



West Michigan Partnership for Children Hires an Experienced Team of Care Coordinators

As official launch day of Kent County start-up draws closer, team expands with skilled individuals from the foster care field.

West Michigan Partnership for Children (WMPC) welcomes Andrea Copeland, Ellie Galas, and Amanda Kangas, who joined the team as Care Coordinators on August 28, 2017, and Cathrine Raftery who will join on September 11, 2017. As Care Coordinators, Copeland, Galas, Kangas, and Raftery will facilitate foster care placements of children referred by Kent County's Department of Health and Human Services and ensure efficient and effective authorization of resources and services for children and families. They will help increase the capacity of the workforce to meet each child's unique needs and build a continuum of care to ensure there is an appropriate placement match for all children referred to WMPC.

Copeland has four years of combined public and private child welfare experience, having served as a Child Protective Services Investigator in Newaygo County, at Bethany Christian Services as a Foster Home Licensing Specialist, and at Catholic Charities West Michigan as a Licensing and Recruitment Specialist. Copeland is particularly skilled at researching, analyzing, and interpreting child welfare policy for the purposes of training new child welfare staff and ensuring compliance with DWCL audits. Copeland received her Bachelor's in Social Work from Ferris State University.

Galas brings four plus years of experience in social work, primarily in foster care licensing at Bethany Christian Services' Kalamazoo office, to her new role as WMPC Care Coordinator. She has also worked as a Senior Site Coordinator at Communities in Schools, which will be an asset to WMPC as it aims to leverage resources available in the education system for children in foster care. Galas is a certified Trauma-Informed Parenting trainer and is active in Partners for a Racism-Free Community. She earned her Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Kalamazoo College.

Kangas has eight years of experience in foster care and adoption, serving as an Adoption Specialist at Lutheran Adoption Service and as a Foster Care Case Manager, Foster Home Licensor, and Intake Worker at Wellspring Lutheran Services. Kangas's rich experience in different roles in the foster care system have prepared her with the necessary skills to work collaboratively in advocating for the well-being of the county's children as a Care Coordinator. Kangas received her Bachelors in Social Work from Grand Valley State University.



Raftery has four years of experience as a lead foster care case manager at D.A. Blodgett – St. John’s, where she also served as a Direct Care Counselor at St. John’s Home for two years. Raftery’s leadership and collaborative approach was recognized in July 2017 when she was awarded the MiTeam star award for D.A. Blodgett – St. John’s. Raftery’s commitment to her community is evident through her many volunteer roles; currently, at Big Brothers Big Sisters. Raftery has a BSW and MSW from Grand Valley State University.

WMPC looks forward to its launch date on October 1, 2017. The organization will partner with Bethany Christian Services, Catholic Charities of West Michigan, D.A. Blodgett—St. Johns, Samaritas, and Wellspring Lutheran Services to provide foster care services to children and families in Kent County piloting a performance-based funding model. WMPC will implement a case rate that incentivizes permanency and allows for the flexibility and creativity of funds to empower and strengthen families and improve outcomes for children.