



The Advocate NEWSLETTER

“Helping Children Find Their Voice”



Welcome to
our Quarterly
Newsletter

We'd like to welcome you to The Child Center, Inc.'s first newsletter! We're excited to better communicate our success and needs to you throughout the year, and to offer child abuse education to our community members. Every quarter our newsletter will arrive by email and we'll also have limited printed copies available. Please flip through and learn more about what we do to end child abuse.

HIGHLIGHTS

04 Being Brave

At The Child Center, Inc., children and their well-being is our first priority. We want to ensure that children disclosing abuse are not further victimized by the intervention systems designed...

06 Champion for Children

We are happy to share with you an update on The Child Center, Inc. Champion for Children Capital Campaign. With a working goal of...

Letter from the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President
Juli Hillyer

Vice President
Julie Seymore

Treasurer
Daniel Mudd

Secretary
Angie Harness

Melissa Bailey
Chuck Brooks

Carri DeHart
Amy Dunning

Yvette Hipskind
Jared Howell

Chris Schulte

The holidays are a time for reflection and a time to give thanks for the blessings we have received throughout the year.

At The Child Center, Inc. we are grateful for the support of friends, partners, and donors like you who continue to help us grow, surpass new goals, and transform children's lives.

Your support allows us to provide a number of greatly needed services to children in our community who have disclosed abuse, neglect, or violence and who need the opportunity to tell their experience in a child-friendly, safe, welcoming environment. You provide forensic interviewers to whom children tell their experience; child and family advocates who assist children and families in finding resources and services to reduce their trauma and provide on-going support; and you provide therapists who children can talk to and process their experience which leads to healing. This year, 624 children were able to tell their experience and receive intervention services you helped provide; children who wouldn't have had anywhere else to turn for services which are only offered at The Child Center, Inc.

Through your giving, you helped provide 22,400 school-age children with the opportunity to participate in prevention education programs such as body safety, internet safety, and sexual harassment; programs focused on educating and empowering children to keep themselves safe.

Earlier this year, one of the prevention education staff presented a body safety program at one of the local elementary schools. A little girl approached our prevention worker after the presentation to say thank you. She gave the prevention worker a picture she had drawn of an adult saying "shhh" and the child saying "no" and looking away. She explained that she wanted to protect herself and her friends so she's glad that she now knows what to do if anything like this happens to her.

Because of you, our work has a powerful impact on the children we work with directly, and the larger community as a whole, because when our children are educated and empowered, our community is stronger.

So, while preparing for your own joyous celebrations with friends and family, it is important to stop and reflect on the joy and blessings in your own life while also being aware of the needs of those around you. During this special time of year, as you think about how you might give to others, we hope you will consider setting aside part of your gift giving budget to support the work of The Child Center, Inc. with a tax-deductible charitable donation. Your gift is extremely important because it offers immediate resources which are directed to current needs and opportunities at The Child Center, Inc.

We've simplified the donation procedure, allowing supporters to donate online, by phone or by mail. Visit www.thechildcenter.com/support, call Linda Buschman at 636-332-0899, or mail your gift to us at 989 Heritage Parkway, Wentzville, MO, 63385. What better way to celebrate the holiday season than to give back a part of what you have been so richly blessed with.

Every gift matters. Will you decide to make a difference today?

From all of us here at The Child Center, Inc., Happy Holidays!

Elphanie "Sissy" Swift
Executive Director

Meet Oakley!

Oakley, our newest facility dog, has officially joined The Child Center, Inc. team! Oakley's primary job is to provide comfort and support to the children and families who come to the center during their time in need. Like our other facility dog, Reka, Oakley was also trained by CHAMP Assistance Dogs. Welcome to the team Oakley!





Being Brave Sometimes Takes Team Support

At The Child Center, Inc., children and their well-being is our first priority. We want to ensure that children disclosing abuse are not further victimized by the intervention systems designed to protect them and take the first steps towards healing. We become their voice by listening and believing.

Earlier this year, a 3-year-old girl came to The Child Center, Inc. to talk about things young children should never have to talk about. She came in feeling confident and strong. This little girl spoke with the interviewer about her terrible experience without hesitation, never missing a beat. During the interview, the girl's mother sat with the child and family advocate. They talked about how she was doing and what her experience had been up to that point. The advocate discussed the process and

potential outcomes with Mom; they also had a conversation about how the family was doing. As intimidating as it is, this parent knew that the first step was the interview. There were bumps in the road and unexpected delays, but this mother took each step with great strength; she continually advocated for her daughter. Advocates from both The Child Center, Inc. and the legal system helped prepare the pair to navigate the potentially confusing and frightening justice system.

This young girl was ready for her day in court. She had a whole team of people there to support her that included family, advocates, an interviewer, attorneys, and law enforcement. The little girl knew all of these people were there for her. She even had a four-legged friend there to provide an added layer of

support for her, a level of silent and gentle support those with two legs can't always provide: Reka. The Child Center, Inc.'s very own facility dog was with her throughout the court proceeding. Reka provided comfort and distraction for this sweet little girl, which could have easily been a time filled with anxiety and nerves as she waited for her turn to testify.

When her turn came, the little girl took the stand with Reka at her side and gave a testimony that radiated confidence and bravery. The little girl was so happy afterward that she repeatedly stated how much she loved Reka and declared that she was "one lucky girl" because she had Reka and so many people there to support her. People who can watch this little girl dance around, color, play hide-and-seek and just enjoy herself would never suspect the trauma she had endured that brought her to that courtroom.

From the beginning of the investigation, the coordinated approach with forensic interviewers, child & family advocates, law enforcement, and prosecutors provided the family with support and compassion to make the whole process easier for them.

When life gives you something that makes you afraid, that's when life gives you a chance to be brave. That day, she was brave.

Amy Robins
Supervisor of Forensic Services

Prevention Tip

3 Tips for Securing Devices You Give Your Kids Over the Holidays

There's a good chance that many of the gifts you get your children during the holiday season involve technology. From smartphones and tablets to gaming systems, kids and teens love devices that keep them connected. Here are three tips to get you started:

1. Educate Yourself on Each Device's Capabilities
Half of the internet safety battle is understanding the particular risks involved with each of your children's devices. These three questions can help:

How does this device connect to the internet?

A smartphone accesses the internet over multiple WiFi networks and LTE data. This means that safeguards at the level of your home network won't be enough, and safeguards need to be in place on the device itself.

How does this device give access to content on the internet?

Parents rarely understand the web browsing capabilities of gaming systems. With gaming systems, it may be a good idea to implement content filtering on your home network.

How does this device enable communication?

The third question helps clarify when monitoring solutions need to be implemented for the sake of preventing activities such as cyberbullying and sexting.

2. Set Parental Controls

A necessary first step you can take toward protecting your children is to find and configure the parental controls on their devices.

3. Create a Internet Safety Plan

While device parental controls are a necessary first step, most parents find that they need other technical safeguards, such as content filters and social media monitoring solutions to fully protect their children from all the dangers out there. We strongly recommend creating a comprehensive internet safety plan, which combines technical safeguards with authentic communication, for your family.

SAVE OUR DATES!

TRIVIA NIGHT

February 9, 2018

www.thechildcenter.com/trivia

MJC WORKSHOP

April 4, 2018

www.thechildcenter.com/workshop

GALA

April 28, 2018

www.thechildcenter.com/gala

GOLF

June 1, 2018

www.thechildcenter.com/golf

BREAKFAST TOURS

HANNIBAL

November 28, 2017

WENTZVILLE

January 10, 2018

Interested in attending?

Please contact Sara at 636-332-0899 or shenderson@cacnemo.org

CHAMPION FOR CHILDREN CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

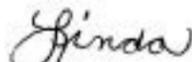
We are happy to share with you an update on The Child Center, Inc. Champion for Children Capital Campaign. With a working goal of \$275,000, the campaign will support the ongoing mission of our agency to respond to child abuse through a supportive team approach to reduce the trauma to children and their families.

The campaign will allow us to further develop our areas of strength: providing education and empowerment to children through our prevention education programs; creating opportunities for children who have disclosed abuse to tell their experience in a child-friendly, safe, and secure environment; child and family advocacy services designed to reduce trauma for children and be an ongoing support; and offering therapeutic services which allow children to process their experience in a safe and supportive environment.

We are also pleased to announce that we have Youth Opportunities Program (YOP) tax credits available for those who contribute to the Champion for Children Capital Campaign. All individuals, LLCs, partnerships, banks, or corporations with Missouri tax liability are eligible for the program. Any single donation of \$500 or more is eligible for a 50% Missouri state tax credit.

Your gift to the campaign will allow children and families to continue to receive the services they deserve, and assist us in ensuring that children disclosing abuse are not further victimized by the intervention systems designed to protect them. We are your child advocacy center existing to serve children and families in our community- to provide healing, help, and hope.

Game On!... together we can end child abuse.



Linda J. Buschman
Director of Development

If you are interested in leveraging your tax dollars through a donation to The Child Center, Inc. Capital Campaign, please contact Linda Buschman at 636-332-0899 or lbuschman@cacnemo.org.

Forever Changed

Bruce & Kirsten Pahde are supporters of The Child Center, Inc. Together, they have been involved with the organization for a couple years - putting children first through their commitment to our mission. Thank you for all that you do to help kids in our community!



How did you first get involved with The Child Center, Inc.?

We first became aware of The Child Center through our friend, Liddy Arneson, at the time she joined the staff of The Child Center. Shortly thereafter, we discovered that our Right at Home Community Outreach Coordinator, Heather Cushing, was on The Child Center's Board. Both of them spoke glowingly of The Child Center's mission and shared with us opportunities to offer some support. Once we learned what The Child Center does, we felt compelled to see how we could help.

What do you find most rewarding about your involvement with The Child Center, Inc.?

Knowing that The Child Center is supporting

children and their families during a time of crisis is our reward. At the most recent gala, the featured speakers were parents who, unfortunately, had recently needed to avail themselves of the services of The Child Center. Seeing and hearing that people have been positively impacted by The Child Center and its resources leads us to remain involved.

What are three words you think of when you think about The Child Center, Inc.?

Healing, support, love.



Save The Date

Trivia Night

SUPERHEROES FOR KIDS

Feb 9th, 2018
7:00 PM

St. Peter's Parish Center
301 First Capitol Dr, St. Charles, MO

Game on! Let's end child abuse.

Quarter HIGHLIGHTS

Prevention Education

This summer, the prevention education team spent time gearing up for their busiest time of the year - back to school! We partner with many of the schools in St. Charles, Lincoln, and Warren counties to provide the prevention education programs. During the first week back, more than 1,200 children received information on how to keep themselves safe. In addition, 3,000 children were educated by the end of October. Not only have children participated, 29 parents and 1,852 professionals who work with children have received education on how to help keep children safe. The team will keep working hard until the end of the school year and we're looking forward to reaching more children, parents, and professionals in the community.

Therapeutic Services

Our Therapeutic Services team has grown! In October we welcomed our new part-time therapist. She is a provisionally licensed professional counselor who will be working with children and their families at our Hannibal location. By providing therapeutic services to children and their families, we aim to reduce the harmful effects of trauma and reduce the common symptoms children experience after a traumatic event. With an additional team member, we are able to offer more therapy services in-house and make the family's access to trauma-focused services more easily attainable.

Hannibal Office

Through October, 171 children have shared their experience of abuse, neglect, or violence at our Hannibal location. This is 50 more children than in all of 2016; children who are now receiving the healing, helping, and hope they need to recover from the trauma they have experienced. In order to continue to provide the best services to these children and their families, we have added additional staff to the Hannibal team. Our prevention education specialist has also been busy since the start of the new school year educating more than 1,400 school-age children on how to keep themselves safe. We are working diligently to continue to provide a timely response and appropriate services to children and families in our community.



Responding to child abuse through a supportive team approach to reduce trauma to children and their families.

Healing • Helping • Hope

WENTZVILLE OFFICE

 989 Heritage Pkwy
Wentzville, MO 63385

 636-332-0899

 info@thechildcenter.com

HANNIBAL OFFICE

 306 Munger Ln
Hannibal, MO 63401

 573-221-2256

 info@thechildcenter.com

www.thechildcenter.com