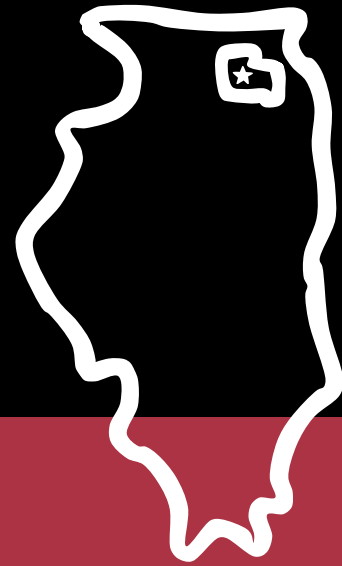




# THE CHRONICLE

## CAREGIVER CONNECTIONS



★ SDA 4: Kane & DuPage



### AGENCY OVERVIEW

Kane County Health Department

**Primary Functions:** Established in 1985, the Kane County Health Department provides an extensive range of public health programs. We are dedicated to ongoing evaluation of the community's health, ensuring the availability and accessibility of essential programs and services for its residents. Moreover, KCHD actively engages in strategic planning and seamless implementation of public education initiatives while upholding and enforcing public health laws.

**Agency Mission:** Our mission is to promote, protect, and advocate for health and wellness in the community.

**Departments & Staff:** The Kane County Health Department (KCHD) is divided into four divisions: Community Health (which includes I/ECMH), Environmental Health, Epidemiology and Data, and Emergency Preparedness.

**History & Impact:** KCHD launched the IRIS System in March of 2021 with 66 local organizations during the height of the pandemic. This free, web-based communication tool created by the University of Kansas helps organizations connect the families they serve to the right resources in the community, providing transparency to the organizations and a closed loop for referrals, ensuring follow-up. Today, the Kane County IRIS community has representation from 170 local community programs including mental health & psychiatry, primary care, dental, early childhood services, K-12 education, park district programs, adult & juvenile probation, parenting resources, substance abuse services, employment resources, immigration and legal services, emergency shelter, and basic needs (food & clothing), and more. IRIS allows Kane County organizations to uniquely address the needs of our residents and coordinate referrals to services that can provide assistance.



# CONSULTANT CORNER



Shannon  
Keating

**Time in This Role:** 1.5 years

**Previous Experience:** I have worked as a Child Welfare Specialist for DCFS and a Child Development Specialist at Mutual Ground, a domestic and sexual violence agency.

**Recent Challenge:** A challenge I battle regularly is my health. I have Fibromyalgia, Hypothyroidism, Eosinophilic Esophagitis and severe food allergies. I have a decent grip on it all but I have my flare ups.

**Advice For My Younger Self:** You either voluntarily do self-care or your body will shut down and force it.

**Hobbies:** I love to craft! My most recent favorites are machine embroidery and epoxy tumblers but things change! I also love indoor plants and outdoor gardening, walking my pup Rosie and cuddling my cat Cali.

**Favorite Vacation Destination:** I went on an Alaskan Cruise for my honeymoon. The views were outstanding, I hiked a glacier and the cruise accommodated my allergies!

**Childhood Dream Job:** I love Outer Space and in a very cliché way, I wanted to be an astronaut.

**Bucket List Item:** In the next six months I would like to get a tattoo around my arm that is the design that was on my Grandmother's dishware.

## SUPERVISOR SPOTLIGHT

Lorena Nunez



**Time in CC Supervisor Role:** 3 Months

**Previous Experience:** Throughout my career, I've had the privilege of collaborating with families and parents during the crucial stages of infancy and early childhood. My role has been to offer valuable support and education, assisting them in gracefully navigating the intricate journey of parenting and nurturing their children's growth and development.

**Daily Duties:** In my capacity as the Early Childhood Programs Manager, I have the honor of supervising both the Early Childhood Mental Health grant and the All Our Kids Early Childhood (AOK) grant. My responsibilities encompass providing essential support to the ECMHC and AOK teams, managing budgets, reports, and related administrative tasks. Additionally, I serve as the AOK Coordinator, facilitating collaboration meetings that convene approximately 50 partners across various sectors. A core aspect of my role involves actively promoting parental engagement within this collaborative effort.

**Childhood Dream Job:** From an early age, I aspired to become a Marriage and Family Therapist, influenced by observing my mother's dedicated work with refugee and immigrant families. Witnessing her efforts in providing shelter, and food, and connecting them with essential resources to help these families rebuild their lives in a new country deeply impacted me. Through these experiences, I gained insight into how a child's environment, experiences, and parenting styles could shape their lives positively or adversely. These encounters made me realize the transformative potential that lies in arming parents with the necessary tools to navigate their own challenges, both within their partnerships and in their lives at large.



**Support Strategies:** As a new supervisor to Susan and Shannon, I'm fully engaged in an ongoing learning process to understand the optimal ways to support them. I make it a priority to set aside dedicated time each month to create a safe and attentive environment, where we can openly discuss ongoing matters and extend the support needed for their success.

**Bucket List:** Road trips hold a special place in my childhood memories, and now, as a parent, I'm eager to create similar cherished experiences for my 1.5-year-old by taking him on his first road trip. Additionally, I'm looking forward to introducing him to the wonders of hiking for the very first time.

**Hobbies:** In my free time, I go to the gym to lift weights or do a yoga class and enjoy listening to true crime podcasts.

# CONSULTANT CORNER

Susan Mrazek



**Previous Experience:** I have worked in child care environments with teachers, children, and families since 2008 when I lived in Hawaii. There, my team and I worked in rural, predominantly Native Hawaiian communities and had the privilege of incorporating a lot of cultural traditional practices into our support of families and providers. Those experiences strongly impacted how I show up as a consultant today.

**Beloved Resources:** I often listen to and share with providers the podcasts- Unruffled by Janet Lansbury; Your Parenting Mojo; Good Inside with Dr. Becky, Affect Autism, and A More Beautiful Life. I often refer to the Zero to Three website, Child Mind Institute, Georgetown Center of Excellence and ICDL.

**Favorite vacation destination:** I absolutely love traveling to New York City. I have been about 4 or 5 times and there is always something new to explore, eat, drink, learn and experience. I love the energy of Manhattan and checking out the outer boroughs with each of their unique cultures and vibes. I haven't been since before the pandemic and would love to go again soon!

**Advice For My Younger Self:** I think it's critical to practice self care in this work. It took a few years for me to see my work holistically and to put a lot of effort into balancing my energy and exercising boundaries. I love the Jeree Pawl quote, "I am always available when I'm available." It has helped me to understand the importance of being there when I'm there and honoring that I can't always be there.

**Hobbies:** I love practicing yoga and reading or listening to grounding meditations or messages in the morning. I enjoy both cooking and baking and hosting dinner parties. I love catching up with friends over dinner or drinks and trying new restaurants in Chicago and the suburbs.

## NEXT PLANNING AHEAD

Enjoy the start to the holiday season!

Holiday Celebration: December 15th 1-2:30pm

Next Quarterly: January 9-10th (virtual)

Quarterly Report Due: January 9th

