



(vō-chāy) means voice.

We use our voice, and empower you to use yours, because we believe every person should belong and be empowered to thrive.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Fawn Davies
Voce
Communications Director
717-471-6540
fdavies@vocetogether.org

Shannon Zimmerman, M.P.A.
PA Office of Advocacy & Reform
Communications Director
717-571-9917
shannzimme@pa.gov

VOCE PRESENTS FORUM ON PENNSYLVANIA'S CHILDREN, CHALLENGES HUMAN SERVICES LEADERS TO WORK TOGETHER TO HEAL TRAUMA

LANCASTER, PA (November 10, 2022) – Voce and Pennsylvania Child Advocate Maryann McEvoy, who also served as honorary chair, hosted more than 100 child-serving professionals at today's inaugural [Forum on Pennsylvania's Children](#) (FPaC), an event focused on healing childhood trauma.

Held at the Lancaster Wyndham Resort and Convention Center, the day-long event is a first step in an ongoing campaign to challenge public and private sector thought leaders to understand the deep effects of childhood trauma and collaborate to create a safer and more equitable Pennsylvania for children.

Voce's goal for FPaC was to create an opportunity for individuals, agencies and child-serving systems to learn from and build connections with one another to work together toward healing trauma. "FPaC was conceived more than two years ago as Governor Wolf launched a plan to make Pennsylvania a trauma-informed state," said Rick Azzaro, Voce Executive Director. "Although we had supported vulnerable children for our entire 20-year history and had built an expertise in trauma and loss, we felt our role was to foster collaboration among professionals from disciplines who typically don't view each other as resources."

The event was a natural fit for the [Pennsylvania Office of Advocacy and Reform](#) (OAR), which is responsible for the implementation of the [Trauma-Informed PA Plan](#). Pennsylvania Child Advocate and OAR Executive Director, Maryann McEvoy, serves as the FPaC honorary chairperson and delivered the closing keynote.

Speaking to the Forum participants, Maryann McEvoy shared an inspiring message about her personal and professional path into trauma and issued a challenge to all in attendance. "We need everyone here to ask themselves, 'What is my mission? Does it align with HEAL-PA? How can I get involved?'"

Promoting a tone of hope and healing, Dr. Liz Winter from the [University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work](#), opened the Forum with a presentation on post-traumatic pathways.

FPaC itself is a collaboration as Voce worked with the [Pennsylvania State Police Office of Community Engagement](#), the [University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work](#), [LCBC Church](#) and several private human services agencies to construct the topics and agenda. "Learning Labs" were designed to nurture dialogue and provide insights from speakers.

According to a [survey](#) conducted by the Pennsylvania Department of Health and released in August 2019, half of all Pennsylvanians have had at least one Adverse Childhood Experience, 19% have experienced three or more, and 38% of all Pennsylvanians have experienced either emotional or physical abuse as a child. These traumas can affect the mental health of those who suffered from them for many years if not treated with the appropriate trauma-informed approach.

Voce will continue to engage Forum attendees through the FPaC online community. A second Forum is planned for 2023.

For more information, contact Fawn Davies, Voce Communications Director, at fdavies@vocetogether.org.

###

Voce (vō-chāy) means voice. Voce uses its voice, and empowers others to use theirs, to create positive, lasting change in people's lives. Voce believes every person should belong and be empowered to thrive. Voce is a Pennsylvania-based non-profit providing consultation and training to agencies throughout the country in the areas of trauma and loss, adoption and permanency, diversity and inclusion, and individual and family well-being. Learn more at vocetogether.org.