herculean efforts to increase support networks in Tioga County and across the state of Pennsylvania. She participated on OMHSAS' workgroup for transitional youth and young adults and on the OMHSAS' workgroup for the credentialing of the CPS work force.

Gwen was well loved by the Wellspring staff. She was not only interested in their work abilities but was often the first to approach a staff member who was experiencing a life struggle whether it was the loss of a loved one or the illness of a child. She would offer a statement of compassion, a word of encouragement, a bit of problem solving or sometimes a shoulder to cry on. She was very proud of the Wellspring staff and touted their accomplishments to other providers. Gwen was a teacher, a guide and an advocate. A beautiful soul who will be missed for years to come but whose legacy lives on in the programs she created and the hundreds of lives she touched.

**A memorial for Gwen will be held on October 12 at 1 p.m. in Mansfield University, 307 Alumni Hall. In lieu of flowers, please send donations to Wellspring Community Support Services, PO Box 574, Mansfield, PA 16933.**

**OUR NEXT PAPRS NEWSLETTER: DECEMBER 2024**