

Advocacy Center for the Children of El Paso

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



The Best Interest of the Child is Always the First Concern.

The Advocacy Center for the Children of El Paso helps El Paso County's child victims of severe physical and sexual abuse at no cost to the family. We provide immediate crisis counseling, victim's assistance benefits, information, referrals for medical treatment, and therapeutic treatment for all child victims and their non-offending family members. We are the only service provider in El Paso County who facilitates the investigation process for all law enforcement agencies who work with victimized children.

On Wednesday, April 23, 2014, we will celebrate our 18th Anniversary with a Dinner and Silent Auction. Our Special Keynote Speakers will be Representative Joe Pickett and Representative Joe Moody.



Joe C. Pickett is a member of the Texas House of Representatives, where he is presently serving his tenth term. Rep. Pickett has written several children's books, as part of his efforts to support children's literacy programs. His civic involvement includes membership on the boards of the Advocacy Center for the Children of El Paso, the Texas YMCA's Policy Council and the Advisory Council for Health Sciences for

the University of Texas at El Paso.

Representative Joe Moody is a lifelong El Pasoan, and a second generation public servant. Representative Moody is part of the Criminal Jurisprudence Committee, as well as serving on the Select Committee on Criminal Procedure where he advocates for the rights of crime Victims and promotes smart criminal justice responses and procedure reforms.



On behalf of the victimized children in El Paso County, we would like to thank Rep. Joe Pickett and Rep. Joe Moody for their support to the Advocacy Center for the Children of El Paso. Thank you!



Advocacy Center
for the Children of El Paso

advocacycenterep.org



Spring 2014 Edition

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

A Letter from the Executive Director	2
Meet Our Children	3
Essential Services	4
How does the Center work	4
Cyber bullying	5
Happy Bear	5
Wish List	6
Supporters	6



A letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friend of the Advocacy Center,

The Advocacy Center for the Children of El Paso helps local children and their families hurt by horrific abuse. Our services are provided for children of all ages. One should not believe that child sexual abuse happens only to teenagers. It is very disheartening to see a two-year-old enter our Rainbow Room which serves as our forensic interview room for children under the age of seven. Just this week we had two children under the age of three receive services from our Center due to sexual molestation - **on the same day**. During a normal week, the Center will assist many children between the ages of six and twelve, but providing services for two toddlers on the same day really makes you realize that sexual abuse of a child can happen at **any** age. Last year, the Advocacy Center for the Children of El Paso provided restorative healing services for 1,187 local children who were victimized by severe physical and sexual assault; 301 victims were under the age of five, 598 victims were between 6-12, and 288 children were between 13-17. Our kids are assisted due to reports they have been fondled, raped, exposed to pornography or otherwise physically or sexually assaulted.

We need your help to ensure that we will always be here to provide a child safe environment, forensic interviews, immediate crisis counseling, care packages, court school and victims' advocacy for sexually abused children.

Please help us make a difference in the lives of child abuse victims. Only with your help, will we **still be here**. Thank you for your consideration and support.



Susan H. Oliva
Executive Director

**"Helping child victims
when they need it most!"**



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President:

Dave Scepanski

Past President:

Rev. Michael Hamilton

Vice President:

Asst. Chief Robert Fiedner

Secretary:

Sgt. James Belknap, EPSO

Treasurer:

Harriet Allen Winters

Board Members:

Michael Bernstein, CPA

Wayne Brock, Ph.D.

Ralph Girvin, ACA

Penny Hamilton, ADA

Gilbert Handal, M.D.

Georgina Martinez, DFPS

Joe Pickett, State Rep.

Renee Tanner

Harry Wilson, M.D.

Chief Cliff Walsh, UTEP PD

ACCEP STAFF

Executive Director

Susan H. Oliva

Victims' Services Liaison

Sylvia C. Morales-Padilla

Forensic Interviewer

Joe Zimmerly

Scheduling Secretary

Ana Apodaca

Aldo Puentes

Volunteers

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 (915)545-5400
El Paso, TX 79902 Fax: (915)545-5414



Meet Our Children



Michael is eight years old. He came to the Advocacy Center for the Children of El Paso because his mother found him with no clothes on in bed with his twenty-two-year-old brother. She immediately called Child Protective Services. She kept saying "They are both my children." The strain of having one of her children acting out as a perpetrator, and one of her children a helpless victim has been extremely difficult. Her oldest son was arrested and is no longer allowed in the home. The Advocacy Center provided a forensic interview and victims' services. Michael also has a younger brother, Albert, who is six years old. Mom and the two young brothers are attending counseling. It is still unknown if Albert was also a victim. The trial has been scheduled

Hanna's mother moved to El Paso because she was laid off from her job working at an insurance company in New Mexico. While searching for work, Hanna and her mom stayed with a close family friend, who was thirty-two-years of age. He molested thirteen-year-old, Hanna, the first time he was able to get her alone. Hanna did not speak of the sexual abuse for four months. She was afraid of being on the streets since mom had nowhere else to live. Mom became suspicious about the man's time with Hanna and asked her daughter if she wanted to talk to her about anything. Hanna started crying and told her mother that the abuse had been going on since the first week they moved in. Hanna came to the Advocacy Center for the Children of El Paso with her mother. She received a forensic interview, and victim services. The family friend was arrested. Mom was glad that Hanna finally told her. They moved back to New Mexico with help from the victims' assistance program. Hanna will have to return to El Paso when her case goes to trial.



Second grader Jimmy did not want to go to school. His grandmother asked him why he no longer looked forward to school. His response was "Because I don't want you to die." Puzzled she asked him "What makes you think I'm going to die?" Jimmy told her that mom's ex-boyfriend used to watch him after school until Mom came home. He would hit him and force him to do bad things with his private parts. He was told by the perpetrator "If you tell anyone, I have a gun and I will kill your mother and grandmother." Jimmy came to the Advocacy Center for the Children of El Paso for a forensic interview. His family received victims' services, a referral for medical follow-up, and counseling. The ex-boyfriend pled guilty and is serving a five-year term. Jimmy is doing better, but is still coping with trust issues.



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

**Call the Texas Abuse Hotline
1-800-252-5400
Or 911**

FAILURE TO REPORT ABUSE IS A CRIME!

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



Essential Services Provided

Our Victims' Assistance program provided the following services:

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| 192 crisis counseling | 67 justice/advocacy |
| 219 follow up services | 201 assistance in filing claims |
| 196 therapy | 95 personal advocacy |
| 512 information referrals (in person) | 304 telephone contacts |
| 793 transportation, care packages, letters, translations, meals, court preparation | |

Last year **1,187** 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.

Other services include: 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.

HOW DOES A CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER MODEL WORK?

 Core Function of CAC

 Function Provided by a Team Member

LAW ENFORCEMENT

- ✓ The role of local law enforcer is grounded in public safety
- ✓ If not criminal in nature, law enforcement may not take action



CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES

- ✓ The role of CPS is to ensure that a child's home is safe
- ✓ If the family/caretaker is not the alleged abuser, CPS may not take action



Immediate Response

Priority Assigned
(24/72 hrs)



Child is brought to Children's Advocacy Center

Joint Investigation Begins
Forensic Interview
Evidence Collected
Photos Taken
Witness Interview
Medical Treatment & Exam (referrals)



CAC Coordinates Case Review with all team members, including law enforcement, prosecuting, child protective services, the forensic interviewer, a mental health provider and a medical professional.

Case presented to
District Attorney/
County Attorney

Suspect charged or
case refused



Child & family receive mental health services. Family advocate works with family to assess critical resources & provide support as the case moves through the justice system.

Child removed from home
or
Case opened for services
or
Case closed



Cyberbullying

The average American teen spends up to 7 hours a day in contact with others on electronic devices, and a recent study found that 43 percent of kids in grades 4- 8 were the victims of some form of cyberbullying or have experienced what parents consider objectionable/aggressive behavior online. Although girls are more likely to be targets than boys, boys are quick to spread the bullying messages. Cyberbullying is a term applied to a wide range of hurtful behavior that occurs through the use of digital technologies and it may happen anywhere online and involve social networking profiles, video and image sharing websites, blogs, e-mails, and instant messaging, or can occur through cell phone texting.

Earlier this year in El Paso, a family mourned the loss of their 14-year-old daughter, after they say cyberbullying forced her to take her own life. She killed herself in her family's Lower Valley home. Her parents said she had been struggling with depression, but still did not expect this to happen. "I was taking it like I didn't really believe all that, until I came home and found my daughter in her closet. So, anybody who thinks cyberbullying isn't serious, come home and find that," her father said. "Anything would trigger her. I've seen some of those things that those girls would tell her, and those are the words that I would never say to my worst enemy," her cousin said. This is not the first time the El Paso area has seen the effects of bullying in the past. In 2012, a sophomore in a local high school, committed suicide after two years of being bullied by classmates.



Cyberbullying & Suicide

If cyberbullying means you, or someone you know feels suicidal, please call
1-800-273- TALK (8255)

State Rep. Joe Pickett expects the Texas Legislature to discuss possible laws against cyberbullying in future legislative sessions, but such legislation has failed in the past. First, Pickett said ,the state needs to come up with a definition for cyberbullying. "It has changed the dynamic because one of the questions that came up is being able to actually even prove who is doing the cyberbullying," he said. Pickett encourages people to share these concerns with their state lawmakers.

The El Paso Regional Cyber Safety Cooperative program provided by the Education Service Center-Region 19, is offered to all schools in El Paso and Hudspeth counties. Another program is the El Paso County Sheriff's Office's Anti-Bullying Coalition, which was started in 2010. The program works with area school districts to promote education on bullying and provide services to help students dealing with bullies.

*El Paso Times

P.S. It's My Body! Happy Bear!



As part of our community awareness & prevention programs, this delightful 25 minute play for children 4-7 years of age, teaches them how to recognize welcome and unwelcome touches, practicing resistance skills, and learning to report to a trusted adult. For more information please call the Advocacy Center for the Children of El Paso at (915)545-5400.




SANTA'S HELPERS!

On December 17th, the Department of Homeland Security Investigations Division gathered at the Children's Advocacy Center of El Paso to drop off donations received from their Icicle Tree Toy Drive. Gift bags and boxes filled the room with toys, books, games and clothing. The scene was a tangible representation of the generosity and kindness that has shaped the drive's success for the past 7 years. Christmas would not be possible for our families without their support!

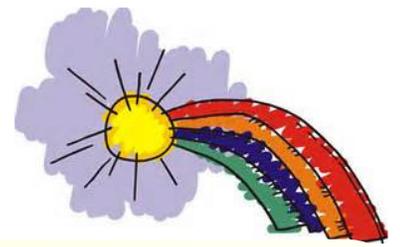


THANK YOU DEPT. OF HOMELAND



THANK YOU!

Since it's opening in 1996, the Advocacy Center for the Children of El Paso has been fortunate in receiving consistent and generous donations from family foundations, board members, individuals in the communities we serve, service groups and from all our professional partners. In this issue, we would like to thank our supporters. We are extremely grateful for your contributions. We couldn't do it without



Wolslager Foundation



Horizon Kiwanis Club



Alta Vista Optimist Club



Mt. Franklin Kiwanis



Rotary Club of El Paso

Sierra Medical Auxiliary

Junior Women's Club of El Paso



Your help and support of El Paso's only Children's Advocacy Center has enabled us to increase child abuse awareness in the El Paso County. With your help we raised \$4,500. Thank You!

- ❖ Clint ISD
- ❖ County Attorney's Office
- ❖ Dept. OF Homeland Security
- ❖ El Paso Sheriff's Office
- ❖ FBI El Paso
- ❖ Garcia Enriquez Middle School
- ❖ Government Employees Credit Union
- ❖ International Bank
- ❖ Kemp Smith Law Firm
- ❖ Kohl's Cares for Kids
- ❖ O'Donnell Intermediate School
- ❖ R.M Personnel
- ❖ Sun City Securities
- ❖ Teachers Federal Credit Union
- ❖ Tip Of Texas Federal Credit Union
- ❖ Tornillo Elementary School
- ❖ Weststar Bank
- ❖ Ysleta Del Sur

WISH LIST

- Packaged diapers-sizes 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



- ✓ Pick up a key tag at the Advocacy Center for the Children of El Paso
- ✓ Scan it at the check-out
- ✓ We earn 1% each time

Thank you in advance for supporting this campaign!



Thank You Agency Partners:

**Child Protective Services
Child Care Licensing**



El Paso Sheriff's Office



County Attorney's Office



El Paso Police Department



District Attorney's Office

