



Spring Into Sexual Assault Awareness Month!

The Children's Advocacy Center Creates a "Champion for Children" Award



"Champion for Children" award recipients: Deputy Luis Rivera & Department of Human Services/Children's Protective Services

The month of April is a juxtaposition: anticipation of warmer temperatures, the return of our feathered friends singing in the morning, and the spotting of the first dandelion – all of which arouse feelings of happiness in most of us. This is in direct contrast to the dubious multiple titles that April bears: Child Abuse Prevention month, Month of the Young Child, Sexual Assault Awareness month, and Crime Victim's Rights week.

At the Children's Advocacy Center (CAC), our work often encompasses each of these distinctions: child abuse, young children, sexual assault, and victim services. Since our inception in 2000, we have interviewed over 1,700 children. The vast majority of these cases have been with children under the age of thirteen. At the CAC, we also help non-offending parents/care-givers by answering questions, offering an empathetic ear, and putting them in touch with valuable community resources.

The concept of a Children's Advocacy Center is effective because

of the collaborative team effort. In order to pay honor and tribute to this team effort, we are pleased to announce the creation of the "Champion for Children Award" that will be given to a very deserving recipient each year at our Sexual Assault Services Volunteer Recognition and Community Education day. This year we have chosen two recipients for the award: Deputy Luis Rivera of the Calhoun County Sheriff's Department, and our local Department of Human Services/Children's Protective Services (DHS/CPS).

Deputy Rivera was chosen because no matter when we call him, be it twenty minutes, one hour, or three days before the interview or meeting, Deputy Rivera responds to our request for help in conducting an interview with Spanish-speaking child or conversing with his/her family with the same urgency and importance as he uses with each of his cases. He has never told us he couldn't respond because it wasn't his case, or sounded irritated because we called at the

last moment. He has always conducted himself with the utmost professionalism and is the epitome of a team player.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) was chosen because we appreciate and acknowledge that they chose to send a Child Protective Services worker to each interview – over 1,700 - despite personnel shortages, budget cuts, and oftentimes the lack of an open CPS case at the time of the interview. It is our belief that the administration at DHS made this conscious decision because they believed that to do so was in the best interest of the child.

We hope you will join us on April 15 at the Burnham Brook Center to help us honor our *Champion for Children* award recipients.

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Letter from the director...

Dear Friends of SAS,

As we commemorate Sexual Assault Awareness Month, Child Abuse Prevention Month, Crime Victim Rights Week, and Volunteer Recognition Month, it is hard to believe another year has passed. An old colleague stopped into the office today and asked how things are going. As I thought about answering, I could only say, "things are pretty much the same." And things *are* 'pretty much the same', at least in terms of number of sexual assault crimes we know about.

Each week at our office, we receive many calls for counseling services from survivors of rape and child sexual abuse. Our 24-hour Victim Advocacy and Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Programs continue to provide crisis services for rape victims about 120 times each year. Our Children's Advocacy Center provides the multi-disciplinary team response to child victims of sexual abuse and their families about 200 times annually. All of this adds up to about 1,000 persons each year receiving services from us; sadly, 'pretty much the same' as in the years of recent past.

"When we join together to assist and work to prevent future rape and sexual abuse, everyone benefits."

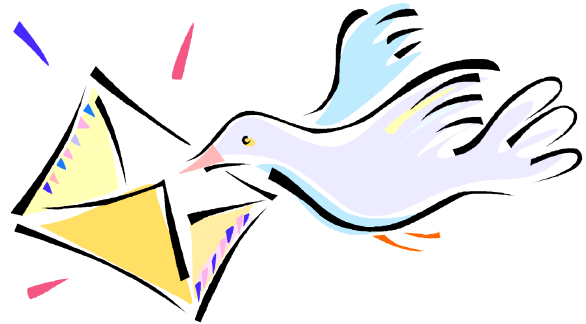
We are glad to be here to assist under these circumstances, but all of us wish for a time when sexual violence would cease in our society. Until then, we are grateful for the support of many of you in our community – members of our multidisciplinary professional response team – law enforcement, prosecutors, child and adult protection workers, medical providers, mental health providers, and our outstanding VOLUNTEERS!! When we join together to assist and work to prevent future rape and sexual abuse, everyone benefits.

Please see the enclosed flyer about our community education event on April 15. I hope you will be able to join us!

Peace to you all, and to our many clients.

Joyce Siegel, LMSW

Program Director



We appreciate your donations!

Please use the enclosed envelope if you would like to help provide services to survivors of sexual assault.

Important Legislation Is Enacted For Michigan Victims of Sexual Violence

December 29, 2008 was an historic day for victims of sexual assault/abuse and Michigan as Public Act 391 of 2008 and Public Acts 544, 545 of 2008 became law. Both laws assure funding for essential services for victims of sexual assault/abuse while setting standards for those services. Due to the complexity of each piece of legislation, reporting of each Public Act will occur in this and the next SAS newsletter. In this issue, we'll highlight PA 391 and PA 544, 545 will be discussed in the next issue.

PA 391 of 2008 accomplished two important things. First, it certifies victims of sexual assault DO NOT have to report their assault to the police in order to receive a medical forensic examination. This certification (by legislation) is a state requirement of the federal government in order to qualify for funds from the STOP Program of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). Millions of federal dollars to Michigan were preserved by passing PA 391 of 2008, which are used locally to support direct services to victims of sexual and domestic violence through SAS, SAFEPlace and the Calhoun County Prosecutor's Office. Secondly, PA 391 of 2008 created a fund through Michigan Crime Victims' Services, called the SAFE Response Fund, which allows QUALIFIED health providers to be reimbursed directly for the costs of providing a medical forensic examination for victims of

sexual assault when the victim does not consent to billing their health insurance for the service due to privacy/safety issues. Sexual assault victims typically have very strong feelings regarding their privacy and personal safety, which were taken into consideration when the SAS programs (including SANE) were created.

Understanding this issue as a potential barrier to seeking health care services after a sexual assault, SAS has never billed insurance for victim medical forensic examinations but instead found alternative means for providing health care AT NO COST to the victim, utilizing grants and donations to cover program costs.

Another powerful feature of PA 391 of 2008, especially important for the Michigan economy now, is the fact that the funding for the SAFE Response fund does not come from taxpayer dollars. SAFE Response fund dollars are from fines and penalties imposed on federal criminals which are provided from the federal Crime Victims' Compensation Act and administered by the Michigan Department of Community Health, Michigan Crime Victims' Services. In simple terms, criminals are paying for the medical forensic care of crime victims.

SAS staff members, along with many other individuals and groups from around Michigan and the nation,

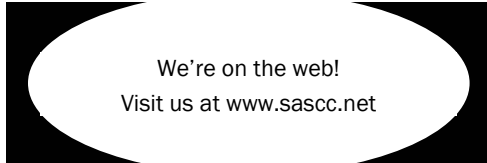
have worked very hard over the last few years to enact this kind of legislative protection of victims. Law makers, victim service providers, health care providers, community leaders, state professional organizations, state employees/boards/department directors, educators, researchers have all been an invaluable part of this process which created opportunities for dialog, idea sharing, cross disciplinary learning, and problem solving on the local, state and national level that will continue to have a positive impact on services for victims for years to come. It is an honor for our staff and community to have been selected to participate in this historic process.

“In simple terms, criminals are paying for the medical forensic care of crime victims.”

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*Working toward a
community free of sexual
violence.*

Battle Creek Health System is a major partner with Sexual Assault Services, donating space and in-kind services, making Sexual Assault Services a Health System, by the **Michigan Crime Victim Services Commission**. The agreement award of \$279,411.00 department of Battle Creek Health System. This project is funded by Grant No. 20448-12V06 awarded to Battle Creek (80%) of the project, comes from the Federal Crime Victims Fund, established by the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 administered by the Office of Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The Battle Creek Health System provides the required match valued at \$69,853.00 by the use of volunteers. Sexual Assault Services wishes to thank the **Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board** for their financial support of this project. This project was supported by Grant No. 99-WF-NX-0026 by the **Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice (STOP GRANT)**. Sexual Assault Services receives a full-membership grant from the **National Children's Alliance**. Sexual Assault Services also receives in-kind support from **Oaklawn Hospital** and **Play Care Learning Center(s)** in Marshall, and **St. Thomas Episcopal Church**, Battle Creek. Sexual Assault Services is a **United Way of Greater Battle Creek** Agency. Sexual Assault Services is supported by **The W. K. Kellogg Foundation**. Other current funding sources include: **The Battle Creek Community Foundation**, **The Marshall Community Foundation**, **The Marshall United Way**, **The Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Council**. Donations have been received from: **The Marshall Exchange Club**, **Crossroads Church and Ministries**, **The Battle Creek Exchange Club**, **The National Exchange Club Trust Fund**, **Zion Lutheran Church**, **Marshall, First Congregational Church (Battle Creek)**, **The Traveling Golf League**, and **Many Generous Individuals and Organizations**. **Assistance is available to Victims of Crime who wish to apply for Crime Victims Compensation.**



2009 Sexual Assault Services of Calhoun County Awards

The LaVern Brann Memorial Award for Outstanding Work in the Criminal Justice Field:

Kandyce Tabeling, Michigan State Police Department

Kandyce has worked on the Sexual Assault Response Team in Calhoun County for many years. She has served on the Sexual Assault/Abuse Coordinating Council, and has participated in community work to establish the Children's Advocacy Center. Kandyce has provided consistently understanding service to victims of sexual assault and child sexual abuse and we thank her for her Outstanding Work!!

The "Champions for Children" Award for Outstanding Work on the Children's Advocacy Center Multidisciplinary Team:

Deputy Luis Rivera, Calhoun County Sheriff's Department and Department of Human Services, Children's Protective Services Department: James Cochran.

Deputy Rivera was chosen because no matter when we call him, be it twenty minutes, one hour, or three days before the interview or meeting, Deputy Rivera responds to our request for help in conducting an interview with Spanish-speaking child or conversing with his/her family with the same urgency and importance as he uses with each of his cases. The Department of Human Services (DHS) was chosen because we appreciate and acknowledge that they chose to send a Child Protective Services worker to each interview - over 1,700 - despite personnel shortages, budget cuts, and oftentimes the lack of an open CPS case at the time of the interview.

The Douglas Mehlhorn, M.D., award for Outstanding Volunteerism and Service:

Linda Joy Delano

Linda Joy Delano has been a SAS Victim Advocate for over 11 years. She has gone 'above and beyond' assisting SAS and victims of sexual assault through her efforts. Linda Joy has taken many shifts after hours and over night to help survivors and our program when others were not available; she has often filled in at the last minute for others. We truly appreciate her dedication and kindness.

2009 Crime Victims' Rights Week

Phyllis VanOrder, Sexual Assault Services Nurse Examiner

Phyllis VanOrder was chosen this year for demonstrating that "the field of victim services is indeed a work of passion that is fueled by a value system of determination, hard work, integrity, and compassion" (Calhoun County Prosecutor's Office, Victim Services Unit).