

# Conference NDFBSA Speakers



**Dr. Jeffrey Anvari-Clark**

Jeffrey Anvari-Clark, PhD, MA, LMSW is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of Social Work. He has teaching interests in social work practice with individuals, families, and communities; financial social work; and behavioral and mental health. His research focuses on the financial domain of behavioral health; financial interdependence; and behavioral interventions in developing financial efficacy. He completed his PhD at the University of Maryland School of Social Work, where he also received his MSW. He holds an MA in social justice in intercultural relations from the SIT Graduate Institute, and a BA in international relations from American University. Jeffrey ran the Family Prosperity Program, conducting financial education, coaching, and eviction prevention case management at Promise Heights in West Baltimore. He also has experience as a financial advisor, private financial coach, and running an IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program. He has taught the MSW course Financial Stability for Individuals, Families, and Communities over several years and is an active member of the Financial Social Work Initiative. He periodically consults with Money Habitudes, LLC. and conducts continuing education courses.

## **ND Youth Advisory Association Board Olivia Bahl, Skylar Olson, and Harley Fiddler**

The NDYAA is an advisory board with the purpose to offer an opportunity for youth to make a difference in North Dakota communities by planning, implementing and advising on meaningful projects and topics to improve the health of North Dakota youth. The advisory board provides young people a chance to learn about, and put into action, community-wide planning and enhance leadership skills and responsibility.

Olivia is currently pursuing a degree in Criminal Justice at MSUM. She has served on the North Dakota Youth Leadership Board for four years, presenting at various panels and conferences. Her lived experience as a foster child informs her advocacy and public speaking, offering a powerful perspective on youth engagement and systemic reform.

Harley is a youth leader and caregiver, currently fostering two of her siblings while raising her daughter. She has served on the North Dakota Youth Leadership Board for two years and presented at UND to share her story with graduating students.

Skylar is an NDYAA Leadership Board Member.



**Tracy Miller**

Tracy Miller has been employed with Children & Family Services -ND Department of Health and Human Services since 2009. She currently serves as the state Family Preservation and Prevention Administrator, overseeing front-end child welfare services designed to support families and to keep children safely in their homes. Following the passing of the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) Tracy has led the implementation of North Dakota's FamilyFirst Title IV-E Prevention Service Plan and the expansion of prevention services statewide.



## **Jennifer Schlinger EdD, LMSW**

Jennifer Schlinger graduated from the University of North Dakota with both her BSSW (2000) and MSW (2004). She completed her EdD in Educational Practice and Leadership at UND and her dissertation addressed trauma education in social work curricula. She joined the UND social work faculty full time in 2020 after teaching undergraduate social work classes as an adjunct instructor for over ten years, four of which with UND. Jennifer has taught both undergraduate and graduate courses including Human Behavior and the Social Environment, Social Work Task and Treatment Groups, Social Policy, Social Work Research Methods, Tools for Policy, Trauma-Informed Care, and Field Instruction Seminar. In addition to teaching, she also serves as the Director of Field Education for all BSSW and MSW students. Jennifer has over 20 years of social work practice and has worked in a variety of areas including medical, military, state government, private, and non-profit.



## **Kayla Jones**

Kayla Jones is skilled professional with an extensive background in domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, and child advocacy. She also has experience in training multidisciplinary professionals on sexual and intimate partner violence, and related issues.



## **Amber Nelson, LPCC, LAC**

Amber Nelson, LMAC, LPCC is a dually licensed mental health and addiction professional with over a decade of clinical experience serving children, adolescents and families. She currently serves as Therapy Supervisor at Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch in Bismarck, North Dakota, where she provides individual, group, and family therapy, clinical supervision, and leadership for multidisciplinary treatment teams. Amber holds a Master of Science in Addiction Counseling from the University of Mary and has a history of studies in leadership. She is trained in a wide range of evidence-based and trauma-informed approaches, including Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), a variety of trauma treatments, Motivational Interviewing, and attachment- and family-based interventions. Her clinical work integrates both traditional therapeutic methods and creative approaches such as mindfulness, yoga, and art. In addition to her clinical work, Amber provides clinical supervision for licensed associate professionals and therapy interns and has experience assisting with psychological testing. She is actively involved in professional leadership and advocacy, including past service on the North Dakota Family Based Association Board of Directors and ongoing involvement with conference planning and training initiatives as well as selected to participate in the North Dakota Women's Leadership Program.



## **Dr Hannah Baczynski**

Dr. Hannah Baczynski is the Director of Therapy & Clinical Development at Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch. She provides psychological evaluations, leads therapy groups, and supports program development and training. She believes care should be personal, effective, and grounded in research. Her work focuses on understanding the reasons behind a person's behavior so she can guide them toward skills that support long-term growth. With experience in areas such as trauma, mood concerns, emotion regulation, and psychological testing, she brings a steady, compassionate presence to the Ranch. She creates a caring space where residents, families, and staff feel supported and encouraged.



## **Kelvin Hazangwi, LCSW**

Kelvin Hazangwi, LCSW earned his Master of Social Work from the University of North Dakota, where he was a Child Welfare Scholar. He currently works as an In-Home Case Manager with the Southwest Dakota Human Service Zone and as a Crisis Service Provider at Northwest Behavioral Health Clinic. Kelvin's experience in the child welfare and behavioral health fields has strengthened his passion for working with youth and parents, with a particular focus on engaging fathers. Kelvin is the current facilitator of the Nurturing Fathers Program, a group for fathers and led by fathers. Kelvin currently provides groups in rural western North Dakota schools, with a focus on providing social skills and mental health education to boys. His professional interests are grounded in extensive prior work in human rights, gender, and development, including a strong emphasis on working with men, masculinities, and violence prevention in South Africa. Kelvin has held leadership roles, including serving as Chairperson of the Anti-Domestic Violence Council of Zimbabwe, Director of PADARE Men's Forum on Gender, and Chairperson of Students and Youth Working on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights in Zimbabwe.



**Dr. Kyle Johnson**

Kyle Johnson, MD is an otolaryngologist based in Fargo, North Dakota, with seven years of clinical practice experience. He earned his medical degree from the Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California in 2011 and completed his residency in Otolaryngology–Head and Neck Surgery at the University of Connecticut Health Center from 2011 to 2016. Dr. Johnson is a graduate of the Nurturing Fathers Program, reflecting his commitment to fatherhood and his family.



**Amy Tichy**

Amy Tichy a University of Minnesota graduate, Amy Tichy has been employed by NDSU Extension Barnes County as a parent educator and coordinator working with regional and statewide programs for 15 years. She has a strong belief in Extension’s mission of empowering North Dakotans to improve their lives and communities through science-based education and takes satisfaction in serving families. In her role as an artist, Tichy advocates for expanded access to the creative arts. In recognition of the value and need for art education in rural communities, she founded Maple Valley Community Arts in 2014. The non-profit organization hosts an annual summer art camp for area youth and occasional adult workshops. Tichy recently completed a second degree at North Dakota State University in Visual Arts with an emphasis in printmaking. She has served as a grant panelist for the North Dakota Council on the Arts, is active in area arts organizations, and has exhibited and sold her artwork regionally.



## **Sean Brotherson, PhD**

Sean Brotherson, PhD is a scholar and educator specializing in human development and family studies, with a particular focus on fathering, couple relationships, and family life education. He earned his PhD in Human Development and Family Studies from Oregon State University in 2000, with minors in Gerontology and Philosophy. He holds a master's degree in Family Sciences (Family Life Education) and dual bachelor's degrees in Family Sciences and English, all from Brigham Young University. Dr. Brotherson's work centers on strengthening home and family relationships across the lifespan. His areas of interest include fathering and generativity, healthy marital and couple relationships, teaching and learning in the home, and fostering connectedness in parent-child relationships. He has also focused extensively on family stress and loss, including child loss and its impact on parent identity, reconciliation in troubled marriages, and the effects of home and farm loss on rural family identity and relationships. In addition, Dr. Brotherson's work in family life education and family policy examines educational strategies, resources, and program evaluation to support father involvement and marriage and relationship education. His policy interests include the interaction of families with community, government, and broader policy contexts, both domestically and internationally, with an emphasis on fatherhood and marriage.



**Roberta Pytlik, LPCC, LMAC**

Roberta is a Masters level clinician in the Fargo community and have been practicing since 2011. Roberta currently co-owns a private practice and see teen and adult clients individually with an emphasis on trauma and substance use recovery. Roberta also received her 235-hour yoga teacher training in 2016 and is registered as an RYT-200 through the Yoga Alliance. Roberta has integrated yoga postures and philosophies in various groups, community classes, and individual therapy sessions.



**Cheryl Thomas**

Cheryl Thomas graduated from the University of North Dakota in 2006 with a degree in Social Work and a second major in Criminal Justice. Cheryl started her career working in child welfare, first at Williams County Social Services in Williston as a foster care/wraparound case manager. Cheryl then moved closer to home by working as a case manager at Prairie Learning Center, which was a juvenile male group home. In 2008, Cheryl started her career with the North Dakota Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (ND DOCR) where she started as a Juvenile Corrections Specialist in the West Central Divisions of Juvenile Services office in Bismarck. Cheryl continued to advance in her career by becoming a Senior Juvenile Corrections Specialist in the region which progressed into becoming the Juvenile Services Community Supervisor for the western half of the DJS regional offices for eight years. In 2022 Cheryl made the career jump to adult corrections, when she was promoted to Women's Services Manager for the ND DOCR where she is now located at Heart River Correctional Center (HRCC) in Mandan. Cheryl leads the Children of Incarcerated Parents Initiative for the DOCR, she has been a part of the ND Family Based Services Association for nearly 10 years.



**Beth Tyson, MA**

Beth Tyson, MA, is a mom, a childhood trauma consultant, public speaker, author, and CASA Advisory Board Member. With a background as a family-based trauma therapist, she honed her expertise stabilizing mental health crises within foster, kinship, and adoptive homes. Motivated by her therapeutic work, Beth founded Beth Tyson Trauma Consulting to spread awareness and advocate for trauma-responsive care across the world. Her commitment to empowering families led her to pen three best-selling books, including therapeutic books for children like "A Grandfamily for Sullivan" and "Sullivan Goes to See Mama." Notably, she also co-created the animated YouTube series "All Connected," offering valuable insights into trauma recovery for teens. Beyond her professional endeavors, Beth cherishes her role as a mother, photographer, and dog lover.



**Tim Geinger, LCSW**

Tim Geinger, LCSW is the Senior Director of Residential Partnerships for Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch who provided residential treatment for kids ages 10-17 with locations in Minot, Bismarck, and Fargo. In Tim's role he is responsible for internal policy and procedures to align with best practice and administrative rule. The other part of Tim's role is to work with external partners to align the Ranch's mission with the needs of kids and families in North Dakota.



## **Senator Kathy Hogan**

Senator Kathy Hogan is retired after 40 years of service in the public human services system. She holds a BA in Sociology from the University of Jamestown and an MS in Educational Counseling from North Dakota State University. She served as Director of Cass County Social Services for 28 years and has been actively involved in community leadership, including service on the Fargo/Cass Public Health Board and with the North Dakota Human Rights Coalition. In 2018, she was honored as a North Dakota Women's Network Woman of the Year. She has served in the North Dakota House of Representatives from 2009–2018 and in the North Dakota Senate since 2019. She is also active with St. Anthony's Parish.



## **Senator Judy Lee**

Senator Judy Lee is a retired real estate broker and has served in the North Dakota Senate since 1995. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Medical Technology from the University of North Dakota. Throughout her career, Senator Lee has been deeply involved in community service, including serving on the board of the Vocational Training Center, the Advisory Board of the Children's Advocacy Center of North Dakota, and the board of Eventide Senior Living. She served as President Pro Tempore of the North Dakota Senate in 2007. Senator Lee is a widow and the proud mother of two children and grandmother of three.



## **Senator Kristin Roers**

Senator Kristin Roers is a Nursing and Clinical Services Consultant and has served in the North Dakota Senate since 2019. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Economics and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from South Dakota State University, as well as a Master of Science in Nursing and Healthcare Systems Administration from the University of Minnesota. Senator Roers brings a strong background in healthcare, clinical leadership, and systems administration to her legislative work.



## **Senator Tim Mathern**

Senator Tim Mathern serves as Director of Public Policy at Prairie St. John's Hospital and has represented North Dakota in the Senate since 1987. He holds a BA from North Dakota State University, a Master of Social Work from the University of Nebraska, and a Master of Public Administration from Harvard University. Senator Mathern brings decades of experience in public policy, health, and human services, and has served on numerous boards and councils, including Resource Connect and Ecological Insights, the Global Council for Political Renewal's International Legislator Forum, the UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences, the Council of State Governments, and the North Dakota State Commission on National and Community Service. He is also active with professional, civic, and faith-based organizations, including the National Association of Social Workers, North Dakota United, the Dakota Resource Council, and Church of the Nativity.



## **Representative Brandy Pyle**

Representative Brandy Pyle is self-employed and has served in the North Dakota House of Representatives since 2017. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Finance from the University of Minnesota's Carlson School of Management and served six years in the Minnesota National Guard. Representative Pyle is actively involved in community and leadership organizations, including the Cass County Park Board, RLND Class VII, Global Bridges, CSG BILLD, and the Henry Toll Fellowship. Her service also includes Haley's Hope, The Village, the Fargo National Cemetery Volunteer Committee, and Westminster Presbyterian Church. She is married to Nicholas and is the mother of four children.



## **Representative Gregory Stemen**

Representative Gregory Stemen works in banking and has served in the North Dakota House of Representatives since 2021. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics Education from Valley City State University and a Master of Science in Educational Leadership from Southwest Minnesota State University. Representative Stemen has been actively involved in public service and governance, including service on the Fort Ransom City Commission and the North Dakota State Board of Higher Education from 2015–2018, where he served as Vice Chair from July 2017 to September 2018. He also served on the North Dakota Veterans' Home Governing Board from 2016–2020, including as Vice Chair from 2018–2020, and is a current appointed member of the North Dakota Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) Board. His leadership has been recognized with the Legislators Excellence Award from the Reason Foundation and the Advocate of the Year Award from the North Dakota Student Association. He is the parent of one child.



## **Katie Krukenberg, LMSW**

Katie Krukenberg is a licensed social worker with over 20 years of experience; 10 years teaching in higher education and working as Field Director and Program Director for Social Work Program at University of Mary; 10 years of direct practice experience in social work (Bismarck Public Schools, Charles Hall Youth Services, Home on the Range; 10 years as a licensed foster parent in ND. As a faculty member in a social work program I teach a course called Dimensions of Diversity, required by all undergraduate students in Psychology, Social Work, and Criminal Justice. As a result, I have a great deal of familiarity with ethical standards related to serving diverse populations as well as research and evidence based interventions with a wide range of diverse populations. Based on my own professional experience working with youth and families as well as the work I've done in collaborating with agencies supervising field sites, I have a wide range of experience in serving diverse populations. I teach the Dimensions of Diversity course two times each semester, and have done so for the last 8 years. As a result, I also attend as much professional development on this topic as I can, in order to continue to learn and to stay current with best practices. I have presented this session to several agencies and conferences within North Dakota over the past 8 years, in addition to teaching the diversity course.



**Heather Austin**

Heather is the Executive Director at Tobacco Free North Dakota. Heather joined the team at TFND in October, 2016. She has over 10 years experience in the non-profit industry. With 5 years at the Bismarck-Mandan Chamber of Commerce and another 5 years working for statewide organizations, Heather has built relationships and coalitions all across North Dakota. Working with people and bringing groups together is her favorite aspect of this work. Personally, Heather has a husband and two boys at home, and enjoys travel, time with family and friends, and reading a good book. Now, Heather is passionate about creating North Dakota's first tobacco free generation by working to create policies and programs that prevent our youth from beginning tobacco's dangerous addiction.



**Janet Amundson, MA, LPCC, IMH-E**

Janet started working in the mental health field in 2010 by providing in-home therapy for young children and their families. In 2017, she stepped into the supervision domain by providing licensure supervision for counselors. Then, in 2019, Janet started to engage in training that focused on reflective supervision as well as receiving reflective supervision herself. Over the past 6 years, she has received hundreds of hours of reflective supervision, and she has attended numerous trainings on providing reflective supervision. Additionally, she has provided reflective supervision for different community agencies, such as school districts, child protection, Head Start, and home childcare providers. Most recently Janet received her Endorsed Reflective Supervisor certificate through the Alliance for the Advancement of Infant Mental Health.



## **Christy Wilkie, LCSW**

Christy Wilkie, LCSW provides therapy for children, adolescents, and young adults who have complex behavioral health issues. She combines her extensive clinical expertise with the belief in kids, and has a unique ability to find and develop their strengths. She works hard to be an ideal therapist for her clients and does what is best to fit their needs. She typically provides cognitive behavioral therapy augmented with motivational interviewing and psychoeducation but is trained in other modalities as well. Christy earned her master's degree in social work from Indiana University-Purdue University. She has worked at DBGR and Dakota Family Services for 17 years. Her specialty areas are: anxiety, depression, ADHD, chronic stress, trauma, and personality disorders. Aside from being a therapist, she is a music lover, adventurer, Vikings fan, traveler, runner, golfer, and fierce friend.



## **Lucas Mitzel, LCSW**

Lucas Mitzel, LCSW provides therapy for children, adolescents, and young adults. He believes building relationships with clients is the most important piece of successful therapy. He loves what he does, because it allows him to walk next to people, he would not have met had he chosen a different profession. He has the honor of meeting people at their worst all while watching them grow into the people they have always wanted to be. He earned his master's degree in social work from the University of North Dakota. He specializes in anxiety, autism, depression, personality disorders, ADHD, trauma, stress, phobias, self-esteem, anger, and grief/loss. Aside from being a therapist, he is a father, husband, dog lover, Minnesota Viking fan, Star Wars fanatic, gamer, musician, and coffee addict.



## Dr. Ryan Capouch

A native of Portland, North Dakota, Ryan Capouch graduated magna cum laude from the University of Mary in Bismarck with a degree in Biology and minors in Chemistry and Theology. He completed his doctorate at the Arizona College of Optometry and worked in several clinics focused in family practice and pediatric optometry. While completing his training, Dr. Capouch found his passion for developmental optometry, a branch of eye care that treats school-aged children, athletes, and brain injury patients. His desire to help patients meet their potential, alongside the increasing demand for his unique approach to vision therapy, led to the creation of Lumen Vision. After completing four postgraduate years of training and assessment, Dr. Capouch received his Fellowship in developmental optometry from the Optometric Vision Development and Rehabilitation Association (OVDRA), the international certifying body for vision therapy and pediatric optometry. Dr. Capouch is an Adjunct Clinical Assistant Professor for the Arizona College of Optometry, and provides educational training at Lumen Vision for fourth-year optometry students. He presents several continuing education lectures yearly to colleagues in optometry and other therapy and rehabilitation fields. Additionally, Dr. Capouch serves on the advisory panel for Our Visual Brain, one of the world's most cutting-edge vision therapy software platforms. In 2023, Dr. Capouch was selected as North Dakota's Young Optometrist of the Year for his contributions to the profession and dedication to high-level patient care. Dr. Capouch serves his undergraduate alma mater, the University of Mary, as a member of their Board of Trustees. Dr. Capouch is a member of the Catholic Medical Association, the Optometric Vision Development and Rehabilitation Association, the American Optometric Association, and the North Dakota Optometric Association. When not addressing the needs of his patients, Dr. Capouch enjoys spending time with his wife Maggie and their son, watching college football (Go Huskers!), singing in his parish's choir, and volunteering at various events throughout the region.



**Jessi Leneagh**

Jessi Leaneagh is a proud enrolled member of the Sicangu Lakota Nation from Rosebud, South Dakota. She serves as the ICWA Family Preservation Program Director at the Native American Training Institute in Bismarck, North Dakota. With a Master's degree in Administrative Studies, focusing on Human Resources, from the University of South Dakota, Jessi is dedicated to advancing practices that support and strengthen Native American families. Her work is driven by a passion for innovation and a commitment to preserving cultural heritage and community well-being.



**Traci Van Beek**

Traci Van Beek serves as the Children and Family Services Program Administrator for the Grand Forks County Human Service Zone. She has worked in the field of child welfare for nearly 27 years, supporting children and families through prevention-focused, family-centered practice. Traci's leadership emphasizes collaboration, relationship building, and strengthening outcomes for families through equitable and effective service delivery. She is passionate about supporting the child welfare workforce and building partnerships that promote the safety, permanency, and well-being of children across North Dakota.



**Harmony Bercier**

Harmony Bercier serves as the Grant Manager for the North Dakota Indian Child Welfare Best Practices Partnership. With nearly eight years in this role, she has focused on advancing tribal-state collaboration and strengthening family preservation efforts under the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). Harmony is passionate about promoting equitable, culturally grounded practices that support the health and well-being of Native children and families.



**Sloan Henry**

Sloan Henry serves as an Indian Child Welfare Tribal Capacity Builder, supporting Tribes and partners in strengthening ICWA implementation and family preservation efforts. She brings nearly seven years of experience in child welfare—almost two years in her current role and five years as an ICWA Family Preservationist. Her work focuses on building tribal capacity, enhancing collaboration between state and tribal systems, and developing sustainable processes that support families and frontline workers alike. Passionate about preserving Native families and uplifting tribal voices, she is inspired by the resilience of the communities she serves and the collective commitment to keeping Native children connected to their culture, families, and identity.



**Leah McCloud**

Leah McCloud is the Lead ICWA Family Preservationist. She is an enrolled member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians and currently serves as an ICWA Family Preservationist. She holds both a Bachelor's degree in Management and a Master's degree in Project Management from the University of Mary. For the past five years, Leah has served with the Native American Training Institute in Bismarck, North Dakota, where she focuses on advancing Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) family preservation efforts. In this role, she works to strengthen Native families, promote culturally responsive practices, and support the well-being of tribal communities through education, advocacy, and partnership.



**Kristi Bitz, PhD**

Kristi Bitz, PhD, serves as Associate Professor and Director of the Psychology Program at the University of Mary. Before earning her PhD in Teaching and Learning from the University of North Dakota, Dr. Bitz earned a Master of Arts in Counseling and a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from the University of North Dakota, as well as a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from Valley City State University. Dr. Bitz's prior experience includes 11 years of service as a school counselor in K-12 public education, working as a vocational rehabilitation consultant, and serving as a university counselor and director of student retention.