

Advocacy Center for the Children of El Paso

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

Celebrating 20 Years of Service



Advocacy Center
for the Children of El Paso

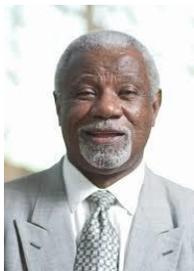
advocacycenterep.org



The Advocacy Center for the Children of El Paso has been helping El Paso County's victimized children since December of 1996. Our mission is to help reduce the trauma for young victims and their families by coordinating professional agency investigations, providing a child friendly environment, immediate crisis counseling, and victims advocacy. We realize that child abuse affects the entire family and we strive to provide assistance for our young victims and his or her non-offending family members.

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.

Not only does the Advocacy Center provide assistance to victims, but we are also active in our community providing information and training. We have a learning resource library/training room on site, available to provide community and law enforcement child abuse training and education. The Advocacy Center also provides a yearly conference for child abuse professionals, with many child abuse topics and national instructors. The Center provides area schools with the "P.S. It's My Body! Happy Bear!" program, which instructs young children about personal safety. We have been a part of numerous health fairs providing information on our services and have given training to area teachers and school district employees.



This year marks the Advocacy Centers 20th year in service! We have brought in one of El Paso's brightest athletic stars, a very sought after motivational speaker, Coach Nolan Richardson, to provide our key note address at our Anniversary Event celebration. Throughout our 20 years, Coach Richardson has been extremely supportive of our mission. He has been our key note speaker on several occasions and has provided support through his annual golf tournament. Thank you Coach Richardson, with your support you help us provide healing services for the children in El Paso County!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

A Letter from the Executive Director	2
Meet Our Children	4
Time Line	5
Essential Services Provided	6
Wish List	6
Supporters	6

Spring 2016 Edition



"Helping child victims when they need it most!"

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 (915)545-5414

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President/Treasurer:
Rev. Michael Hamilton

Past President:
Michael Bernstein

President Elect:
Gilbert Handal, M.D.

Vice President:
Ralph Girvin

Vice President:
Wayne Brock, Ph. D.

Secretary:
Sgt. James Belknap, EPSO

Board Members:
Bill Anderson, ADA
Georgina Martinez, DFPS
Joe Pickett, State Rep.
Dave Scepanski
Chief Cliff Walsh, UTEP PD
Harry Wilson, M.D.

ACCEP STAFF

Executive Director
Susan H. Oliva

Forensic Interviewers
Rebecca Mielinski
Joe Zimmerly

Victims' Services Liaison
Sylvia C. Morales-Padilla

Scheduling Advocates
Ana Apodaca
Aldo Puentes

Volunteers



A letter from the Executive Director

Who is the boogie-man? What does he look like? When I was young, I believed that the boogie-man was an adult who preyed on children. I believed the boogie-man was the person who hurt, raped, beat and stole women and children. I believed the boogie-man could be picked out in a crowd - because he was what evil looked like. My question is - do we know what evil looks like? Imagine a person just opposite of the boogie-man. Imagine a model citizen, a clean, well-groomed successful businessman, a weekly churchgoer and philanthropist. Think of a person who inspired you in life, a person who has a rock solid reputation. Now imagine the shame, humiliation, and fear of telling someone that this "model citizen" is a person who sexually abused you. Telling someone you were a victim of sexual abuse is difficult enough, but telling someone that your perpetrator is a person you looked up to, a person society admires, *takes courage*.

I grew up with the Cosby Show. I admired Dr. Huxtable and his family values. I even met Bill Cosby in the 1980's. I was star-struck, I believed Bill Cosby was the perfect family man and a model citizen. With his fame, success, and reputation, I can only imagine how difficult it was for one of his alleged victims of sexual abuse to "tell" anyone they were assaulted by a person the world admired. Who would believe them? Child abuse victims are asking themselves the same question. Who will believe me? They feel fear, humiliation, and shame. They believe that the adult (their father, mother, teacher, or clergyman) who is abusing them is a successful model citizen. They believe they will not be believed or supported, it *takes courage* to tell someone you are a victim of sexual abuse.

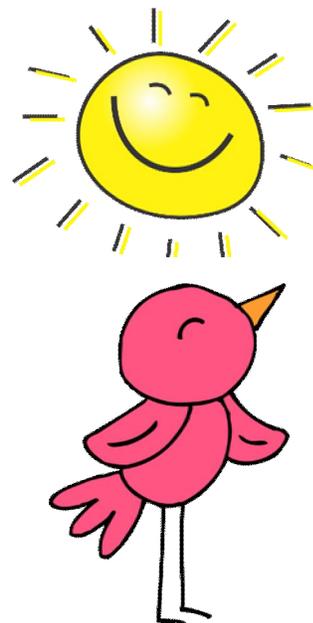
The Advocacy Center for the Children has been assisting El Paso's victimized children since 1996. We assist local children who have been raped, exposed to pornography, or otherwise sexually abused. Last year the Center assisted 246 children under the age of five, 479 children between the ages of 6 and 12, and 101 children over the age of 13. Sexual abuse of children happens in our city each and every day (and child abuse may never be reported due to the fact it is usually at the hands of a family member). If a child tells you they are being abused, remember the child is telling you because they trust you, and they want the abuse to stop. Children need to know you will believe them, and will protect them. Reassure the child that they did not do anything wrong. Reassure the child that the abuse is not their fault. Let the child know they are not in trouble, and they did not let you down. Listen to your children. Report child abuse by calling 911 or (800)252-5400. For more information on prevention and support, please visit our website advocacycenterep.org.

Only with community support can the Advocacy Center for the Children of El Paso successfully continue our mission to provide healing services for El Paso's children who have fallen victim to the most horrific crimes committed against them. Thank you El Paso for caring and helping us to be twenty years strong.

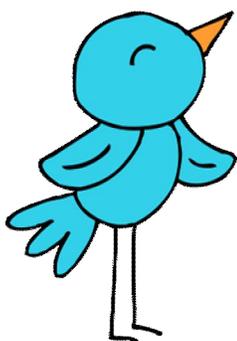
Susan H. Oliva

Meet Our Children

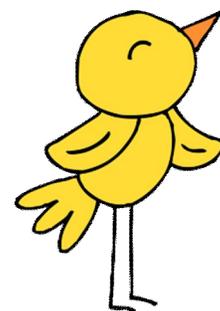
Melissa's father separated from her mother. Unable to afford rent, Mom, five-year-old Melissa, and two other younger siblings were forced to move in with grandma. While Mom worked to help support her children, they were left in the care of their 19-year-old uncle. The uncle sexually abused Melissa on more than one occasion. Melissa hesitated to tell her mother because she was afraid, and she also believed they had no other place to go. Melissa finally told her Mom about her uncle's abuse. She was interviewed at the Advocacy Center for the Children of El Paso and disclosed the sexual abuse. Her brother was also interviewed at the Center and he described witnessing the abuse. Melissa's Mom did not hesitate to pursue prosecution against her brother. Melissa and her family received services from the Center's Victim's Assistance Program to include counseling and victims' transportation. The family lived in a shelter for a short time and is now living in their own apartment. Mom recently was able to purchase a car. The uncle was indicted and is awaiting trial.



Linda was in seventh grade, and her sister, Lisa, was in fourth grade when they moved in with their grandparents. Sadly, both girls were sexually abused at the hands of their grandfather. Their grandparents had been providing care for the girls and their two brothers (due to their Mom's drug issues). Both Linda and Lisa received a forensic interview at the Advocacy Center for the Children of El Paso and gave details of being sexually assaulted multiple times by their grandfather. Their grandmother immediately protected her grandchildren and left her home. Grandma moved herself and all four children in with relatives. Through the Center's Victims' Assistance Program, the family applied and received services from the Texas Crime Victim's Compensation Program (and received housing relocation assistance). The Center also provided care packages of clothes, food items and toiletries to benefit the struggling family. Grandma recently provided us an update: The children are actively in counseling and adjusting to their new home and school. Grandfather was arrested and the trial date is pending.



At the age of nine, Alejandro was sexually assaulted by a male cousin. Alejandro kept this a secret for seven years, before coming forward to tell his parents what his cousin had done. For almost half of his young life - he told no one about his abuse - he kept it buried inside. His parents took immediate action and reported the abuse. Alejandro is now 16 years old. He is still feeling guilt, humiliation, and fear. He has not been ready to tell anyone else about his abuse. Through the Center's Victims' Assistance Program, he is actively receiving counseling. We hope that through healing he will find his voice, want to be heard, and receive the justice he deserves.



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.*

Advocacy Center Time Line

20 YEARS OF SERVING CHILDREN

1995

1995- May: The Advocacy Center for the Children of El Paso is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501© (3) nonprofit organization. After civic community members from churches, hospitals, legal and law enforcement and other interested parties worked diligently on articles of incorporation, protocols and formal agency collaboration agreements for over two years. The Board of Directors were officially established. Board Presidents include (to name a few): Matthew Moore, Harry Wilson, M.D., Harriet Allen Winters, Mike Bernstein, CPA, Barbara Camp Law, PA, Armando Nava, Jr., Dr. Terry Allen, Ph.D., Rev. Michael Hamilton, and Dave Scepanski.

1996



1996- Summer: The Lee and Beulah Moor Children's Home provided a physical location providing the Center a place to operate and have a safe homelike environment for child victims to receive healing services.

1997

1997 February: The Advocacy Center for the Children of El Paso received full membership and accreditation from Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas, Inc.

1997 December: The Advocacy Center for the Children of El Paso completes the 1st full year of operation with 321 child victims receiving services.

1999

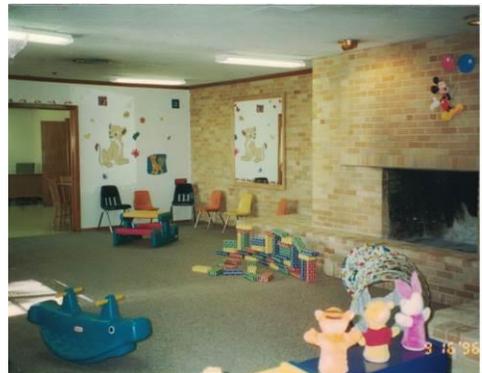
1999 May: The Advocacy Center for the Children of El Paso receives national recognition from Mutual of America, for team partnership.

1996-August: Susan H. Oliva was hired as the Executive Director and the first and only employee in an empty 9,800 square foot building.



2002

2002-Summer: The Advocacy Center for the Children of El Paso completes a 3,800 square foot expansion to our building allowing the entire Crimes Against Children's Unit of the El Paso Police Department to move into the Center. This brings agency representatives from 12 to 30 people working daily at the Center.

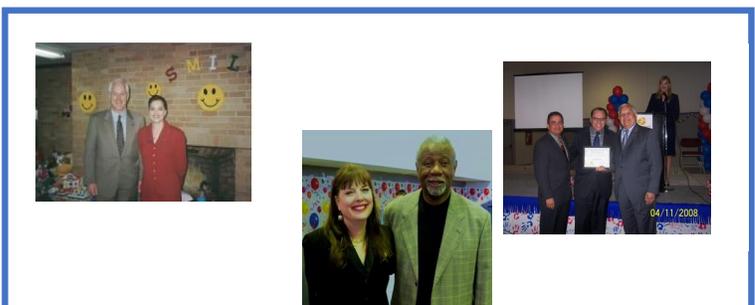


1996- December 6: The First child victim was provided assistance by the Advocacy Center for the children of El Paso, The Victim was an 18-month old baby girl, abandoned by her mother.



2010

2008



April 2010- The Advocacy center for the Children of El Paso celebrates 14 years of assisting El Paso county victimized children. Event speakers include:

- Congressman Beto O'Rourke
- Congressman Silvestre Reyes
- Texas Representative Joe Pickett,
- National Basketball Champion Coach Nolan Richardson
- Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott
- Texas Attorney General John Cornyn,
- Texas Senator Elliot Shapleigh
- Texas Senator Jose Rodriguez
- El Paso Mayor John Cook



2010 December: The Advocacy Center for the Children of El Paso reaches a milestone of over 7,500 child victims receiving services from the center.

The Advocacy Center for the Children of El Paso receives State Recognition by Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas, Inc. for Team Excellence Awards in the areas:

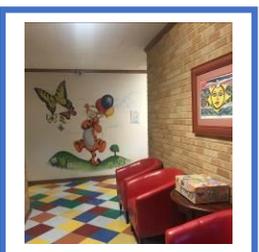
- 2000 Child Protective Services: Linda Wiley
- 2001 Prosecution: Penny Hamilton ADA
- 2001 Medical Professional: Dr. Harry Wilson
- 2002 Executive Director: Susan H. Oliva
- 2004 Law Enforcement: Det. Rebecca Mietlinski
- 2007 Child Protective Services: Manny Rivera
- 2010 Victim Advocate: Sylvia Morales-Padilla



In 2008 the Advocacy Center launches the P.S. It's My Body! Happy Bear! As part of our community awareness & prevention program. 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.

2016

Advocacy Center Celebrates its 20th year of providing healing services for the children of El Paso County.



Childhood sexual abuse MYTHS vs REALITY

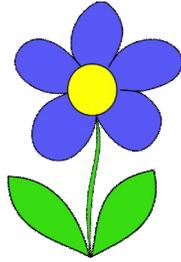
MYTHS	REALITY
Child Sexual abuse is rare	Research indicates that one in four children are sexually abused.
Girls are molested more than boys are.	Boys & girls are equally likely to be victims. (Although researchers believe that boys are less likely to report)
Most Sexual Abuse occurs at the hands of strangers.	Only about 15% of sexual abuse occurs at the hands of strangers. In about 45% to 50% of the cases, the perpetrator is a family member.
Sexual abuse is more common in the lower socio-economic groups.	The incidence of sexual abuse is relatively equal among all ethnic & socio-economic groups.
Adolescence is the most common age for sexual abuse to occur.	The highest incidence in sexual abuse is in pre-pubertal children with the average being 8 years old.
Child sexual abuse is usually violent & involves penetration.	Most child sexual abuse does not involve intercourse and is not physically violent.
A child would naturally show fear and/or hatred towards his/her abuser.	Children often show love & loyalty toward a family member who is abusing them.
A child will tell immediately if he/she were abused.	Delays in reporting and/or denial are the rule, not the exception.

www.stoparchildabuse.com

Essential services...

The Center provides services for children victimized by severe physical and sexual abuse, and our Victims' Assistance program provided the following services:

- ✓ Forensic Interviews
- ✓ Crisis counseling
- ✓ Follow up services
- ✓ Therapy
- ✓ Information referrals (in pers)
- ✓ Justice/advocacy
- ✓ Assistance in filing claims
- ✓ Personal advocacy
- ✓ Telephone contacts
- ✓ Transportation, care packages, school letters, translations, meals, court preparation.



Thank You!

Together we make a difference in Children's lives!

Agency Partners:

Child Protective Services
Child Care Licensing



County Attorney's Office



District Attorney's Office



El Paso Police Department



El Paso Sheriff's Office



Supporters:

Alta Vista Optimist Club

Department of Homeland Security

Horizon Kiwanis Club

Mt. Franklin Kiwanis



- ❖ 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



We are El Paso's
only Children's
Advocacy Center.
advocacycenterep.org
CHECK US OUT!

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