



June 2020

## ***30 YEARS OF SERVICE TO ABUSED AND NEGLECTED CHILDREN***

This year marks the 30th anniversary of our agency. We opened our doors in January 1990 as CASA of Adams County. The CASA program uses trained community volunteers who then become the voice for a child in the court system. We have expanded the CASA program over the years and now serve children in Brown, Cass, Hancock, Morgan, Pike and Schuyler counties.

In 1999, we opened our first Children’s Advocacy Center in Adams County to serve child victims of sexual or severe physical abuse. Since then, we have added centers in Brown, Cass, Schuyler, Pike, Morgan, Scott, Hancock and McDonough counties.

We also offer and provide a prevention program to children Pre-K through 5th grade. Happy Bear and “P.S. It’s My Body” teaches children safety strategies and is designed to decrease children’s risk of being abused.

Our mission remains to serve abused and neglected children in our community.

## ***HERE FOR GOOD***

We were happy to join the many other businesses teaming up with Landmarx and its “Here for Good” campaign. Individuals could choose a local participating business and purchase a t-shirt with the business logo on the front for \$20.00. That business then received \$10.00 for each shirt sold. All shirts also included the “Here for Good” logo on the back. Thank you to everyone who supported our agency by purchasing a t-shirt and to Landmarx for this opportunity.

### **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

**June**  
11 Noon Networking - Quincy  
(via Zoom)  
**July**  
03 Office closed

We currently have the following volunteer needs:

- Happy Bear Presentations
- CASA Volunteers
- Fundraising
- Mailings

If you would like to help, please contact our office at 217-223-2272.

Our agency could not continue its mission of advocating for children without your help. You can help by:

- Monetary Donation
- ANC Foundation Donation
- Office Supply Donation

## WHAT IS FORENSIC INTERVIEWING?

Forensic interviewing is a first step in most child protective services (CPS) investigations, one in which a trained professional interviews a child to find out if he or she has been abused or neglected.

In addition to determining whether abuse or neglect has occurred, this approach produces evidence that will stand up in court if the investigation leads to criminal prosecution. Properly conducted forensic interviews are legally sound in part because they ensure the interviewer's objectivity, employ non-leading techniques, and emphasize careful documentation of the interview.

We are proud to say that our agency has 5 trained forensic interviewers. In addition to our Director of Forensic Interviewing, Jessica Bolton, trained staff include Susan Tode, Todd Shackelford, Jamie Carroll and Karolina Anton. Each has been accredited with numerous hours of continuing education on forensic interviewing. To date, they have conducted nearly 1,150 forensic interviews of children.

## HELPING CHILDREN COPE DURING A CRISIS

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all of us. Each person handles stressful situations differently and children are no exception. Although young children may not fully understand what is currently happening in the world, they know and sense the stress and uncertainty around them. Children's reactions can include: fear of being alone, change in appetite, experiencing bad dreams, becoming withdrawn from family or friends, increased irritability, whining or aggressive behavior. If you notice a change in a child, patience, tolerance and reassurance are key. If changes in behavior or mood persist, don't be afraid to seek the help of a mental health professional.

## THANK YOU

A \$1,250.00 COVID-19 relief grant was received from the McDonough County United Way. This grant was made possible by a donation from the Tracy Family Foundation (DOT Foods) to the McDonough County Way in the total amount of \$10,000.00. The grant's purpose was to assist victims who may be at a higher risk during the quarantine.

Thank you to the following restaurants/businesses who included a new CASA program flyer with their curbside pickup and delivery orders or provided a display area: Chicks on the River, Dominos, Tangerine Bowl, El Racherito, Zoup, Chomps, Tap Room and Grown and Gathered (in Quincy), Little Mexico, Sally's Bistro and Save-A-Lot (in Beardstown), and Dorothy's Market (in Mt. Sterling).

We truly appreciate your support of our agency, its mission and programs!

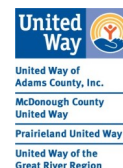
***Please see page 3 for the agency's response to COVID-19***

**\*\* When shopping at Amazon Smile, choose Advocacy Network for Children as your charity and Amazon will donate a portion of your purchase price to us! \*\***



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## ***AGENCY RESPONSE TO COVID-19***

Amid the ongoing concerns over COVID-19, our agency continues to take steps to keep our staff, volunteers and clients safe. Staff will be returning to the office in shifts starting June 1st with changes put in place. Walls and plexiglass have been added to our Executive Assistant's front office area, shared staff offices have been separated with a new office added to our lower level.

Our Children's Advocacy Center staff continue to do essential forensic interviews. These interviews are being done on a case-by-case basis and through communication with our multidisciplinary team members. Staff is doing follow-up contact with clients to check on their well-being. Mental health providers remain willing to provide mental health services to our clients via telemental health.

Our CASA staff is constantly in touch with its volunteers for assistance and guidance as it relates to child visits via technology and help with case reports. No home visits are being done for the safety of all parties. Required contact is being arranged with everyone's safety in mind. Attendance at juvenile court case hearings are being done at the direction of the respective county.

We are following all guidelines put into place by our various grantors (both state and federal), the CDC and local and state officials.

We need to continue to all work together to reduce the spread of this virus. At the same time, with all the stress and uncertainty this pandemic is causing families, we fear child abuse cases will go up in the coming months. With schools and day-cares being closed the last few months, reporting of child abuse cases has declined significantly. If you suspect a child is being abused, please call the Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-252-2873.

Please visit our website or Facebook page for new or additional updates. Our website also contains a complete list of staff names, phone numbers and office locations.