



New Mexico Children,  
Youth & Families Department

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:** Melody Wells, Public Information Officer  
Phone Number: (505) 470-3417

## **New CYFD Task Force Members Announced**

*The Child Protective Services Task Force Includes Behavioral and Physical Health Experts, Foster Parents, Kinship Caregivers and Guardians*

Santa Fe – The Children, Youth & Families Department Cabinet Secretary Brian Blalock has announced the members of a Child Protective Services Task Force that will work directly with CYFD leadership to research and make recommendations for positive changes to the Department.

The Task Force comes out of House Joint Memorial 10, which was introduced and approved during last year’s Legislative Session. The Joint Memorial created a Child Protective Services Task Force that is charged with making “recommendations to improve the safety and well-being of children and youth in the care of child protective services, as well as improving recruitment, retention and support for the resource parents who care for children in foster care.”

Secretary Blalock praised the new Task Force as “a good way for us to meet with stakeholders to get new ideas and to increase transparency about what we are doing to improve CYFD.” He said the Task Force is part of a significant positive change effort led by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham guided by “a renewed investment in state government’s responsiveness and cooperation” with stakeholders and the public.

The Child Protective Services Task Force will begin meeting in November 2019 and has until October 2020 to make its initial report.

Members named to the new task force applied and were chosen by Secretary Blalock, guided by the recommendations in the Joint Memorial. HJM-10 Task Force Members include:

- Mariana Padilla, Director of the Children’s Cabinet
- Katrina Hotrum-Lopez, Cabinet Secretary for the Department of Aging and Long-Term Services
- Truman Clark, who brings experience as a young person involved with CYFD
- Bette Fleishman, Executive Director of Pegasus Legal Services for Children and Member of the Children’s Court Improvement Commission
- Roslynn Gallegos, a Licensed Behavioral Health Professional
- Destiny Garzes, who brings experience as a young person involved with CYFD
- Hon. Petra Jimenez-Maes, (Ret. NMSC)
- Ashley Keiler-Green, a Licensed Physical Health Expert
- State Senator Linda Lopez, who is also a guardian
- Emily Martin, a CYFD Employee
- Jolene Martinez, who brings expertise in youth homelessness
- Pamela Michaels, who brings expertise in working with LGBTQAI young people and families

- Veronica Montano-Pilch, Executive Director of New Mexico Kids Matter
- David Montoya, who brings expertise in the Indian Child Welfare Act
- Kalonji Mwanza, a licensed social worker who brings expertise and historical CYFD knowledge
- Carmen Prince-Morris, who brings experience as a foster parent
- Veronica Ray Krupnik, who serves as a Court Appointed Special Advocate and also brings lived experience as a young person who was involved with CYFD
- William Romero, a CYFD employee
- Joanna Rubi, who brings experience as a foster parent
- Lieutenant Nick Sanders of the Albuquerque Police Department
- Donalyn Sarracino, CYFD's Tribal Liaison
- Carri Shook, who brings experience as a foster parent and expertise in working with LGBTQAI young people and families
- Ezra Spitzer, Executive Director of NMCAN (New Mexico Child Advocacy Network)
- Margaret Villegas, who brings experience as a young person involved with CYFD
- Desiree Wheeler, who brings experience as a young person involved with CYFD
- Jane Yohalem, who brings expertise in family reunification

###