



SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

This event wouldn't be possible without the heartfelt contributions of our speakers and facilitators. Read on to get to know the people behind the mic!



Karin Albring is the Education Supervisor, for the Charlotte, NC branch. She joined the program in 2021. Karin has over 20 years' experience teaching ESL to foreign students. She has a master's degree in ESL and is passionate about helping students achieve their full learning potential while they transition into their new life. Karin's experience with Bethany has given her a deep understanding of the unique challenges immigrant children face when they arrive. She is committed to creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment for all the children in care. Karin loves working for Bethany. She has grown as a human being, as a Christian, and is thankful to work with precious, amazing kids.



Ted Ancelet is the Sr. Chaplain for Bethany Christian Services. Ted has been with Bethany for 12 years. Before that, he was a pastor for 10 years. Ted's focus is the spiritual health and development of Bethany's 1800+ employees and integration of faith and culture. Ted oversees the training of Bethany staff in Relational Wisdom (a program that integrates emotional intelligence with faith) as well as biblical conflict resolution and peacemaking through a program he helped create called Coaching Peace and provides conflict coaching and mediation to Bethany's employees and board members. He also provides leadership coaching and team development training utilizing the enneagram. Ted and his wife of twenty-seven years, Tracie, live in Knoxville, Tennessee with their four children: Avery (23), Aidan (21), Addie (20) and Abel (16).



Autumn Andretta has served with Bethany Christian Services since 2009. Over her 14 years with Bethany she has worked across International, State Foster Care and Adoptions, and Domestic Adoptions programs. She has provided case management services under the USCCB and LIRS contracts in HS/PRS services and was the Regional Supervisor for both the HS/PRS direct program and the Trafficking Victim Assistance Program (TVAP) in Georgia. In January 2023, she moved into her current role, serving as the HS/PRS National Program Manager. Autumn lives with her husband and four children in Canton, Georgia. She earned her MSW from Kennesaw State University in 2010 and is a Licensed Master Social Worker in the State of Georgia. Autumn was motivated to pursue a career in social work by her many early experiences in serving alongside church missions and NGOs in Eastern Europe and South America. She is passionate about using her talents and experiences to provide leadership in growing our national services for vulnerable children and families.



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Ashley Bates is the HS/PRS Quality Assurance and Intake Coordinator (QA/IC) for Bethany, Virginia. She is responsible for maintaining efficient intake operations within the HS/PRS team and supporting the team's adherence to program compliance. She has been with Bethany since March 2020 and worked in various Bethany programs providing direct client support before joining the HS/PRS team in October 2022. Ashley graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University with a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's in counselor education. She enjoys supporting her HS/PRS team as they provide quality, compassionate case management services to youth and their families.



Terri Bowles has been at Bethany for 19 years both in Tennessee and then in North Carolina. She serves as the State Director of North Carolina and the Regional Director for Tennessee, Virginia, Maryland, and South Carolina. Terri has worked over 35 years in the human services field. She has an Australian Shepherd named Scout and a long-haired Chihuahua mix named Molly, who are both spoiled beyond words. Terri loves to cook, read, tell stories, take walks with her dogs, and laugh. She loves the new opportunity she has been given to serve the refugee and immigrant communities across her five states.



Sara Bukowski has served as the HS/PRS Program Supervisor for North Carolina since April 2022. She has worked in the mental health field for twenty years in a variety of settings, including outpatient, residential, and in-home services. Sara has been with Bethany since 2017 and has held previous roles within the Domestic Infant Adoption program and Outpatient Counseling services. Sara is also a Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor and Qualified Supervisor for the state of North Carolina and specializes in trauma and attachment.



Elizabeth Chege provides support to the HS/PRS team in Houston, Texas as a Regional Supervisor. Elizabeth holds a Human Rights Master's Degree in Law and has worked in the legal and social services field providing services to migrant populations for over a decade. Elizabeth has a heart to help women and children achieve stability and realize their full potential. Elizabeth serves at her local church as a Sabbath school teacher and desires to be a transformational life coach in the future.



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Diana Cisneros serves as the UC Therapist in Smyrna, Tennessee, a role she has held since 2022. Prior to this role, she worked with unaccompanied children as a Home Study and Post Release Service Specialist for the U.S. Committee of Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) for 4 years. Diana graduated with her bachelors and master's in social work at Middle Tennessee State University. She comes from a Salvadoran family, so her passion quickly became serving refugees and asylum seekers! She completed her clinical internship at the Sexual Assault Center in 2021, where she provided client-centered individual and group trauma therapy services for Spanish speaking adult survivors and non-offending caregivers of children survivors. In her spare time, she enjoys nature walks, eating Nashville hot chicken, and spending time with her fiancée and 7-year-old stepdaughter.



Dorothy Clark serves as the Executive Assistant of Refugee and Immigrant Children's Services. Prior to joining Bethany, she worked in higher education for 6 years and various non-profits and churches. She earned a bachelor's degree in Church Music and another bachelor's degree in Bible from Cairn University and has taught piano lessons for over 30 years.



Yanitza Cruz-Perez is the UC Program Director for Transitional Foster Care and Long-Term Foster Care in Paw Paw, MI. Over the past 11 years, she has dedicated her career to working with migrant families and immigrant children. She had the privilege to travel to Mexico and Madagascar to further learn on policy, socioeconomics, culture, and more. Yanitza highly values justice, transparency, and open communication, and to the best of her ability, she leads her team with these values and expects it from them. Through her 5 years at Bethany, Yanitza has been able to oversee TFC, LTFC, and two Therapeutic Residential programs. She is privileged to have been part of the developing and opening of these two therapeutic residential programs. Other things that she highly enjoys is policy, development of training materials, facilitating trainings, and mentoring others. At a personal level, Yanitza enjoys traveling, spending time with her family, and her fur babies, Lucky and Simba. Her life's philosophy is "Fear is normal, but don't let the fear stop you."



Darryl Denson, born and raised in Springfield, Massachusetts (the home of Dr. Seuss and the Birthplace of Basketball) is the proud father of two sons and twin girls. Darryl served in the military and started his career path in the Human Service field in 2001 for Brightside Children and Families adolescent Sexually Abusive Youth (SAY) Program. The excitement of helping youth and seeing the tears of joy at reunifications convinced Darryl that the Human Service field is his career calling. His journey in this calling has included the following roles: Program Manager for Job Corps, Program Director for the Center for Human Development Juvenile Justice Assessment Program, and the Facility Director at Marietta RYDC (DJJ). In 2024, Darryl joined Bethany as the Program Director for TFC Atlanta. He is excited for the blessing and opportunity to help reunify minors from their country of origin into a happy, waiting guardian and sponsor. Outside of Darryl's work career, he is a basketball coach for High School Boys, an Under Armor UAA 15u traveling coach, and a drummer at his church.



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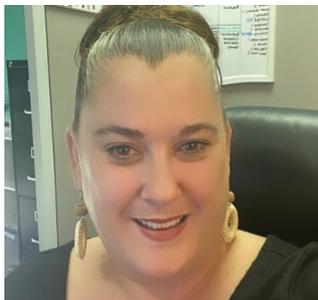
Jacia Dionnaire serves as the National UC Children's Program Manager. She joined the Bethany team in 2021 as the TVAP Human Tracking Case Manager in Winter Garden, FL. With over a decade of experience in social welfare, Jacia's career in social services began in the Hillsborough County School district as a parent liaison for Title I schools. She then moved on to work with the Department of Children and Families as a dependency Case Manager in Tampa, Florida, where she worked closely with children and their parents during their most challenging times. She has since worked throughout various counties in Central Florida as a mentor to at-risk female youth, a crisis intervention specialist in Orange County, FL for the Department of Children and Families and local Community Based Care agencies, a parenting coach, diversion coordinator, and victim's advocate. She holds a Master's degree in Human Services and strives to continue to make her mark in the world through her work in social welfare and human services.



Madison Dollarhide currently serves as a Lead Case Manager for the TFC Program in NC. Madison has been serving the unaccompanied children population and working with immigrant families since the start of COVID in 2020. Madison graduated from California State University, San Bernardino with a BA in Sociology and is currently in year two of her MSW Program at University of North Carolina, Pembroke. In her free time, she enjoys spending time outside with her family, gardening, backpacking, and learning to cook from scratch.



Flor Franco joined Bethany's HS/PRS National team in November 2022 as a National Intake Coordinator. Previously, Flor worked as an HS/PRS Case Manager for Bethany Southern California between September 2021 and November 2022. Flor earned a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from California State University, San Bernardino in 2019 and a Master's degree in Psychology from Grand Canyon University in 2021, with a concentration in Forensic Psychology. Outside of work, Flor likes to spend time with her family, baking, and finding new restaurants.



Julie Hill has been with Bethany, NC for 3 years. She played a crucial role in helping launch the TFC program and was instrumental in defining the Licensing department. Julie has desired to work with families, especially children in need, since she was a young girl. She has over 20 years' experience in social services, working with individuals and families in economic or behavioral crises, residential group homes, child abuse and neglect, and foster families. Julie is a strong advocate for diversity and inclusivity.



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Lauren Holt joined Bethany's HS/PRS National Team in June 2022 as a National Intake Coordinator. Previously, Lauren worked as an HS/PRS Case Manager for the Bethany North Carolina team between March 2021 and June 2022. Lauren graduated from Appalachian State University in 2017, earning degrees in Spanish and Global Studies, with a concentration in Latin American Studies. Outside of work, Lauren can be found spending time outdoors with her family and friends.



Miguelina "Miggy" Jorge is the National Lead Quality Assurance and Policy Manager at Bethany. Miggy joined Bethany in February 2022. In her role, Miggy serves as the main point of contact for all centralized policy questions and QA related matters and is responsible for reviewing and interpreting all policies and procedures based on BCS and ORR standards for the RIS programs. Miggy also serves as the lead auditor in all monitoring visits for direct programs. Miggy has extensive knowledge of child welfare, having worked in both the front and back end of case management for almost two decades. Miggy is certified as a Quality Assurance Manager and a Child Welfare Case Manager in the State of Florida. Miggy is bilingual and is fully fluent in Spanish. Outside of work, Miggy enjoys spending time with her children, trying new restaurants, and exploring nearby beach towns.



Sara Lillie serves as the National Lead Quality Assurance Manager for the HS/PRS program with Bethany. She has worked in programs serving unaccompanied and released children since joining Bethany in 2016. Sara previously worked as a Case Manager in Bethany's LTFC boys group home Casa del Sol before moving to the HS/PRS program in 2021. Sara excels in developing systems and tools, streamlining activities across programs, and using data for ongoing program improvement. She looks forward to using her expertise in both types of programs to promote the continuity of care from children being in the care and custody of ORR, to release planning, to the provision of Post Release Services. Sara lives in Grand Rapids, Michigan, with her husband and son. Outside of work she enjoys spending time outside, watching football, and reading.



Wandy Loyola Rojas is the Intake Coordinator for Bethany, NC. She joined Bethany in July of 2023 as a TFC Case Support Specialist. Wandy holds a bachelor's degree in International Studies from the Universidad Central de Venezuela. She fled her home country in 2020 and has made her home in Charlotte. Wandy loves working for communities in need, especially with immigrant children.



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Keisha Machado-Cintron currently serves as the National Senior Compliance Analyst for Bethany's HS/PRS program. Keisha has been at Bethany for the past 3 years. She previously worked as a Local Quality Assurance / Intake Coordinator for the Pennsylvania site and Regional Supervisor for the Midwestern Combined Program before moving to the HS/PRS National Team in 2024. Keisha obtained her Master's in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and loves helping under served populations. Keisha lives in Colorado Springs, Colorado with her husband and dog. Outside of work she enjoys spending time with family and friends, working out, walking, running, hiking and listening to music and podcasts.



Jeremy Mateo began his role at Bethany in August 2021 as a Home Study and Post Release Services Case Manager for New York and New Jersey. His passion for assisting undocumented children was influenced by his mother, who served as a transitional foster parent during his high school years. This experience led him to shift his career aspirations from becoming a pilot to pursuing a degree in community psychology. Jeremy is passionate about his faith and committed to helping others find their identity in God. At 14, he dedicated his life to the Lord and developed a strong desire to share the gospel. He has been actively involved in his local church, working with youth and young adults, and continues to inspire many. He continues his studies and lives with his wife and their dog, Bentley.



Candyce Mayers serves as the National Director of Home Study and Post Release Services for Bethany. She joined Bethany in 2018 as the Regional Supervisor for the Global Refuge (formerly LIRS) HS/PRS program in the NJ/NY Branch. Candyce obtained her BA in Psychology and MSW from Monmouth University in West Long Branch, NJ. She is a Licensed Social Worker as well as an Ordained Elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Candyce has a passion for working with people who are unhoused, focusing on long-term solutions as well as emergency planning. Candyce brings over 15 years of supervisory experience to Bethany working in family reunification, residential services, and domestic violence.



Lyndsie Meador serves as the Senior Compliance and Monitoring Analyst for RIS Children's Programs. Prior to joining this role in May 2024, Lyndsie served RIS Children's Programs as the National Medical Services Coordinator and collaborated with program medical staff and leadership. Lyndsie held previous positions since 2019 within Bethany that created a foundational understanding of program function and how it relates to service coordination. Prior to her time at Bethany, Lyndsie held positions in the clinical space at two of the major hospital systems in Grand Rapids, MI, and alternatively in the drug and medical research sphere at a contract research organization in Kalamazoo, MI. Lyndsie is passionate about UC Program best practices, program improvement through data collection and analysis, and the collaboration between service lines to ensure each child in care is properly supported. In her personal time, Lyndsie enjoys reading, weightlifting, and spending time with her husband, Alex, and their 2 cats and 2 bunnies.



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Dana Mills' career at Bethany started as an intern in 2018 within Safe Families for Children and the Foster Care Adoption programs in Nashville, TN. During her time at Bethany, she has had the opportunity to work in various roles such as Pregnancy Counseling, TFC Case Aide, UC Quality Assurance Coordinator, and currently works as the National RIS Referral Specialist. In 2018, she graduated with her BSW from Trevecca Nazarene University. In her free time, Dana enjoys spending time with her husband and their 1-year-old son, going out to eat, and watching the latest true crime documentary.



Heather Murray is honored to work at Bethany since May 2023 as the National HS/PRS Compliance Monitoring Manager and brings over 25 years of experience working with vulnerable families and children. She has an MSW from the University of Toronto and a BA in Psychology degree from the University of Windsor, Canada. Previously, Heather worked in a variety of settings as a National Trainer, Compliance Director and Master Social Worker with non-profit organizations including Habitat for Humanity, Prevent Child Abuse America, and National Church Residences. Her experience in non-profit case management, policy development and overall risk and compliance complements her current role. She enjoys the opportunity to meet directly with HS/PRS program staff as she co-leads the annual HS/PRS Monitoring Site Visits. In her downtime, Heather loves to travel with her family and relax on the beach and oceanfront shores of the Caribbean and Mexican coastlines.



Maria (MJ) Perez Cervantes joined Bethany, NC as Medical Coordinator in April 2023. She holds an associate degree in culinary arts and began her medical career eight years ago as a dietary aide, serving meals to hospital patients. Her passion for patient care, especially for Latino patients, inspired her to become a Certified Nursing Assistant, allowing her to work closely with nurses and doctors. MJ's dedication to helping others started from her childhood, where she assisted her grandmother in providing meals to Central American immigrants hiding from the police in Mexico. Working at Bethany has been incredibly rewarding for her, as she feels blessed to make a difference in the lives of children starting anew in the U.S.



Cynthia Quintana is an immigrant and first-generation college graduate from Grand Valley State University in Michigan and holds her bachelor's and Master of Social Work from there. She has more than eighteen years of experience working with children and families in public schools, federally qualified health centers, and community social service agencies. She began her Bethany journey at the Grand Rapids office in September of 2014 and has held roles as a Clinician, Lead Clinician, Clinical Supervisor, Site Supervisor, Program Manager, and has been in the Program Director role since 2018. Currently, Cynthia's program is home to about seventy staff contracted to serve up to fifty-four youth. Over the years, the program has adjusted to serving children from over ten different countries with diverse languages. Cynthia and her peers have brought to life celebrations such as Hispanic Heritage Month, Día de Muertos celebration, Christmas Posadas, visits from Santa Claus and summer carnivals for the youth in care. She was heavily involved and worked through the difficult times of parent separation and the Afghan crisis. Cynthia has a deep connection to this program and continues to strive to make it a safe and memorable experience.



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Katherine Richardson is a National Quality Assurance Manager for the Home Study and Post Release Program at Bethany. She graduated from Arizona State University with a bachelor's degree in Spanish Linguistics and a Minor in Communication. She has been working with ORR and unaccompanied children for the past 10 years and has worked in a variety of roles from shelter direct care staff, shelter Case Manager, Post Release and Home Study Case Manager, Home Study Lead Case Manager, and currently as a Quality Assurance Manager. Katherine enjoys using her skills to serve vulnerable youth and their families.



Clara Rodriguez Perez serves as one of the HS/PRS National Clinical Supervisors. She earned her Master's in Clinical Psychology concentration Child & Adolescent at Montclair State University. Throughout her years working in psychology, Clara developed a special passion for working with children, youth and families to begin healing from trauma. Her passion ignited 10 years ago when she began providing Game Based-Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (trauma focused) to children ages 5 to 12 in group settings. Within her years of experience, she had the privilege to work as a therapist and supervisor for non-profit organizations serving in outpatient and partial hospital programs within the community.



Melissa Roig serves as one of the HS/PRS National Clinical Supervisors. Melissa is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in Florida. She earned her MSW from the University of Central Florida and her BA from the Florida Institute of Technology. Melissa is passionate about the field of social work, with a particular interest in empowering children and families. She comes with experience from a variety of settings, such as a Clinical Assessor Supervisor with Brave, a Mental Health Therapist with Lifetime Counseling Center and the Children's Advocacy Center, the School Social Worker with Brevard County School District, and a Child Advocate Manager with the Guardian ad Litem Program.



Nichol Rolle serves as the National UC Children's Director. Nichol knew from a young age that serving marginalized children and their families would be her work in life. To do this, she became a social worker earning her BA and MSW from Howard University in Washington, D.C. Initially, she served as a school social worker and her work continued at Bethany where she was a Pregnancy Counselor for the Central and North Florida regions, an Adoption Specialist, and a social worker to unaccompanied children. She desires to continue to grow services to reach the most vulnerable children and their families.



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Francisco Sastre is the Senior Director of Monitoring and Evaluation at Bethany. Prior to joining Bethany in 2021, Francisco provided research and evaluation support to nonprofit organizations developing data-informed strategies to monitor and improve services. As a trained medical anthropologist, he specializes in understanding the influence of socio-cultural environments and utilizing data to enhance the wellness and well-being of underserved communities. Francisco holds an academic appointment at Albizu University in Miami. He and his wife Liz spend time living and working in Atlanta, Georgia, and Argentina.



Natalie Scott serves as the HS/PRS National Training Coordinator, a role she has held since September 2022. Prior to this role, she worked as an HS/PRS Case Manager for the Bethany Georgia branch for 1 ½ years. Natalie graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a bachelor's degree in Hispanic Linguistics and Global Studies with a concentration in global health and environment in Latin America. When she isn't navigating her professional responsibilities, you may find her reading a book in her hammock, helping others learn English, or dragging her friends into unexpected adventures.



Olga Wach is the TFC Program Director at the Reading, Pennsylvania office. She began her work with refugees in 2015 at a Family Residential Center near Reading, PA. The following year she worked as a Family Resource Specialist/LTFC Case Manager for 3 years prior to transitioning into an ORR funded residential shelter where she spent an additional 2 years. She assisted in opening an ORR funded shelter in Sarasota, FL as the PSA Manager. Olga graduated in 2014 with a Bachelors in Criminal Justice and in 2021 with a Masters in Homeland Security. Committed to continuous growth and innovation, Olga looks forward to contributing to future projects and making a lasting impact on the refugee population.



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Ingrid Weiss Slikkers, LMSW (Clinical & Macro), CCTP, has practiced social work since the early-1990's. She comes from an Argentinean/Uruguayan pastoral family having lived in various places including overseas. Early in her career she worked at a homeless shelter, juvenile detention center, specialized summer camps, and at a psychiatric hospital for children. After receiving her graduate degree, she worked as a child and family therapist for many years focusing on the treatment of trauma, loss, and family issues. She is a Certified Clinical Trauma Professional and part of the International Association of Trauma Professionals. Slikkers has significant experience doing and advocating for culturally appropriate therapy within multi-cultural groups doing concentrated work within the Latino community. Ingrid joined the Andrews University Social Work Department in 2016 and serves as an Associate Professor of Social Work and Executive Director of the International Center for Trauma Education & Care. Prior to working at Andrews, she served as a program manager for Southwest Michigan Bethany Christian Services shifting from a clinical therapist position to management and development of programs to serve immigrants and refugees. Most recently, Ingrid has been involved with leadership and development of the International Center for Trauma Education and Care and additionally facilitating the School of Social Work to function as a Trauma - Informed organization which supports infusing trauma awareness within each course taught by the school. She is a Trust Based Relational Intervention Practitioner (TBRI). Ingrid is married, has two young adult sons, a new daughter-in-law, and enjoys reading and traveling. Having been involved in children and family church ministries and education, she is daily in awe of the intersection of faith and science and the hope and healing this brings.



Lukas Ziomkowski is a clinical and macro licensed Social Worker through the state of Michigan where he currently serves as the Vice President of Refugee Services at Samaritas. Lukas is a graduate of Grand Valley State University in Grand Rapids, MI with a Master's Degree in Social Work and a B.A. as a double major in Psychology and Liberal Studies. Lukas has a diverse range of professional social work experiences working with population groups in a variety of services including wilderness adventure therapy, residential care, refugee resettlement, as well as international experience with youth programs in Galway, Ireland.