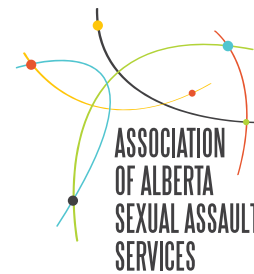


Board of Directors 2023-24



John Ferguson- President

John Ferguson is a 35-year veteran of the RCMP, having recently retired as the Assistant Commissioner in charge of Criminal Operations for the Province of Alberta. John has an extensive policing background having worked in numerous detachments and specialized units throughout Manitoba, Nova Scotia and Alberta. His policing experiences are very broad as he has worked in small isolated communities with significant geographical areas of responsibility, to managing investigations that were national and international in scope. In his recent role as the Criminal Operations Officer, John was responsible and accountable for the overall strategic direction, leadership, and operational oversight of the Core Policing functions of the RCMP in Alberta. He was dedicated to building trust and confidence with the communities served by the RCMP, and he focused his efforts on community engagement and collaborative partnerships with community groups, stakeholders and other law enforcement, particularly in the areas of rural crime and race relations. As the Criminal Operations Officer, John also established a dedicated Sexual Assault Review Unit to provide oversight and support to RCMP investigators, and to develop and implement initiatives that led to better quality police investigations and more compassionate and respectful care for victims.

John holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario and he is a member of the Police Order of Merit. John has also been awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond and Platinum Jubilee Medals, and the RCMP Long Service medal. John and his wife Debra have three children and four grandchildren.

Gabrielle Betts- Vice President

Dr. Gabrielle Betts has a PhD in Political Science from Carleton University, an MA and BA in Political Science from the University of Alberta, and holds a Project Management Professional designation. She has dedicated her career and community involvement to contributing to positive social change.

Gabrielle brings over 15 years of experience developing and leading teams with diverse portfolios and expansive accountabilities in the ministries of Health, Community Services, Education, and Status of Women with the Government of Alberta and the departments of Employee Services and City Operations at the City of Edmonton. Currently, she is the Executive Director of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for the Alberta Recycling Management Authority (ARMA). In this role, Gabrielle is responsible for shaping and leading the implementation of EPR oversight in Alberta. This important recycling framework shifts the physical and financial burden of collecting, sorting, processing, and recycling waste to the producer and away from local governments and taxpayers.

One of the highlights of Gabrielle's career was her role with Alberta Status of Women as Director of the Violence Prevention Against Women and Girls where she led a team to plan and implement the Government of Alberta's Commitment to Preventing and Addressing Sexual Violence (the Commitment) which included a Premier's Proclamation of May as Sexual Violence Awareness Month. The Commitment brought together community-based organizations and ten government ministries for the first time to deliver a coordinated, province-wide response to sexual violence in Alberta to support survivors, improve the institutional response, and shift the culture of consent by advancing gender equality.

In the community, Gabrielle has been incredibly proud of her role on the Board of Directors for the Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services, and has previously served on the Board of Directors for Sage Seniors Association and REACH Edmonton.

Thorna Lawrence- Treasurer

Thorna Lawrence was appointed to the Board in March 2021 and serves as the Board's Treasurer. Thorna has extensive consulting and business systems experience in Alberta's private sector and has specialized in business analysis and strategic management and consulting, working for Alberta's technology and energy sectors. She operates T.L. Lawrence Consulting, serving in consulting roles at Trimac Transportation, Pason Systems, Teck Coal, and Deloitte Touche, among other companies. She holds a degree in Economics from the University of Calgary and a Chartered Professional Accountant, Chartered Accountant designation from the Chartered Professional Accountants of Alberta.

A strong supporter of volunteer initiatives, Thorna served as Chair of the Calgary Communities Against Sexual Abuse Board for fifteen years and as both Treasurer and Board Member with the United Way of Calgary and Area. She served as Board Member of the Alberta Liquor Gaming and Cannabis Commission for a six-year term, chairing the Audit and IT Committees. She holds a Directors designation from the Institute of Corporate Directors. She recently received the Queen's Jubilee Medal in recognition of her volunteer contributions to AASAS.

Linda McCracken- Secretary

Linda McCracken has served as an AASAS Board Member since 2018. After forty-seven years of nursing practice, Linda retired in June 2020. Most of those years of practice were within the emergency care sector here in Alberta. With a full certificate in Forensic Studies from Mount Royal University and having served as a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner with the Calgary Sexual Assault Response Team, Linda gleaned a clearer understanding on the importance of practicing trauma and violence informed care. Beginning in 2001, Linda developed and championed healthcare provider training (live and on-line) across the province on universal assessment and response for survivors.

In 2007 Linda became the Domestic Violence Program Coordinator for Alberta Health Services (AHS) – Calgary Zone. Within this role she served as a consultant for frontline staff and various AHS clinical policy/procedures and guideline domestic violence (DV) working groups. A key accomplishment was being asked by the AHS Workplace Health & Safety Prevention of Harassment & Violence Program to be the subject matter expert in the development of a provincial guideline on addressing 'DV in the Workplace'. In advocating for a 'disclosure-friendly', 'worker-driven' safe work environment, Linda formulated a workplace Domestic Violence Individualized Safety Plan tool for managers and workers to complete together to support preventative measures/protections.

On a more personal note, Linda is enjoying her retirement by travelling and spending time with her young granddaughter.

Kellie Cummings

Kellie's passion to work with people living with trauma began at an early age. Her spark was ignited when she became the babysitter for a foster family in Northern Alberta. Since then, Kellie pursued her education in Early Childhood Development, received her Rehabilitation Practitioner Diploma, immersed herself with gaining experience and extensive training focusing on family violence, sexual violence, risk assessment, risk management along with providing specialized case management for women and children who have been impacted by all forms of abuse and traumatic events. Kellie has been working within the vulnerable sector for over 20 years and has dedicated the last 16 years working directly with people of all ages impacted by intimate partner violence, abuse, sexual violence, oppression, homelessness and or complex trauma.

Kellie is currently the Director of Partnerships and Relations for Central Alberta Child Advocacy Centre located in Red Deer. She specializes in gender specific violence, sits on a multidisciplinary team, and is recognized as a leader, innovator, and pioneer within this field. Kellie has witnessed firsthand how individuals, families and their communities are affected by family violence, sexual violence, and child abuse. As a survivor of intimate partner violence, she is a strong advocate for raising awareness and public education while helping survivors on their journey of a renewed life. If Kellie is not speaking at events or conferences, you will find her sitting on numerous social justice committees within Central Alberta.

Brad Cunningham

Brad moved to Peavine Metis Settlement with his family when he was 11 years old. Brad is married has 5 children and 2 grandchildren. Brad, his brother and a few cousins spoke up about Sexual Violence in 2009. They decided to press charges and went through the court system in 2010. Brad and the guys started a men's healing group with the help and assistance from the High Prairie RCMP and Sexual Assault Center based out of Grande Prairie. (PACE).

Brad became a board member with the Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services (AASAS) in 2012. Today AASAS has 15 centers across Alberta that provide support and services for Victims of Sexual Violence.

Brad is now travelling across Alberta to share his past as a Victim and how he has learned to speak up, educate and build awareness about Sexual Violence.

With the love and support from his wife and children Brad wants to empower Victims to speak up, gain confidence, build strength to reach out and utilize the supports and services that are available so that we can all live healthier happier lives.

"This is all about the babies, what are we doing today, tomorrow to know that our babies will live free from harm and violence"

Brenda Murdoch

Brenda Murdoch is a recently retired Senior Constable from the Calgary Police Service. She has worked in various units including the Domestic Violence Unit with CONNECT Family & Sexual Abuse Network, the Diversity Resource Team and the collaborative resource centre for the homeless. Brenda has presented on sexual assault, domestic violence, cultural diversity and the homeless as well as Animal Abuse and the Link to Violent Criminal Behavior.

Brenda is a Certified Forensic and Composite Sketch Artist who worked with victims of sexual assault and other violent crimes, successfully creating images of offenders resulting in numerous identifications, charges and convictions.

Brenda holds a BSc. in Zoology from the University of Calgary. Prior to policing, she worked at the Chief Medical Examiner's Office assisting with sudden death investigations and she has worked as a manager for the Calgary Health Region. She lives with her husband Mike in Cochrane with their rescued wiener dog Krystal and they love to travel.