



WHAT IS THE CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER?

The Children's Advocacy Center is a way of serving child victims of sexual abuse or serious physical abuse through a comprehensive approach to services for victims and their non-offending caregivers.

The Children's Advocacy Center provides a safe, neutral, child-friendly environment where child victims and their non-offending caregivers meet with a team of professionals for the purpose of investigation. This team includes law enforcement, DCFS and State's Attorneys.

In addition to our trained forensic interviewers, our staff provides personal and court advocacy services to each child victim and non-offending caregiver(s) and helps bridge the gap between social services, law enforcement, and the court system. Mental health services with a trained trauma focused therapist can also be arranged and provided for.

Our Children's Advocacy Center program was started in Adams County in 1999 and is now in nine counties (Adams, Brown, Cass, Hancock, McDonough, Morgan, Pike, Schuyler and Scott). Nearly 6,500 child victims of sexual abuse or serious physical abuse have received services to date.

The services we provide to these child victims and caregivers are **FREE** of charge. Your support is needed now more than ever. Please consider making a donation to help us in our mission of protecting and upholding the rights of these children.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

August

13 Noon Networking - Quincy

September

07 Office closed

10 Noon Networking - Quincy

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

WE NEED CASA VOLUNTEERS

There are children in the court system waiting for a CASA volunteer, someone who will speak on their behalf and to be in their corner. Advocacy Network for Children now has a CASA program in seven area counties (Adams, Brown, Cass, Hancock, Morgan, Pike, and Schuyler). CASA volunteers are trained community volunteers appointed by a judge to speak up for abused or neglected children in court. CASA volunteers work alongside attorneys and case workers from case inception to its completion. No special experience is required. If you would like to be the voice for an abused or neglected child in our community, please call the office at 217-223-2272. Additional information is also available on our website.

CHILD ABUSE DURING A PANDEMIC

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, people are required or encouraged to stay home to protect themselves and their communities. However, the home may not be safe for many families who experience domestic violence, which may include both intimate partners and children.

Children are specifically vulnerable to abuse during COVID-19. Increased stress levels among parents is often a major predictor of physical abuse and neglect of children. Stressed parents may be more likely to respond to their children's anxious behaviors or demands in aggressive or abusive ways. The support systems that many at-risk parents rely on, such as extended family, child care and schools, religious groups and other community organizations, may no longer be available in some areas.

If you feel a child or family is in need, we urge you to call your local law enforcement or DCFS office immediately.

THANK YOU

The Kiwanis Club of Quincy recently awarded a combined \$1,000.00 to the agency from their two Bids for Kids auctions. Funds will be used to offset printing costs for the agency's Happy Bear Prevention Program. Pictured is Diane Pieper, Executive Assistant, and Kiwanis Club member, Joann Dedert, at the first check presentation.



The Exchange Club of Quincy donated \$685.00 to the agency. Funds were received in memory of Fred Lauder, a longtime member of the Exchange Club.

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 began returning to the office in shifts on June 1st with changes put in place. However, with COVID-19 cases increasing in Adams County, staff returned to working from home on July 27th. When needed, a limited number of staff will be at the office at various times for meetings or interviews.

Our Children's Advocacy Center staff continue to do forensic interviews. Safety precautions are in place for our staff, MDT members and children and families and PPE supplies are available if needed. Attendance at court hearings is done at the direction of the respective county. 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 or in person with precautions in place.

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. Home visits are being conducted with precautions in place for the safety of all parties. Attendance at juvenile court case hearings are being done at the direction of the respective county. Trainings for new volunteers are being done via Zoom or in locations where appropriate spacing can be made.

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 remain vigilant and continue to all work together to reduce the spread of this virus. At the same time, with the stress and uncertainty this pandemic is causing families, we fear child abuse cases will go up in the coming months. 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.