

OCR Core Competencies II: Advanced Training for New Attorneys
January 27-28, 2022
Faculty List

Chase, Ashley

OCR Staff Attorney | ashleychase@coloradochildrep.org | 720-351-4346

Ashley Chase began her career in child welfare law while attending the University of Colorado School of Law with her participation in the Juvenile Law Clinic where she was awarded the CU Law pro bono service award (2006/07) and the Juvenile Law Clinic Award (2007). After completing an externship with the Honorable J. Robert Lowenbach in the 19th Judicial District, Ashley began working in Weld County in the area of family law and as a Guardian ad Litem. During her 10 years in Weld County, Ashley participated in all aspects of litigation and appeals. She worked in the problem-solving court (Family Treatment Court) and was a member of the 19th Judicial District Best Practices Team. In 2010 she was awarded the Jim Covino Advocate of the Year award from the Office of the Child's Representative and in 2017 she was a member of the Best Practices Team of the Year. Ashley has presented and taught across the state in the field of Child Welfare Law and continues to follow her passion as the Staff Attorney and Legislative Liaison at OCR where she provides oversight and support to contract GALs across the state and participates in state-level policy work. Ashley currently serves as the Colorado state liaison for the NACC and is the co-chair of the Colorado FFPSA Implementation Team.

Colson, La Tanya

Case Consultant | LColson@guardianadlitemelpaso.org | 719-219-0294

La Tanya Colson currently works as a Case Coordinator for OGAL in El Paso County. She has a master's degree in Psychology. She is also working on her certification in addiction and currently under supervision she conducts clinical assessments for mental health and detox for local hospital. La Tanya previously worked as a Lead Caseworker for El Paso County Department of Human Services in the Family Treatment Drug Problem-Solving Court Division for 8 years. Prior to that, she worked as a Permanency Consultant for the Bureau of Child Welfare in Wisconsin, assisting children who were lingering in the Milwaukee County child welfare system with achieving permanency. She has additionally worked as Foster Adoption Licensing Specialist for the State of Wisconsin where she certified and maintained foster to adopt homes. La Tanya also worked as a Liaison and Victim Advocate for the Milwaukee County Domestic Violence Unit of the District Attorney's Office as well as a Service Coordinator for a shelter for victims (and their children) of domestic violence.

Danz, Sheri

OCR Deputy Director | sheridanz@coloradochildrep.org | 720-351-4342

Sheri Danz's legal advocacy on behalf of children and youth includes representing adolescents and young adults in child welfare and other civil matters as a Skadden Fellow/staff attorney at the Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago; representing juveniles in delinquency proceedings as a staff attorney at the Colorado State Public Defender's Office; and representing youth in public benefits, child welfare, and protective order proceedings as a legal intern at the Door's Legal Services Program, a multidisciplinary youth services center in New York City. Ms. Danz has also worked on issues regarding parents' counsel at the Office of the State Court Administrator in Colorado and served as a law clerk to the Hon. Gene Carter, United States District Court Judge for the District of Maine. Prior to law school, Ms. Danz taught special education in rural North Carolina through the Teach for America Program. Sheri Danz is a graduate of New York University School of

Law, where she received a Root-Tilden-Kern public interest scholarship and served as a member of the New York University Law Review.

Gien, Shirley

GAL 2nd Judicial District | sgien@cacdenver.com | 720-394-0553

Shirley Gien grew up in the Denver area. She received her BA in Psychology and Philosophy from CU Boulder and received her JD from Temple Law School, then hurried back to Colorado. She began practicing as a GAL in 2015 after 10 years in the medical malpractice defense field. Shirley spends her time with her family, her dogs, hiking 14ers and Jeeping the San Juan Mountains, in no particular order.

Henderson, Chris

OCR Executive Director | chrishenderson@coloradochildrep.org | 720-351-4345

Chris Henderson has dedicated his legal career to children's issues. His legal practice has focused on representing children's best interests in dependency and neglect and delinquency proceedings. In 2016, he founded and was the managing partner of Child Advocates of Colorado. Mr. Henderson has provided strategic leadership and directed operations for a team of attorneys, social workers and support staff to provide quality multidisciplinary representation for hundreds of children involved in the court system. Prior to relocating to Colorado, Mr. Henderson was a staff attorney with the Children's Law Center of Los Angeles where he represented numerous children and served as lead attorney for the first dependency drug court in Los Angeles County. Before attending law school, Mr. Henderson was a therapist for children and adolescents, providing therapy for in-patient children and adolescent psychiatric patients. In July 2018, Mr. Henderson was selected by the OCR Board of Directors to be the new Executive Director. Mr. Henderson attended Colorado State University, receiving a Bachelor of Science degree in 1994. He obtained a Master of Arts Degree from the University of Denver in 1998. He received his Juris Doctor Degree from Whittier Law School in 2004 graduating *summa cum laude*.

Jensen, Alison

GAL 2nd Judicial District | ajensenGAL@gmail.com | 303-501-0531

Alison B. Jensen is a Guardian ad litem in D&N, delinquency, and truancy cases in Denver County. Alison practiced as a GAL and junior partner at the Denver multidisciplinary office of Radley & Southerland before opening her own firm in 2017. Prior to becoming a GAL, Alison lived in London and was the communications and development manager for a children's legal charity. She also volunteered in secondary schools in one of London's most deprived boroughs. Alison is this year's chair of the CBA Juvenile Law Section and a member of the Denver Juvenile Court's Best Practice Court Team. Before moving to Denver to attend law school at CU, Alison lived in Minneapolis and worked in public relations. She is an avid traveler, a dog fanatic, and a green-thumb-in-training.

Jensen, Melissa

GAL 8th Judicial District | mel@jensendavislaw.com | 970-498-8809

Mel Jensen works with Mary Davis in Larimer County and primarily serves as a Guardian *ad Litem* for children and adults. Mel focuses her legal work on untangling the therapeutic privilege and advocating for equity for parents and children with disabilities. As an introvert, she is looking forward to speaking on a panel discussion on the therapeutic privilege while also being at home.

Neal, Matthew**GAL 19th Judicial District | matt@matthewneallaw.com | 970-373-5155**

Matthew Neal is an attorney at the Law Office of Matthew Neal. He has been working primarily as a delinquency GAL since 2018. Matthew has previously worked at the Greeley Office of the State Public Defender, and at a private firm primarily handling criminal defense and family law matters. Matthew attended law school at the University of Colorado and undergraduate at the Ohio State University.

Nord, Cara**OCR Staff Attorney | caranord@coloradochildrep.org | 720-351-4350**

Cara Nord is a staff attorney with the Office of the Child's Representative. Cara's interest in children's issues began over 20 years ago when she wrote an original oratory about child abuse for her junior high forensics team. After earning a Bachelor of Arts *magna cum laude* in American Politics and Philosophy/Prelaw, Cara taught fourth grade in Washington, D.C. through Teach for America. Her teaching experiences afforded her the opportunity to attend law school on a full-tuition public interest scholarship. During law school, Cara interned at a public defender's office where she represented children in At-Risk Youth (ARY) and Child in Need of Services (CHINS) proceedings, interned with TeamChild, and completed Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) training. After graduating from law school *summa cum laude*, Cara clerked for the Washington State Supreme Court and volunteered as a Big Sister. She then spent over 10 years litigating child welfare trials and appeals as an Assistant Attorney General in Washington State and as an Assistant County Attorney in Colorado. Cara joined OCR in February 2017. She enjoys legal research and writing, facilitating interactive trainings, and addressing race/class disparities.

Ruff, Jeff**GAL 17th Judicial District | jeffdruff@yahoo.com | 720-207-7393**

Jeff Ruff graduated from University of Montana with a BA in Economics in 1996, and the University of Montana School of Law in 1999, he worked at the Yellowstone County Attorney's in Montana. Jeff was admitted to practice law in Colorado in 2000. He began his legal career as an environmental attorney working on large scale litigation projects for an EPA and DOJ contractor. After working on developing a litigation support company with a friend in early 2001, he began working as a Criminal and Juvenile Defense Attorney in late 2001 for a mid-sized law firm in Denver. He started Ruff & Tureson, PC. In 2003. The practice primarily focused on Criminal and Juvenile defense representation for court-appointed, low pay and slow pay clients. They were a high-volume practice representing hundreds of juveniles and adults. In 2007, Jeff began working as a contractor for OCR, in Dependency and Neglect, Juvenile Delinquency and Truancy cases primarily in Adams County. In 2008, he formed The Ruff Law Firm, LLC, and continued to work as a defense attorney and a GAL. In 2012, he joined law practices with his wife, and they formed Ruff & Tartar, PC. Jeff has handled cases in more than half of the judicial districts in the State of Colorado and has worked with thousands of children and families throughout his career. He has had the opportunity to speak about juvenile law and his experiences at numerous conferences, including Juvenile Judicial conferences, County Attorney conferences, Public Defender trainings, OCR conferences and trainings, and Education Summits/Conferences for Teachers and Administrators. Jeff has been recognized or won several awards for his advocacy including: Reunification Hero in June of 2021; the Civility in Practice Award for the Adams and Broomfield Bar Association in February 2018; the Excellence in Practice Award - Spirit of the Convening in

2017; and the OCR Jim Covino Advocate of the Year Award in 2013. Last, but-not-least, he is a father to two beautiful and talented daughters and is the second-best GAL in his house.

Ulrich, Anna

OCR Staff Attorney | aulrich@coloradochildrep.org | 303-860-1517

Joining OCR in November 2021, Anna N Ulrich is the newest OCR Staff Attorney, specializing in appellate and affirmative litigation strategies. Prior to joining OCR, Anna focused on representing the best interest of children in dependency and neglect cases as a Guardian ad litem on appeal, and she was also the County Court Judge for Saguache County, Colorado. Anna obtained her J.D. from University of Colorado School of Law in 2001. From 2001-2005, Anna practiced Native American law in Durango and Boulder, Colorado. In 2006, Anna began practicing child welfare law, first as a Child and Family Investigator and then as a Guardian ad Litem in the San Luis Valley of Colorado. From 2012-2016, Anna also represented local departments of social services as a county attorney in dependency and neglect cases. She spends her free time hanging out with her teenage daughter and her rambunctious poodle, and they can usually be found in Colorado's spectacular mountains and rivers.

Wolff, Alex

OCR Case Consultant Coordinator | alexwolff@coloradochildrep.org | 720-351-4351

Alex worked as a social worker and supervisor for 15 years in the Brooklyn office of the Legal Aid Society. The Legal Aid Society represents children in the most delinquency and D&N cases in New York City Family Courts. While at Legal Aid, he worked with clients aged zero to 21. The Brooklyn office is comprised of approximately 50 lawyers and 14 social workers who work with approximately 6,000 clients per year. Social workers have been an integral part of the Juvenile Rights Practice of Legal Aid for roughly 40 years. Alex firmly believes that Legal Aid's clients required and benefited from interdisciplinary collaboration. He also believes such collaboration enhanced the practice of attorneys and social workers. Working at Legal Aid was an incredible learning experience for Alex, and he realizes he has much to learn about Colorado's systems and challenges. His goal is to help in any way he can to support contractors who are already practicing in an interdisciplinary way and to help connect and strategize with contractors interested in working with Case Consultants.

Yarbrough, Sarah

GAL 18th Judicial District | syarbrough@bmalawco.com | 303-952-4949

Sarah has been a practicing attorney since 2013. Sarah joined Bettenberg, Maguire & Associates in July 2013 as an associate attorney whose primary focus is representing children as a Guardian *ad litem* in Dependency and Neglect, Delinquency and Criminal Direct file cases. Sarah is a member of the 18th Judicial Human Trafficking Task Force and sits on the 18th Judicial High Risk Victim review board. Sarah has been involved with the 18th Judicial Human Trafficking Task Force since 2014 and has participated in the development of the 18th Judicial High Risk Victim review board in 2015. Sarah's GAL practice has focused on representation of Human Trafficking Victims since 2015.

