Welcome to Voices of Courage Child Advocacy Center! We want to take this opportunity to introduce our center to you by way of our first Annual Report.

At the Child Advocacy Center (CAC), we work to ensure that children who have been abused have a safe place where they can reveal what happened to them so that they and their families get the assistance they need to navigate ‘what happens next’.

We serve children ages 3-18 in nine counties throughout Northwest Missouri. We provide multiple services to children who have been abused. The first is a forensic interview. When a child has been abused, they should be interviewed by a trained professional who understands how to talk to children so they can disclose their abuse without enduring additional trauma.

Next, we provide mental health treatment to children who have suffered abuse or trauma. Our therapists are experts in the field of childhood trauma and are trained to help our clients work through what has happened to them.

Third, our advocates provide support to the child and their family as they go through the process of being interviewed and the possible events that follow. They answer questions and are a second set of ears for the family to help retain information provided during this stressful time. If needed, they can accompany the family in further proceedings, such as court or other follow-up processes.

Finally, we provide child abuse prevention education. Through our many programs, we have trained thousands of children and adults about what abuse is, signs and symptoms children can exhibit, and what to do if it happens to them or someone they know. We always teach kids that abuse is never their fault and that it’s never too late to tell. And we always want adults to know that we are all responsible for the children around us, so we must be vigilant and protect them.

We want a community where every child feels safe and supported. We hope you will join us in this effort by way of volunteering for an event, donating to the CAC, sponsoring one of our events or becoming a member of “The Pride” (our monthly donor group).

Thank you to those who have helped us in the past, and to those who we know will help us in the future. Together, we can make our community a safer place for children.

Melissa Birdsell
Executive Director

EVERY CHILD DESERVES A SAFE AND HAPPY CHILDHOOD

Our Mission—Preventing further trauma to abused children by providing a safe environment for them to disclose abuse, obtain protection and receive counseling.

SAFETY - PROTECTION - HEALING

We strive to support and ensure a community where all children are free of abuse and neglect. However, if there is abuse, all children will be protected and have access to a child-friendly environment for healing and the opportunity to reach their ultimate potential.
1610 Counseling Sessions for 165 individual children

496 Forensic Interviews of children ages 3-18

65% of clients are Female
35% of clients are Male

661 total children seen in 2019
68% from Buchanan and Andrew Counties

429 Victim Family Members served by our Family Advocates

Nearly 3,000 adults and children trained in child abuse prevention

The services described on the previous page (forensic interviews, mental health and advocacy services) are provided to our clients at **NO COST** to the family. When a child is abused, the family should have access to the help they need for that child without cost being a barrier. Our CAC does not charge for these necessary services. Our current grants do not cover many of our necessary, daily expenses. Therefore, we rely on donations and fundraising in order to maintain our programs and services. We thank our many loyal supporters for their donations over the years. We welcome others to check us out and see that we are a worthy cause for your donation dollars. Without generous donations, we cannot continue to provide children with the quality treatment they so deserve.

CAC staff enjoyed a fun day at Dave & Busters for their 2019 Christmas party

Abuse Type

- 53.5% Sexual
- 23% Physical
- 17.5% Domestic Violence
- 6% Other

2019 Financial Review

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<th>Income</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
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<td>Donations</td>
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<td>Fundraisers</td>
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<td>Other income</td>
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<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
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<td>Outside Contracts</td>
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<td>Facilities &amp; Equip.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other expenses</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>$656,996.18</strong></td>
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Every day, we ask children to be brave and tell their story of abuse. We love our Over the Edge rappelling event, because it aligns with our mission so well. Asking people to do something so outside their comfort zone to help support these brave children is what this event is all about.

A total of 40 people summoned the courage to rappel down 8 stories in historic downtown St. Joseph in 2019. They asked their friends, families and their workplaces to help them raise at least $1,000 each for the opportunity to rappel. Those friends and families came through with great support.

This event would not be possible without the many generous sponsorships from local companies like Hillyard, who allows us to use their building to host the event. We are also grateful to Sunshine Signs, who has been our Presenting Sponsor for the first two Over the Edge events. Their support allowed us to get this event ‘off the ground’ and bring it to St. Joseph in 2018.

Over the Edge St. Joseph takes everyone’s effort to pull off—staff, board of directors and as many volunteers as we can get. Not only is there work all year long to recruit rappellers and obtain sponsorships, but there is a lot of work to be done on event day. We have a ground party going on, with a children’s play area, games, food and drink available as the rappels are happening.

Sign up to rappel on our website at:
www.voicescac.org
THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS OVER THE EDGE SPONSORS
FOR HELPING US RAISE MORE THAN $100,000 IN THE FIRST 2 YEARS OF THIS EVENT

SAVE THE DATE — OVER THE EDGE ST. JOSEPH 2020
Saturday, October 17 Rappels start at 9AM
Hillyard Building, 4th and Faraon
These are the Forensic Interview rooms. The room on the left is used to interview our younger clientele. The room on the right underwent a facelift in 2019 in an effort to make it more welcoming and comfortable for our teenagers who utilize that room.

On the left is a cozy corner in one of our therapist’s offices, designed to encourage conversation and comfort. On the right is our play therapy room, where our therapists can help children work through their trauma through purposeful and monitored play.

Having a conference room to hold staff meetings, board meetings, small trainings and our parent classes has been a great addition to the CAC. This room gets nearly daily use—even just as a place for staff to gather at lunch to discuss issues and ideas. The picture on the right is our main lobby area, which doubled in size as part of the 2018 renovation.
**WHAT IS A CAC?**

To understand what a Child Advocacy Center (CAC) is, it’s important to first understand what a child would face without one.

Without a CAC, a child might have to tell the worst story of their little lives over and over again. They might tell a teacher, principal, nurse, police officer, doctor, lawyer and therapist! This repetition can cause additional trauma to a child because they have to relive the trauma multiple times. The child can start to feel that no one believes them, and shut down—refusing to tell their story anymore. It can also hurt the case against the abuser if the child reveals slightly different or additional details with each telling.

With a CAC in place, the child is brought to the interview by a ‘safe’ adult. They tell their story once, to a trained interviewer who knows to ask questions in a way that doesn’t re-traumatize the child. Then, a team of professionals make decisions together about how best to help the child. These professionals can include law enforcement, Children’s Division, medical professionals, mental health professionals, prosecution, juvenile officers, victim advocates and others. This is called the multi-disciplinary team (MDT), and it is a core part of the work of CAC’s.
Where can you find us?
Facebook at Voices of Courage Child Advocacy Center
Instagram at voicescac
Twitter @VoicesCAC
Website at www.voicescac.org

How can you help?
Donate! Visit our website and click the Donate button! You can make a one-time donation or join The Pride—our monthly giving program.
In Kind Donations—snacks, small bottles of water, Clorox wipes, tissues, small comfort items such as stuffed toys or blankets are all needed.
Volunteer! We have multiple events throughout the year where you can help out. Again, just visit our website for more information.

How can we help you?
If you are part of a group or organization looking for more information about child abuse prevention, we can speak at your meeting, luncheon or other gatherings. We have trainings, like Darkness to Light, Mandated Reporter and others to help your group or staff learn about child abuse prevention. The more we all know, the safer kids will be!

Are you an educator? Contact us about our in-school child abuse prevention programs aimed at helping children learn about safety at home, at daycare, at church, on the internet and wherever they may be.

Together we can make a difference.