

# Parental Alienation International

Advancing worldwide understanding in the field of parental alienation

# pasg

Parental Alienation Study Group

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*The Wishing Tree.* Targeted parents who participated in the Stockholm PASG Conference or the London EAPAP Conference honored their alienated children with a leaf named for each child, August 2018. See page 12.

## Editorial

### **Building on Success**

“RESOUNDING SUCCESS” would be two words that capture each of the recent international conferences on parental alienation.

In Stockholm, the well-attended second international conference of PASG covered some of the latest thinking in parental alienation from the world’s leading experts. Participants and presenters traveled many miles and from many countries to engage in serious, insightful dialogue on this topic.

Just a few days later, the European Association of Parental Alienation Practitioners held its second conference focused on professional development and practice concerning parental alienation for the countries of Europe, filling a conference hall in the center of London. You’ll find accounts of both of these events in this issue.

I came away from these four days of the highest caliber presentations and discussions with the view that parental alienation is on the path to be recognized as a clear violation of children’s rights as the efforts continue to inform mental health practitioners and the legal community. The mental health-legal “interlock” represents a powerful way to prevent and remedy PA.

With these conferences, and a third conference in Oslo, Norway, now past, we continue working to relieve the suffering of those who experience parental alienation. In this issue, Dr. William Bernet discusses the urgent need to submit comments and research to an APA Working Group to Review Scientific Literature for High Conflict Family Relationships with Child Involvement. Please take a moment from your busy schedules to lend your voice!

Also in this issue, you’ll read about an ambitious fundraising campaign to support and extend PASG’s efforts. And you’ll see that preparations are beginning for the third international PASG conference in Toronto, Canada in 2019. We will publish more information about the conference as plans develop.

*Louis M. Pilla*

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## Events

### **PASG Members Participate in Recent and Upcoming Events**

Parental alienation is frequently a topic at national and international conferences for psychologists, psychiatrists, psychiatric nurses, social workers, and other mental health and legal professionals. Many PASG members participate and make presentations regarding parental alienation at these events. If you know about an upcoming event involving parental alienation and/or PASG, please contact [louispkop@gmail.com](mailto:louispkop@gmail.com).

#### **Parental Alienation... Family Violence Lost in the FOG**

*Hobart, Tasmania, Australia*

*October 17-19, 2018*

This conference is being organized by PASG members Amanda Sillars and Mandy Matthewson. Presenters include PASG members Demosthenes Lorandos and Randy Rand. More information: [www.parentalalienation.org.au](http://www.parentalalienation.org.au)

#### **American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law Annual Meeting**

*Austin, Texas*

*October 25-28, 2018*

PASG President William Bernet is attending – please let him know if you will be there. More information at <http://aapl.org/>.

#### **International Conference on Shared Parenting 2018**

*Strasbourg, France*

*November 22-23, 2018*

The theme of this conference will be “Shared Parenting, Social Justice and Children’s Rights.” PASG member Edward Kruk is a featured speaker.

#### **Biennial Conference of the International Academy of Law and Mental Health**

*Rome, Italy*

*July 21-27, 2019*

PASG members are encouraged to submit proposals regarding parental alienation for this meeting. More information at [www.ialmh.org](http://www.ialmh.org)



### **You can earn money for PASG effortlessly.**

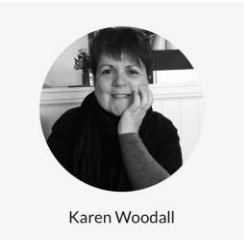
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## Interventions

### Turning Points for Families

#### A therapeutic “vacation” with Linda J. Gottlieb, LMFT, LCSW-R

By Karen Woodall, Family Separation Clinic, London, UK;  
[Karen.woodall@familyseparationclinic.co.uk](mailto:Karen.woodall@familyseparationclinic.co.uk)



LINDA GOTTLIEB’S WORK IS GOLD STANDARD in therapeutic reunification of children and families affected by parental alienation. Her Turning Points for Families program offers a unique intervention which is based upon the marriage between family systems therapy and psychological education. What is powerful about this program is the immediate restoration of the family hierarchy and the placing of the child in the rightful place in relationship to the formerly rejected parent.

As in all successful work with alienated children, Turning Points for Families uses the counterintuitive strategy of confronting the psychologically split state of mind at the outset of the intervention. This summer I was fortunate enough to observe Linda at the PASG Conference in Stockholm walking us through the framework of the intervention she uses in Turning Points.

As Linda pointed out to us during her live case study, her first correction of the family hierarchy comes when she validates the formerly rejected parent’s role in the child’s life by handing them the power to make decisions about a child’s requests during therapy sessions. This placing of the child in the correct place in the family hierarchy, rather than overempowering the child by requiring the rejected parent to seek forgiveness or placate the child, is one of the most powerful healing actions a therapist can take in treating parental alienation. Watching Linda and then hearing her speak at length about her work and her training with Salvador Minuchin at the EAPAP Conference in London a few days later underlined to me that her work sets the worldwide standards of intervention to which all practitioners in this field should aspire.

#### **Revolutionary restoration**

In light of the recent era of shifting toward empowering children of divorce and separation to greater decision making roles, the idea of restoring the family hierarchy and ensuring that children have their place within that is revolutionary. Yet it is the foundation of what Minuchin taught in his work in family therapy. The principles of family therapy are: experience rather than insight produces change; the here and now rather than the subjective interpretation of the past is what creates dynamic shifts; and the family system rather than the individual is where the problem is located.

Linda’s work, however, adapts Family Therapy to fit the way that parental alienation works in a family and uses the counterintuitive approach to create rapid shifts in healing the damaged parent/child relationship. Linda identifies that element of Family Therapy which requires adaptation when she speaks of personality disordered parents and demonstrates that these are parents who require containment and restriction of their damaging behaviors.



All of this comes together to produce an intervention in which the child is swiftly restored to a healthy relationship with the previously rejected parent, using a four-day vacation as the basis to “jump start,” as Linda calls it, the restoration of the healthy relationship bonds.

Observing the way that Linda identifies power and control issues and uses herself as therapeutic guide to change the manner in which the child has been used to holding the reins of control in the family is a powerful learning experience. Not many therapists are able to use immediacy and strength of character to bring corrections to the family system in this way. And yet as Linda told us in London “Sal[vador Minuchin] would never have allowed that to happen.” (That is, a child being disrespectful to a parent.) “He would always have corrected it.”

**Listening to this made me realize that the interventions we need in this emerging scientific field are already here, they are already used and they are already making huge changes in children’s lives.**

Listening to this made me realize that the interventions we need in this emerging scientific field are already here, they are already used and they are already making huge changes in children’s lives. Learning from the gold standard practitioners in this field is the most urgent task for all of us who do this work. ■

#### **Submit An Article to PAI**

We welcome submissions to the newsletter, including news, case studies, pilot studies, literature reviews, announcements, research, research studies or proposals, advocacy, publicity, promotion, and requests for support or funding. Send your idea for an article to the [Editor in Chief](#) or the Editor in your region.

## Feature Articles

### **Experts Gather in Stockholm for Second International PASG Conference**



Participants outside the conference venue on the second day of the PASG conference.

STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN hosted a vibrant gathering of parental alienation experts at the Second International Conference of the Parental Alienation Study Group. The two-day conference, August 24-25, included presentations and discussions from the top authorities in parental alienation. There were 20 presenters and panelists from 12 countries. Some 80 people attended the conference, with more than 30 other attendees viewing the event via video streaming.

Held at two venues on the island of Skeppsholmen, topics ranged across the mental health and legal spectrums. The conference's international flavor was apparent with the presenters including experts from Romania, Scotland, Slovenia, Spain, Germany, England, and the United States.

Videos of the presentations have been posted on the [PASG YouTube channel](#). Power Points of most of the presentations have been posted in the Documents Archive of the PASG website.

Many thanks to Lena Hellblom Sjögren for serving as chairperson of the PASG2018 Program Committee. The success of the conference was due in no small measure to her significant efforts. ■



Attendees at the first day of the conference, held in The Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm.

## European Association of Parental Alienation Practitioners Holds Second Annual Conference

### Two-day event focused on legal and mental health interlock

*By Nick Woodall, Family Separation Clinic, London, England*



THE SECOND ANNUAL CONFERENCE of the European Association of Parental Alienation Practitioners (EAPAP) was held on 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018 at the Cavendish Centre in London, England. The theme of the conference was the legal and mental health interlock that is necessary to promote successful resolution in cases of parental alienation.

Described by Sir Paul Coleridge, former High Court Judge in the UK and Chair of Marriage Foundation, as a conference with gold standard presentations, the two-day event featured many of the world's leading authorities on parental alienation. The event was attended by more than 200 delegates over the two days and, whilst the conference was focused on the situation in Europe, delegates also travelled from as far afield as Hong Kong, New Zealand and the USA to attend.

Attendees included magistrates, judges, lawyers, psychotherapists, psychologists, mediators and family support workers. The conference was also attended by a group of parent representatives who formed a parent panel to give their views throughout the interactive event.

#### **Drawing together**

The purpose of the conference was to draw together the practitioners who work in the internationally recognized models which are shown to be successful in treatment of parental alienation. The conference heard from 18 experts in the field with the first day focusing on the legal and the second day focusing on the mental health aspects of the issue. Karen Woodall from the Family Separation Clinic in London introduced the standards of practice which will govern the work of the new European Association of Parental Alienation Practitioners. These were endorsed by the Conference and by Sir Coleridge in his closing speech.

These include a commitment to families to provide services that are clear and explicit in how the needs of children and rejected parents are recognized and met, that are demonstrated to deliver the key standards of the organization, that deliver specialized treatment routes that are provided as a plan of work prior to intervention, that implement an intervention to prevent child abuse where necessary, and that prioritize the restoration of the relationship between child and parent.

Speaking about the launch of internationally recognized standards of practice, Karen Woodall acknowledged the work of Wilfrid von Boch-Galhau, Ursula Kodjoe, Walter Andritzky and Peter Koeppe, pioneers in parental alienation awareness-raising who organized the first international conference on PA in Germany in 2002. Recognizing that the standards of practice advocated by EAPAP have been in existence for almost two decades, Karen spoke of the need to build upon the work which has already been done to establish the reality of parental alienation as child abuse.

In addition to key European practitioners such as Gordana Buljan Flander, Judge Lana Peto Kujundžić and Vlatka Boričević Maršanić from Croatia, Simona Maria Vlădică from Romania, Sietska Djistra from the Netherlands, and Francesca Wiley QC, Andrea Watts, Victoria Green, Hamish Cameron and Nick Woodall from the United Kingdom, the conference heard from North American speakers including Amy J. L. Baker, Brian Ludmer, Bill Bernet, Steven G. Miller, Jennifer Jill Harman, Eric J. Green, Linda Gottlieb and Leilani Sinclair.

The European Association of Parental Alienation Practitioners will open for membership later in 2018 and the steering committee will meet in Strasbourg in November to further develop the work of the new organization.

Presentations, slides, photographs and film from the two day event will be hosted on the website for EAPAP at [www.eapap.eu](http://www.eapap.eu). Information about membership in EAPAP can be obtained from [office@eapap.eu](mailto:office@eapap.eu). ■

# Strategies and Manifestations

Participants in the Stockholm and London conferences climbed stairs to the presentation halls marked by Richard Gardner's eight child behaviors that are manifestations of parental alienation plus Amy Baker's 17 strategies used by parents to alienate a child.

In Stockholm, Xiaojie Zheng, an artist and member of PASG (pictured at left), labeled each step in the rustic staircase of the Swedish schoolhouse which was the venue for the conference. In London, she gave the steps of the sophisticated Cavendish Conference Center the same artistic treatment. The numerous steps, tramped over and over each day by every participant, sent an evocative message about the struggles that unite and challenge all parents and professionals dealing with parental alienation. They reminded all of conferences' mission and of the steep path ahead for everyone concerned with this terrible problem.



# The Wishing Tree



*The Wishing Tree* was designed by Xiaojie Zheng as a traveling accompaniment to the Stockholm and London conferences. Xiaojie explained that, "The branches come out of a heart which is connected to the tree trunk, with the tree roots spreading out under ground."

Each targeted parent at the conferences was invited to write the name of each of their children on a single leaf, and then attach the leaves to a branch of the tree. Says Xiaojie, "I want all targeted parents and alienated children to be aware that they are not alone. By visually adding more leaves to help the tree grow, we connect with each other and ground ourselves to fight the devastating suffering of parental alienation."



*The Wishing Tree* was a highly moving, inspirational and hopeful addition to both conferences, enabling mothers and fathers to acknowledge love for each of their children by name. Every conference participant had an opportunity to visit the tree, see each child's name and honor the loving fight that parents are making the world over to regain relationships with their children.

## Board of Directors Report from Stockholm

### Topics included funding, PASG 2018 and Board personnel changes.

*By William Bernet, M.D., President, Parental Alienation Study Group*

THE PASG BOARD OF DIRECTORS met in Stockholm, Sweden, on August 25, 2018, which coincided with PASG2018, the Second International Conference of Parental Alienation Study Group. The meeting was attended by two officers (President William Bernet and Treasurer Demosthenes Lorandos), three members of the board (Amy J. L. Baker, Wilfrid von Boch-Galhau, and Lena Hellblom Sjögren) and three guests (Louis Pilla, managing editor of *Parental Alienation International*; Judith Pilla, chair of Committee for Public and Professional Accountability; and Alice Berkowitz). The highlights of the meeting are summarized here.

**Membership.** Demosthenes Lorandos reported that PASG now has almost 500 members from 50 countries. He said that during January to July 2018, PASG members contributed about \$500 in unrestricted funds to the organization. Those funds are used for day-to-day operations such as the maintenance of the website and the Parental Alienation Database. As of July 31, 2018, our unrestricted funds amounted to \$3,774.

**PASG2018.** Lena Hellblom Sjögren gave a preliminary report regarding PASG2018, which had just concluded. At the conference, there were 20 presenters and panelists from 12 countries. Videos of the presentations will be posted on the PASG YouTube channel; Power Points of the presentations will be posted in the Documents Archive of the PASG website. Dr. Hellblom Sjögren thanked Mr. Tom Janssen, the chairperson of the PASG Technology Committee, for managing the IT aspects of the conference.

**Board changes.** The Board was informed that Abe Worenklein has resigned from the role of secretary and Demosthenes Lorandos has resigned from the role of treasurer. Alice Berkowitz was nominated for the position of secretary; Phillip Hendrix was nominated for the position of treasurer. After discussion, the Board unanimously elected those individuals for their respective offices.

William Bernet recommended and made a motion that the Board of Directors increase the membership of the board from four to six individuals. Dr. Bernet further nominated Abe Worenklein and Demosthenes Lorandos for the two additional seats on the Board of Directors. After discussion, the Board unanimously approved the motion and elected Dr. Worenklein and Dr. Lorandos to the Board of Directors.

The next meeting of the PASG Board of Directors will occur in January 2019. ■

## Influence the American Psychological Association Regarding Parental Alienation

**Submit your comments and research during this limited timeframe.**

*By William Bernet, M.D., President, Parental Alienation Study Group*



MOST PASG MEMBERS WILL RECALL that about two years ago there was a campaign to ask the American Psychological Association (APA) to study parental alienation. Dr. Craig Childress submitted a proposal to the APA suggesting that they create a commission to address the problem of parental alienation and related topics. Dr. Childress encouraged his colleagues and followers to endorse his proposal, and I believe that hundreds (and perhaps a thousand) individuals followed his lead.

Recently, as a result of that campaign, the APA created the Working Group to Review Scientific Literature for High Conflict Family Relationships with Child Involvement. The Working Group announced a method for submitting comments, references, and documents, which is available to APA members as well as nonmembers. Go to <http://www.apa.org/practice/leadership/bpa/family-conflict.aspx> and read about the Working Group, its membership, and its method for addressing the topic of parental alienation. Note that they are not simply studying parental alienation, but also the broader topic of how children are affected by high conflict family relationships.

Visit the Working Group's website and then submit your comments and pertinent documents. At a minimum, you can say that parental alienation is a very important issue for many families.

If you have conducted research that was published in a peer-reviewed journal, send a copy to the Working Group. The group is not interested in articles that simply express a person's opinions, even expert opinions; they want to see qualitative and quantitative research. If you have published peer-reviewed research in languages other than English, send it to the Working Group along with a summary in English. However, do not send the Working Group personal information or accounts of your own family situation; they will not review or retain that type of information.

I have heard that the Call for Input will only be open for 60 days, so this is the time to take action. If you have questions, contact me at [william.bernet@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:william.bernet@vanderbilt.edu). ■

## **PASG Launches Annual Fundraising Campaign – With a Twist**

**Gain recognition by donating over \$100 by December 31 and help reach the \$10,000 goal.**

MEMBERSHIP IN PASG IS FREE. There is no cost for members to post information on [www.pasg.info](http://www.pasg.info) regarding your books and websites, to post opinions on the Forum and to network with 500 PASG members from more than 50 countries.

However, PASG requires funding to run various operations. Each year we conduct a fundraising campaign. We use the unrestricted funds to manage our website, support the annual international conference, and pay administrative fees related to our status as a nonprofit corporation.

We have also received donations intended for specific purposes, such as funding five grants for PASG members to conduct research regarding parental alienation. We have received another important donation, which is funding the development of a significant new book, *Parental Alienation: Science and Law*, to be published in 2019.

This year we will express our appreciation by recognizing members who donate \$100 or more. That is, we will acknowledge your donation in the January 2019 issue of *PAI* (unless you tell us not to). Make your donation by December 31, 2018 to be recognized in that manner. Several PASG have already donated more than \$100 during 2018.

What's more, for the first time, we are setting a specific goal, which is to reach \$10,000 by the end of December. Since we have 500 members, that comes to about \$20 per person. Please help us to reach our goal!

### **How to donate**

You can donate to PASG in two ways. The first is to use the “Make a Donation” button on the PASG website. That takes you to PayPal, where you can use your credit card to send funds to PASG. Some members donate automatically every month through PayPal. The advantages of using PayPal are that (1) it is easy to do and (2) it accepts currencies from almost every country. The only disadvantage is that PayPal deducts a small fee for every transaction.

The second way is to write a check to Parental Alienation Study Group and mail it to the following address:

William Bernet, M.D.  
President, Parental Alienation Study Group  
1313 Twenty-first Avenue South  
209 Oxford House  
Nashville, TN 37232 United States of America

If you have questions, contact me at [william.bernet@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:william.bernet@vanderbilt.edu). ■

## Planning Begins for PASG2019 Conference in Toronto, Canada

**Meeting will be open more widely to mental health and legal professionals who are not members of PASG.**

*By William Bernet, M.D., President, Parental Alienation Study Group*



HAVING COMPLETED A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL PASG2018 in August, the Board of Directors of PASG is moving ahead with planning for PASG2019.

Each year, the scope and audience of the international conferences have increased.

PASG2017 (Washington, DC) was intentionally restricted to members of PASG; all the presenters, of course, were members of PASG. PASG2018 (Stockholm, Sweden) was open to the general public,

especially mental health and legal professionals; almost all the presenters and panelist members were members of PASG.

The plan for PASG2019, which will occur in Toronto, Canada, is to open the program more widely to mental health and legal professionals who are not members of PASG. We want to see these conferences become the international forum for individuals who are interested in developing and promoting research on the causes, evaluation, prevention, and treatment of parental alienation. The dates for PASG2019 have not yet been determined.

The chairperson of the Program Committee for PASG2019 is Brian Ludmer, B.Comm., L.L.B., an attorney in Toronto. Brian is experienced in dealing with complex family law cases involving parental alienation. He was one of the authors of *The High-Conflict Custody Battle: Protect Yourself and Your Kids from a Toxic Divorce, False Accusations, and Parental Alienation*. He was a co-founder of Lawyers for Equal Shared Parenting, an advocacy group, and co-drafter of Bill C-560, the proposal to amend Canada's divorce legislation to bring in a rebuttable presumption of equal shared parenting.

We need your help to plan and orchestrate PASG2019. Contact Brian at [brian@ludmerlaw.com](mailto:brian@ludmerlaw.com). If you want to make a presentation at PASG2019, start putting your ideas on paper. Prospective presenters will be asked to submit written abstracts to the Program Committee, which will review the submissions and create the schedule for PASG2019. ■

## **About the Parental Alienation Study Group (PASG)**

### **Mailing address**

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### **Who Are We?**

Parental Alienation Study Group, Inc. (PASG) is an international, not-for-profit corporation. PASG has over 500 members – mostly mental health and legal professionals – from 51 countries. The members of PASG are interested in educating the general public, mental health clinicians, forensic practitioners, attorneys, and judges regarding parental alienation. PASG members are also interested in developing and promoting research on the causes, evaluation, and treatment of parental alienation.

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**Format:** Submit manuscript as a Word file (.doc, .docx ) as an email attachment.

**Style:** news, case studies, pilot studies, literature reviews, announcements, research, research studies or proposals, advocacy, publicity, promotion, requests for support or funding.

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**Editorial Policy:** PASG seeks to lead and promote the scholarly discussion and debate concerning Parental Alienation practice, research, education and advocacy to promote development of informed practice and policy in this field.

Articles may be subject to editing. Authors will be consulted and will be sent their final article for proofing and approval prior to publication.

The editorial team may solicit information and articles for publication and will

appropriately consult contributors about the article to be prepared based upon their contribution.

Contributors may submit articles or links to articles that are already published or considered elsewhere. It is the responsibility of contributors to obtain the necessary permission where required to submit their article to *Parental Alienation International* and to appropriately acknowledge prior publication.

The PASG retains the final decision of the suitability of articles and which articles are selected for publication in *Parental Alienation International*.

### **Advertising and Editorial**

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