

The Children's Safety Center, Inc. 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

RESTORING DREAMS



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

A young girl with light brown, curly hair and a large yellow bow is shown from the chest up. She is smiling and looking upwards and to the right. Her face, neck, and white sleeveless top are covered in colorful paint splatters in shades of red, orange, yellow, and purple. The background is a blurred green field.

**The Children's Safety
Center served a
total of 632 alleged
victims of child
abuse in 2021.**

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



One word I keep going back to, while briefly summing up 2021 is resiliency. Not only are children and teenagers we help resilient, but the Children's Safety Center team and partner agencies are also resilient -- every single day.

We all continued to survive the pandemic, while helping hundreds of children and teens begin their journey of healing. I am thankful every single day, to lead a group of dedicated individuals, each with servant hearts. It is evident with their mindfulness, selflessness, and compassion -- each one truly cares about their work and their clients, as well as how the CSC may best assist in the response to child abuse investigations.

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month and on April 30th, the CSC announced to our partner agencies the purchase of 7 acres of land on Gene George Boulevard, along Springdale's Care Corridor. Emily and I were able to explain our plans to build a stand-alone facility and share our excitement of how we had begun fundraising for our "Healing the Future" campaign in July 2019. During our announcement we had secured \$6 million.

In October, the CSC proudly announced the naming of the new J.B. and Johnelle Hunt Family Children's Safety Center. It was one of the best days of my career. You could feel the excitement of everyone who gathered to celebrate such an enormous milestone. The moment was 25 years in the making and the pride was evident on all the faces of those gathered. By the end of the year, we raised \$10.7 million of our \$12.5 million capital campaign goal.

As always, the CSC advocates provided clients and their family members more than the initial crisis intervention and direct support or home visits, but also provided rent and utility assistance, gas cards, groceries, beds, bedding, clothing, school supplies, and so much more.

The therapy program continued serving clients with trauma based therapy sessions, as well as therapists provided a parent group, two teen girls group, a grief group, and two LGBTQ groups. We experienced much success with all the groups and hope to continue providing the extra support.

Casey was able to continue prevention training throughout the schools and communities. She was able to train more than 2,000 individuals.

With COVID-19 still a part of our world, Emily and her committees were able to hold a dual, virtual/in person event for the annual Dream Big Charity Gala. It was a fun event held on a gorgeous evening, at Prairie Street Live, with adults and children in attendance.

You may have noticed our presence on social media platforms has increased, thanks to our Strategic Partnership Coordinator, Peyton Stewman. Peyton was a volunteer for the center, while she attended the University of Arkansas. To have Peyton as part of our team has been a dream come true and she has increased our outreach ten-fold.

I could write pages and pages of all the CSC experienced last year. Please know we continue to value you and I would like to ask you to continue being an advocate for the children and teenagers we help. I only see more growth on the horizon and I hope each of you will continue to invest and be a part of our organization. In 2022 there is only more to come, as we celebrate 25 years of our work, in Washington County. We will look back and celebrate those who were resilient and began the center and we will keep looking forward and planning how we will continue our work for 25 more years!

Cheers to you!



Executive Director

CHILD ABUSE IN OUR COUNTY

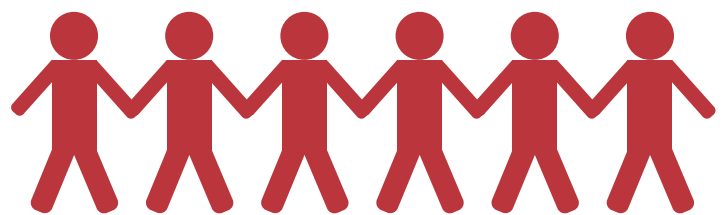
Since 1997, the Children's Safety Center has been the expert resource on child abuse in Washington County. Our teams are first responders to reports of child sexual and physical abuse, and we coordinate the response of the county's law enforcement, child protection, and medical professionals.

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 2021 WERE VICTIMS OF
ALLEGED SEXUAL ABUSE**



Luna, Age 11

“I thought this was going to be the scariest thing ever, but being here with people that make me feel safe and comfortable has made this experience so much better.”

IN 2021, AT THE CHILDREN'S SAFETY CENTER...



632

children & families
received advocacy
services



499

children received
forensic interviews



65

children received
S.A.N.E. examinations



1,808

therapy sessions
conducted

AGE

0-10 | 273

11-17+ | 359

Youngest:
3 Weeks Old

Average Age:
11 Years Old

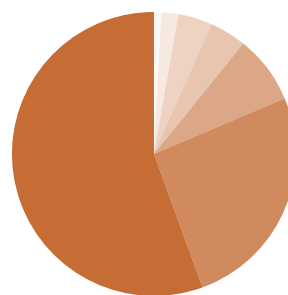
GENDER

Female | 458

Male | 174

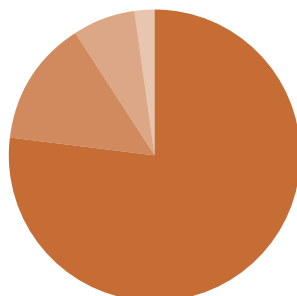
15 children served openly
identify as transgender

RACE



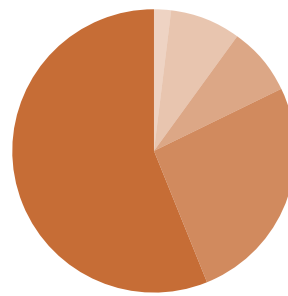
- White | 55%
- Hispanic/Latinx | 26%
- Multiracial | 8%
- African American/Black | 4%
- Pacific Islander | 4%
- Native American | 2%
- Asian | 1%

ALLEGATION



- Sexual Abuse | 74%
- Physical Abuse | 17%
- 2 or More Allegations | 6%
- Neglect | 3%

ALLEGED KNOWN OFFENDER



- Other Known Person | 56%
- Parent | 26%
- Step-Parent | 8%
- Other Relative | 8%
- Parent's Boyfriend/Girlfriend | 2%



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. Since 2020, our advocates have gone 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 more 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. A forensic interview at CSC is a collaborative team approach toward giving a child or teenager the opportunity to make a statement regarding all types of alleged abuse and or a witness statement of a crime. Trained and professional interviewers conduct non-leading, fact-finding interviews that also meets the child or teenager communication, development, emotional and cognitive needs.

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 were able to provide both telehealth and in-person therapy and support groups for clients and their caregivers. Our therapy program is comprised of one full-time therapist, one contract therapist, and three graduate level student interns from local universities.

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





PREVENTION

Mandated Reporting – Recognizing, Responding, and Reporting Child Abuse

Making a report of child abuse can be stressful. The CSC wants community members to feel confident and educated on the process, as well as fulfilling their requirements and duties as a Mandated Reporter. In 2021, our Program Director provided this training to over 1500 adults in our community, including multiple local school districts staff. Attendees of this training are often school staff, faith communities, youth serving organizations, or anyone who works with children. Mandated Reporter Trainings are free of charge and discuss an overview of the CSC and services provided, dynamics of child abuse, physical and behavioral signs of all types of child maltreatment, mandated reporting laws, and how to appropriately respond to a disclosure and gather information to make a report. This training can be conducted in English and Spanish.

Prevention – Preventing Child Sexual Abuse and Protecting Children

Protecting children is our top priority. That is why the CSC continues to educate our community by providing free child sexual abuse prevention trainings. The CSC routinely provides a one hour training, as well as Darkness to Light's Stewards of Children training, which is a video based two hour training. These trainings are tailored to parents, family members, foster parents, and anyone who cares for children. Both training options discuss dynamics of child sexual abuse, signs to look for, how to talk to your child about body safety, internet safety, as well as how to respond to a disclosure of abuse. These trainings can be conducted in English and Spanish.

Children Curriculum – Empower Me!

The CSC offers a body safety curriculum called Empower Me!, which we have implemented in all of the public elementary schools in Washington County. Free of charge, the CSC trains school counselors in the curriculum and the counselors then provide the education directly to the students. The curriculum is designed for K-5th grade students and includes three components. First, the children receive the education, then the school staff receive training on how to recognize, respond and report, and lastly, we offer a parent night to educate parents about the curriculum and child abuse prevention.

In 2021, the CSC provided prevention education to over 2,100 adults and are excited to continue these important prevention initiatives in 2022!

TESTIMONIALS



"I think it's important to show that things like this [abuse] do happen and that there is a process and a program already in place to help children. It is not just children that need to speak out but the adults in their lives, the teachers, the coaches, the supervisors. Anybody that sees anything needs to say something. We are committed to this cause in Washington County."

Jane & Bryan Hunt, CSC Supporters



"In spite of all of the trauma and child abuse the CSC staff are witness too, they continue their work tirelessly, and always have a great attitude. I know we, as law enforcement, can call on them day or night and they will respond quickly and efficiently to help any situation we throw their way."

Detective Scott O'Dell, Fayetteville Police Dept.



Our family is so grateful to have an advocate at the CSC. In situations like this, it is reassuring to have someone to talk to. I feel heard, and, most importantly, I know that there is someone else looking out for my son.

Mother of CSC Client

CHILDREN'S SAFETY CENTER STAFF



ELIZABETH SHACKELFORD
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



CASEY ATWOOD, LSW
PROGRAM DIRECTOR



EMILY RAPPE' FISHER
DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR



LINDSEY WAGNER, LMSW
CLINICAL DIRECTOR



KAREN BLACKSTONE
FORENSIC INTERVIEWER



DEBBEE DECKARD
FORENSIC INTERVIEWER



ANNAFRANCES PASLAY
CHILD ADVOCATE



MARGARITA SANCHEZ
*BILINGUAL CHILD
ADVOCATE*



MIRIAM NAVARRO
*BILINGUAL CHILD
ADVOCATE*



PEYTON STEWMAN
*STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP
COORDINATOR*



LEAH SCOTTI
OFFICE MANAGER

CONTRACT SEXUAL ASSAULT NURSE EXAMINERS

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2021 IN PHOTOS



A photograph of several children lying on their stomachs, covering their eyes with their hands. They are wearing colorful clothing (yellow, orange, red, green, blue). The image is partially obscured by a large white text overlay.

RESTORING DREAMS FOR 24 YEARS

CHILDREN'S SAFETY CENTER OF WASHINGTON COUNTY