PENNSYLVANIA COUNSELING ASSOCIATION

A Branch of the American Counseling Association

2020 PCA Virtual Conference Awards Ceremony

Saturday, October 3rd 2020

Outstanding Graduate Student Award: **Joelle Swyka**

I knew from a young age that I wanted to help people due to the fact that I was always needing help myself. Due to a rare genetic condition called Bardet-Biedl syndrome that would eventually take my eyesight from me. Thus, I was the kid in my school who was left out of a lot of activities that included birthday parties and sleepovers. I decided though despite various struggles that my family and I faced during my childhood that I wanted to further pursue my education. So, that I can eventually help adolescents and their families struggling in similar ways down the road. I graduated from the California University of Pennsylvania with a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology. I then took a year off because I was a little uncertain what I was going to do with my life, but I finally decided to look into the area of counseling; thanks to my mom who had received her Certificate of Education from the university.

So, I filled out an application to enter into the Masters of Professional Counseling Program which I started last summer. In addition, I attended my first Pennsylvania Counseling Association (PCA) conference last October where I found there was not a division that I could attend in regard to children and adolescents. Dr. Robinson informed me that the Pennsylvania Counseling Association for Child and Adolescent Counselors (PACAC) had been obsolete for a while, so I asked her if I would be allowed to take it under my wings, and thus the division has been revived. I have also managed to obtain a Practicum placement at Children's Hospital for the Spring and I am extremely excited, because I am one step closer to obtaining the career that I have always wished for.

Outstanding Supervisor Award: **Abra Kuniak**

Abra has her Master of Science in Counseling Psychology (MSCP) from Chatham University and is a LPC in the state of Pennsylvania. She has experience working with children, adolescents, adults, couples, families, and geriatrics.

Abra has worked in a variety of different settings including inpatient and outpatient neuropsychiatric assessment, outpatient community mental health, crisis intervention, in home services such as Wraparound BHRS and Family Based, the school setting, and private practice. Abra has specific training in QPR (Question Persuade Refer train the trainer), CISM (Critical Incident Stress Management), and DCORT (Disaster Crisis Outreach and Refer Team). She is the Team Lead (assistant manager) of a Pennsylvania county crisis intervention program and is also on the county's DCORT team. Abra also performs CISM in the hospital system in which she works. Abra's experience aids in decreasing crisis events and the impact of traumatic events.

Outstanding Professional Teaching Award: **Dr. Deborah L. Duenyas**

- Deborah is an Assistant Professor in the Counselor Education and Student Affairs Department at Kutztown University of Pennsylvania. Deborah earned her Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision from Kent State University, Ohio. She is licensed in Pennsylvania as a Professional Counselor (LPC) and in Ohio as a Professional Clinical Counselor (LPCC). Deborah has recently been elected as the Pennsylvania Counseling Association (PCA) President-Elect for the 2020-2021 academic year. She has taught graduate courses in professional orientation and ethics, family systems, neuroscience for counselors, tests and assessment in counseling, research methods, fundamentals of counseling, counseling theories, and Master's-level practicum and internship courses. Deborah has forged a research and scholarly agenda around the topics of neuroscience-informed counseling, using creativity in counseling, professional adjustment for counselors, counseling as a global profession, and social justice/advocacy for marginalized populations.

Outstanding Research Publication:
Dr. Jered Kolbert

Jered B. Kolbert is the Co-Director of Duquesne University's Counselor Education Program. Dr. Kolbert is a certified school counselor and Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) in Pennsylvania. He obtained his doctorate in counseling from The College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia. He has worked as a school counselor and he currently provides individual, couple and family counseling in a private practice setting. Dr. Kolbert has co-authored the following books: *Introduction to Professional School Counseling*, *Theory and Cases in School-based Consultation* (2nd ed.), *Understanding Girl bullying, and Understanding and Managing Behaviors of Children with Psychological Disorders.*

OUTSTANDING COUNSELOR EDUCATION PROGRAM: KUTZTOWN UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Lifetime Achievement Award:
Dr. Paul Niemiec

- Paul A. Niemiec is the Director of Counseling Services for Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Greensburg, where he has practiced for 19 years. He is a counselor with almost 35 years' experience working with couples and families. Paul works with individuals, couples, and families, and supervises the clinical work of the counseling staff. Paul maintains several other diocesan appointments, including Victim Assistance Coordinator, consultant to the Office of Clergy Formation, the diocesan deans, and the Vicar General. Paul is a member of the Diocesan Review Board, the Admissions and Scrutinies Committee for the Office of the Permanent Diaconate, and the Seminarian Review Board. He is an evaluator for the Matrimonial Tribunal.
- Paul earned his doctorate in counselor education and supervision from Duquesne University in 2002. He received his Bachelor's degree in psychology from St. Vincent College and his Master of Science degree in Health Related Professions from the University of Pittsburgh. Paul is a Licensed Professional Counselor in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Prior to his appointment at Catholic Charities, Paul was associate professor in the social work and child and family studies programs at the Community College of Allegheny County. He was an adjunct instructor in Counselor Education and Supervision at Duquesne University and in Marriage and Family Therapy at Seton Hill University. He was a supervisor and program director of home-based counseling services for different child welfare services in Westmoreland, Allegheny, Washington, and Fayette Counties. Paul was a counselor for many years with the Lutheran Service Society.
- Paul currently holds an adjunct teaching position in the Department of Psychology at St. Vincent College, Latrobe, PA, where he teaches courses including Family Systems, Introduction to Counseling, History and Systems of Psychology, and Positive Psychology for 30 years.

David W. Hall Advocacy Award: **Lisa Corbin**

Lisa Corbin, MA, MS, LPC, NCC has worked on college campuses for more than 20 years. She has held positions in both student life and academic affairs. Prof. Corbin currently serves as an assistant professor in the School of Professional and Applied Psychology where she teaches and advises mental health counseling students.

In addition to her work at PCOM, Prof. Corbin serves as the trauma counselor at a Philadelphia inpatient recovery facility for males. She runs groups for male survivors of childhood sexual abuse, groups on mindful meditation as well as a grief and loss support group.

Prof. Corbin is completing her PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision and has just completed her internship at a local rape crisis center where she provided trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy to individuals and families.

Prof. Corbin is active in the Pennsylvania Counseling Association (PCA) where she served as conference chair and is also active with the Greater Philadelphia Area Counseling Association (GPACA) where she is currently serving as secretary. She is writing her dissertation on variables that predict career choice within the field of counseling. Her hope is to use this data to increase diversity among the counseling profession.

President's Award: **Dr. Nellie Scanlon**

Nellie Scanlon, Ph.D., NCC, LPC, ACS

Nellie Scanlon is a Licensed Professional Counselor, Nationally Certified Counselor, Approved Clinical Supervisor and Certified Secondary School Counselor. She recently successfully defended her dissertation and will be conferred on December 18, 2020 with her PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision from Duquesne University. And she recently accepted a faculty position as a counselor in the Slippery Rock University Counseling Center.

Nellie has been involved in PCA leadership since 2014 first as the Co-Chair of Government Relations, then President-Elect, next President, and now Immediate Past President. She is also involved in national leadership and is currently the Chair-Elect of the North Atlantic Region (NAR) of the American Counseling Association (ACA).

In Memoriam of
DR. FRANCENE E. HAYMON PHILLIPS

May 11, 1945 - September 8, 2020

Thank you for your service!

PCA Awards Committee Reviewers:

- Dr. Jennifer Park
- Ms. Denise Takakjy
- Dr. Robin S. Archer
- Dr. Stephen Kiuri Gitonga