

Heather McNeill



I'm Heather McNeill, a PAIMI Advisory Council (PAC) member serving since June of 2014. I am a single mother to two children, ages 13 and 7. I'm a writer, editor, and proofreader, and I volunteer in our local public school system in North Central Kentucky. I have firsthand knowledge and experience with mental health issues in various realms. I started working with people whom have mental health illnesses in my teacher education courses at Western Kentucky University in 1996. I obtained my Bachelor's degree in English and Allied Language Arts in 1998 with secondary education teaching certification. As part of my teacher education training and field work, I took various psychology and mental development courses and applied that knowledge to my own classroom when I started teaching in 1999. I worked closely with staff, administration, parents, and students in accommodating and integrating students with mental disabilities and illnesses into my classroom. I was an advocate for the students struggling in school with mental illnesses and helped them cope with their illnesses in an educational environment ensuring success of the student with the goal of helping them better adjust to the demands of education mentally, socially, and emotionally. I later accepted a Social Insurance Claims Representative position with the Federal Government, working for the Social Security Administration with a workload of nearly 80% of my claims being disability claims. I worked closely with claimants and the Disability Determination Service whom process those claims to properly document signs, symptoms, diagnoses, and medical evidence, serving as a voice for children and adults whom are disabled mentally, physically, or both. I joined the PAIMI Council to continue to act as a voice for children and adults alike with mental illnesses in whatever way I can serve. I have met with legislators and shared my personal testimony with others in hopes that my knowledge and experience will educate, support, and encourage those affected by mental health conditions, regardless of the extent of his or her personal connection to mental illness, and to inform those with a voice in government, enabling them to make informed decisions regarding the causes he or she will take a stand for in government regarding mental illness legislation. I continue to serve the public integrating my knowledge and experience while serving as an Advisory Council member for a Family Resource Center (FRC) in our local public school system, in which we reach out to students and their families regarding whatever needs they may have, including but not limited to mental health issues.