

## PRESENTER AND SPEAKER PROFILES

**MaryLee Allen**, director of child welfare and mental health at the Children's Defense Fund (CDF), is responsible for defining and carrying out CDF's agenda to keep children safe in nurturing families and communities. Allen has played a leadership role in the development, passage, and implementation of major child welfare and children's mental health reforms over the past two decades. She co-chairs, with the Child Welfare League of America, a coalition of child welfare and mental health organizations and works with advocates and service providers across the country. Allen is the author and co-author of many articles and publications.

**Brian Baker** is a children's attorney at the Juvenile Rights Project, Inc., of Oregon, which he joined in 2001. He has coordinated education advocacy services at the project since 2001, including developing extensive special education training materials for parents and advocates and presenting training statewide to foster and adoptive parents, child welfare caseworkers, court appointed special advocates, attorneys and judges, and juvenile justice department directors. Baker has participated in Oregon Department of Education workgroups regarding administrative rule changes under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); testified before the state legislature regarding education services for dependent and delinquent children and youth, and presented on education law issues at continuing legal education seminars.

**Jamey Bell** is executive director of Connecticut Voices for Children. She was a staff attorney at Greater Hartford Legal Aid, Inc., for 12 years, concentrating on legal issues affecting low-income families, including health care access, education, child protection, and juvenile justice. She served as lead counsel in class action litigation to require the Connecticut Department of Social Services to provide adequate dental care to low-income families on Medicaid. The litigation was settled in 2008, with the State agreeing to significantly improve access to dental care for families. She has been involved in building broad-based coalitions to promote policy reforms in health care. Bell earned the juris doctorate from Northeastern University School of Law.

**Lamond Daniels**, a social worker, works with youth and families served by the Bridgeport, Connecticut, Division of the Annie E. Casey Foundation/Casey Family Services, in addition to participating in policy initiatives. Daniels has organized and prepared youth to participate in numerous advocacy efforts to improve Connecticut's foster care system, including presenting at conferences and testifying at legislative hearings. He also participates in the Casey-Center for the Study of Social Policy Alliance for Racial Equity. He earned a master's of social work from Fordham University.

**Joy Duva**, deputy executive director for planning and policy for Casey Family Services, the direct service agency of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, has more than 20 years of experience in child welfare. Her experience includes casework, program planning, management, and consultation. Duva served as director of family preservation for the Child Welfare League of America, providing consultation to states designing and developing family preservation programs. She also is a former director of child welfare for the State of Maryland, where she administered foster care, adoption, child protective services, and family preservation programs.

**Sarah Healy Eagan** is an attorney and the director of the Child Abuse Project at the Center for Children's Advocacy (CCA) in Hartford, Connecticut. Eagan provides individual legal

representation to children in the areas of abuse and neglect, special education, and mental health; works to promote passage of legislation introduced by CCA; and provides appellate advocacy on important issues in child protection law. She has led and participated in trainings for attorneys new to the practice of juvenile law and assists in the facilitation of the attorney-mentoring program run by the Commission on Child Protection. Eagan serves as the co-chair of the Hartford Department of Children and Families Advisory Committee. She is a graduate of Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, and an honors graduate of the University of Connecticut School of Law.

**Douglas Hall** has worked for Connecticut Voices for Children for more than seven years and is currently the acting managing director. He also contributes to tax and budget and family economic security matters as a data analyst and researcher. Hall spent months overseeing the Connecticut-based work for the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, an initiative that helps foster youth transition successfully to adulthood. He continues to oversee the public policy and public will component of the Connecticut Youth Opportunity Strategies, now primarily managed by the Department of Children and Families. He recently co-authored reports exploring Connecticut's growing income gaps, the distribution of family assets, and the impact of Connecticut's state and local taxes on people of different income levels.

**Shakeisha H.**, age , is a junior at Kolbe Cathedral High School, and has maintained her educational stability for the past three years. She enjoys dance and gymnastics. She encourages others in foster care to speak out and advocate for their own needs. She has participated in Casey Family Services Youth Advocacy Leadership Academy and welcomes every opportunity to advocate for the rights of children and youth growing up in foster care. A mother, she is dedicated to ensuring that her son receives a quality education. She plans to attend college and become a lawyer or forensic scientist.

**Commissioner Susan Hamilton** was appointed by Governor Jodi Rell in to lead the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF). Hamilton first joined DCF in as a social worker, was promoted to social work supervisor, and, in , a program supervisor. In , Hamilton became the first director of the newly established Office of Legal Affairs, providing legal support, consultation, and training to staff relating to children's safety, permanence, and well-being. In , she was named undersecretary for legislative affairs for the Office of Policy and Management. In that capacity, she assisted in developing the governor's budget recommendations and in drafting all legislation to implement these recommendations. Hamilton graduated from the University of Connecticut with a joint degree in law and social work.

**Karina Jimenez Lewis** is a senior policy associate with the Annie E. Casey Foundation/Casey Family Services. She works to influence child welfare policy, specifically in the areas of poverty-related neglect, disproportionate racial and ethnic representation, and educational stability. She helps implement Casey's long- and short-range goals to shape public policy and practice within the child and family arena. Lewis received a Master of Social Work degree in policy practice from the University of Connecticut School of Social Work.

**Taki M.** is an -year-old freshman currently attending Branford Hall Career Institute to pursue a career in computer technology. A youth advocate for the past two years, he recently participated in Casey Family Services Youth Advocacy Leadership Academy. As a youth in foster care who has

experienced educational instability, he believes this issue is of great importance and must be addressed if his peers are to have successful futures.

**Cheryl Smithgall** is a research fellow at Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago. Her work spans the fields of child welfare, children's mental health, and education, and she employs both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Her current projects include a federally funded evaluation of the Illinois Department of Children and Families Integrated Assessment program and a number of studies focusing on behavioral health and education. Prior to joining to Chapin Hall, Smithgall was a child protective caseworker in Portland, Maine, and taught as a part-time lecturer at the School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago, including courses on data analysis and policy management, research methods, and human behavior and the social environment. She holds a master's in psychology from the State University of New York at Buffalo and master's and doctoral degrees from the School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago.

**Anne Louise Thompson** is the bureau chief for the Bureau of Special Education with the Connecticut State Department of Education. She previously served as an education consultant to the bureau, overseeing special education compliance monitoring and coordinating the implementation of a federal class action lawsuit regarding students with intellectual disabilities. In addition to teaching at the university level, Thompson held teaching and administrative positions in special education in Virginia and Connecticut schools and Regional Education Service Centers. She has published in several journals and state department publications and is co-author of the book *Ideas for Inclusion: the School Administrator's Guide*.

**Representative Toni Walker** is the deputy majority leader in the State House of Representatives and serves the 3rd House District (New Haven). She is a member of the Appropriations, Human Services, Judiciary, and Legislative Management committees. She currently is the coordinator of special services and grants at New Haven Adult Education, designing and implementing community-based programs.