



PAPRS NEWSLETTER

PENNSYLVANIA ASSOCIATION OF PSYCHIATRIC REHABILITATION SERVICES

2024 BOARD MEETINGS

-  JANUARY 16-17
-  APRIL 4 (ANNUAL)
-  MAY 15-16
-  SEPTEMBER 11-12
-  NOVEMBER 13-14

QUARTERLY NETWORKING EVENT:

THURSDAY, MARCH 13TH
11:30 AM - 1:00 PM



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PAPRS ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

 62 Dallas Shopping Center
PMB 176 Dallas, PA 18612

 717-655-7662

 www.paprs.org



INCOMING PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

BY: SARA DOBSON - MS, CPRP

I am humbled and excited to step into the role of Board President for the Pennsylvania Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services (PAPRS). Since joining the Board in January 2022 and becoming President-Elect in January 2023, I've done my best to absorb as much as I can. There is a true depth of passion, knowledge, and skill on the Board and within the PAPRS staff, and I am grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with my PAPRS colleagues as we continue to advance the role of Psychiatric Rehabilitation across the state as a vital part of the mental health services landscape.

I want to express gratitude to the outgoing leadership – especially Kim MacDonald-Wilson as President, and Ellwyn Andres as Immediate Past President. The past two years have been a time of stabilization for PAPRS and have poised the organization to continue to grow in new and exciting ways. Today, PAPRS has strong finances, a fully staffed team who is remarkably committed and talented, and a Board of dedicated individuals who bring their strengths and volunteer their time to promote and advance psych rehab services (PRS).

As psychiatric rehabilitation professionals, we are driven by our mission to support mental health recovery so that individuals can achieve success and satisfaction in the living, learning, working and social environments of their choice. This principle informs everything we do at PAPRS, from networking and advocacy, to providing resources and high-quality educational opportunities for PRS professionals. Looking ahead, our goals include fostering greater engagement among our membership and expanding the accessibility and impact of PRS across the state through intentional advocacy. As part of this, we plan to continue strengthening our relationships with key stakeholders, including OMHSAS, the Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association, and the Pennsylvania Clubhouse Coalition. Additionally, we are committed to ensuring that PAPRS remains a trusted resource for education, training, and networking by broadening our training and education offerings.

A little bit about me: I earned my Master's in Psychiatric Rehabilitation Leadership from Rutgers University in 2018. In my professional role, I work in a job

PAPRS STAFF

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

- Denise Astaneh
denise.astaneh@papr.org

EDUCATION MANAGER

- Rochelle Reimert
rochelle.reimert@papr.org

OPERATIONS MANAGER

- Aaron Burkhardt
aaron.burkhardt@papr.org

PAPRS LEADERSHIP

PRESIDENT

- Sara Dobson

PRESIDENT-ELECT

- Vacant

SECRETARY

- Karen Yob

TREASURER

- Robert Spade

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

- Kim MacDonald-Wilson

BOARD MEMBERS

Phillip Debrasky
Virginia Dikeman
Janelle Eberhardt
Laura Gardner
Jocelyn Giancola
Katelyn Ivanac
Holly Knoll
Nancy Micocci
Caitlin Needham
Julie Sanders
Corinne Schnee
Marietta Scouten
Hazel Smith Guild
Kelsea Thompson
Debra Weisgerber
Kimberly Wilson-Roberson
Patrinia Wilkerson

ADVISORY MEMBERS

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

that I truly love as a Program Manager for a curriculum based PRS program that serves adults in upper Bucks and Montgomery Counties. Outside of work, I live in the Lehigh Valley with my husband, two children, three cats, and one dog. I enjoy adventurous coffee bicycle rides, hiking, and running—and I recently completed my first marathon!

My personal philosophy is to try and approach everything with curiosity, authenticity, and empathy. As I begin this two-year journey as Board President, I intend to keep that philosophy at the forefront as I continue learning from and working alongside our Board, staff, Membership, and partner Stakeholders to support psych rehab services.

Our work is not possible without the involvement of our members. I encourage you (yes, YOU!) to get involved with PAPRS—whether by attending a quarterly networking meeting to connect with colleagues, joining a committee to share your strengths, or participating in our trainings and annual conference to enhance your professional skills.

Thank you for all that you do to support and promote the field of Psychiatric Rehabilitation. Please feel free to reach out anytime to me or our PAPRS staff—for resources, to get involved, or just to say hello. Together, we will continue to empower individuals living with mental health conditions to build the skills and support systems they need to achieve their goals and realize meaningful valued roles in their chosen communities.

In partnership,
Sara Dobson, MS, CPRP

Thank You

A special *THANK YOU* to our previous members who have completed their term, and transitioned off of the PAPRS Board on December 31, 2024. Your dedication to PAPRS over the last few years is greatly appreciated!

Ellwyn Andres, Skyler Deitrick

Collette D'Angelo, Pam Nabried-Abdullah



PAPRS BOARD MEMBERS

**CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEWLY
ELECTED BOARD MEMBERS!**

KELSEA THOMPSON - NORTHEAST REGION
STEP BY STEP; PSYCH REHAB SUPERVISOR

PHIL DEBRASKY - CENTRAL REGION
CSG; PSYCH REHAB DIRECTOR

PATRINIA WILKERSON - SOUTHEAST REGION
CSG; CLUBHOUSE SPECIALIST

HAZEL SMITH GUILD - NORTHEAST REGION
WELLSPRING; EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

GINNY DIKEMAN - NORTHEAST REGION
OMHSAS; STATE LICENSOR

JOCELYN GIANCOLA - SOUTHEAST REGION
ST. LUKE'S; PROGRAM MANAGER

ROBERT SPADE - WEST REGION
HAND IN HAND LLC; PSYCH REHAB STAFF

RITA SCOUTEN - NORTHEAST REGION
WELLSPRING; PSYCH REHAB STAFF

2025 PAPRS CONFERENCE

IMPORTANT DATES

- 2/7/25** DEADLINE TO SUBMIT SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS
- 2/10/25** EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION BEGINS
- 2/21/25** CREATIVITY CONTEST VOTING CLOSES
- 3/2/25** REGULAR REGISTRATION BEGINS
- 4/3/25** 2025 PAPRS CONFERENCE BEGINS
- 4/4/25** ANNUAL OPEN MEMBERSHIP MEETING
- 4/11/25** 2025 PAPRS CONFERENCE CONCLUDES

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

Early Bird Special (2/10–3/1)

- Member (Full Conference): \$275
- Non-Member (Full Conference): \$375
- Member (Full Conference): \$40
- Non-Member (Full Conference): \$60

Regular Registration (3/2–6/1)

- Member (Full Conference): \$300
- Non-Member (Full Conference): \$400
- Member (Full Conference): \$45
- Non-Member (Full Conference): \$65

**New this year - registration will remain open through June 1st so attendees can register for on-demand sessions following the Conference*

PSYCHIATRIC REHABILITATION: PATH TO RECOVERY! APRIL 3RD, 4TH, 10TH, & 11TH

2025 SCHOLARSHIPS

PAPRS is pleased to announce that we again offer scholarships for the 2025 virtual conference, Psychiatric Rehabilitation: The Path To Recovery.

For 2025, scholarships for the entire conference are available for individuals with lived experience who are in recovery. We screen and prioritize applications to be sure that all areas of the state are represented, with priority to individuals who have not been granted a conference scholarship in recent past years. We will begin accepting applications on January 24, 2025. **Applications are due February 7, 2025.** Late applications will not be accepted.

This year we have a special scholarship! Wellspring Community Support Services is sponsoring a scholarship in the name of Gwen DeYoung. Gwen was an amazing woman that was on the PAPRS board and assisted with the scholarship committee for years. Her love and dedication to the psych rehab field and peer support will forever live on!

[Scholarship Application Link](#)

CALL FOR PRESENTERS!

Each year, the PAPRS Conference provides a statewide forum for people committed to psychiatric rehabilitation and recovery to come together, celebrate, share ideas, exchange knowledge, develop new models and approaches, and envision ways to create a responsive and empowering mental health system.

The richness of this conference emerges from the breadth of workshops we offer, which come from YOU, the participants! Submitting a workshop proposal gives you the chance to both benefit and contribute to this vital, yearly event. Proposals are encouraged from across the field: people in recovery, family members, providers, advocates, administrators, researchers, executive directors, and government officials. PAPRS especially invites first time submitters to send proposals for consideration.

Interested Presenters should first gather all the information and documents needed to complete the application for a workshop presentation. Documents to upload at the time of application include the list of *Academic References* and the *Posttest*. These documents may be in either Word or PDF format. *Note that you will be unable to submit the form without the upload of these two documents.*

WORKSHOP APPLICATION

WORKSHOP TOPIC IDEAS

- › ENGAGEMENT SKILLS
- › RELATIONSHIP BUILDING
- › BOUNDARIES AND ETHICS
- › MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING
- › TRAUMA INFORMED CARE
- › PRACTITIONER SKILLS
- › YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS
- › CRISIS INTERVENTION
- › CO-OCCURRING DISORDERS
- › DUAL DIAGNOSIS
- › LGBTQIA+, GENDER IDENTITY, AND TRANSGENDER SERVICES
- › SOCIAL JUSTICE, RACISM, THE BLACK EXPERIENCE, & DIVERSITY
- › CULTURAL COMPETENCE
- › MANAGING RECOVERY-ORIENTED PROGRAMS
- › EXEMPLARY OR EMERGING PRACTICES
- › SUICIDE PREVENTION
- › VALUE BASED PURCHASING
- › PR IN RESIDENTIAL SERVICES
- › HEALTH, WELLNESS, RECOVERY
- › TELEHEALTH SERVICES
- › CHILD AND FAMILY RESILIENCY



This year, PAPRS wanted to encourage emotional expression through all the arts and the freedom to explore emotions and experiences that might be difficult to express strictly in a painting or drawing. We welcomed individuals of all skill levels to share their journey through expressive arts. This allowed individuals to participate without pressure to conform strictly to one form of expression or art.

This year, we have had 39 submissions! Please share your enthusiasm for this initiative with our artists by viewing the entries and casting your vote.

You can vote for three entries in each category. As you scroll through, please jot down the numbers of the entries you would like to vote for. When you have identified your six choices, return to this page and click the link to vote at the bottom to cast your votes. Voting is open to the public.



Voting closes on February 21, 2025

Winners will be notified via email and announced on the PAPRS website by February 28, 2025.

[Entry Link](#)

[Voting Link](#)

2025 CONFERENCE KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Lisa Razzano

Lisa A. Razzano, PhD, CPRP is a tenured Professor of Psychiatry and Deputy Director of the Center on Mental Health Services Research and Policy at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), and Director for the James Scholar Program at the UIC College of Medicine. Dr. Razzano is recognized internationally for her funded research and workforce development programs focusing on mental health recovery, physical health co-morbidities, health literacy, mental health, and recovery among people with HIV/AIDS, and community intervention and services research.

Dr. Razzano is co-Director for the Chicago Campus' Brain and Behavior course (Block 6), as well as Subtheme Leader for Human Growth and Development for the Tri-Campus Phase 1 medical curriculum. Dr. Razzano has served on numerous federal scientific study groups, government review panels, and national executive boards.

The Wildflower Alliance supports healing and empowerment for our broader communities and people who have been impacted by psychiatric diagnosis, trauma, extreme states, homelessness, problems with substances and other life-interrupting challenges.

Essential to our work is recognizing and undoing systemic injustices such as racism, sexism, ableism, transphobia, transmisogyny, and psychiatric oppression. All trainings are available both for peer supporters, and for providers, friends, families, and communities seeking to improve their understanding. Our trainings center the healing power of having genuine human conversations about experiences that are often responded to with force, coercion, judgment, and fear.

We do this through: Peer-to-peer Support & Genuine Human Relationships, Alternative Healing Practices, Learning Opportunities, and Advocacy.



Sera Davidow



Lasada Pippen

Lasada "LP" Pippen defied the odds.

Despite a challenging childhood marked by financial struggles, he transformed from an underserved individual to a STEM graduate and engineering expert. LP, the first in his family to graduate college, forged a prosperous career as a Computer Engineer & Cloud Architect. But success didn't satisfy LP's ultimate passion. He shifted gears from thriving in the tech industry to pursuing his true calling – empowering others to unlock their potential and stay inspired for greatness.

Today, LP delivers his compelling message and tools, sparking change among students, educators, and leaders worldwide.

Pittsburgh's Gab Bonesso is an award-winning standup comedian, a Nationally recognized public speaker who was recently named "Top 100 Speaker on Mental Resilience" by the EZ Care Clinic in San Francisco; and she is one half of The Josh & Gab Show: an award-winning assembly program that has reached over 500,000 students and teachers around the country promoting a message of kindness.

Gab's public speaking career began when she openly started talking about her bipolar disorder in her standup comedy. Quickly seen as an advocate, Gab was given public speaking opportunities to talk about her journey with mental health. Gab combines her real life stories with her joke writing ability to keep her talks brutally honest and hysterical. Gab's mental health talks have been described as "extreme raw honesty". Gab truly feels no shame in her mental health diagnosis and hopes to spread awareness and kindness to those living with mental health disorders.



Gab Bonesso

2025 PAPRS CONTINUING EDUCATION

ORIENTATION TO PSYCHIATRIC REHABILITATION

» 9 AM – 12 PM
January 14-15, 21-22

PSYCH REHAB SERVICES DOCUMENTATION

» 9 AM – 12 PM
January 28-29, February 4-5

CPRP JOURNEY THROUGH THE DOMAINS - BOOTCAMP

» 9 AM – 1 PM
January 2
January 9
January 23
January 30
February 6
February 13
February 27

PSYCHIATRIC REHABILITATION PROCESS IN SUPERVISION

» 9 AM – 12 PM
February 18

ETHICS AND BOUNDARIES IN RECOVERY-ORIENTED SERVICES

» 9 AM – 4 PM
February 24

SKILLS IN PSYCHIATRIC REHABILITATION

» 9 AM – 12 PM
March 5

ENGAGEMENT SKILLS IN PSYCHIATRIC REHABILITATION

» 9 AM – 4 PM
March 24

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



OUTGOING PRESIDENT'S RECAP

BY: KIM MACDONALD-WILSON – SCD, CPRP

The past two years as President of the PAPRS Board of Directors was a time of significant growth and change for PAPRS. Two years ago, I wrote an article as Incoming President. I reflected on what the Outgoing President, Ellwyn Andres, accomplished in the 2 years of his term, especially during the challenging years of COVID/pandemic shutdown and reopening of services. I said “It definitely would be a hard act to follow.”

My term as President of the PAPRS Board of Directors started January 1, 2023 and ends December 31, 2024. Within the first few months of my term, we experienced turnover in PAPRS staff and got to work. We re-established the Advisory Committee to navigate these challenges and developed an Executive Director Search Committee. As a result of the search committee, we hired Denise Astaneh as the PAPRS Executive Director. We also changed bookkeeping services from a contracted position to a part-time position, hired Rochelle Reimert as Education Manager, and hired Aaron Burkhardt to support PAPRS Operations. Those new staff and our Board of Directors set

up a new bank account earning significant dividends, explored the features and functions of our technology products (MemberClicks website, QuickBooks, CVENT conference software), negotiated discounts, and upgraded these systems so that we could function efficiently and effectively.

In addition to staffing changes, we also experienced a number of transitions on the Board of Directors. Our Board of Directors is a working board, volunteering their time and expertise, pitching in when we were understaffed. We are so grateful for their contributions and could not function without them. However, as we all have experienced in the field since the pandemic, the stresses of managing our Psychiatric Rehabilitation programs, families, and personal lives has also taken a toll. We have lost some Directors to resignation, retirement, health and personal challenges. We grieved the passing of a long-time and valued member of the PAPRS Advisory Committee and former Board member Gwen DeYoung this past summer. However, we also welcomed new Board members in 2024 and worked to transition from managing all day-to-day operations to functioning as a Board overseeing and guiding the organization into the future. In spite of these challenges, we accomplished one of our goals to fully staff PAPRS, streamline our business operations to continue serving our membership, and strengthen our financial position.

We strengthened our relationship with our parent organization, Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association (PRA), and the new management company, Meaningful Measurement. We successfully completed a Chapter Agreement with PRA and updated our chapter agreement to return to a standard chapter agreement on sound financial ground. Denise and I participated in the past year on a PRA workgroup to validate the Psychiatric Rehabilitation Practice Domains and the CPRP exam. Our new PAPRS staff revived our Boot Camp training by offering 3 classes this year alone! As part of the PRA project, we supported PAPRS members who participated in our PAPRS Boot Camp training this year to sit for the CPRP exam being used to conduct the analysis (which included several other states). Those participants were offered an option for a free exam retake if needed in exchange for receiving exam results a few months later than typical. Results of this analysis confirmed the value of our Boot Camp training in preparing members with taking and passing the exam. A Win-Win!

The Board and PAPRS staff also strengthened our relationship with OMHSAS. This past September, the new Psychiatric Rehabilitation Regulations, Chapter 5230, was passed by a vote of 4-1 of the Independent Regulatory Review Commission (IRRC). PAPRS Board members had contributed comments to the proposed regulations several years ago and connected with OMHSAS staff overseeing the finalization of the regulations. In addition, we were advocating for the inclusion of Psychiatric Rehabilitation in the PA State Medicaid plan. We did hear from OMHSAS that while the PR regulations were approved, that decisions about moving PR into the state plan will be delayed until next year, potentially for the 2026 budget year. Disappointing news, but it appears there is renewed interest in making Psychiatric Rehabilitation a crucial recovery and wellness-oriented service within behavioral health.

Psychiatric Rehabilitation is one of the few services that supports individuals with lived experience in achieving life goals and roles in the community – working toward goals that most of us have – a satisfying job or career, a safe and pleasant place to live, learning and earning the credentials we want and need, and connecting to the people and communities we choose. I tried my best to ensure that this term “would be a hard act to follow.” It has been an honor to serve PAPRS as President of the Board of Directors to achieve that vision.

OUR NEXT PAPRS NEWSLETTER: SPRING 2025