


The Children's Safety Center, Inc. 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

RESTORING DREAMS



**children's
safety center**
of Washington County
Restoring Dreams

A young girl with brown hair and a yellow bow is smiling and looking upwards. Her face, neck, and white dress are covered in colorful paint splatters. The background is a blurred green field.

**The Children's Safety
Center served a
total of 672 alleged
victims of child
abuse in 2020.**

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It has been tough to reflect on 2020, as it was a difficult year for so many in our world. As I take a moment to think of the past year, I am aware it changed all of us in one way or another. However, I am thankful it brought our Children's Safety Center team closer. I am grateful I had the board of directors to guide me with decisions I had to make for the good of the team. Whether it was rotating staff fairly throughout the day, or deciding when it was safe to all be back in the office together. While dealing with their own realities at home and work, the CSC Board never wavered from empowering the team and me. These decisions enabled the CSC to never shut our doors during the pandemic or have to turn a child away for services. What a blessing!

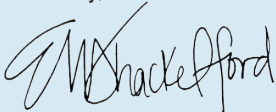
Honestly, I have never been more proud of the CSC team than during 2020. Everyone faced challenges, but met the challenges head on. The therapists immediately began tele-therapy and providing therapy sessions virtually. The child advocates took time to figure out the best ways to follow up with their clients and decided to put together and deliver dozens and dozens of COVID-19 Care Packages, providing children with groceries, board games, and activities for outside. Numerous times, the CSC was able to provide rent assistance, as well as assistance for utilities. The child advocates even figured out a way to continue painting hands with a sponge (that could be thrown away), instead of a paintbrush so we were able to place handprints on our walls.

In the beginning of COVID-19, the CSC Program Director thought, "how am I going to provide training to schools and the community, if I am unable to do so in person?" Quickly, Casey pivoted and began virtual trainings. These went over very well with community members and she was able to surpass her 2020 goal and provide more than 1,200 individuals, in Washington County, trainings regarding child abuse issues.

We knew early on that we would not be able to hold our largest annual fundraiser, Dream Big Charity Gala, in person with our usual 1,000 attendees present. Emily and the volunteers set out to make our first virtual fundraiser a success. They did not miss one detail, from the entertainment, to the online auction, to the interviews and videos. It was a perfect first virtual fundraiser for CSC. The support from our sponsors, donors, and volunteers was overwhelming and we are truly grateful for each of you.

Even while everyone has been wearing masks, we are still **seeing, listening, and hearing** the children. We are still meeting their needs with resources from our wonderful community. I believe this past year, the CSC also felt the largest, most positive impacts on our mission in more than 23 years. We had so many reaching out to provide for our children and their family's needs, but also for the CSC team needs. The CSC was able to provide Christmas to 322 children. All of this past year gave the entire team, as well as our volunteers hope for tomorrow. For all of this, I am appreciative. I wish all of you a healthy and happy new year. We see a bright future ahead for the Children's Safety Center and I hope you continue to be a part of our healing.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Moore Shackelford
Executive Director



CHILD ABUSE IN OUR COUNTY

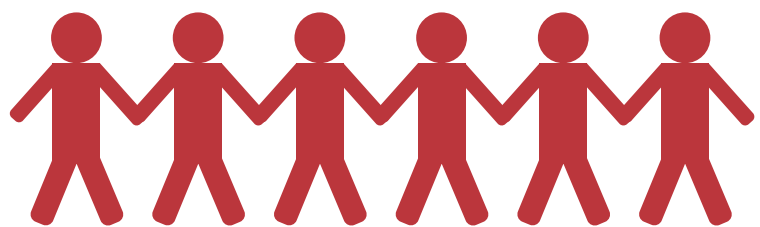
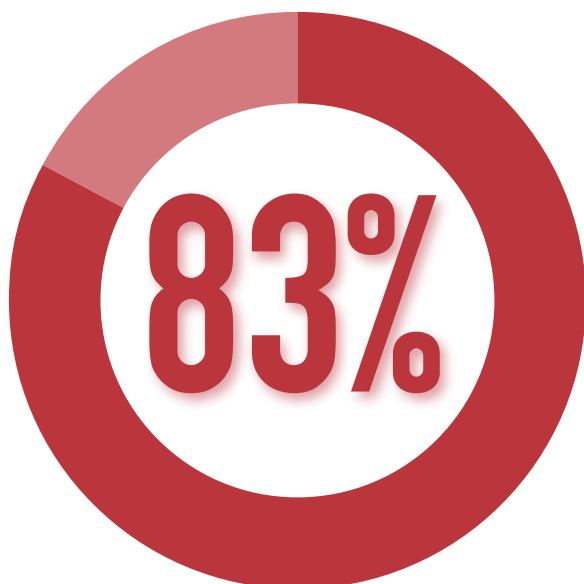
Since 1997, the Children's Safety Center has been the expert resource on child abuse in Washington County. Our teams are first responders to reports of child sexual and physical abuse, and we coordinate the response of the county's law enforcement, child protection, and medical professionals.

Child abuse occurs in every community in Washington County

- Regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status or any other demographic
- Sexual abuse is most often a repeated crime
- Victims often suffer in silence for months, years, or a lifetime before abuse is discontinued or reported
- 90% of sexual abuse is by someone the child knows
- Abusers often have regular access to victims by being a family friend, babysitter, or family member

Sexual abuse across the U.S.

- 1 in 10 children are sexually abused before turning 18
- Only 20-40% of child sexual abuse is ever reported to authorities
- Experiencing child sexual abuse has long-term health impacts, as well as increased risk of poor academic performance, being a victim of other violence, drug abuse, depression, and suicide



**of the children served at the
CSC in 2020 were victims
of alleged sexual abuse**



LUCY

Age 10

Lucy came to the Children's Safety Center after disclosing that her grandfather had been sexually abusing her. Understandably, Lucy was nervous about getting her medical exam and, at first, declined it. But after learning that her advocate would be with her the entire time, she agreed. Later, while placing her handprint on the wall, Lucy turned to her advocate and said, ***"That wasn't scary at all!"***

COVID RESPONSE

Client Impact

The Children's Safety Center has always provided services to the both our clients and their care givers. This can include providing diapers or food, finding alternative living situations, or referring non-offending parents to mental health services. With increased unemployment, kids not being in school, and other effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, child advocates, therapists, and the rest of the CSC staff have gone even further to provide for the families we serve.

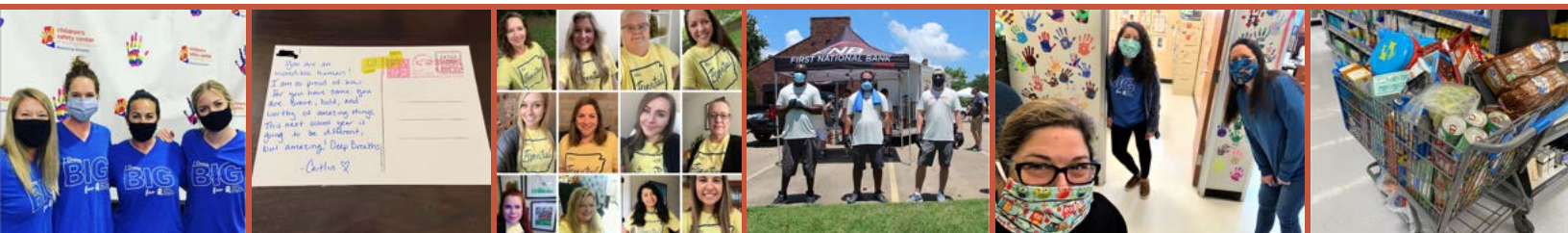
Providing Therapy in a Pandemic

This year our therapists have gone above and beyond to safely provide therapy to our clients. They provided services with telehealth, so each child was able to continue on the path to healing. Since this made it difficult to utilize tools such as art therapy, our therapists put together bags which they delivered to their client's homes.



Events in 2020

Due to shutdowns, distancing, and limited capacity, our annual fundraising events looked different than normal. Because of the support from our community, we were able to successfully host both events while meeting safety standards. We switched our crawfish boil to a drive through event which completely sold out in an hour. Just a month later, we were able to shift our annual Dream Big Charity Gala to a completely virtual event in which over 3,000+ people joined in live to watch our program and participate in our silent auction. As we continue to find ways to overcome the set backs of Covid-19, we are grateful for our community's unwavering support.





SERVICES

The Children's Safety Center is a 24-hour crisis center for children and their families to receive immediate services. We attempt to eliminate any barriers between the services a child needs and the services a child receives. For this reason, all of our services are offered at no charge, as long as the family needs them.

Advocacy

In the midst of a crisis, we believe our priority should be the safety and healing of our children and families. Our child advocates strive to provide families with the resources they need as well as navigating them through the legal process during their moments of crisis and beyond. Services provided by the program include: needs assessments, community resource referrals, home visits, attending court hearings with the children and help applying for Crime Victims' Compensation funds. In 2020, our advocates went even further to provide care to our clients and their families. With increased unemployment and other outcomes of the Covid-19 pandemic, we were able to provide rent and utilities assistance, groceries, and care packages to our families in need. Advocacy can be on-going and is not defined by any specific time frame.

Forensic Interviews

Minimizing the number of times children must tell their stories of trauma is fundamental to the Center's mission. Trained CSC forensic interviewers conduct non-leading, fact-finding interviews at the beginning of the investigative process in order to minimize the number of times a child has to tell his or her story of abuse or neglect. The interviews are recorded to preserve the child's statement, while law enforcement and/or the Department of Children and Family Services watch the outcry behind secure doors, in hopes that the child will have to tell his/her story once.

Medical Services

Onsite in the center's medical suite, the CSC Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (S.A.N.E.) conduct acute and non-acute forensic sexual assault examinations for children. Services also include sexually transmitted infection testing, and case consultations.

Mental Health Therapy

The ultimate goal of our therapy program is simple, to help child abuse victims and their non-offending family members heal from trauma. Through highly individualized and specialized therapeutic counseling using trauma informed therapeutic interventions, our therapists strive to restore emotional functioning and to ensure a positive and productive adulthood. Our empirically sound, innovative types of therapy are diverse and include: Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TFCBT), Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP). This year, our therapists transitioned into providing telehealth therapy and support groups for clients and their caregivers. Our therapy program, is comprised of two full-time therapists and the center serves as an accredited training site for graduate level student internships from local universities.

IN 2020, THE CHILDREN'S SAFETY CENTER...



672

children & families
received advocacy
services



555

children received
forensic interviews



79

children received
S.A.N.E. examinations



1,683

therapy sessions
conducted

AGE

0-10 | 338

11-17+ | 304

Youngest:
11 Days Old

Average Age:
10 Years Old

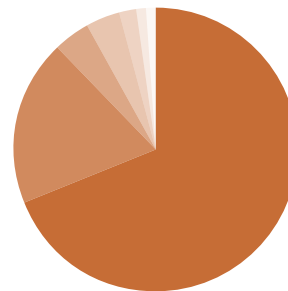
GENDER

Female | 368

Male | 215

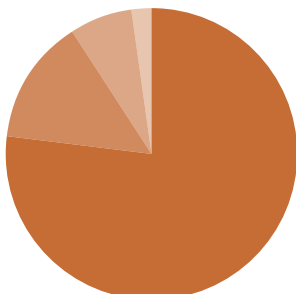
Non-binary | 1

RACE



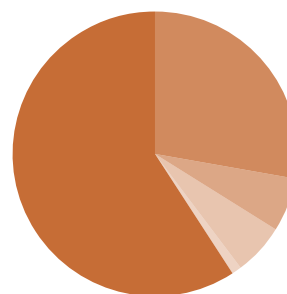
- White | 69%
- Hispanic/Latino | 19%
- African American/Black | 4%
- Multiracial | 4%
- Pacific Islander | 2%
- Asian | 1%
- Native American | 1%

ALLEGATION



- Sexual Abuse | 77%
- Physical Abuse | 14%
- 2 or More Allegations | 7%
- Neglect | 2%

ALLEGED KNOWN OFFENDER



- Other Known Person | 59%
- Parent | 28%
- Step-Parent | 6%
- Other Relative | 6%
- Parent's Boyfriend/Girlfriend | 1%

PREVENTION

Prevention – Keeping Children Safe

Protecting Children is our top priority. That is why we are continuing to educate our community on child abuse prevention by implementing the Empower Me! Curriculum as well as child sexual abuse prevention trainings. These programs raise awareness of the prevalence and consequences of child sexual abuse by educating children and adults about the steps they may take to prevent, recognize, and react responsibly to the threat of child sexual abuse.

Recognizing, Responding, and Reporting Child Abuse

In 2020, over 350 community members completed our child abuse prevention trainings. The CSC Program Director may go to any agency, organization, or business in the community to conduct this presentation, however, many of these trainings have been conducted virtually this year. These courses apply to any adult who comes in contact with children whether through their job, church, or as a parent or relative to any child. Our Program Director also hosts mandated reporter trainings for teachers, church staff, youth serving organizations, and other professionals in the community, and was able to reach over 650 people this year. We are excited to continue these important prevention trainings throughout the community in 2021!

Empower Me!

Over the last few years, the CSC Program Director has been able to implement our Empower Me! curriculum to all of the public schools in Washington County. These are hosted for local area schools to train school counselors on the body safety education curriculum. The counselors then implement Empower Me! directly with students in kindergarden through sixth grade. The training is meant to be three-fold: the first piece is training the counselors, next is mandated reported training for schools staff, and finally we offer a parent night to educate caregivers and equip them of the same critical information. Although this year presented new challenges, the CSC Program Director worked to bring Empower Me! to new places like private schools, Pre-K programs, and homeschool parents as well as refresher courses in our public schools.

Financials

Federal/State Grant Funds	\$412,397.95	Individual/Family/Business	\$183,274.09
Crime/Victim Reparations	\$70, 800.79	Local Grants	\$329,512.13
Fundraising Events	\$214,929.98	Total	\$1,210,914.94

MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM

Our Multidisciplinary Team consists of:

- Arkansas State Police Crimes Against Children Investigators
- Washington County Prosecutors
- Department of Human Services Division of Children and Family Services Investigators
- Washington County Sheriff's Office
- Fayetteville, Springdale, Farmington, Greenland, West Fork, Elkins, Lincoln, and Prairie Grove Police Departments
- Children's Safety Center
- Circuit Court
- Juvenile Court



TESTIMONIALS



“The Children's Safety Center works to address one of the worst problems in our area. Child sexual abuse is harsh, but when I leave the CSC I feel hope. The positive attitude of the staff is infectious. As a donor, I am happy to be a part of the solution with them.”

JANE HUNT, CSC SUPPORTER



“The work done here at the Children’s Safety Center is incredibly important. I know that because of the CSC and our partnership, help is always one phone call away.”

**NICKALUS WHITE, DETECTIVE
SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS UNIT
FAYETTEVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT**



“I know I've said it over and over but thank you! This last year has been stressful, and you held ‘Sarah’ together through the tough things. You’ve taught her so much. My family can’t put into words what you've done for ‘Sarah’. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. You gave me back my happy girl.”

FATHER OF CSC CLIENT

CHILDREN'S SAFETY CENTER STAFF



ELIZABETH SHACKELFORD
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



CASEY ATWOOD, LSW
PROGRAM DIRECTOR



KAREN BLACKSTONE
FORENSIC INTERVIEWER



EMILY RAPPE' FISHER
DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR



DEBBEE DECKARD
FORENSIC INTERVIEWER



BRITJNI JEFFERS, LSW
CHILD ADVOCATE



MARGARITA SANCHEZ
BILINGUAL CHILD ADVOCATE



ANNAFRANCES CHANCELLOR
CHILD ADVOCATE



LINDSEY WAGNER, LMSW
CHILD ADVOCATE



JENI MCINTYRE, LCSW
THERAPIST



CAITILIN HOUK, LMSW
THERAPIST



PEYTON STEWMAN
STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS
COORDINATOR



AMY SMITH
OFFICE MANAGER

CONTRACT SEXUAL ASSAULT NURSE EXAMINERS

DR. ANDY KOEHLER
VOLUNTEER MEDICAL DIRECTOR

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NWA REGIONAL SANE COORDINATOR

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APRN, MSN, FNP-C

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HEATHER MIZE, RN

AMBER O'MALLEY,
MSN, RN, SANE-A/P

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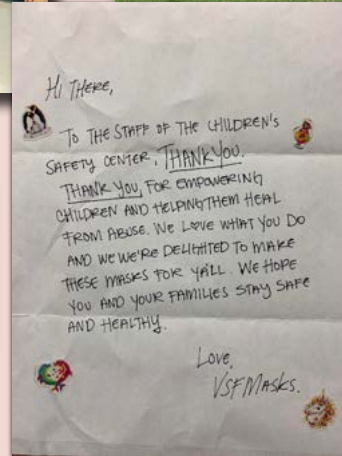
GAGE


Age 8

After being placed in a foster home due to environmental neglect, Gage finally felt safe enough to disclose physical and sexual abuse by his mother's boyfriend while at the Children's Safety Center. Though he wasn't sure about it at first, Gage started to look forward to his sessions with his CSC therapist. He eventually asked her, ***"What do you have to do to get this job? I really want to help people and do what you do."***



2020 IN PHOTOS



A photograph of several children lying on their backs, covering their eyes with their hands. They are smiling, suggesting a playful or shy gesture. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent orange filter. A thin white vertical line is positioned above the text.

RESTORING DREAMS FOR 23 YEARS

CHILDREN'S SAFETY CENTER OF WASHINGTON COUNTY