

Pinwheel Passages

*The newsletter of the
Children's Advocacy Center
of the Bluegrass*



Children's
Advocacy
Center
of the Bluegrass

A healing place for
sexually abused children
and their families.



A Message from the Board President **"The Challenge of a Christmas Message"**

It's that special time of year once again. For many of us, this is a time of wonderful childhood memories, fun filled family gatherings, laughter and the anticipation of more to come as the holidays draw closer. Regrettably, for the children served by the Children's Advocacy Center of the Bluegrass, their memories are often times not so wonderful as their recollections of past holidays are tainted with incidences of severe, traumatic and sometimes prolonged acts of sexual abuse.

As we have recently observed with the tragedies unfolding at Penn State University, vulnerable young children can be preyed upon, exploited and abused by adults who otherwise appear to be "fine, upstanding citizens". Victims of child sexual abuse are not confined to any particular socioeconomic segment, gender, race, national origin, religion or any other demographic classification. Many young children suffer in silence and are ill equipped to cope with the significant and sometimes lifelong consequences of their sexual abuse.

Needless to say, as the current president of the Children's Advocacy Center, I have found it challenging to compose a "Christmas Message" which reflects the joy of the holidays because I know there are many children who desperately need the kinds of intervention, therapy, support and long term restorative care that our organization provides. Unfortunately, the need for what we do to protect and help abused children is greater than the financial resources we have.

Moreover, the demand for services offered by the Children's Advocacy Center has increased to such an extent that we will need to move into a larger building this year. We will require more staff. We will need help in sprucing up our new location so that it presents a fresh, warm, friendly and non-threatening environment. We will also need help in paying for our new building. While the needs are great, so is our resolve in meeting these needs.

We cannot fulfill our mission alone and we need your help. Won't you please send a financial contribution in whatever amount you feel comfortable to the Children's Advocacy Center of the Bluegrass? We have pledged to make sure that the children we serve are safe, protected and provided with the best opportunities for successful healing.

Thank you for your consideration of this request as you make choices for your holiday gifts.

All the best,

Bruce Simpson

Bruce Simpson
President, Children's Advocacy Center of the Bluegrass

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Lessons Learned from Penn State

By Andrew Oliver, Executive Director

The details contained in the 23-page grand jury report are so graphic and stomach-turning that many media outlets have chosen not to report the alleged acts. Jerry Sandusky, a prominent coach and trusted mentor, now stands accused of raping eight children over the course of a decade. Since his indictment, at least two more individuals have come forward to accuse Sandusky of sexual abuse. The number of victims will surely rise in the coming days.

What happened at Penn State University is a tragedy of epic proportions and the emerging details suggest a widespread cover-up. A coaching legend, his athletic director, and university administrators all failed to intervene and report eyewitness accounts of abuse, and made no attempt to identify a child victim who was sexually abused in their locker room.

Their inaction undoubtedly ensured that countless other children would suffer a similar, terrifying fate.

It's easy, but not productive, to vilify Penn State and the culture of secrecy which allowed this to happen. It's also shortsighted because this issue is bigger than the university. Child sexual abuse — the kind that's every bit as horrifying as what is alleged at Penn State — happens every day in every community across the country.

The statistics are shocking. Nationally, one out of four girls and one out of six boys will be sexually abused before they reach their 18th birthday. What's worse? Only one in 10 will ever tell.

Despite our outrage over the inaction in Pennsylvania, most of us never do anything when confronted with child abuse. A recent national survey found that only 26 percent of Americans reported child abuse when they witnessed it. The reasons for failing to report varied greatly. Some people didn't know who to call and others felt it was none of their business.

If the Penn State tragedy can teach us anything, it's that all adults have a moral and ethical responsibility to report suspected cases of child abuse, and to intervene if abuse is witnessed. The fulfillment of any legal obligation, which varies by state, is not a replacement for exercising a moral responsibility to ensure children are safe.

A child's safety is an adult's responsibility. Children cannot and should not be expected to protect themselves.

All adults should learn the signs of abuse and to be vigilant in protecting children. The biggest indicator that a child is being abused is if he or she discloses that abuse has occurred. Other signs include changes in behaviors (eating, sleeping, school performance, etc.) and unexplained injuries. Some children display risk-taking behaviors and others may display inappropriate sexual behaviors. For more information, check out D2L.org and onewithcourage.org.

Sex offenders are clever about finding opportunities to gain access to children. They're skilled at manipulating adults to lower their boundaries about contact with their children in the same way that they groom children for sexual contact. We spend a lot of time talking about "stranger-danger" but the reality is that sexual abuse is overwhelmingly committed by someone the family knows and trusts.

Parents should sense a red flag if any adult — a friend, coach, minister, teacher, or family member — seeks to spend significant amounts of time alone with their child.

The Children's Advocacy Center of the Bluegrass provides comprehensive services to children and families affected by sexual abuse. Additionally, the Center is available to help community members learn more about protecting children and responding effectively to sexual abuse.

It's evident in Pennsylvania that someone — anyone — should have done something. Children everywhere are counting on adults to speak up for them, so that this never happens again.

To report abuse or neglect in Kentucky, call the Child Abuse Hotline: (800) 752-6200
If a child is in immediate danger, dial 911



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An Evening for the Children's Advocacy Center of the Bluegrass

On August 27, the Children's Advocacy Center hosted its signature fundraising event at the R.J. Corman Hanger in Nicholasville. More than 200 guests enjoyed a beautiful night filled with great food and drink, music by the Swells, and an exciting live auction. The Center would like to extend special thanks to our hosts, Dave Baker and DeAnn Stephens, Event Chairperson, Barb Saunier, and Honorary Chairpersons Coach Matthew and Jenna Mitchell.

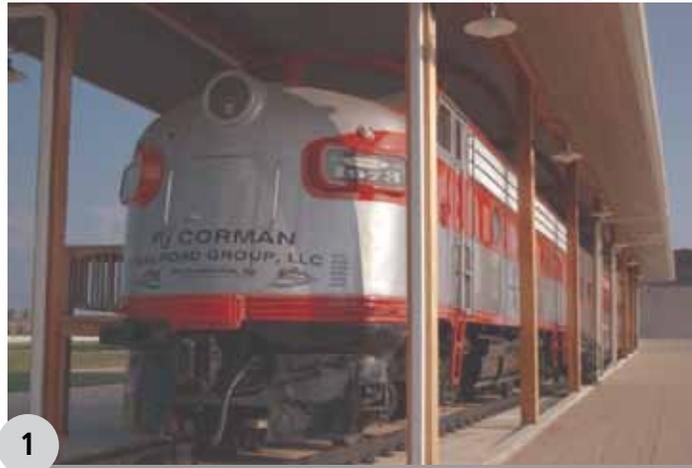
All photos by Brian and Judy Myers



A Night to Remember.

It truly takes a team to keep our children safe and to ensure that abused children and their families receive the services they need.

With heartfelt thanks and gratitude to our event sponsors and all the volunteers who made this evening possible.



- 1 – One of R.J. Corman's trains
- 2 – Jenna Mitchell and Murray McCandless
- 3 – Emily and Matthew Malone
- 4 – Ray Larson, Matthew Mitchell, and Wayne Martin
- 5 – Tom Kenny and Nancy Cox
- 6 – Anna Bryson, Lee Milward, and Derrick Whitaker
- 7 – Clint and Keri Long, Kirstin and Matthew Wiley
- 8 – Matthew Mitchell
- 9 – Amelie and David Larson
- 10 – Murray McCandless, Herbert Miller, Bruce Simpson, and Ray Larson
- 11 – Barb Saunier, Event Chairperson



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- WKYT-TV 27

Summer Swing Golf Scramble and Silent Auction Presented by Urban Active

In July, the Center hosted the first annual Summer Swing Golf Classic at Marriott's Griffin Gate Golf Club in Lexington. The weather held out and 80 golfers took to the links to raise funds in support of the Center's mission. We owe a special debt of gratitude to Urban Active who sponsored this inaugural event. We couldn't have done it without their generous support!



All Photos by David Desjardins



Breakfast with Santa

This event is **FREE!**

Saturday, December 17, 2011 8am to 11am
Victorian Square, Downtown Lexington

Santa will be available for photos from 8am to 11am. Donations welcomed and greatly appreciated. Online giving at www.goodgivingguide.net

Breakfast provided by the generous donation of our sponsors (available while supplies last)

All proceeds benefit Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky & the Children's Advocacy Center of the Bluegrass



The Importance of Advocacy and Support of Caregivers

By Megan Kohler, Family Advocate

When a disclosure of sexual abuse is made, a child's life has already been turned upside down. Children are often distressed as they watch their parents grieve. Perhaps an offender is made to leave the home. Sometimes the child is put into foster care, depending on the level of support available from his family.

Given this upheaval, it's not surprising that children are reluctant to disclose or that they sometimes recant their allegation--not because their original statements weren't true, but because they long to return to some semblance of normalcy, however imperfect.

While this is clearly a scary time for child victims, it is also a time of enormous heartache for the non-offending caregiver. Because sex abuse is often perpetrated by someone known and trusted by the family, children and their parents can feel isolated by extended family or other community members. Sex abuse thrives on secrecy and frequently becomes a battle of "she said/he said," leaving victims and their families on the defensive, when what they really need is time to heal, to be heard, and believed.

As a Family Advocate, listening is one of the most powerful and important aspects of my job. I listen when parents wonder aloud how they'll pay their bills now that the offending parent is no longer in the home. I listen as some parents become overwhelmed with memories of their own victimization; forced to confront unresolved issues, while coping with the devastation that accompanies their child's disclosure. Their concerns are my concerns and we work together to find local resources, brainstorm new possibilities, and find creative ways to solve financial problems.

Each Thursday, we host a Caregiver Support Group at the Children's Advocacy Center. The agency provides dinner and childcare so that parents can meet and talk with one another about the many obstacles, frustrations, and the small victories they each encounter. We examine the nature of sexual abuse to gain a better understanding of the unique behavioral challenges our children might face. We share frustrations while gathering skills to help us move forward. We learn about safety planning, strengthening our children's boundaries and self-esteem, and recognizing predatorial red-flags.

The greatest success of supporting the parent of a sexually abused child is knowing this service plays a critical role in reducing the chances this child will ever be re-victimized. Such simple steps toward such a worthy goal.

One Out of Four Girls. One Out of Six Boys.

Every year, one out of four girls and one out of every six boys is sexually abused. For these children, having to tell someone about the abuse is often terrifying.

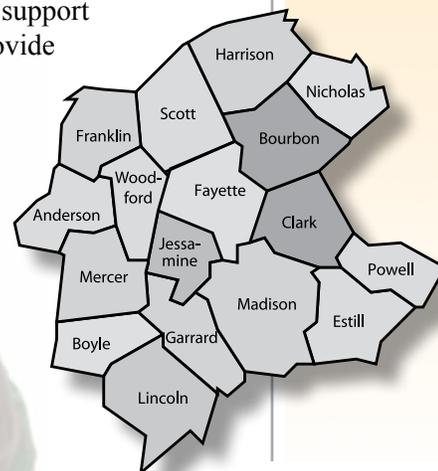
Since 1994, the Children's Advocacy Center of the Bluegrass has worked to reduce the trauma experienced by victims of child sexual abuse by coordinating services with other agencies under one child-friendly roof. This year alone, the Center will provide forensic interviews to approximately 600 children and crisis support to 800 caregivers. Our expert medical staff will provide at least 140 comprehensive medical exams. More than 90 children will enroll in individual therapy where they'll develop

a healthy self-image, learn to trust again, and identify ways to protect themselves from further victimization.

There is no more direct way to help the Children's Advocacy Center than by making a financial contribution. Your support makes it possible for us to provide hope and healing to the very children who need it most.

Center Client Statistics

- Females 79%
- Males 21%
- 0-6 years 34%
- 7-12 years 46%
- 13-18 years 20%



Center Staff

Andrew Oliver, CSW
Executive Director

Allison Benjamin
Director of Finance

Patti Bridges, BSW
Child Advocate

Raegan Gyorffy, CSW
Forensic Interviewer

Kristin Jenkins, CSW
Forensic Interviewer

Megan Kohler, BA
Family Advocate

Melissa Krueger, RN
Nurse/Medical Clinic
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Tracy Perkins, LCSW
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The Kentucky Office of the Attorney General contributes to the protection of children in the Commonwealth by providing financial support for child sexual abuse prevention programs and to help offset the portion of child sexual abuse medical exam expenses not covered by private insurance or Medicaid.

The Kentucky Child Victims' Trust Fund and the Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Prevention Board supports the Children's Advocacy Center of the Bluegrass and other advocacy centers across the state.

Please show your support for the centers by purchasing an "I Care About Kids" license plate.



Proceeds from the "I Care About Kids" license plate go to the Child Victims Trust Fund for helping Kentucky's most vulnerable children. To purchase this plate, contact your local county clerk. For more information visit <http://ag.ky.gov/victims/plate.htm>.

Mission of the Children's Advocacy Center

To reduce the trauma experienced by child victims of sexual abuse by providing services in a nurturing, friendly and safe environment.