



THE
CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER
OF NIAGARA

Working Hand in Hand for Children



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Message from the Executive Director

As October comes to a close, I think about fall and many of my favorite things. With October comes apple cider and apple pie; crisp nights and warm days; and the smell of bonfires. The green leaves turn yellow, orange, red, and brown.

Two other colors, colors associated with awareness, are very important and are now linked with October. Pink is perhaps the color that we most often associate with October. Pink for Breast Cancer Awareness. Every year, the sales of "pink" products raise awareness and millions of dollars for organizations that are dedicated to the prevention and treatment of breast cancer. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 200,000 women were diagnosed with breast cancer in 2007. The emotions and suffering that follow a breast cancer diagnosis are very real and far-reaching, impacting women, their family members and their friends.

The month of October is also dedicated to another struggle faced by numerous women. In October the color purple is used to promote Domestic Violence Awareness. I hope that, one day, the color purple is as prevalent as pink. The U.S. Department of Justice estimates that each year over 900,000 acts of Domestic Violence are committed and that 15.5 million children live in homes where domestic violence has occurred during the past year. Interpersonal violence does not just occur between men and women. It can happen to anyone regardless of race, age, socioeconomic status, religion or sexual orientation. It is estimated, that domestic violence occurs in 25-33 percent of all gay and lesbian relationships. Regardless, love shouldn't hurt.

When we think of interpersonal violence, we often visualize the woman who has marks and bruises, who is scared, crying, perhaps covering her face for protection, hoping for her abuser to stop. We think about the children who may be living in the home. Children, who, often times are witness to violence against their mothers, siblings, or other family members, or who victims are of abuse themselves. However Domestic Violence is not just physical, the abuse can be verbal, emotional, sexual, financial and more.

The non-physical aspects of Domestic Violence are extremely devastating and often more difficult to detect. Overt signs such as name calling, belittling, bullying, and threatening may exist. Financial control, including over spending, controlling how money is spent, or controlling the ability to work outside the home, is another non-physical aspect of DV. Other common dynamics include limiting who you can spend time with. This can be very subtle and sometimes is framed from the point of view of seeming to care, for example, "Oh, honey, I haven't seen you all week, stay home with me tonight..." These tactics used time and time again effectively isolate a woman from her support system and increase the abusers control over her.

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Many women want to leave their abusive relationships, but feel trapped and don't know how. They may feel helpless, ashamed, or afraid that their abuser will hurt them or their children even worse if they leave. Some don't recognize the problem or may feel that the abuse is their fault, that if they change, the abuse will stop. They may feel that if they leave their abuser they will be breaking up their family, when really their family is already in shambles.

Leaving a Domestic Violence relationship is a process. It takes planning and re-sources but it can be done! There are numerous people and agencies dedicated to helping victims remain safe and regain control over their lives. If you or someone you know needs help leaving an abusive relationship in Niagara County contact the 24 hour Domestic Violence Hotline at 433-6716 or 285-6984.



Are you in an abusive relationship?

CAC News

Niagara County Child Fatality Review Team Receives Approval from Office of Children and Family Services

On August 3, 2011 the Niagara County Child Fatality Review Team (CFRT) was approved by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS). Since 1998, the CAC has spear-headed, 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.

From 1998 until August 2011 the Niagara County CFRT was an informal team. With the approval of OCFS, our team can now review any sudden, unexpected child fatality in the county in a confidential manner and complete a fatality report shortly after the death occurs. Previously, our team performed anonymous reviews at quarterly meetings, sometimes more than a year after the death occurred. We anticipate that a more immediate review will produce more accurate information to help families and prevent future fatalities.

In 2010, we experienced the traumatic sudden death of at least 9 children in Niagara County. It is the goal of The Child Advocacy Center and the Niagara County CFRT to address the investigation and prevention of child fatalities in our community so they do not happen in the future. With an OCFS approved team we are one step closer to our goal.

Clinical Specialist, Betty Lamb Retires



After 26 years of service to our community and 16 years at the Child Advocacy Center of Niagara, our Clinical Specialist, Betty Lamb has retired. Prior to her career as a Clinical Specialist at the CAC, Betty worked at the Beeman Clinic. Betty has worked with the CAC team since 1995 when the CAC was established. The CAC and the multi-disciplinary team celebrated Betty's service to our community with a retirement party at The Water Street Landing in mid-August.

During her career as a Clinical Specialist, Betty touched the lives of over two-thousand children and families, helping them heal after traumatic times. At her retirement party, Betty received a hand-painted tree with two-thousand thumb-print leaves, each leaf representing a child Betty has helped. The impact

Betty has made in our community is undeniable and far-reaching.

Since Betty's retirement on June 30th, the Child Advocacy Center has welcomed our new Clinical Specialist, Sara Gates. Sara comes to us from Monsignor Carr Children's Clinic in Niagara Falls. Sara joined the team in late July and got to a quick start, seeing children and families within her first days at the Center. Welcome to the team, Sara!

Events

In Case You Missed It!

Freewheelers All Clubs Super Cruise and Basket Auction

The annual Freewheelers All Clubs Super Cruise and Basket Auction was held on June 11th at the Whistle Pig to benefit the Child Advocacy Center of Niagara. The event was sponsored by Niagara County Credit Unions, Freewheelers Car Club, The Whistle Pig, and Dan the Man T-Shirts.

Classic cars from all over Niagara County were showcased while the DJ played classic hits from the 50s and 60s. Many of the car show attendants participated in the auction and purchased Freewheelers Super Cruise T-Shirts, making the event a successful fundraiser for the Child Advocacy Center. All the proceeds from the



auction and shirt sales will be used to help the Center serve children in our community who have experienced abuse and neglect. We would like to thank Freewheelers, Niagara County Credit Unions, The Whistle Pig, and Dan the Man T-shirts for all their support and hard work!

Niagara County Fair

The Child Advocacy Center of Niagara teamed up with the Niagara County Sheriff's Department at this year's Niagara County Fair. The Center had a table in the Sheriff's tent August 3-5 where we handed out prevention and awareness materials to fair-goers. Parents and children were all especially interested in our water safety materials which are available on our website (cacofniagara.org).

We had a very successful few days at the fair with over 450 people visiting our table. It was great to reach out and spend some time on the eastern end of the county! Thank you to the Sheriff's Department for allowing The Child Advocacy Center to share space under the tent!



In Case You Missed It Continued

Child Fatality Investigation and Prevention Training

The Child Advocacy Center of Niagara hosted the Child Fatality Investigation and Prevention training in late September. The free, two-day training was held Thursday September 22nd and Friday September 23rd at Antonio's Banquet and Conference Center located at 7708 Niagara Falls Boulevard in Niagara Falls. The training was sponsored by Niagara County Department of Social Services and New York State Office of Children & Family Services.

Over 100 people attended each day of training, and we hosted representatives from eleven counties in New York State including Niagara, Erie, Genesee, Wyoming, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Allegany, Steuben, Chemung, Schoharie, and Schenectady counties.



The first day of training featured Chief Jim Holler, a lively nationally known speaker specializing in child abuse and child death investigations. This training day addressed the duties of the first responder in the investigation of a child's death, investigative techniques to determine whether the death was natural, accidental, suicidal, or homicidal, and include key crime scene and forensic evidence techniques. The training also educated first responders including law enforcement and Child Protection Services to conduct an effective, yet sympathetic investigation.

The second day of training featured Dr. Richard Kaplan, an inspirational expert in recognizing child abuse. Dr. Kaplan is a Pediatrician, the Associate Medical Director at Midwest Children's Resource Center, an Associate Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Minnesota Medical School, and the Medical Director of The Center for Safe and Healthy Children in Minnesota. Dr. Kaplan has been working with child abuse victims for over 30 years. This training day was tailored to an audience with advanced experience with the issue of child abuse. It addressed medical findings often seen in child abuse, and provided critical information for all disciplines involved in the assessment, diagnosis, treatment, and investigation of child abuse.



Upcoming Events

Domestic Violence Training

In Recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness Month, The YWCA of Niagara, The Child Advocacy Center of Niagara, Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center, and Niagara County Sheriff's Office Domestic Violence Program Invite you to a presentation by nationally recognized experts on Family Violence issues.

Catherine Cerulli, J.D., Ph.D, Associate Professor, Department of Psychiatry, University of Rochester Medical Center and Suzanne Tomkins, J.D., Professor, University of Buffalo School of Law and co-director, Program for Excellence in Family Law will discuss "The Intersection of Mental Health and Interpersonal Violence – Translating Research into Advocacy".

The training will take place Friday October 28, 2011 at Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center (621 10th St., Niagara Falls) in Auditorium A from 10 a.m. to noon. Registration begins at 9:30 am.

This program qualifies for 2.0 CLE credits in the area of Professional Practice. To register, contact the Child Advocacy Center at 285-0045.



Help end child sexual abuse today!



Statistics show that **1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will be sexually abused by the age of 18**, and nearly 70% of all reported sexual assaults (including assaults on adults) occur to children ages 17 and under. **More than 90% of abusers are people children know, love, or trust.** Child sexual abuse is a real and devastating problem in our society and in our community. You can help end it! The Child Advocacy Center of Niagara offers the only nationally available sexual abuse prevention

training that is proven to be effective-Stewards of Children by Darkness to Light.

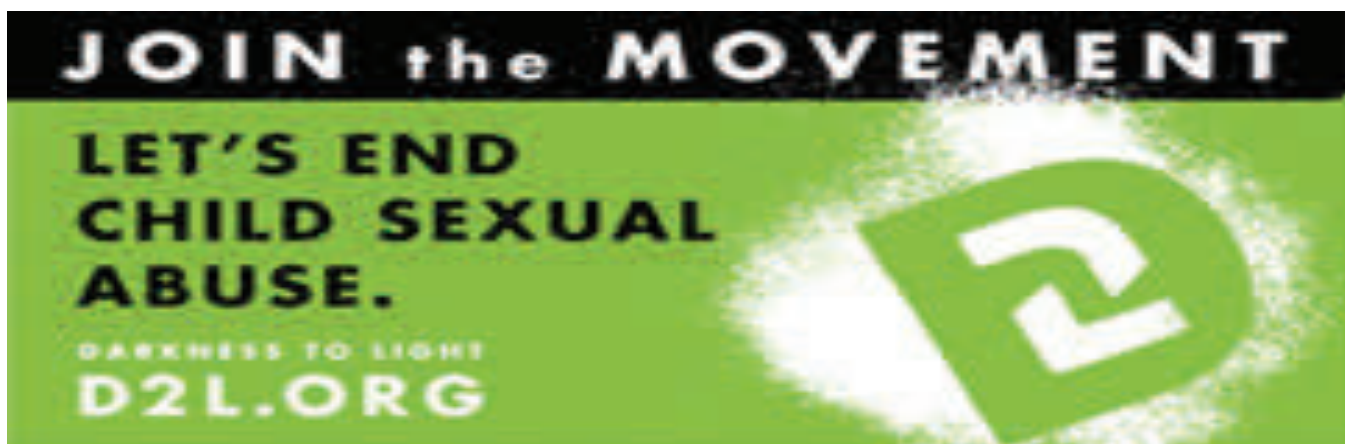
Stewards of Children is a three-hour training designed to increase knowledge, improve attitudes, and change child-protective behaviors. This revolutionary program is for any responsible adult who cares about the welfare of children. It is also appropriate for youth-serving organizations (sports leagues, day care centers, after school programs, children's clubs, church groups and more).

Stewards of Children covers many topics related to child sexual abuse including facts about the problem of child sexual abuse the types of situations in which child sexual abuse might occur, simple, effective strategies for protecting children from sexual abuse, the importance of talking about the prevention of sexual abuse with children and other adults; and the signs of sexual abuse so that you might intervene and be able to react responsibly.

Participants will come away with increased awareness of the prevalence, consequences and circumstances of child sexual abuse; new skills for adults to prevent, recognize and react responsibly to child sexual abuse; ideas for proactive, positive change to organizational policies and procedures; and an individual commitment to take action via a personal prevention plan.

Make the commitment for the long term well being of your children, family, organization and community. You can be a leader in our community as well as a leader among other youth serving organizations by setting a higher standard and showing that you will do whatever it takes to keep children safe when they are with you.

Schedule the Stewards of Children training for your youth-serving organization today with one of our facilitators! Visit d2l.org for more information about child sexual abuse, and contact Emily Foschio at emily.foschio@nfmmc.org to schedule your Stewards of Children Training today!



Working Hand in Hand For Children

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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.

Deaths associated with Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) have decreased steadily since the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommended that infants be placed to sleep on their backs. For every 1000 live births, deaths associated with SIDS have decreased from 1.4 in 1988 to 0.55 in the last recorded year of 2006. Despite this decrease in SIDS occurrences, there are still risks associated with SIDS. Follow these tips to help lower the risk of SIDS and prevent infant deaths...

- Always place your baby on his or her back to sleep— for naps and at night
- Place your baby to sleep on a firm crib mattress covered by a fitted sheet
- Never sleep with an infant in an adult bed. Never place a baby to sleep on a couch or futon to sleep. A crib is the safest place for an infant to sleep.
- Keep soft objects, loose bedding, toys, and soft bumpers out of your baby's sleep area
- Try using a clean, dry pacifier when the baby sleeps
- Do not let your baby overheat. Dress him or her in light sleep clothing, and keep the room at a comfortable temperature
- Avoid any product that claims to reduce the risk of SIDS. Most have not been tested for effectiveness or safety.
- Do not use home monitors to reduce the risk of SIDS.
- Reduce the chance that flat spots will develop on your baby's head. Provide "Tummy Time" when the baby is awake and supervised.

For more information and references visit <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/sids>

