



## **PCCYFS 2020 Annual Conference**

**Keynote for September 1, 2020**

**Dr. Lark Eshleman**

Lark Eshleman, PhD, is Executive Director of the About Child Trauma Foundation, an education and research non-profit teaching about and researching the short- and long-term effects of early emotional trauma, and the power of building resilience in our youngest population. She is a former school librarian, elementary school principal, and school psychologist, and is a Doctor of Psychology, specializing in child development, attachment, and developmental trauma.

Dr. Lark is on a select committee of the Pennsylvania Department of Education to shape the criteria for required trauma trainings in PA schools, is a special consultant to the State of Delaware's foster care system, among other training and consultation work. In 2003 she wrote one of the first books on attachment trauma related to adoption – ***Becoming a Family: Promoting healthy attachments with your adopted child*** -- and writes for Fostering Families Magazine, among other magazines and journals. Most recently she and Jane Gordon, Art Therapist, created and published a “coloring in pairs” coloring book – ***Color Me Closer*** – which helps bring people emotionally closer through partner and select content coloring.

She offers workshops and trainings for schools, parents, and professionals, also bringing insights to international audiences, including adoptive families in India, professionals in Singapore, and communities in Eastern Europe. Her groundbreaking group work with children of war in Croatia has been transformed into a group treatment model called “Traumatized Children: Building Trust. An innovative program for mental health professionals who work with children and families.”

Her passion is learning and teaching about the critical nature of healthy beginnings for our youngest Loved Ones. Her very favorite role in life is with her family.



## **PCCYFS 2020 Annual Conference**

### **Keynote for September 2, 2020**

### **Ilonka Deaton**

At age 12, Ilonka won a national singing competition in South Africa that landed her a recording deal. She was excited by the birth of her career and the prospects thereof, but her music manager had something different in mind. Shortly after her first album release that same year, Ilonka's manager brutally assaulted her and threatened to kill her and her family if she spoke a word.

For the next 5 years, he held her in a sexual slavery bondage while selling her likeness and performances to big casino CEO's and conglomerates. Ilonka was finally rescued at age 17 when an undercover police officer saw her manager physically attacking her in a Johannesburg casino. The manager went on the run and was finally found and arrested in 2012.

Silenced by the secrets she was forced to keep for years, Ilonka fled to the United State to pursue a fresh start in the music industry. Bound by the nightmares of her past, Ilonka suffered debilitating bouts of depression and attempted suicide. This landed her in a psychiatric hospital. Three short months after her attempt, she was invited with her now husband and music producer, Bill Deaton, to attend a church. Faced with the realization that she needed healing, Ilonka cried out to God for help.

She is now rescued, redeemed and set free, and is a healthy, full of life, complete woman in Jesus Christ. She encourages individuals that no matter how hard your story is, you can have victory over it and have a full and hopeful life. She advocates the healing process of counseling for individuals who have been sexually abused in any way and speaks words of life into their lives. Her inspiring message is one of victorious life, freedom, tears, laughter, and hope for any wounded heart.

Her appearances fund her own organization, Ilonka Ministries Clinic, based in Nashville, which provides free counseling for hurting women. Ilonka joined film maker Jaco Booyens, of After Eden Pictures, in a heroic film called "8Days" about human trafficking, where she also wrote and performed one of the title theme songs called "8Days." Her husband, Bill Deaton, wrote and produced the music score for the film. Ilonka uses her voice to give other victims a voice and a chance of seeing hope again.