



# FROM THE DIRECTOR The Other 16,700

We are often asked how many children walk through the doors of the Children's Advocacy Center of Kent County on an annual basis. When we say 1,000 children, most people are shocked. While it is startling to think about that many children in our county experiencing the trauma of being sexually abused, what keeps me and many others up at night are the children that do not make it through our doors. The children that are threatened with violence by their abusers to keep quiet. The boys that are too afraid to tell someone out of fear of what others will think about their sexual identity. The young ones that do not want to get someone they love and truste in trouble. The girls that are shamed into silence.

And there are a lot of children experiencing this crisis.

One out of every 10 children (or 10%) will be sexually abused before their 18th birthday. According to the last US Census, the population of children in Kent County under 18 years of age was just over 177,000. Ten percent of that is 17,700. There are 17,700 children in our community who experience sexual abuse and are being ignored, forced to live in fear, or shamed.

While our multidisciplinary team works tirelessly to provide services to the children who do come through our doors, we recognize the urgency in identifying all of the children that need our help and the barriers that inhibit them from receiving support.

Last year, our team and board committed to working hard to ensure that the Children's Advocacy Center of Kent County is known as a safe place for every child in Kent County. To do so requires a multi-pronged approach and leans heavily on our community for guidance and participation. Our strategy includes:

- Launching the Community Advisory Council, which is composed of people from organizations, neighborhoods, and community groups representing various populations in Kent County that we want to learn how to better serve. The Council's role will be to advise CAC staff and our multidisciplinary team partners through listening sessions to understand how we can ensure that we are able to provide our services to significantly more children and their families.
- CAC staff and board members will continue their work in building our global capacity which is an ongoing effort to strengthen our collective understanding of the social systems and cultural diversity of our community and importantly, the specific implications those have for children who have been sexually abused.
- Increasing our capacity to provide holistic case management to caregivers and families of our clients. The vast impact of child sexual abuse does not end with the child. We have found that helping to address income stabilization, assistance with residency documentation, and food insecurity makes it more likely that families will have positive outcomes.
- Exploring ways to grow our capacity to potentially provide off-site services, such as tele-therapy, tele-forensics, satellite locations, and in-home or in-school therapy.
- Ensuring diversified, sustainable, and robust revenue to expand our services.

Child sexual abuse is the uncomfortable, unwelcomed, community problem that we all find it difficult to talk about. Nevertheless, we must talk about it, and we must work toward solutions, because far too many children in our community are hurting. We welcome all in joining us in this important effort.

Together, we can do this.

In partnership, Melissa Werkman **Executive Director** 

Murstentaman



"This paper planter is made from pages of her bad memories written in a trauma narrative journal. It will serve as a reminder that her bad memories will always be a part of her, but that the growth and healing that she has fostered is worthy of caring for, too."

-CAC Therapist, Alicia



# It Wasn't Her Fault

"It's really hard for me to make new friends in school and sometimes I get so mad that I hit my little brother and sister." Taylor shared in her therapy session that anger and frustration can get the best of her when she doesn't know how to deal with her emotions.

She began therapy at the Children's Advocacy Center of Kent County in October 2018 when she was just 7 years old, after being sexually abused by an older cousin. Taylor's parents were going through a divorce around the same time that she disclosed her abuse. She felt like everything was her fault and that she hurt her family by telling someone about the awful things she was experiencing at the hands of someone she loved and cared for.

Many children working through trauma, like Taylor, experience a cognitive dissonance when reflecting on the reality that their offender is someone they love and also someone who hurt them. Our therapists provide them with reassurance that their feelings are valid, they did not deserve what happened to them, and it's okay to let go of people who hurt them.

Throughout her time in therapy, Taylor was able to understand that what happened to her was not her fault. She was able to make several new friends and even taught her new friends how to express their own emotions. She has found new coping skills and has not physically harmed anyone in over six months. Taylor has learned how important her feelings can be. But more importantly, she learned that she does not always have to face her hardships alone and to ask for help.

# **The Impact of Victim-Blaming**

The big sweater or the short-sleeve shirt? The fitted jeans or the baggy sweat pants? These were the decisions that Vanessa was burdened with while preparing for a forensic interview at the Children's Advocacy Center of Kent County. She was afraid someone would think that she was promiscuous and wouldn't believe her story because of what chose to wear. Thankfully, with reassurance from her mother, Vanessa was able to confidently participate in a forensic interview and tell her story without fear of judgement.

Victim-blaming is the attitude which suggests the victim did something to provoke the assault by their actions, words, or dress. Our society and the prevalence of victim-blaming on social media has made it challenging for victims of sexual abuse to tell someone.

It is our responsibility to challenge the assumptions provoked by victimblaming and create a safe space for victims to tell their story and to be believed.



# Regardless of the size, your ongoing gift matters to our work!

By scheduling a recurring contribution, you make a greater impact by:

CREATING PREDICTABLE REVENUE: Ongoing giving allows for program planning, reduces staffing fluctuations, and ensures operational consistency

REDUCING INEFFICIENCIES: On average, nonprofits see fewer than 50% of donors renew their gifts from year to year. That means that rather than spending more of their time cultivating meaningful long-term partnerships, development staff need to spend more time on administrative tasks.

BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP: Giving should lead to a strong partnership between a donor and the CAC as we work in tandem to strengthen the community. Focusing your giving to a mission that matters with a sustaining gift allows for you to be integral to creating impact:

you learn more about the problem of child sexual abuse

you become an advocate and share information with family, friends, and co-workers on how imperative it is that we play a part in eliminating the devastating impact of trauma on children and families

you become an instrument of change

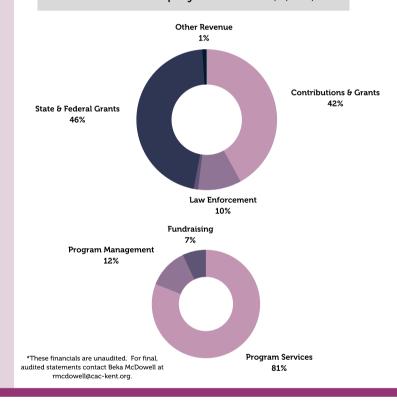
If you would like to learn more about how you can make an impact through ongoing giving, contact Tatum Hawkins, Development & Communications Director, at 616-336-4033 or thawkins@cac-kent.org.

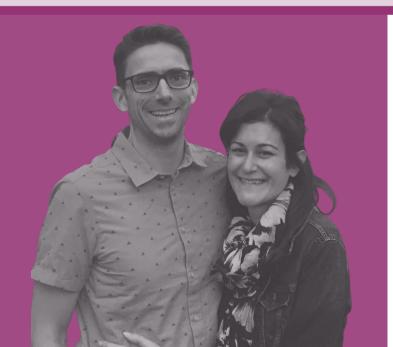


Condensed Statement of Financial Postition\*

#### FY20 Finances

Assets	
Current Assets	\$485,161
Property and Equipment (Net)	\$2,752,902
Other Assets (Promises to Give)	\$594,321
Total Assets	\$3,832,385
Liabilities & Equity	
Current Liabilities	\$22,679
Long-Term Liabilities	\$65,000
Equity	\$3,744,706
Total Liabilities & Equity	\$3,832,385





### Why We Give

"We give to the Children's Advocacy Center of Kent County because they help provide a platform and voice to the most vulnerable among us. Their work with children who have been victimized requires the resources to simplify what is otherwise a complex, time-consuming, and traumatic process. A gift of any size sustains an organization and environment that puts children first and helps them begin to heal."

Erik Daly & Jessica Bloom Donors since 2017 and Circle of Care members

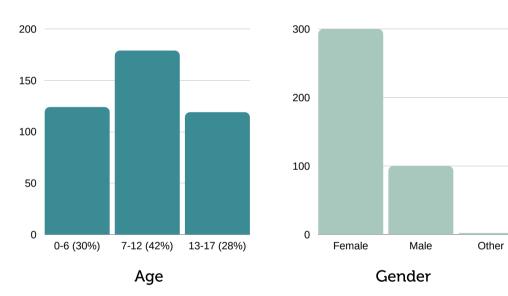
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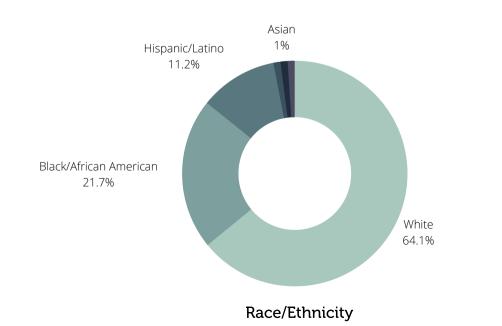
#### 2020 Clinical Impact

October 1, 2019-September 30, 2020

456	1719	114
Forensic	Counseling	Parents receiving
Interviews	Sessions	case management

#### New Client Demographics





Circle of Care members provide sustaining support to children on their journey to healing.

#### Circle of Care

**Robert and Nancy Bierenga** Bob Bockheim and Anne Bishop John Boeschenstein Tim and Stacy Breadon Tracy Breihof Dr. William and Kathy Bush Lisa Cicinelli Carl and Darlene Cress Erik Daly and Jessica Bloom Jeffrey DeLongchamp Eric Deuker Chuck and Barb DeVries Lawrence and Jennifer Duthler Amanda and Justin Fielder Max Friar Jane Gietzen David and Michele Hardy Ken and Jane Hilbert Denny and Linda Hoemke Erin Hoffman and Elissa Stormo-Hoffman Win and Kyle Irwin Jeff Jackson Nancy Jesko Jenelle and Sean Kelsch Dawn and Mark Kibben JD Loeks Deborah McNabb Fran and David Miller Ron and Patty Miller Anne Mohan Walter and Roxann Monroe Sam and Kim Nicholas Scott and Marcy Nicholson Keith and Deanne Oosterbaan John and Mandy Pike Suzanne Smith-Popma and Jason Popma Tom and Sharon Schaap **Ryan Schmidt** Gail and David Scott Bruce and Kim Seitz Hon. Sara Smolenski and Linda Burpee Tom Stanley David and Amelia Start Sheriff Larry and Iris Stelma Chad Sytsma Dan and Tania Tomaszewski Dave and Sandy Turner Diane Turnwall Dr. Michael and Rebecca Vredenburg John and Vicky Weller Stephan and Jennifer Wolf Bob and Tracy Wolford

The following supporters have committed to a legacy gift in their estate plans.

Legacy of Hope & Healing Society Robert and Nancy Bierenga John Boeschenstein Sue A. Kern Carolyn Otzman

# phi·lan·thro·py

/FƏ'LANTHRƏPĒ/ (NOUN) LOVE FOR HUMANKIND. DERIVED FROM THE GREEK WORDS "PHILOS," WHICH MEANS LOVING AND "ANTHROPOS," WHICH MEANS HUMANKIND.

# Thank You

During the 2019-2020 program year, we received \$708,475 in contributions from 657 donors, foundations, and local businesses. Our work to end child sexual abuse continues because of your generosity. A complete listing of donors is available on our website at www.cac-kent.org/documents-reports.

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### CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER & SHERIFF'S OFFICE PARTNER FOR BODY SAFETY BOOK SERIES

When schools closed as a pandemic safety precaution, it was evident early on that we would face challenges providing body safety education during the following school year. With remote and hybrid learning becoming the new temporary normal, our staff and partners worked to find solutions to insure that children in our community would still have access to body safety education.

At the beginning of the school year, our Kids Have Rights program partnered with the Kent County Sheriff's Office to produce, Right Time for Story Time, a series of read-aloud videos for children in preschool through fourth grade. These videos provide children and their caregivers opportunities to engage in ongoing body safety conversations. There is an English and Spanish version of each video, and a follow-up activity. The Right Time for Story Time series can be accessed under the "Resources" tab at www.cac-kent.org.

We invite you to watch the videos with the young children in your home and use the additional resources to have body safety conversations. It is our hope that every child in our community can continue to have access to body safety education. We know that it is only through working collectively and consistently that we can stop the silent epidemic of child sexual abuse.





# 22,442

children received body safety education during the 2019-2020 school year.

000

970

classroom lessons provided by Kids Have Rights during the 2019-2020 school year. 15

children disclosed they had been sexually abused after participating in a Kids Have Rights lesson.



## Remembering Chief William Hegarty June 18, 1939-July 4, 2020

Chief William Hegarty led a police department committed to working tirelessly to seek justice for children in Kent County who experienced sexual abuse. It was when he met a young girl in a yellow dress who came into the lobby of the police station in great distress that he recognized that the investigation process followed by the justice and social service system had the ill-effect of continually re-traumatizing children. Out of that realization and a collective desire to support children and reduce trauma as much as possible, the Children's Advocacy Center of Kent County was established over 27 years ago.

William Hegarty will leave a legacy of hope, and thanks in large part to his vision and leadership thousands of children in Kent County are able to begin their journey of healing. We wish to extend our love and support to his wife, Teri, and their family in their grieving his loss and celebrating the man he was to our community and, more importantly, to their lives.

#### **Memorial Gifts**

(October 1, 2019-September 30, 2020) Donations have been given in memory of the following individuals:

Deb Bailey - Jane Brink - Chief William Hegarty - Kathy Jackson - Joni Kowalczyk Ray Martin - Linda Louise Michaels - Bill Porter - Linda Raterink

### **Board of Directors**

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Mercedes Toohey Consultant and Community Volunteer

Lonna Wiersma Senior Vice President, Human Resources Director, Mercantile Bank of Michigan

Tracy Wolford Community Advocate

### **Upcoming Events**

Virtual Walk In Their Shoes Tours Hosted the second Tuesday of every month at 12pm

Thursday, January 28, 2021, 12pm Donor Learning Session: Adverse Childhood Experiences

Thursday, February 25, 2021, 12pm Donor Learning Session: Building Resiliency

Wednesday, April 21, 2021 Third Annual Summit to Stop Child Sexual Abuse

Wednesday, May 12, 2021, 12pm Believe the Child Luncheon

> For more information about upcoming events or to register contact Tatum Hawkins at thawkins@cac-kent.org.

# Donors

We are sincerely grateful and honored to acknowledge the following donors who have given to the Children's Advocacy Center of Kent County between October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020 We have made every attempt to ensure the accuracy of this information. If you have any questions regarding the following list, please contact Tatum Hawkins at thawkins@cac-kent.org.

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