



THE
CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER
OF NIAGARA

Working Hand in Hand for Children



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Message from the Executive Director

It has been a busy and eventful few months at the Child Advocacy Center of Niagara as we work to help child victims of violence and their families.

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight a long standing effort of the Child Advocacy Center, Child Fatality Prevention. We are pleased to announce enhancements to our efforts as a result of grant funding from the Office of Children and Family Services and the Niagara County Department of Social Services (DSS).

Since 1998, the CAC has spearheaded, in coordination with law enforcement, DSS, the district attorney's office and other community service providers an effort to conduct a multidisciplinary team review of all sudden, unexpected child fatalities in Niagara County. The team has reviewed over 100 child deaths in order to develop an understanding of the factors involved so that we may prevent future fatalities.

Across the country, an average of 5 children die each day as a result of child abuse and neglect. The tragedy of children dying has impacted our Niagara County community as well. In 2010, we experienced the traumatic sudden death of at least 9 children. We wish that these deaths could have been prevented. No parent should have to experience the grief of losing a child.

To meet this goal, Kim Proch has joined the Child Advocacy Center team as our Child Fatality Review Team (CFRT) Coordinator. Grant funding will allow us to conduct a more timely and thorough review of child fatalities in order to identify the specific risk factors and needs in our community. It will also allow us to develop specific prevention and intervention efforts, provide regional training, and improve public awareness on issues related to child safety.

We will feature a "Child Fatality Prevention Corner" in each news letter and on our website. This section of the newsletter will highlight a particular issue surrounding child safety. As summer is fast approaching, despite our current cold rainy weather, we will highlight water safety this quarter. We are also available to come to your organization, school, church, or community group to address issues of child safety.

We also welcome Emily Foschio, as our new Education and Outreach Coordinator. Emily comes to the Child Advocacy Center with a background in public communications, and has been involved with the public relations efforts of several non-profit organizations in the Buffalo area. Emily will be taking over the responsibilities formerly held by Lisa Lannon. I would like to welcome Emily to our team, as well as thank Lisa for helping tremendously during the transition and in the training of our new staff!

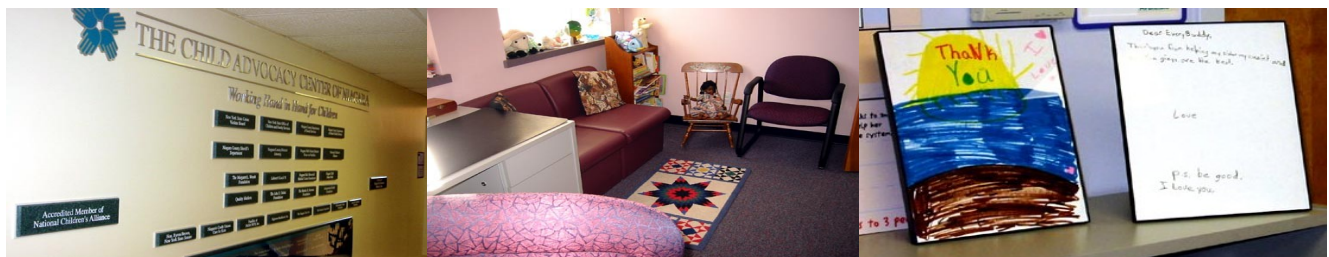
Child Advocacy Center of Niagara Wins “Organization of the Year”

The Kiwanis Club of Niagara, a branch of the global Kiwanis organization of volunteers, chose the Child Advocacy Center of Niagara to receive the John Weber Memorial Award, 2011 Organization of the Year.

The Child Advocacy Center of Niagara was honored at the John T. Anderson Awards Dinner hosted by the Kiwanis Club of Niagara on Saturday, May 7th. Executive Director, Laura Kelemen accepted a plaque at the dinner representing the Center’s achievement.

The Kiwanis Club is dedicated to their mission of “changing the world one child and one community at a time”, and presented the award the Child Advocacy Center of Niagara in recognition of our service to the community. The Child Advocacy Center works to end family violence and make the investigation, treatment, and healing of child abuse an easier process for children and their families.

The Child Advocacy Center is honored by this achievement. Thank you to all of the people who made it possible including our multi-disciplinary team of law enforcement, social services, prosecution, victim advocates and CAC staff!



CAC awarded “Organization of the Year” by the Kiwanas Club of Niagara

Child Advocacy Center of Niagara Awarded Grant to Enhance Services

The National Children’s Alliance has awarded a \$27,620 grant to the Child Advocacy Center of Niagara. The grant will be used to enhance the quality of investigations of alleged child abuse and neglect.

The grant will provide several members of the Child Advocacy Center’s multi-disciplinary team with the opportunity to attend specialized training on conducting forensic interviews for children with special needs. A forensic interview is a neutral and legally sound fact-finding method that encourages children who are suspected of being abused to talk about their experiences. This training will be beneficial to the Child Advocacy Center when working with children who are very young, very scared, or who have developmental disabilities.

The grant will also allow the center to install soundproofing materials and language translation services, including American Sign Language. The addition of these technologies will help ensure the accessibility and confidentiality of our services to all children who are in need.

This very competitive grant will help agency staff and the multi-disciplinary team develop the expertise, skills, and tools required for working with young children, those with developmental disabilities, and those with communication or other language barriers who are suspected of being abused.

We would like to thank the National Children’s Alliance for awarding us with this generous grant. We are grateful to the Niagara County District Attorney Office, Sheriff’s Department, and Department of Social Services for their support of this grant application.

In Case You Missed It!

Gala For Hope

The Gala For Hope dinner dance was held on April 15 at the Conference Center Niagara Falls in recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month. The Gala For Hope is a fundraiser organized by Candace Corsaro, a community activist, The Child Advocacy Center of Niagara, and Family & Children's Services of Niagara. The proceeds from the event were donated to the Child Advocacy Center of Niagara and Family & Children's Services of Niagara in order to help fund our efforts to prevent and treat child physical and sexual abuse.

One hundred people attended the Gala and enjoyed cocktails, dinner, and dancing. A silent auction was held raffling off prizes including an overnight stay at the Adam's Mark Hotel and four airline tickets donated by Spirit Airlines.

The proceeds raised by the Gala will benefit the children and families served by the Child Advocacy Center of Niagara, as well as the PASSAGE and Healthy Families programs of Family & Children's Service. The funds will allow our organization to continue the work we do to investigate child abuse cases, treat and heal victims of child abuse, and to prevent child abuse in the future.

We are very grateful to all of those who played a role in organizing the event, all those who attended, and all the sponsors who made this event possible. It was a great success! We are excited for and already planning next year's event. We welcome your involvement! **Please contact Laura Kelemen (285-0045) if you are interested in being part of the organizing committee.**



Gala attendants enjoy live music by JoyRide, dancing, dinner, and a silent auction at the 2011 Gala For Hope fundraiser.

FVIP Safe at Home Conference

The 13th annual FVIP Safe at Home: Seeking Solutions for Adult and Child Victims of Family Violence Conference was held on May 10 at the Convention Center Niagara Falls. This year's conference hosted 4 national and local speakers including Lieutenant Mark Wynn, Angela Downes of the National District Attorneys Association, Art Mason of LIFESPAN, and Mindy Mitnick, of the National Child Protection Training Center. The goal of the conference is to provide state of the art training to local service providers who work with women and children affected by family violence.

Lt. Mark Wynn gave the keynote speech entitled "Making the Law Keep its Promise". Lt. Wynn, using real life examples from his 20 years on the Nashville Metropolitan Police Force, implored the audience to work together to protect women and children. He gave concrete examples of how individuals and organizations can work in coordination to keep our kids safe. Eight separate workshop sessions were offered during the afternoon portion of the conference with topics ranging from elder abuse, to abuse in police families, to the developmental impact of abuse and neglect.

The conference was sponsored by the Niagara County Family Violence Intervention Project, Child Advocacy Center of Niagara, and Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center. Co-sponsors are the Niagara County Department of Mental Health's Trauma Treatment Specialty Services Division, Catholic Charities of Buffalo – Niagara County Services, the Northeast Regional Child Advocacy Center, and the City of Niagara Falls. Thank you to our sponsors!

This year's conference attracted over 160 people from all over New York State. There were even a few guests from Ontario Canada present. The conference was a great success! We look forward to next year's conference in October 2012!

Upcoming Events

Freewheelers Car Club Auction

Freewheelers Car Club will be hosting their annual All Clubs Super Cruise and Basket Auction on Saturday, June 11th at The Whistle Pig from 9 am to 4 pm. The Whistle Pig is located on Packard and Military.

The event is sponsored by Niagara County Credit Unions, Freewheelers Car Club, The Whistle Pig, and Dan the Man T-Shirts and Awards. All proceeds of the event will benefit the Child Advocacy Center of Niagara and help us to serve children in our community who have experienced abuse and neglect.

Freewheelers Car Club is accepting donations of baskets to be auctioned off at the event. If you are interested in donating please contact Jerry Petito at 283-5224 or Emily Foschio 285-0045. We look forward to seeing you there!

Why a Child Advocacy Center?

Child Advocacy Standard - Forensic Interview

Child Advocacy Centers who meet ten standards can be accredited by the National Children's Alliance. The standards are designed to ensure effective, efficient, and consistent delivery of services to child victims and their families. Similar standards are utilized by the NYS Office of Children and Family Services to support and review child advocacy centers. The Child Advocacy Center of Niagara is an accredited member of the National Children's Alliance and a Tier One Child Advocacy Center in the state of New York. These designations indicate that the Child Advocacy Center of Niagara meets all standards on both national and state levels.

In each issue we explore a CAC standard and its importance to helping children and families...

Forensic Interview

A forensic interview is a neutral and legally sound fact-finding method that encourages children to talk about what they have experienced or know that resulted in a concern about abuse. Forensic interviews are conducted by a specially trained interviewer in a safe, child-friendly environment and are considered to be the cornerstone of an abuse investigation.

These interviews are coordinated with members of law enforcement, child protection, district attorneys, and victim advocates to avoid multiple interviews of a child. Members of the investigative team observe the interview in a separate room through a one-way mirror and/or closed circuit TV where the child cannot see them. This makes the environment less threatening for the child and allows for a single interview instead of several.

The forensic interview is one of the most important standards that CACs have to meet, obtaining a statement from a child in a developmentally and culturally sensitive, unbiased manner that will support accurate and fair decision making. Forensic interviews are also designed to produce evidence that will stand up in court. The forensic interview aims to make a child more comfortable discussing upsetting experiences, and therefore these interviews, many times, mark the beginning of the healing process for children and their families.



The CAC's interview room provides a safe and child-friendly place for children to talk about their experiences while other important members of the investigative team observe.

Working Hand in Hand For Children

CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER OF NIAGARA

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Child Fatality Prevention Corner

In this section of the newsletter we will be discussing issues associated with child safety in order to spread awareness and prevent future fatalities.

As summer approaches, we need to focus on water safety. Each year, more than 830 children below the age of 14 die as a result of drowning. Drowning is the second leading cause of death among children ages 1 to 4. Young children can drown in just an inch or 2 of water. In the summer months from May through August deaths as a result of drowning increase 89 percent over the rest of the year. Follow these tips to avoid deaths or injuries associated with a lack of water safety.

- Always stay within arms reach of your child when he or she is swimming in or is close to water.
- Never leave a child alone in the water just because they have "floaties" on and always use age appropriate "floaties".
- Get swimming lessons for your child after the age of 4. Take lessons yourself if you cannot swim!
- Install a pool alarm and a fence around your pool.
- Make sure your child only swims in designated areas.
- Be sure your child wears a lifejacket on a boat or in open water.
- Keep the doors to bathrooms and laundry rooms closed.
- Never leave children unsupervised in the bath tub
- Always empty containers such as kiddie pools and buckets.

(www.safekids.com)



Keep your kids safe and healthy-teach and practice water safety!


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Memorial Medical Center
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