



# The Great Lakes Association of Child Life Professionals Executive Board Nominees for 2020-2021

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# **Katie McEwen**

## ***Nominated for President Elect***

**Workplace:** Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center

**Education Background:** Bachelor of Music: Music Therapy & Voice; Master of Science in Child Life

**Years of Experience:** 5 years in child life

**Relevant experience:** Katie is a Certified Child Life Specialist II and has been working as a child life specialist for over 5 years. During her time at CCHMC, Katie has a variety of leadership and committee experience. She was the member-at-large and then president of CCHMC's Child Life Practice Council for three years. Under her leadership, they developed programs that are now being implemented division wide. Katie has also served as the member at large representing child life in the CCHMC hospital wide Shared Governance system. She has a lot of experience representing her child life peers in a variety of settings and environments. Katie participated as a Mentor for the ACLP mentor/mentee program and has been on the education committee for GLACLP.

**Why would this person be a good candidate for this position?** Katie is an excellent child life specialist who is able to think outside the box and consider everyone's opinion and position when problem solving and coming up with creative solutions. Katie is organized, knows how to delegate, and is a team player. Katie has had a wide breadth of leadership experiences and is comfortable experience representing a large group of specialists and representing them well. Katie also has a wide breadth of committee and leadership experience that she is able to translate to GLACLP.

# Ashley Martin

## *Nominated for Child Life Specialist Member-at-Large*

**Workplace:** Cincinnati Children's Medical Center Medical Center

**Education Background:** Master of Art in Family & Consumer Science with concentration in Child Life

**Years of Experience:** 2 years in position and 4 years in child life

**Relevant experience:** Ashley has 10 + years of experience serving children in a variety of settings (daycares, schools, ABA therapy and medical camps) and has gained 4 years of work experience within the child life field. In 2016, Ashley worked as a Child Life Assistant at Helen DeVos Children's Hospital and served on the GLACLP executive board as the Student Member-at-Large for the 2018-2019 term. Ashley exhibited leadership such as assisting with CLA summit conference planning, collaborating with the Child Life Specialist-at-Large for the duration of the mentor/mentee program, and promoted volunteer/leadership opportunities for child life students within the region. During this time, Ashley also pursued her graduate degree and received her Master of Arts in Family and Consumer Sciences with a concentration in child life. Ashley completed and presented her final thesis paper on developmental care within the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit which heavily inspired her first role as a NICU CCLS at Cincinnati Children's Hospital. Ashley has been employed as a CCLS at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center for a little over 2 years and currently works with the Vascular Access and PICC team. Within her first year of employment, Ashley joined several interdisciplinary NICU committees, attended bi-weekly developmental care rounds, and presented to child life students about sibling support. Ashley also designed and implemented the NICU's first sibling support program and shared ideas with hospital leadership which contributed to the new hospital wide sibling support programming. Currently, Ashley serves on the child life Professional Inquiry Council as the child life specialist representative.

**Why would this person be a good candidate for this position?** Being a member of the GLACLP community for 5+ years has offered Ashley many opportunities to improve her professional skills by learning the latest trends in child life and connecting with the child life community. Serving on the board in the past as the Student-Member-at-Large was a rewarding opportunity and strengthened her skills in leadership, initiative, and competence. Ashley enjoyed connecting with students on a personal level and serving along-side other professionals in the field who shared a similar passion as her. Since that time, Ashley has focused her efforts on exhibiting leadership within her hospital institution and is excited for the opportunity to serve the child life community again.

# Jessica Wadium

## *Nominated for Child Life Specialist Member-at-Large*

**Workplace:** Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center

**Education Background:** Bachelor's Degree in Child Life from Edgewood College

**Years of Experience:** 2.5 years

**Experience:** Jessica established the child life program at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, which serves pediatric hematology/oncology and children of adult patients. Through grant writing, Jessica secured funds to increase child life presence and was able to hire an additional child life specialist part time. She has formed programs, including an annual sibling appreciation day and disease-specific education events, to better meet patient and family needs. Jessica has provided educational sessions through presentations and committee work during her time at Roswell Park. She manages the volunteer program in the pediatric center and works closely with child life students to assist them along their journey into the child life field. Jessica has also participated in the creation and execution of an evidence-based research project on medication adherence for pediatric oncology patients. She has enjoyed her time as an active GLACLP member for the last five years.

**Why would this person be a good candidate for this position?** As an active member, Jessica has cherished her experiences participating in the GLACLP mentorship program and conferences. Having been a conference scholarship recipient herself, Jessica understands how vital these GLACLP services are for students and professions in the child life field. Jessica is a hard worker who takes initiative and is filled with ambition. She highly respects how the GLACLP has served its members in the past and has a strong desire to further this important work. Jessica would be a great fit for the Child Life Specialist Member at Large position as she is passionate about collaboration and communication to better serve students, child life professionals, and therefore the families we care for.

# Jalyssa Kessler

## *Nominated for Child Life Specialist Member-at-Large*

**Workplace:** Parkview Health

**Education Background:** Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Purdue University

**Years of Experience:** 2.5 years in position and 3 years as a certified child life specialist

**Experience:** Jalyssa has participated in the GLACLP mentor-mentee program since 2013. She started as a mentee when she was a student and has been a mentor for the last 2 years. Jalyssa has served several terms on GLACLP committees including communications, conference planning, and education. She also chaired the planning committee for her hospital when they hosted the 2020 GLACLP Student Symposium. She is active with ACLP as well.

**Why would this person be a good candidate for this position?** Jalyssa is organized, detail oriented, friendly, outgoing, and well-rounded. She is a go-getter and enjoys new challenges and tasks. She's had experience within the GLACLP organization and has learned a lot about how the organization operates. She's been a GLACLP member since 2012. Jalyssa loves to network and continually expand her knowledge about child life.

# Jeannine Brown

## *Nominated for Child Life Specialist Member-at-Large*

**Workplace:** Helen DeVos Children's Hospital

**Education Background:** Master of Education with an Early Childhood Emphasis at Grand Valley State University; Bachelor of Science at Grand with a major in Social Science Division at Grand Valley State University

**Years of Experience:** 2 years in position and 3 years in child life

**Experience:** As a student and working with students as a professional, Jeannine has taken full advantage of the opportunities through the GLACLP. She participated in the GLACLP Mentee/Mentorship program for two years, planned with a committee a student symposium, attended three student symposiums, and attended six GLACLP annual conferences and 2 ACLP conferences. She also is an active member in the Bereavement Committee and Social Committee at Helen Devos Children's Hospital. Throughout her child life journey, Jeannine has either been a volunteer, a student or child life specialist at three hospitals involved in the GLACLP.

**Why would this person be a good candidate for this position?** Jeannine should be strongly considered for the Member-at-Large Child Life specialist because of her admirable dedication, immense knowledge and comprehensive experiences. She is dedicated to the continued advancement of the child life, which is evident through conferences and events attended and committees joined as both a student and a professional. Her current knowledge of the role of the child life specialist would assist the executive board and organization greatly as she can smoothly navigate the important conversations needed to ensure collaboration with all involved. She has a wide range of experiences working with children and families in both the hospital and home setting where she has acted as a liaison between families and the medical team and/or education system. In addition, Jeannine embodies positivity, friendliness, and a calming presence in her every day, and her team members benefit greatly with her on the team.

# Danielle Behnke

## *Nominated for Child Life Specialist Member-at-Large*

**Workplace:** Rainbow Babies and Children's Hospital

**Education Background:** Bachelor of Arts in Psychology; Master's in Healthcare Administration

**Years of Experience:** 2.5 years in position and 8 years as a certified child life specialist

**Experience:** Danielle has over 8 years of clinical experience working as a Certified Child Life Specialist, with clinical experience gained within three pediatric hospitals throughout the Great Lakes Region. In her role as a child life specialist, she has had the opportunity to serve as an active participant on child life department student committees, assisting with reviewing student applications and interviewing prospective students, evaluating and updating programming and mentoring new student preceptors. In addition to Danielle's role as a student committee member, she also has experience serving in a supervisor capacity for multiple internship and practicum students. She has received second victim training that allows her to serve as a hospital peer supporter for colleagues both within and outside of the child life department. She has experience serving as the child life representative on multiple hospital quality improvement committees and initiatives (e.g. "Comfort hold" committee, Autism committee). Danielle has experience providing formal education and presentations for residents, nurses and nursing students within the hospital setting, as well as experience presenting at multiple Great Lakes Regional conferences (GLACLP and GLR-AMTA).

**Why would this person be a good candidate for this position?** Danielle values relationship development and believes that, through collaborative practices, all students and professionals have the ability to make positive contributions toward the clinical growth and emotional well-being of those within the child life community. She believes in the power of mentorship and is attentive to the professional and emotional needs of others, always willing to spend quality time in conversation with child life students, as well as co-workers. She has dedicated herself to increasing her own knowledge, and comfort, with supporting students and colleagues within her workplace, receiving additional peer supporter and preceptor training. Danielle is passionate, and committed, to the child life profession and would welcome the opportunity to serve on the GLACLP executive board as the Member-at-Large Child Life Specialist, a role which would allow her to serve as a liaison, actively supporting the professional needs of those within the Great Lakes child life community.

# Ashley Otenev

## *Nominated for Educator Member-at-Large*

**Workplace:** University of Michigan Dearborn & C.S. Mott Children's Hospital

**Education Background:** Bachelor of Science in Family Studies from Western Michigan University; Master's in Public Health Education/Community Health Education from Concordia University, Nebraska

**Years of Experience:** 3 years at UMD and almost 6 years at Mott; 7 years in child life

**Experience:** Ashley is a LEO Lecturer at University of Michigan Dearborn and has taught HHS 305: Introduction to Play and HHS 425: Working with Children in Healthcare Settings. She is the current Child Life Specialist Advisor to the Child Life Student Association at UMD. She completed a clinical fellowship at Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital in 2014 and has worked at C.S. Mott Children's Hospital since 2014. Throughout her career she has worked in general care, hematology/oncology, radiology, emergency, consults/children of adult patients, and intensive care.

**Why would this person be a good candidate for this position?** Ashley has a strong interest in child life academics, and working with students interested in a career in child life. From teaching to supervising volunteers and practicum students, and everything in between, she is invested in working with future child life specialists.

# Kara Brennan

## *Nominated for Educator Member-at-Large*

**Workplace:** Concordia University

**Education Background:** Master's in Organizational Leadership and Healthcare Administration; Bachelor of Arts in Family Life Education

**Years of Experience:** Less than 1 year in position and 11+ years in child life

**Experience:** Kara has worked as a Certified Child Life Specialist in a clinical capacity at C.S. Mott Children's Hospital for 8 of her 11 years in the field. She was a preceptor for practicum students and interns for 7 years. She moved into the role of administrative assistant for the Child and Family Life Department for 2 years where she learned the business side of the department and finished her master's degree. Kara also served as Secretary for the GLACLP Executive Board from 2019-2020. She co-chaired the conference and knows the in's and out's of being on the executive board already. Kara is now the Child Life Program Coordinator at Concordia University. She teaches a total of 5 classes, which includes teaching as a fixed term faculty member at Central Michigan University.

**Why would this person be a good candidate for this position?** Kara is passionate first and foremost about child development. This love and passion has translated so perfectly with her love for education in child life, and now in teaching child life to students. She is very well-connected academically with other child life professors and students, as well as with Michigan Medicine/Mott Children's Hospital. Her job is to support and mentor students, so she would be an ideal fit for this position to serve as a liaison as Child Life Educator Member-at-Large.

# **Janelle Mitchell**

## ***Nominated for Educator Member-at-Large***

**Workplace:** Ohio University

**Education Background:** Master of Science in Child Life from Bank Street College

**Years of Experience:** 3 years in position and 13 years in child life

**Experience:** Janelle has been a long-time CCLS with Nationwide Children's Hospital. She began teaching adjunct for the child life program in 2009 and was hired as a full-time Assistant Clinical Professor of Child Life in 2017. She oversees the graduate clinical training and teaches the following courses: Death, Dying, and Bereavement; Professional Practices in Child Life; Advanced Child Life; Therapeutic and Medical Play in Child Life; Parenting Relations; Child Life Practicum; Child Life Internship. Additionally, Janelle oversees the child life program services throughout Athens County, providing supervision with our advanced graduate students in their settings and oversees the clinical simulation lab.

**Why would this person be a good candidate for this position?** Janelle made the transition from full-time clinician to full-time faculty. She has been creative in moving our program forward in all areas, especially clinical training of graduate students. She has been actively involved in ACLP committees and task forces, so she would bring to the table a great deal of experience and knowledge regarding the important behind the scenes work on child life associations. Plus, she is truly one of the most pleasant individuals to collaborate and work with.

# Morgan Syme

## *Nominated for Secretary*

**Workplace:** Helen DeVos Children's Hospital

**Education Background:** Bachelor of Arts at Michigan State University with a Major in Child Development with Honors

**Years of Experience:** 8 months in position and 3 years in child life

**Experience:** Morgan has served on countless committees (Bronson Bereavement, HDVCH Bereavement, Preparation Committee, EPIC Committee, and Social Committee) with the purpose to improve processes and continue to develop a strong name for child life. While serving on these various committees, Morgan acted as the secretary, recording and organized the notes, planning steps, and setting up future meetings to ensure progression.

**Why would this person be a good candidate for this position?** Morgan is a strong candidate for consideration to serve on the GLACLP board that is highly respected by all of her team members. Her motivation, positive spirit, energy, and calming presence would only benefit the board in advancing the future development of the child life specialist career and professional development. Morgan is a dependable team player and up to date on current child life trends with the delicate ability to offer input in difficult situations. She demonstrates ideas in an organized fashion with innovative practices and ideas.

# Courtney Hall

## *Nominated for Treasurer*

**Workplace:** Nationwide Children's Hospital

**Education Background:** Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology and Health from Miami University

**Years of Experience:** 2+ years

**Experience:** Courtney has worked in both inpatient and outpatient settings during her time at Nationwide Children's Hospital. She excels regardless of the setting she's working in, and does an amazing job of educating about and advocating for the role of child life. Courtney has established herself as a leader within the child life team and the overarching Family and Volunteer Services department. Courtney has taken on some leadership roles of some ad hoc work groups in our department. She is articulate, organized, smart, observant, collaborative dependable, and trustworthy. Courtney works well with others, has strong critical-thinking and decision-making skills, and is a budding leader.

**Why would this person be a good candidate for this position?** She is a young and vibrant CCLS that has demonstrated qualities that would fit well for an E-board member. Her communication skills and maturity both stand out. She enjoys learning new things and has shown herself to be one who intentionally challenges herself to grow. She makes decisions carefully, and follows through on all she takes on or that is given to her. She is able to navigate complicated relationships and situations in her clinical work and with team members. Courtney has very strong communication skills. Courtney has an attitude of service and has intentionally sought out opportunities to further grow and connect within our hospital community; she has readiness to be part of this organizations leadership. Courtney has taken lead on multiple research projects and team goals within our child life team, participated in safety huddles on her current clinical unit (Emergency Department), and was recently nominated as a One Team Culture Coach. As a One Team Culture Coach, Courtney will help to reinforce hospital values, encourage team effectiveness and engagement, improve communication, foster a diverse and inclusive culture, and promote self-awareness. Through all of these projects and positions, Courtney maintains a professional attitude and is very organized and attentive. Courtney is very passionate about the work that she does. She has a questioning attitude that is welcomed and appreciated. She is a self-starter who takes initiative and has great follow through. Courtney can always be depended on to do what she says she will do and has a very high level of maturity and professionalism.

# Ashley Curcio

## *Nominated for Treasurer*

**Workplace:** Nationwide Children's Hospital

**Education Background:** Bachelor of Science in Child Life and Bachelor of Art in Psychology

**Years of Experience:** 5 years at Nationwide; 19 years total in child life, including 14 years at Maynard Children's Hospital

**Experience:** Ashley started her first child life job in 2001 and over the years has worked in a variety of settings, including both inpatient and outpatient, chronic and acute. She is currently a Clinical Lead for her child life team, and she is exceptional at multi-tasking the many responsibilities that come with this role. While living in North Carolina and working as a child life specialist, Ashley also volunteered with the Dream Factory of North Carolina, a local wish granting organization for critically and chronically ill children. After several years of volunteering with the organization as a wish coordinator, Ashley was elected to the Executive Board as Treasurer and served a two-year term in this role.

**Why would this person be a good candidate for this position?** Ashley would be an ideal candidate for the Treasurer position because she is very organized, reliable, detail oriented, knowledgeable with computer programs, and a quick learner. Ashley has a strong work ethic, a high level of integrity, effective communication skills, and she is meticulous in her work. Ashley's leadership experience as a Child Life IV in North Carolina, Treasurer for the Dream Factory of North Carolina and her current role of Clinical Lead make her an ideal candidate for the position. She possesses the skills, experience and dedication needed to be successful as an Executive Board Member. Ashley has exceptional organizational skills, is detailed oriented and extremely dependable. Ashley has utilized these skills professionally as well as in volunteer work in her personal life. Ashley consistently goes above and beyond what is expected of her. She is thoughtful in roles and responsibilities she takes on and puts forth undivided time and attention for each commitment. She has a very strong work ethic. Ashley is proficient in her use of various computer programs. Her skills in utilizing Excel, would be very helpful in this role. Ashley's ability to build rapport and connect with others is a quality that is very important in an Executive Board Member. Ashley excels in these skills. She has experience working with professionals and students from many diverse backgrounds. She uses a strength-based approach when working with others. Ashley is very thoughtful in decision making, utilizing evidence and data to form decision.

# Mary Weaver

## *Nominated for Student Member-at-Large*

**School:** Student at Ohio University

**Education Background:** Bachelor of Science in Human Development and Family Studies at Kent State University, May 2020; currently a graduate student at Ohio University

**Years of Experience:** Less than 1 year in child life

**Experience:** She is a first-year graduate student in our two-year child life graduate program and was selected as a Graduate Assistant for the department faculty. Mary completed her undergraduate degree in Human Development and Families Studies with Kent State University.

**Why would this person be a good candidate for this position?** Mary would be a great voice for graduate students who are beginning the process of navigating child life practicum deadlines, applications, etc.

# Morgan Deitschel

## *Nominated for Student Member-at-Large*

**School:** Student at Ohio University

**Education Background:** Bachelor of Science in Child and Family Studies/Child Life & Pediatric Health Care Settings, Ohio University, May 2020; currently in child life graduate program at Ohio University

**Years of Experience:** 5 years as child life student

**Experience:** Morgan is enrolled in Ohio University's 12-month child life graduate program and is completing her child life practicum this semester with Nationwide Children's Hospital (delayed from summer). She is completing child life and child and family studies graduate courses this fall and spring semester, with her child life internship to follow next summer. Morgan has attended past GLACLP conferences with the Ohio University team (2019 & 2018), has experienced international child life travel, has a very diverse and well-rounded hands-on experiences working with children and families along the lifespan and with vulnerable children, and has been an all-around outstanding student as both an undergraduate in our child life and pediatric health care concentration program and now as a child life graduate student.

**Why would this person be a good candidate for this position?** Morgan would give voice to both undergraduate and graduate students, as she has experienced both. She has enjoyed attending and networking with the GLACLP past two conferences and sees the benefits of involvement. She carries with her incredible professionalism – a very polished person. Lastly, Morgan is funding most of her college education on her own, with a little bit of financial support from extended family members. Her personal journey has been inspiring to witness and she knows what it's like to navigate the application process for the required clinical experiences. She would be an important student voice if she were to be on the E-board.

# Nikki Allen

## *Nominated for Student Member-at-Large*

**School:** Student at Western Michigan University

**Education Background:** Graduate Student at Western Michigan University

**Years of Experience:** 3 years in child life

**Experience:** Nikki has completed all undergraduate and graduate courses for child life. She is a Certified Child Passenger Safety Technician and is certified in Child Passenger Safety Technician Special Needs. Currently, she is the President of the Child Life Organization at Western Michigan University. Nikki is a previous Board Member of Love Your Melon. She has experience volunteering at Bronson Children's Hospital. Additionally, she is a Phase One Student at Helen DeVos Children's Hospital. Previously, Nikki was employed at Helen DeVos Children's Hospital and Big Brothers Big Sisters.

**Why would this person be a good candidate for this position?** Nikki would make a great addition to the GLACLP board as a student member-at-large because she has experience related to child life and is eager to help other students through this process. Her ability to connect with others will allow her to support other students and members in a positive manner. She is also the President of the Child Lifer Organization at Western Michigan University, and have held board positions with other RSO's on campus. Nikki has a background of experience working with a variety of diverse individuals and this would allow her to make a great liaison in various situations. She would work hard to apply what she has learned in the past and build upon her current knowledge when it comes to serving others and working as a team.