

## 2023 GLACLP Eboard Nominees and Bios

### TREASURER



**Maggie Alvstad** from Bronson Children's Hospital with one year of child life experience

Bachelors of Science in Child Life with a minor in Psychology from East Carolina University

**EXPERIENCE/STRENGTHS:** I've been a certified child life specialist at Bronson for almost a year now. I completed my internship at Marshfield Children's Hospital in Wisconsin during the thick of the pre-vaccine pandemic. Because patient care was so limited, I learned a lot about the behind the scenes work of child life. After graduating college, I took some time to manage the renovations of my church after a fire. I managed the finances, insurance and banking that was involved in the \$140,000 renovation.

I'm passionate about furthering the field of child life, I'm extremely organized and consider myself financially literate. I've previously managed a large budget for my church and kept detailed lists and spreadsheets of all the spending.

**BIO:** I am currently an Emergency Room Child Life Specialist at Bronson Methodist Hospital in Kalamazoo, Michigan. I graduated in 2020 from East Carolina University with a Bachelor of Science in Child Life with a minor in Psychology. I moved to Michigan in November of 2021 for my dream job at Bronson and love living here! I spend my free time hanging out with my roommate, reading by the pool, and FaceTiming my family. Fun fact: I love to travel and have been to 42 states and 10 countries!



**Paxton Green** from Cleveland Clinic with 3 months of child life experience

Bachelor's degree in Family Life, with a concentration in Child Life, from Concordia University Ann Arbor.

**EXPERIENCE/STRENGTHS:** Paxton was previously both President and Treasurer of the Child Life Association (student organization) at Concordia University Ann Arbor.

She is incredibly organized, detail oriented, responsible, is a good steward of resources given, and is creative in maximizing the resource potential.

**BIO:** Paxton is currently a Child Life Specialist with Cleveland Clinic, working in the Radiology Department. She previously completed her internship at Cincinnati Children's Hospital. She was previously the President of the Child Life Association, student group, at Concordia University Ann Arbor, where she completed her bachelor's degree in Family Life with a Child Life concentration.

## **SECRETARY**



**Molly Berry** from Bronson Children's Hospital with 8 months of child life experience

Western Michigan University BS and MA

**EXPERIENCE/STRENGTHS:** As a student I volunteered at both Bronson Children's Hospital and Helen DeVos Children's Hospital. I completed a 150 hour child life practicum at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh and my 600 hour child life internship at Helen DeVos Children's Hospital. I am currently a certified child life specialist in the surgical unit at Bronson Children's Hospital. I have a Master of Arts in Child and Family Development from Western Michigan University. I enjoy writing, have strong communication skills, and am excited to take on new opportunities in the child life field.

I am detail oriented, organized, and passionate about the field of child life and our community. As a recently certified child life specialist, I am looking forward to being an active member of the child life community. I would like to use my skills to be an active member of the GLACLP Eboard and help benefit the organization.

**BIO:** Molly Berry is currently a Certified Child Life Specialist at Bronson Children's Hospital working in surgery. She received both her Bachelors of Science in Child and Family Developments and her Masters of Arts in Child Life from Western Michigan University. Molly is passionate about the child life field and is very excited to be involved in the GLACLP community. When Molly is not working, she enjoys spending time being outdoors, reading, going to concerts, and spending time with her friends and family.



**Vanessa Shields** from Beacon Children's Hospital with almost a year of child life experience

Bachelor's degree in Family Life with a Child Life Concentration

**EXPERIENCE/STRENGTHS:** She is dedicated, committed, thorough, timely, and would give this position her all. She is very detail oriented and is incredibly organized. She has been the committee scribe for the GLACLP Research Committee for the last year.

**BIO:** Vanessa is currently a Certified Child Life Specialist in Same Day Surgery at Beacon Children's Hospital. In her role, she has been a strong advocate for children and families in her area. She is also currently a member of the GLACLP Research Committee, serving as scribe for the committee meetings for the last year. Prior to this position, and her involvement on the committee, Vanessa completed her internship at SIU School of Medicine at St. John's Children's Hospital and completed her practicum at C.S. Mott Children's Hospital. She completed her bachelor's degree in Family Life, with a concentration in Child Life, from Concordia University Ann Arbor.

## **TRADITIONAL CCLS MEMBER AT LARGE**



**Mallory Gutchall** from Nationwide Children's Hospital with 7 years of child life experience

Bachelors in Child and Family Studies with a specialization in Child Life from Ohio University

**EXPERIENCE/STRENGTHS:** Mallory has been involved in the ACLP mentor/mentee program multiple years and has been a practicing CCLS for 7 years.

I believe I'd be able to effectively communicate the needs of child life specialists when planning various networking and professional development opportunities. I have been practicing for 7 years and really enjoy helping to connect people to different resources/programs such as the mentor/mentee program. I am looking for ways to enhance my leadership skills within the context of the child life field.

**BIO:** Mallory is a child life specialist on the Oncology Unit at Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio. She completed her undergraduate degree at Ohio University and then went on to work at Le Bonheur Children's Hospital for 7 years. Throughout her time as a CCLS she has been an informal mentor for students and new staff, as well as those in the child life community through the ACLP Mentor Program. She also currently serves on the Bulletin Committee. Mallory values integrity, innovation, and collaboration in her work. She also loves spending time with her pup, Beau.

## **NON-TRADITIONAL CCLS MEMBER AT LARGE**



**Julie Piazza** from the University of Michigan Health, Office of Patient Experience with 40 years of child life experience

Masters in child life and health care administration; Bachelor degree in child development

**EXPERIENCE/STRENGTHS:** Extensive experience in child life across the care continuum and instrumental in seeing needs for services in specialty areas and developing opportunities through research and innovation in museums, schools, nature and wellness. Utilizing available resources and maximizing outcomes is Piazza's area of expertise. Piazza has taught in child life educational programs on the undergraduate and graduate levels at several colleges/universities.

Innovative, effective team development, project management and strategy skills, meets people where they are, intentional inclusion are key elements of Piazza's leadership style. She has been an original GLACLP board member, instrumental in laying a foundation for the organization. Piazza has been active and in leadership roles on several nonprofit organizations in the community and as part of Michigan Medicine.

**BIO:** Julie Piazza is a Senior Project Manager for the Office of Patient Experience leading innovations for comfort management, healing environments, nature and healing and preparation for public health. Piazza serves as project lead for the adult non-pharmacologic interdisciplinary care in partnership with the Department of Child and Family Life at University of Michigan Health's Frankel Cardiovascular Center. She has a BS in Child Development from Iowa State University and a MS in Children in Health Care Settings/Administration from Wheelock College. Piazza has worked at University of Michigan Health since 2001 and shares from her over 40 years of experience in clinical care as a CCLS, program implementation, patient experience, community partnerships, servant leadership, pain management research, and compassionate connected care.



**Jennifer Fieten**, MA, CCLS from Maryville Children's Healthcare Center (a pediatric specific transitional care facility) with 22 years of child life experience

MA in Education; BS in Family Consumer Nutrition and Sciences

**EXPERIENCE/STRENGTHS:** Has had a variety of experiences in non traditional settings to include: pediatric palliative care and hospice, organ donation, academics, and now in a pediatric specific transitional care facility.

**BIO:** Jennifer Fieten has been a Child Life Specialist for over twenty two years, providing child life services for children and their families in a variety of traditional and non traditional child life settings. She is currently the Certified Child Life Specialist at Maryville Children's Healthcare Center, providing services for children with medical complexity following non accidental trauma. Previously, she was a Medical Social Consultant with SIU School of Medicine in Springfield, IL. She is also an Adjunct Instructor and Course Developer with both Maryville University in St. Louis, MO, and Concordia University in Ann Arbor, MI. Prior to these roles, she served as Child Life Program Director, coordinating the undergraduate Child Life minor and the new Child Life graduate program at Concordia University. Prior to this role, she was employed as a Child Life Specialist in a pediatric palliative care and hospice program. She is currently a committee member of the ACLP's Professional Resources Committee and was previously a member of the Executive Board of the Great Lakes Association of Child Life Professionals, as the Educator at Large. She currently has the privilege of being Chair of the Great Lakes Association of Child Life Professionals' Research Committee. She is a member of the Psychosocial Care Council for Operation Smile and serves as a volunteer Child Life Specialist on medical missions with this wonderful organization. She is also currently a volunteer with the Chicago Department of Public Health, providing child life support for their pediatric vaccine clinics and has presented on caring for the pediatric patient for the Illinois Department of Public Health.

## **EDUCATOR MEMBER AT LARGE**



**Nancy McCurdy** from Ball State University with 35 years of child life experience

BA in Elementary Education at Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX

MS in Early Childhood and Family Studies at Indiana University

**EXPERIENCE/STRENGTHS/BIO:** Nancy began her career as a Child Life "Worker" at Riley Hospital for Children long before certification was in place. She was part of the original Child Life Study Group, and then Task Force, with the Association of Children's Health (ACCH). She was an original member of the Child Life Council, when it became independent from ACCH. She has a particular interest in the history of the Child Life profession. She did an internship at Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital in London through Wheelock College, now part of Boston University.

She has worked at Riley Hospital for Children, Peyton Manning Children's Hospital, and Lifelines Children's Rehabilitation Hospital at St. Vincent. Additionally, she has worked in non-traditional Child Life roles in early intervention and hospice. She was a co-founder of CHAMP Camp, a camp for children and adolescents with tracheostomies and those requiring ventilator assistance, which celebrated its 30th year in 2021.

She has taught Child Life coursework at Ball State University in Muncie, IN from 2013 - 2016 and returned again in 2020 to develop a new course, "Infants, Children and Families in Health Care Settings", which involves a Simulation Lab. Presently, she also works PRN in Same Day Surgery in the Riley Outpatient Center.

She has been a Mentor for both the GLACLP and the ACLP, and has long been a member of both organizations.



## **STUDENT MEMBER AT LARGE**



### **Jade Mergen-Henry**

Full Time Student (Graduating from Western Michigan University with a bachelor's degree in Child and Family Development this upcoming Fall 2022 also enrolled in the Accelerated Graduate Degree Program for MA in Family Consumer Sciences with a Child Life Concentration)

**EXPERIENCE/STRENGTHS:** I believe that I would be a good candidate for this position because I'm very organized and creative. These qualities will allow me to be successful at running the social media page. While I do not have any professional experience with this, I really enjoy social media on a personal level and feel that I could continue creating a page that is welcoming and fun, while also being helpful and informational to professionals and students. I also believe I'm a good candidate because I collaborate well with others. I'm someone who is very thoughtful, kind, and outgoing. These qualities allow me to partner well with others. I believe that working together is so much better than working apart. I feel that I have valuable thoughts and ideas to offer and would love the opportunity to collaborate with other child life professionals in this capacity. Lastly, I believe I would be a good candidate because I desire to help and support other child life students. As a student myself, I'm still learning and figuring things out in this child life journey but something that has helped me so much is having other students/professionals who have gone before me mentor me and support me. I love the idea of a child life student being on the executive board because it allows for students to have a voice. I think I would be a great voice and representation for child life students. It would be wonderful to support and advocate for other students just as I have been supported and advocated for.

**BIO:** My name is Jade Mergen-Henry. I'm a student at Western Michigan University studying Child and Family Development. I will be graduating with my bachelor's degree this upcoming Fall 2022. While in undergrad I was accepted into the Accelerated Graduate Degree Program, MA in Family Consumer Sciences with a concentration in child life. This program has allowed me to take a few graduate child life courses while still in my undergrad and get a head start on completing my master's degree. I will be a graduate student starting in Spring 2023. I'm looking forward to continuing my schooling and broadening my knowledge of child life. I just completed

two, year-long volunteer experiences at Helen DeVos Children's Hospital as a Phase 1 Child Life Student and another at the Children's Healing Center. I was able to work with many diverse groups of children and families and gained an increase of knowledge, love, and appreciation for the field of child life. I'm currently serving on the GLACLP conference committee where I'm helping to plan the upcoming annual conference, give student input, and learn valuable collaboration skills. If I'm not at school or work, you can find me outside exploring nature with my loved ones. Some of my favorite outdoor activities include hiking, kayaking, and camping. I'm passionate about the field of child life and can't wait for the opportunities that are to come.

### **PRESIDENT-ELECT**

No Applications

### **TECHNOLOGY LIAISON**

No Applications