

Advocacy Center for the Children of El Paso

El Paso's **only** Children's Advocacy Center



Advocacy Center
for the Children of El Paso



Congressman Beto O'Rourke Keynote Speaker 17th Anniversary Event

The Advocacy Center for the Children of El Paso is the only organization to serve as the first stop for children entering the justice system because of suspected sexual abuse, severe physical abuse, and those who have witnessed a violent crime. Last year, over 1,000 children received critical services at the Advocacy Center. Child sexual abuse is a crime of secrecy which, tragically, breeds within our communities because it's difficult to talk about. That's why communication and openly discussing this issue, is the most effective tool we have to put a stop to child abuse. We believe that the eradication of child abuse begins with building informed, empowered communities with the courage to talk openly about child abuse. This year we will be celebrating our 17th Anniversary of providing critical services to the El Paso community. Our Keynote speaker this year will be Congressman Beto O'Rourke.



Congressman O'Rourke was elected to represent the people of the 16th District of Texas in November 2012. Prior to his Congressional service, he served two terms on El Paso's City Council. Born and raised in El Paso, he has been deeply involved in civic, business and community efforts in his hometown. Congressman O'Rourke will help us in getting our message out about child abuse and the services that are provided at the Advocacy Center. Thank you Congressman O'Rourke for supporting "our kids"!



Spring 2013 Edition

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A letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friend of the Advocacy Center,

The Advocacy Center for the Children of El Paso (ACCEP) is El Paso's only Children's Advocacy Center. We assist child victims when they are first identified as victims of severe physical or sexual abuse. ACCEP is a not-for-profit organization developed through collaboration with law enforcement, prosecuting attorneys, Child Protective Services, and medical and therapeutic partners to help children victimized by physical and sexual abuse. This year we are celebrating our 17th year of helping victimized children receive healing services. As the founding Executive Director, people often ask "Isn't that work hard? How could you still be there after so many years?" My answer is "Yes, it's hard- but if our Center was not here to help children hurt by the most horrific crimes committed against them, our kids would not have the opportunity to be heard."

Meet Maggie (not her real name). She had just turned 12 years old, when her house was burglarized at 2:00 a.m. She was sleeping in her bedroom, while her mother woke up and confronted the robber. It was at that moment he changed from burglar to rapist. He sexually assaulted Maggie's mother (in front of Maggie) and after tying up her mother, raped Maggie. Maggie and her mother were both taken for a sexual assault examination. Maggie's pajamas, torn and stained, became part of the forensic evidence, and when she arrived at our Center at 8:00 a.m., she needed appropriate clothing and breakfast. Maggie felt scared and violated. ACCEP provided comforting care as well as all other immediate needs and clothing for Maggie. This was done as she waited to be interviewed by a trained ACCEP professional to obtain information to find and prosecute the person responsible. Maggie and her mother were immediately provided victims' services to help them heal (medical and therapeutic) and relocation information and assistance. With counseling, and healing support, Maggie is coping, feeling more confident, and doing better on her personal road to healing.

ACCEP, with a dedicated staff of four and trained volunteers, currently assists over 1,000 child victims, plus their non-offending family members each and every year. We truly impact the lives of children when they need it most. Child victims of severe physical and/or sexual abuse and their non-offending family members are provided services from the Advocacy Center for the Children of El Paso on a priority basis, seven days a week, 24 hours a day, as required. You allow us to make that happen! On behalf of victims like Maggie, we thank you for your support.

Executive Director



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Child Abuse is everyone's business!

If you believe a child is being abused or neglected it is your legal duty to report.

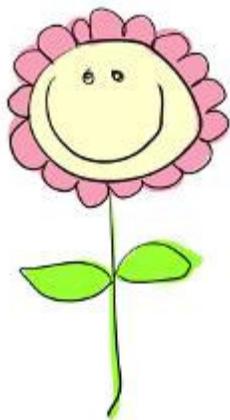
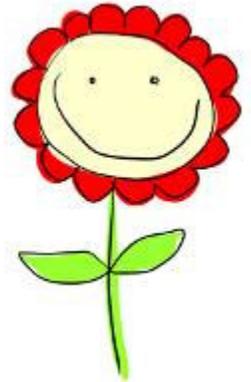
Call the Texas Abuse Hotline

1-800-252-5400 Or 911

FAILURE TO REPORT ABUSE IS A CRIME!

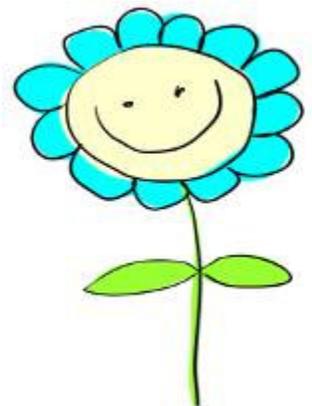
Our Center's Children

Briana was only five-years-old when her mother died of cancer. She was sent to live with her mother's parents. Her grandfather began molesting her at the age of six. Five years later, Briana told her teacher about the abuse. Her grandfather was prosecuted, but unfortunately, the sexual abuse did not end for Briana. At the age of twelve she was sent to live with her father. While participating in counseling, Briana disclosed that her cousin, uncle, and stepbrother were each touching and sexually abusing her in "every way possible." Each of her additional abusers were all under the age of seventeen, and were all prosecuted. Briana is still receiving counseling. At first her father did not wish to receive counseling services, but just started therapy this month. Briana is doing better in school, she reflects on each new day, and is taking it one step at a time on her difficult road to healing.



Lily is now living with foster parents. She lived with her mother and father until the age of eleven. When she told her mother that her father was touching her, she received no support. Her mother actually told her to stop spreading lies. Frustrated, she told her classmate about the touching. Her classmate told her teacher. A report of child abuse was made to the (800)252-5400 phone number. Lily's prayers that the abuse would stop became a reality, however, so did her worse fears - she was not allowed to go home. She only wanted the abuse to stop - not be uprooted from her parents and the only home she had ever known. A difficult time has passed, and Lily has adjusted to her new life. She is safe and has been placed with a loving nurturing foster family. With Lily's blessing, her new family is working through the process of adopting her and giving her a permanent loving home.

Marisa, Becky, and Marcos are siblings each under the age of nine. They came to the Center because their single parent mother was using drugs, and having numerous men stay over at their apartment. One of the men (Carlos) stayed for over a month. In that month's time, Mom failed to protect her three children and each of them was sexually assaulted. Since the abuse, Mom has been in and out of rehabilitation. The children have been living with their grandmother. Mom is only allowed to visit the children through supervised visitations - however, she rarely makes the effort to see her children. Carlos was never located. Each of the children is currently attending counseling, and are still receiving victims' services from the Center. Grandma has been very protective of her grandchildren. They have recently moved, and the children started a new school. Grandma feels like each of the children is coping better, and are doing well at their new school.



**Names have been changed to protect the innocent.*



Essential Services Provided

Last year 1,277 children came through our doors. They all come here with their own individual stories filled with fear and pain, along with parents or guardians who are trying to pick up the pieces and begin the journey to recovery.

Our Victims' Assistance program provided the following services:

- 132 crisis counseling
- 63 justice/advocacy
- 534 follow up services
- 169 assistance in filing claims
- 164 therapy
- 221 personal advocacy
- 584 information referrals (in person)
- 298 telephone contacts
- 713 transportation, care packages, letters, translations, meals, court preparation

Our Victims' Assistance Program includes all services listed above including: coordinating professional agency investigations, providing a child friendly environment, and forensic interviews. We also provided assistance for children who had witnessed violent events, such as murder, stabbings, or other violent attacks.

P.S. It's My Body! Happy Bear! Community Awareness & Prevention Programs

The Advocacy Center for the Children of El Paso is currently working with area schools to raise awareness and provide information about child abuse. A delightful, interactive play for children ages 4-7.



Implemented for more than 1,500 local elementary school students each year, this 25-minute program addresses recognizing welcome and unwelcome touches, practicing resistance skills, and learning to report to a trusted adult (available in English & Spanish). If you would like Happy Bear to visit your school, please call the Advocacy Center for the Children of El Paso at (915) 545-5400.



Practical Tips for Keeping Your Children Safe

As difficult as it is to imagine, children are most often abused by adults who they know and love. Parents need practical advice to protect their children from sexual abuse

- Do not insist that your children hug or kiss relatives or friends. Let children express affection on their own terms.
- Let children know their feelings are important to you. Encourage them to come to you when they feel uncomfortable. Ask your child about their feelings when they appear uncomfortable.
- Teach your children the appropriate names for body parts. As they develop, begin to talk with them about private parts, good touches & bad touches.
- Play the "What if..." game with your children. This is a great way to reinforce safety issues with your child. "What if a stranger asked you to come in their car?" "What if someone you knew touched your private parts?"
- Know where your children spend their time and with whom. Be cautious if an adult wants to spend private time with your child.
- Make unannounced visits to your child's nursery, daycare or school. Doing this raises awareness among caregivers and reinforces the responsibility they have for the safety of the children they care for.





The Advocacy Center is so fortunate to have the support of a wide range of individuals, groups and organizations. Your generosity makes it possible for us to continue in our mission to help the most vulnerable in our society! Thank you!

"You make healing happen!"



GO BLUE! Wear Jeans for Kids

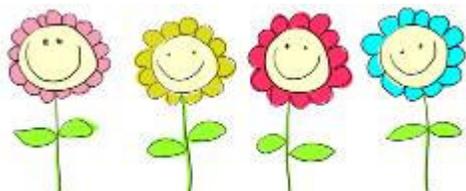
Thank you to our participants in April's 2012 National Child Abuse Prevention and Awareness Month. Our first year of "Go Blue! Wear Jeans for Kids" had over 1,000 participants. With your help we increased El Paso County's awareness about child abuse issues and supported El Paso's only Child Advocacy Center. We greatly appreciate your support in raising \$6,000 and thank you for *Going Blue*. Together we will help El Paso's child victims hurt by severe physical and sexual abuse to receive healing services. We appreciate your support, and assistance. Thank you for carina about El Paso's victimized children.



Making Christmas Joyous

Thank you Department of Homeland Security Investigations Division for bringing the joy of Christmas to our families whose lives have changed forever due to severe physical and sexual abuse! We appreciate your support for the sixth straight year!

Rotary Club International Thank you for new clothes and shoes!



Thank you Wolslager Foundation

Our center shines brighter with new flooring!



The best gift is one given! Give a gift that will make a difference in

the life of a child. Your tax deductible gift, no matter what size, will help ensure that critical services are available for abused and neglected children in El Paso County.



Wish List

- Packaged diapers-sizes Newborn 1,2,3,4,5,
- Comforting new toys- teddy bears, basketballs, Barbie Dolls
- New children's underwear and socks-all sizes
- Toiletries, canned goods, Capri Sun packaged drinks, toilet paper, paper towels, coloring books, crayons, office supplies
- Auction items for annual fundraiser- small working appliances, household items, clocks, jewelry items, art work, gift certificates for merchandise or services

More ways you can make a difference:

- Volunteering time & talents
- Donating needed supplies and items
- Contributing money to fund programs
- Becoming a monthly donor
- Honor or memorialize loved ones via the Advocacy Center for the Children of El Paso



We Need Your Support!

We are participating in the Albertsons Community Partners Program. There is no cost to get involved and we will benefit greatly from your help. Please pick up a key tag at the Advocacy Center and scan it at the check-out each time you shop at Albertsons. We will earn 1% of your shopping each time you scan this key tag. You can make copies of the key tag and distribute to friends, family, neighbors and co-workers who may also be willing to help. Thank you in advance for supporting this campaign.

Keep in touch with the Advocacy Center for the Children of El Paso

advocacycenterep.org

CHECK US OUT!



We are El Paso's only Children's Advocacy

Editor: *Ana Apodaca*, ACEP Staff



Mission Statement:

The Mission of the Advocacy Center for the Children of El Paso is to advocate for child victims of abuse and neglect in the El Paso area by providing education and a collaborative, comprehensive and efficient intervention process to seek justice and to maximize each child's chance for healing. With community support, this mission can be accomplished in a child and family sensitive environment through partnership of legal, law enforcement, child protective and health care resources.

Advocacy Center for the Children of El Paso

1100 E. Cliff, Bldg. D
El Paso, TX 79902

(915)545-5400
Fax: (915)545-5414

*"Helping Child Victims
when they need it most!"*