

# CAIU: ALL IN!

## CAIU: ENGAGED IN ADVOCACY



### Did You Know?

ANDRIA SAIA

While the Capital Area Intermediate Unit as an organization does not have a political position, there are times when we engage with our political representatives. Over the years we have given testimony on topics of debate, hosted our representatives to engage in discussion with our superintendents, and on occasion, we advocate for political action to be taken.

Recently, we asked all staff, and the families of our Early Intervention students to engage in advocacy over the issue of budget shortfalls for Early Intervention and educational programming for students in Loysville YDC. Two of our parents shared the following responses:

“Thanks so much for your email and your support. I am a strong supporter of early intervention programs to help students like Rose — and I will continue this support. As a homeschool graduate and parent myself, I can also relate to the challenges you face in providing an education to your children — it’s not an easy job! When it comes time to craft and pass the budget next month for the rest of the fiscal year, I’ll be thinking about Rose and the many children like her who rely on the early intervention program. All my best, Andrew Lewis, Pennsylvania State Representative, 105th Legislative District”

“Thank you for writing me about fully funding early intervention services in the 2020-21 state budget. I appreciate the great work of the Capital Area Intermediate Unit and its program specialists that serve the growth and development of children across Dauphin and Perry Counties. As you may know, the General Assembly approved an interim five month budget in May in response to uncertainty around the actual state tax revenue collections given the massive economic disruption associated with COVID-19. . . I understand the importance of these programs for our children and young families and with the pandemic having interfered with education over this past year, now more than ever Pennsylvania must commit to ensuring children are able to get back on track with their schooling and learning needs. Again, thanks for contacting me. Sincerely, John DiSanto, State Senator, District 15”

Thank you to all staff and our families for their advocacy efforts!

### In this Issue:



Kristen Schreiber, OT, has devised a way to make her role as an itinerant more fun! All of her supplies are in “Marty” which she wheels from school to school. It’s been a team project during Covid 19!



Autism Support Halloween Fun - Miss Julia Kepler’s at Carroll Elementary engaged in a traditional Halloween activity. The messier the hands, the better the pumpkins!

Do you have a story for *ALL IN*?  
Do you know a member of the CAIU family we should recognize? Please send all stories and ideas to [communications@caiu.org](mailto:communications@caiu.org)

Topic	Page
Did You Know?	1
CAIU	2
Director’s Message	2
Student Services	3
Tech Services	4
Educational Services	5
Business Services	6
HR & Communications	6
CAIU Compliments	7
CAIU Wellness	7
News of Note	8
Opportunities	8
Help Wanted	8

We’re on social media!

@CapitalAreaIU

### IN THIS ISSUE

DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE

WELLNESS: MINDFULNESS

COMPLIMENTS

CAIU: BIAS IN HIRING PRACTICES

RENNIE GIBSON, AMI HEALY, MEGAN HARVEY

Diversity in our workplace is important! It makes us smarter, more innovative, and promotes better critical thinking.

So why do many organizations lack diversity? Many assume with the increasing diversity and other cultural changes and focus that discrimination has declined over time, in contrary, hiring discrimination is actually on the rise.

What is Hiring discrimination?

Hiring discrimination happens when a job applicant is treated unfavorably because of their race, skin color, national origin, gender, disability, religion, or age.

Even among well-intended employers, bias and discrimination may lurk in our hiring decisions and processes. Changes in process and diversity initiatives alone are not going to remedy the lack of equal representation in companies.

No one is pre-loaded with inclusive behaviors. We are hard-wired to align with people like us and reject those who we consider different. We all need to reflect on and address our own personal discrimination/biases, and in this specific case, those that are making final hiring decisions as they may end up inadvertently weeding out qualified candidates from underrepresented backgrounds because of bias.

Undoing these behaviors requires moving from a fixed mindset — the belief that we’re already doing the best we possibly can to build diverse teams — to one of openness and growth, where we can deeply understand, challenge, and confront our personal biases.



**Are Hidden Biases Affecting Who the CAIU Hires?**  
Although we all are not directly involved in the hiring process, we all are part of the CAIU team and play a role in actively promoting diversity and equity. It is our responsibility to hold ourselves and each other accountable.

Here are some specific strategies to Reduce Hiring Bias

- **Build awareness around hiring bias.** Recognize and accept that **YOU** have biases, especially affinity bias. Hold ourselves and each other accountable and work towards finding a solution to eliminate it.
- **Blind the resume review process.** Remove unconscious bias by “blinding” out the candidate’s name, age and other potentially discriminating information from the resumes **before** reviewing them.
- **Standardize the interviews.** Implement a standard interview format with set questions and post-interview debrief to ensure all assessors follow the same framework when assessing and ranking candidates.
- **Watch out for bias toward likeability.** Familiarity is comfortable. GET OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE! Likeability is NOT an indicator of job performance. *Structured interviews and a diverse hiring panel help eliminate hiring a candidate based on a likeability bias.*
- **Implement a collaborative hiring process.** Diversity attracts diversity. Include as many different people, with differing backgrounds and differing worldviews as you can. Refrain from comparing notes and debriefing verbally with the interview team until after you have formed your own point of view of the candidate.
- **Acknowledge confirmation bias.** Confirmation bias is the tendency we all have to seek out information that supports our preconceived notion about someone or something. Acknowledge that confirmation bias exists and conduct your interview only to get acquainted with the candidates, but assess them via a skills test or an on the job interview.
- **Think about diversity/inclusivity goals.** Reduce hiring bias and increase diversity by setting apparent team and organizational goals and actively work towards them. Define what you want to achieve. Market to your candidates that the CAIU is actively working towards being a diverse employer and encourage diverse candidates to apply. **Whatever you want to achieve, clarify it and share it widely.**
- **Vary where you advertise.** Diversify the recruitment process and campaign. Look for different job boards. Change the search parameters to include potential candidates on LinkedIn who may not possess all of the specific job

Message from the Executive Director



ANDRIA SAIA

Recently I have begun baking. Not just throwing a box of brownie mix in a pan, but actual follow-a-recipe-from-scratch baking. Baking has always been a bit scary me. It’s so easy to have it go disastrously, all effort wasted. So, I just didn’t bake - until now. And I want to tell you something I have learned. Baking is a perfect metaphor for life. Even life during COVID.

You would think that “if you follow the recipe, you will get exactly what you expect.” Not so with baking. Baking is nothing short of chaos. It means taking not only the recipe and ingredients into consideration, but all the elements: Too much/not enough, moisture/resting/rising/baking, the humidity in the air, the cycle of the moon, what color you are wearing that day – I swear it all matters. ☺



What happens when a recipe didn’t work? I learned about the elements and tried again. Or tried another recipe.



I think Life is much the same. Every day the elements change. What worked yesterday may not work tomorrow. We learn and

adapt and overcome. Sometimes, despite our best efforts, the dough doesn’t rise and the only thing to do is try a new recipe.

How do you know if it worked or not? Not until the end when you get to taste it. In the last month or so, I have made some things that didn’t look perfect, but tasted great. I strive for both looking and tasting great, but given a choice I think tasting great is better than looking great. I think this translates to two life lessons. One, just like my baking, you cannot improve without feedback. Seek it out for the gift that it is. Second life lesson: “it is what’s on the inside the counts.” No matter how rough and ready, or refined and elegant our exteriors, what we bring to the table from the inside is what matters.

Good baking requires great ingredients for the best results. Like in baking, don’t skimp on the good stuff – offer up your best self. Even if you think they don’t deserve it. Just like our favorite recipes, have balance in the sweet to your salty, and softness to your crunchier, harder moments.

Finally, in baking – more than any other kind of cooking – you must honor the process. There is no rushing it. You can try and cheat the process, but your end result will suffer. Life is much the same. Life takes time. There are short cuts, but ultimately we learn so much more if we appreciate the experiences along the way.

What are you baking for yourself and others today?

Want to read more?:  
<https://www.thedailypositive.com/baking-the-cake-of-life-recipe-for-success/>



skill sets, but who possess strong transferable skills. Target university and college jobs boards that you would normally shy away from.

In summary, the first and foremost thing we can do is **recognize and accept that YOU have personal biases**. All of us need to ask ourselves: *Where could bias show up in my decisions and actions today?* And then, **Increase and Build Awareness!** It is important that we all spend some time **building our personal awareness by reading and learning about the experience of underrepresented communities**. Not only will it help you uncover the biases you’re bringing to your personal and professional life, which could include important decisions such as hiring, it will also equip you with the framework and language to recognize and call out any bias in others and in your company’s processes.

**Resources:**  
<https://hbr.org/2019/06/how-to-reduce-personal-bias-when-hiring>  
<https://hbr.org/2017/10/hiring-discrimination-against-black-americans-hasnt-declined-in-25-years>  
[https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how\\_diversity\\_makes\\_us\\_smarter](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_diversity_makes_us_smarter)

**Increase and Build Awareness by Reading and Learning:**

- [So You Want to Talk About Race](#) by Ijeoma Oluo
- [White Fragility](#) by Robin DiAngelo
- [What Works](#) by Iris Bohnet
- Harvard Business Review’s [“Women at Work”](#) podcast

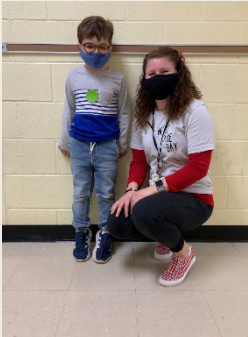
When you know better...  
You do better  
- Maya Angelou

# Student Services

ALICIA MCDONALD

## Blind and Vision Support Services

October was Blindness and Visual Impairment Awareness Month and moreover, October 15th was White Cane Awareness Day. Both were celebrated in Nolan Deitrich’s kindergarten class at Upper Dauphin Elementary School on Thursday, October 15th, 2020. Autumn Booths, Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI) at the CAIU worked with



Nolan to plan a classroom presentation to raise awareness about visual impairment and blindness. Nolan was proud to speak to his peers about his vision needs and why he has to do some things differently than his peers. Nolan is a dual-media learner - he learns through both print and braille. Nolan explained that it is hard to see the small papers in class, so he uses larger papers, which help make reading print easier. He also explained to his peers that when he leaves the classroom, he is going to work with Miss Autumn to learn more braille. Ms. Booths and the CAIU appreciate Nolan’s help in raising awareness for those with blindness and visual impairments.

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## Variety - the Children’s Charity

The CAIU hosted another socially distanced, outdoor, adaptive bike, stroller, and iPad presentation on Wednesday, November 4th.

“I’m thrilled to share that as of September 30, **nearly 190** adaptive bikes, adaptive strollers, and communication devices have been presented to eligible kids

from Cumberland, Dauphin, and Perry Counties (**worth \$300,000 in equipment** provided by Variety) – something we should all feel very excited and proud about hearing!

The CAIU team has truly helped us to reach these kids and their families to gift them with life-changing equipment (at no cost to the IU or school district).

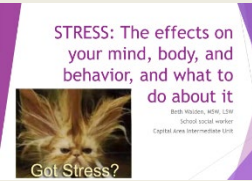
Thank you for your support and commitment to make Variety’s programs possible. I’m excited about the impact our partnership will have during this school year!”~ Charles P. LaVallee, Chief Executive Officer Variety – the Children’s Charity

## ELECT

During the Covid pandemic, the ELECT program is connecting with our students in group settings, virtually via zoom. Each month we offer bi-weekly group meetings, hosting guest speakers, sharing their wisdom and expertise. This month, ELECT invited ELECT alumna, Cheyenne, to share the story of her journey as a teen mom, a high school graduate, and her post-high school success. Our current ELECT teens related to the struggles Cheyenne shared and were inspired by the success Cheyenne has achieved. Cheyenne showed incredible maturity when she shared her thoughts about co-parenting, relating everything back to the impact words and behavior will have on her children.

As much as our students received from this incredible zoom event, ELECT staff were also impacted by the reminder that what we do matters. Words of encouragement, academic support, and life skills education can change the outcome to what may have seemed a desperate situation. The “Never Give Up” mindset of the ELECT Case Manager was instilled in Cheyenne and changed the trajectory of her life to the betterment of herself, her family, and her community

## Social Work



The Pennsylvania Office of Administration’s Infrastructure and Economic Development HR Delivery Center kicked off their inaugural session of the “Personal Development Learning Series” with a presentation on Stress Management from our very own Beth Walden, MSW, LSW. Beth provided insights to stress management for adults as well shared her own experiences and advice. She also participated in an employee-led panel discussion. Over 400 people attended Beth’s presentation!





**Volunteer Educational Surrogate Program**

CAIU works to find and train volunteers to participate in the Volunteer Educational Surrogate Program. An educational surrogate parent is a person designated to assume responsibility in matters relating to the identification, evaluation, and educational placement for students with disabilities who are considered unaccompanied.

This year’s training program was virtual. There are monthly check-ins between CAIU and the volunteers. Each volunteer signs on for the academic year. This is a great opportunity for retired teachers! To learn more visit <https://bit.ly/3jFj1W0>. For more information about this program contact Meg Taylor-Makuch, [mtmakuch@caiu.org](mailto:mtmakuch@caiu.org)



**Early Intervention**

EI Safety Care recertifications have been completed this year due to the creativity and flexibility of trainers Sarah Hancock, Jamie Gordon, Lara Borne and Michelle Straw. These trainers truly pivoted and created a new way to complete this annual recertification with EI staff that involved virtual re-training and safe and distanced in-person portions of the requirements. One of the trainings occurred outside the week of November 2nd. Hats off to our trainers as well as to our EI staff for continually adapting to pandemic challenges and making things work!



kindness” (close-up link pictured), where Hill Top students all created links with their planned acts of kindness.

**Hill Top Academy**

With October being designated as National Bullying Prevention month, Hill Top staff and students participated in several spirit week events to celebrate and raise awareness. Pictured is Health and PE teacher Cheryl Park “putting bullying to bed” with a group of elementary and secondary students wearing their pajamas to school and Hill Top staff wearing Orange to celebrate “Unity day” on October 23<sup>rd</sup>! In the background of the Unity Day picture you can see Hill Top’s orange “chain of

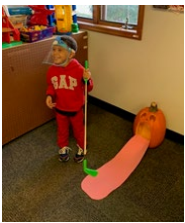
**EI Communication Group Pumpkin Golf!**

EI speech/language impaired students who are enrolled in a communication group at the Delbrook site worked on their speech production skills in a very



motivating activity - Pumpkin Golf! Students in this group have challenges with planning and carrying out the movements necessary to produce speech, so speech pathologists Debbie Klair and Nina Meanor are always planning activities to incorporate lots of practice opportunities with fun and engagement. Students during this activity were practicing using “core” or functional, common vocabulary in short sentences as they played their best round of golf! Fore!

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**Tech Services**

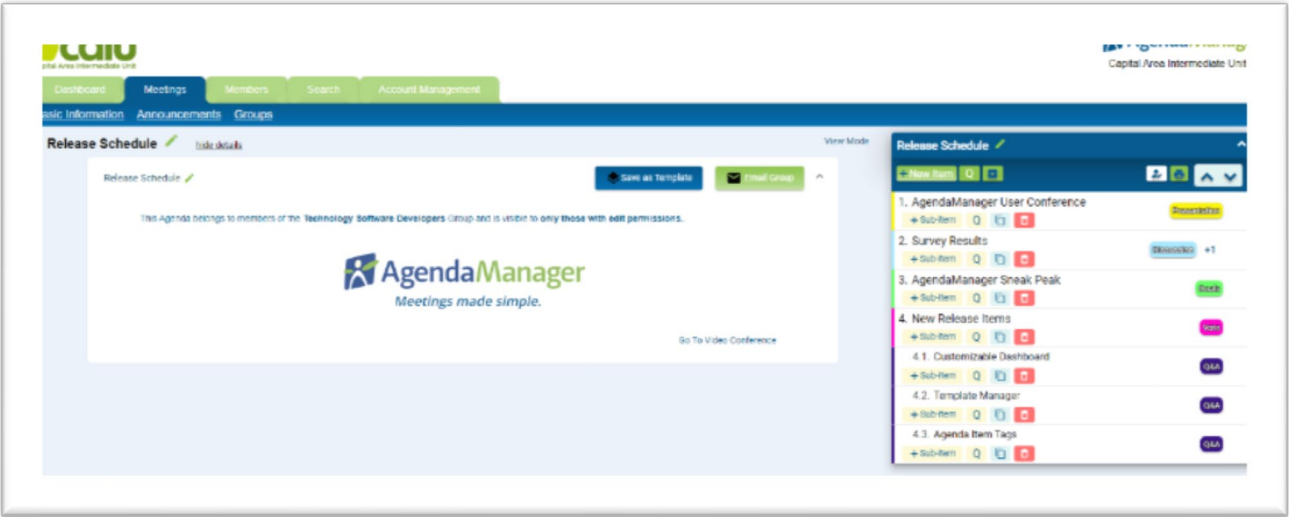


DAVE MARTIN

**AgendaManager – Ready, Set, Launch!**

Meetings. When they are run efficiently, things get accomplished. When they are not, people leave feeling frustrated. Just Google “how to run effective meetings” and you will see how many books have been written on this topic. What makes the difference? Planning, communication and an effective agenda. That is where AgendaManager steps in and helps districts embrace best practices.

For the last ten years AgendaManager has served as a tool for districts, IUs and other clients to create effective agendas and easily share information. And word is getting out. AgendaManager is now in five states including Washington, Wisconsin, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. AgendaManager started as a web-based meeting management solution, but now assists schools in running effective meetings. Sharing best practices and aligning the AgendaManager application to these practices has been an integral part of making a district successful. To continue this progress, AgendaManager is expanding its social media presence and is implementing a significant upgrade to its platform in early 2021!



On October 21, 2020, AgendaManager held its second annual user conference, to give users a sneak peek at the new interface. Over 90 people registered from 46 different districts and service agencies. The first part of the conference was a training on meeting best practices, delivered by our staff member Rocky Brent, along with staff from CESA 7, our partner service agency in Wisconsin. The second half of the conference focused on showing a preview of the upcoming release, receiving feedback from the attendees, and getting their input on future development. The CAIU staff was enthusiastic about the feedback it received during the conference and in the post-event survey. One hundred percent of the attendees rated the updates to AgendaManager as excellent (68%) or satisfied (32%). The upgraded technology in this new release empowers the AgendaManager development team to rapidly deploy enhancements to the application as requested by the user community.

It is a very exciting time for AgendaManager, its current users, and the future AgendaManager community! Rocky Brent – Account Manager

## Tech Tip of the Month



### Browsing the Internet does not have to be hard

Did you know you can make your life a lot easier when browsing the web? There are some easy navigation tips that you can adopt today. Once you use one or two of these tips to navigate the web, they will start to become natural and will start to improve your efficiency over time. Then you can try to incorporate more and more of them into your daily web surfing. Then you will be able to browse like a professional.

#### Navigation tips:

1. Use the “spacebar” or “page down” button to scroll down the website one page at a time. Use the “shift” and “spacebar” or “page up” button to move back up a page at a time.
  2. You can search a webpage by pressing “ctrl” and “f”. This will cause a box to pop up in the top right of the screen. In this box type what you are looking for and it will take you to what you desire.
  3. If you press “ctrl” and “w” this will automatically close the window that you are on.
  4. If you press “ctrl” and “n” this will open a new tab in your Chrome browser.
  5. You can press “ctrl” and “shift” and “t”, this will open previously closed tabs in your Chrome Browser.
  6. If a webpage ever fails to load you can press “f5” and this will automatically refresh the page.
- Written by -- Nathan Evans – Student Intern

## Educational Services



### BRIAN GRIFFITH

#### Become a Social Emotional Learning Champion for your District this school year!

CAIU has partnered with Shippensburg University to offer a Safe and Supportive Schools Professional Development series this year. The series began in the first week of November and will continue monthly through April.



The response to our series has been so terrific that we will have divided 16 four-person teams into two cohorts. These cohorts will meet twice monthly via Zoom from November to April to develop plans for implementing SEL in their schools and districts. Options for Act 48, Act 45, and even graduate credit will be available. Through this cohort experience, participants will...

- Understand the importance and impact of social and emotional learning (SEL)
- Engage in SEL foundational learning opportunities to foster awareness, shared commitment and shared ownership
- Strengthen adult competence and capacity for promoting and modeling SEL
- Be able to describe what SEL looks like in practice providing examples of explicit SEL instruction, and academic integration
- Utilize research and evidence-based frameworks, resources, and strategies to guide implementation planning and development
- Lead school-based teams through a process for systemic, coherent SEL implementation that ultimately improves the school's culture and climate

#### Arts in Education

CAIU is a partner organization of the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (PCA) for the Arts in Education (AIE) program. AIE is dedicated to ensuring that public and non-public schools, community agencies, and businesses are provided with opportunities for quality

arts education services. The AIE Partnership enables artists to help others explore and develop their creativity and artistic skills in a variety of educational, community, and institutional settings. Teachers/agencies select and collaborate with qualified artists who spend at least 10 days (but 20 is preferred) in a school or agency conducting artist residencies. Residencies integrate the arts into a teacher’s core curriculum, or provide customized experiences that celebrate memories for people 55 years old and older.

Currently, the CAIU is working with several schools and agencies on putting residencies together to share the love of art with their students. With COVID-19 changing the way residencies look, our teaching artists are going above and beyond to continue to share their passion with our schools and communities. Our Teaching Artist, Rand Whipple, for example, is working with Cornwall-Lebanon School District’s virtual academy on incorporating digital story-book telling and stop-motion animation from their computers at home! Look for more information about Artist Residencies and how you can have a residency at your school or classroom at [www.aiecaiu.org](http://www.aiecaiu.org).

#### Training and Consultation Team Update

The CAIU Training and Consultation (TaC) team’s educational consultants have been very busy this fall, developing new professional development and learning opportunities within several virtual network offerings.



These networks are forums of various state-directed initiatives for educators to synchronously learn new concepts and strategies and grow professionally with support from the CAIU TaC consultants.

Many of the networks also provide ongoing supports through newsletters, social media groups, recorded sessions, asynchronous courses, and consultative services. These CAIU networks include *Special Education Teachers Network*, *Unique Learning Systems (ULS) Professional Learning Community (PLC)*, *AAC and the SLP*, *Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Network*, *CAIU Reading Network*, and *Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) Learning and Networking Series*.

If you want to learn more or are interested in participating in any of these networks, please contact Ami Healy, CAIU TaC Supervisor, at [ahealy@caiu.org](mailto:ahealy@caiu.org) for information.



Business Services



DAREN MORAN



For many years the Champions for Children Committee has been organizing the annual giving tree. This is an event that was started before most of us started working at the IU and is continuing to grow each year. For the new employees of the IU, this is an event that you can participate in many different ways.

If you are part of the education staff and provide services to a student in need, please look through your IU email to find out how to submit a request for one of your students. If you are in a position where you have resources to help with a student’s needs, please look for an email coming up that the tickets are available.

In the last few years the giving tree has gone to a virtual format which means you don’t even have to make a trip to the Enola office to pull a tag off of the tree. Virtual tags are created and posted on line before Thanksgiving. CAIU employees anonymously purchase the gifts for our students in need. The gifts are collected and distributed to families before the December break.

Gifts must be purchased, wrapped and delivered to the Front Desk in Enola (with the gift number written on the outside of the package) **no later than December 15th** so that the gifts can be sorted and delivered on December 16, 17, 18th.

Please note: The Giving Tree makes every effort to include all CAIU students. Special considerations can be included on the request form and winter themed wrapping paper can be selected for non-Christian participants.

A lot of work is done behind the scenes by our giving tree committee comprised of Geri Schaffer, Lisa Smiley, Judy Zemanek and Becky Boone.

A big shout out to all the hard work they do to pull off this wonderful event.



HR & COMMUNICATIONS



TOM CALVECCHIO

Open Enrollment:

Submit your **Insurance Coverage Election** form to HR at [openenrollment@caiu.org](mailto:openenrollment@caiu.org) no later than **November 30, 2020**

\*Do not interoffice mail or drop form off

Please do not submit a Insurance Coverage Election Form unless you have changes to make or must certify coverage for a spouse

HSA contribution amounts can be changed via the Employee Self-Serve Portal, otherwise they will remain the same

\*Information only valid for the 2021 Open Enrollment period

Open Enrollment Guide

Insurance Election Form

HSA Advantage Direct Guide

Employer Certification (Spouse)

Dependent Care FSA (WageWorks)

Dear CAIU Staff-The CAIU Open Enrollment window is here!

This is your annual opportunity to make benefit election changes for yourself and your family. Please check your CAIU email to access the open enrollment video and accompanying forms. We will be accepting change forms at: [openenrollment@caiu.org](mailto:openenrollment@caiu.org)

The window for Open Enrollment will close on 11/30/2020.



**Kudos to you!** As you are aware, the HR office tracks clearances for staff at the CAIU. During the spring, many locations were closed due to COVID-19, making renewals challenging. We are happy to report that since March; 178 employees have successfully renewed their clearances! Any questions about clearances can be directed to [jneusbaum@caiu.org](mailto:jneusbaum@caiu.org)

Communications

The Communications Team has had their hands in a variety of CAIU projects and events this fall.



**Take Action:** CAIU regularly participates in advocacy efforts, but this year’s endeavors demanded a more organized and strategic approach. The 2020-2021 PA state budget did not fully fund Early Intervention Services (preschool special education) and educational funding for Loysville Youth Development Center School. The budget only approved funding for these services through November 30, 2020.

For greater impact, the Communications Team organized and created a webpage dedicated to advocacy efforts with easy to use resources and tools. Additionally, the team assisted in efforts to create public awareness through multiple communication channels including a press release, media interviews, and social media campaigns. To learn more and provide support, visit [www.caiu.org/takeaction](http://www.caiu.org/takeaction).



**American Education Week, November 16 - 20:** Each year, the National Education Association (NEA) promotes a full-week of celebration to spotlight public education. Known as American Education Week, CAIU celebrates, recognizes, and appreciates all of the people on our staff and in our partnership who work hard each and every day to provide our region’s children with outstanding educations. This year, our partner school districts, student families, support staff, CAIU educators, and substitutes will receive praises of “thanks” in the form of cards, letters, door prize opportunities and/or surprise videos.

# CAIU Compliments

## CAIU STAFF IN ACTION



Sembach

**Jesse Killinger** - Sending a shout out to our wonderful Hill Top Academy custodian, Jesse Killinger. Your diligent cleaning and sanitizing of our school are greatly appreciated. You are key in keeping us all healthy and safe, and you do it all with a smile and a friendly word. ~ Paula



**Irene Reedy**- I wanted to take a moment to let you know what an asset Irene has been to the Ready for School Ready to Succeed program. She stepped right into the role and built a collaborative relationship with Kimberly Istvan, the manager for the Ready for School program. Together, they have moved the program forward in leaps and bounds. Irene has not been afraid to address uncomfortable situations, make suggestions for improvement, implement changes and adapt when needed. She represents the CAIU well and in turn allows the Ready for School program to successfully serve the families in our communities. We value her professionalism and her relationship with Kimberly, the education liaisons, and the school district representatives. It's always nice to hear about the great things our employees do and this was worth noting. ~ Stefani McAuliffe, Vice President of Community Impact – United Way of the Capital Region

#begreat  
#changinglives



**Dr. Andy McCrea**, Assistant Director of Student Services - Dr. Andy McCrea was a phenomenal support to us in the CCA Special Education Department over the last month or so. He was very responsive and helped communicate to the districts to help get records transferred so students could receive services. He also really went above and beyond in helping us with incoming K students transitioning from EI programs by connecting us to all the statewide point of contacts again, all in the name of service to students and stakeholders. Thank you for providing responsive resources to us and focusing on supporting student access. ~ Michelle Orcutt | Associate Vice President of Special Education Commonwealth Charter Academy



**Amy Hazel** - Amy is too legit to quit! She is awesome and amazing and everything in between. Since I began with the Ed Services team, Amy has helped me through so much with understanding marketing, digital design and more. Her guidance has been a crucial part in the work I exhibit today. She's always open to setting up a meeting or even a pop in to talk with her. Now as the AIE Coordinator she has been a wonderful mentor and I can't thank her enough for all of the support she provides. ~ Beth Cappello, Special Projects Coordinator



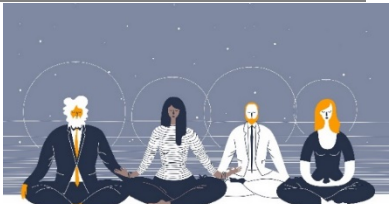
**Autumn Booths** - I just wanted to write to you about one of your employees, Autumn Booths. She comes into my classroom 2 times each week to work with one of my students. I am so impressed with her and her interactions with my student as well as my other students. She is phenomenal. I'm especially writing about an event that happened yesterday. She presented to my entire class on my students' disability and did an incredible job. She had a fun activity to help them understand Braille and shared all kinds of resources with them. I've told her how much I appreciate all she is doing, but I know how much it means when your supervisor tells you you're doing a great job. My hope is that you will share with her what an incredible asset she is to the IU team." ~Lisa

# CAIU Wellness

## RENNIE GIBSON

### The Benefits of Mindfulness and Meditation

Mindfulness is the practice of purposely focusing your attention on the present moment while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations, used as a therapeutic technique. **Mindfulness has been scientifically proven to have tremendous health benefits and is a key element in stress reduction and overall happiness.**



**Mindfulness improves well-being.** Being mindful makes it easier to savor the pleasures in life as they occur, helps you become fully engaged in activities, and creates a greater capacity to deal with adverse events. Many who practice mindfulness have found that they worry less about the future or regrets of the past. In addition, they are less preoccupied with self-esteem issues and are better able to form deep connections with others.

**Mindfulness improves physical health.** Scientists have discovered that mindfulness can: help relieve stress, treat heart disease, lower blood pressure, reduce chronic pain, improve sleep, and alleviate gastrointestinal difficulties.

**Mindfulness improves mental health.** Mindfulness meditation is an important element in the treatment of a number of problems, including: depression, substance abuse, eating disorders, couples' conflicts, anxiety disorders, and obsessive-compulsive disorder.

**How does Mindfulness and Meditation work?** There are many ways to practice mindfulness, but the goal of any mindfulness technique is to achieve a state of alert, focused relaxation by deliberately paying attention to thoughts and sensations without judgment. This allows the mind to refocus on the present moment. All mindfulness techniques are a form of meditation.

**Go with the flow.** In mindfulness meditation, once you establish concentration, you observe the flow of inner thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations without judging them as good or bad.

**Pay attention.** You also notice external sensations such as sounds, sights, and touch that make up your moment-to-moment experience. The challenge is not to latch onto a particular idea, emotion, or sensation, or to get caught in thinking about the past or the future. Be aware of what comes and goes in your mind and which ones produce a feeling of well-being or suffering.

**Stay with it.** At first it will be difficult and may not seem relaxing. Over time, with practice, you will become more comfortable and will find that meditation provides a key to greater happiness and self-awareness.

### Here are a couple techniques:

- **Basic mindfulness meditation** – Sit quietly and focus on your natural breathing or on a word or “mantra” that you repeat silently. Allow thoughts to come and go without judgment and return to your focus on breath or mantra.
- **Emotions** – Allow emotions to be present without judgment. Practice a steady and relaxed naming of emotions: “joy,” “anger,” “frustration.” Accept the presence of the emotions without judgment and let them go.
- **Urge surfing** – Cope with cravings (for addictive substances or behaviors) and allow them to pass. Notice how your body feels as the craving enters. Replace the wish for the craving to go away with the certain knowledge that it will subside.

**Practice acceptance** - *Above all, mindfulness practice involves accepting whatever arises in your awareness at each moment. It involves being kind and forgiving toward yourself.* Gently redirect. If your mind wanders into planning, daydreaming, or criticism, notice where it has gone and **gently redirect** it to sensations in the present. You will find that it becomes easier to accept whatever comes your way during the rest of your day.

**Want more help with mindfulness, stress relief:**  
<https://www.helpguide.org/harvard/benefits-of-mindfulness.htm>  
[Relaxation Techniques for Stress Relief](#)  
[How to Stop Worrying](#)





- American Education Week – November 16-20, 2020
- Children’s Grief Awareness – November 19, 2020
- Special Education Day – December 2, 2020
- Hour of Code Week – December 7-11, 2020
- Annual Giving Tree Event. Please help us make this year one of our best. See the following link for more details.

[2020 CAIU Annual Giving Tree](#)

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

The best project you will ever work on is you! Take some time to explore all the ways there are to grow – personally and professionally.

**Here are just a few upcoming sessions:**

- Frontline Training Videos
- All Staff Day Service Projects
- Diversity & Equity 101 – Session 2 & 3
- Fall Professional Learning Series
- Equity Networking Session
- CAIU Reading Network

*“Change is inevitable, but transformation is by conscious choice.” ~ Heather Ash Amara*

Log into [Frontline](#) for the complete list of upcoming **Professional Development Opportunities**.



For instructions on how to register, please see our website [HERE](#)

## Help Wanted!

Do you want to know what positions are open at the CAIU? Below is a list and a link to our application portal.

Paraprofessional

- 12 – EPP
- 2 – Job Coach
- 2 – PCA

Professional

- 2 Speech Therapists
- 6 – Teacher



Support Staff

- 2 – Program Secretary
- 1 – Learning Management Solutions Analyst

Link to CAIU Job Search:

<https://www.applitrack.com/caiu/onlineapp/>

Know someone looking – please share!

"The only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking. Don't settle." - Steve Jobs

Do you have a story for *ALL IN!*? Do you know a member of the CAIU family we should recognize? Please send all stories and ideas to [communications@caiu.org](mailto:communications@caiu.org)

To our Veterans,  
THANK YOU for your service and sacrifice!

