



CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER
OF SMITH COUNTY

2022

Annual Report

Our Mission

The mission of the Children's Advocacy Center of Smith County (CACSC) is to protect and restore the lives of abused children through team investigations, healing services, community outreach and strategic partnerships.

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letter from the CEO

Daily the doors swing open as children and their protective caregivers walk in seeking safety, hope, healing and justice. And daily our doors swing open with an incredible staff who have the same goal in mind for the children we serve.

Last year, Children's Advocacy Center of Smith County conducted interviews for 1034 children who made an outcry of abuse or who an adult reported as possibly being abused.

While it is hard to understand this harsh reality for too many of our children, I am thankful for the incredible team of professionals at the CACSC and for our partners in law enforcement, Child Protective Investigations, the District Attorney's Office, and the medical community with whom we work.

New statistics indicate that the pace of abuse continues to rise. The national statistic for child sexual abuse is that 1 in 10 will be sexually abused before their 18th birthday. A survey was recently sent to high school students in Texas and those results show that 1 in 6 Texas high school students have been sexually abused.

This makes our outreach through Community Education and Trauma Informed Schools even more critical than when we implemented it in 2009. The age-appropriate curriculum we present to all ages of students and the trauma training provided to educators are critical to reaching vulnerable children.

While we continue to provide evidence-based responses to child abuse and evidence-based prevention to children, we can only do that when you join in this fight. We appreciate your support and belief in this incredible work we are doing for the most vulnerable children in our community.
We cannot do it without you.

We share with you our accomplishments in 2022 through this Annual Report, but the most important thing I ask you to remember is that every number represents a child. A child whose life trajectory can be changed by a multi-disciplinary approach to their case and intervention by the professionals at Children's Advocacy Center of Smith County.



Terri Smith
Chief Executive Officer



what we do



Forensic Interview

The forensic interview allows a child time to tell his or her story of abuse in a child-friendly environment to a specially trained CAC employee, the Forensic Interviewer. This recorded forensic interview is given to law enforcement, Child Protective Services and the District Attorney's office for to ensure the child's safety and for case investigation and prosecution.

Family Advocacy

The Family Advocate works with the family to assess immediate needs and provide assistance with resources which may include counseling, medical care, housing, employment, clothing and other basic living needs. Their relationship continues until the disposition of the case and/or until the family is strong enough to navigate on their own.



Therapy

The primary therapy provided is an evidence-based treatment proven to be a highly effective intervention for child victims of abuse, Trauma Focused-Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT). Other modalities are used when a client's needs indicate the need for a different approach. Therapy is provided onsite at the CAC and also at Lindale High School.

Medical Forensic Health Exam

Medical Forensic Health Exams are performed at the CACSC in a child-friendly room by Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners, who have received specialized training to recognize trauma, medically evaluate the child and provide information to the team working the case.





Community Education

The CAC offers community education for ages 4 through adult to teach children and youth about personal safety and the dangers of the internet and to teach adults how to recognize and report child abuse.

Trauma Informed Schools

In an effort to reach every child affected by abuse and the ensuing trauma, and who might not otherwise tell their story, the CACSC began partnerships with area school districts to provide training to teachers and staff so that adults in the school are prepared to recognize and respond to those impacted by traumatic stress and provide them tools to cope and create a culture of respect and support.



Court Education

Kids in Court is a court education curriculum in used to prepare young witnesses for the experience of providing testimony in a courtroom.

Rainbow Room

The Rainbow Room is an in-house emergency resource center for clients of Department of Family & Protective Services Child Protective Services, law enforcement agencies and Children's Advocacy Center. The Rainbow room meets the basic needs and is available for a family in crisis by supplying clothing, shoes, diapers, formula, car seats and cribs .



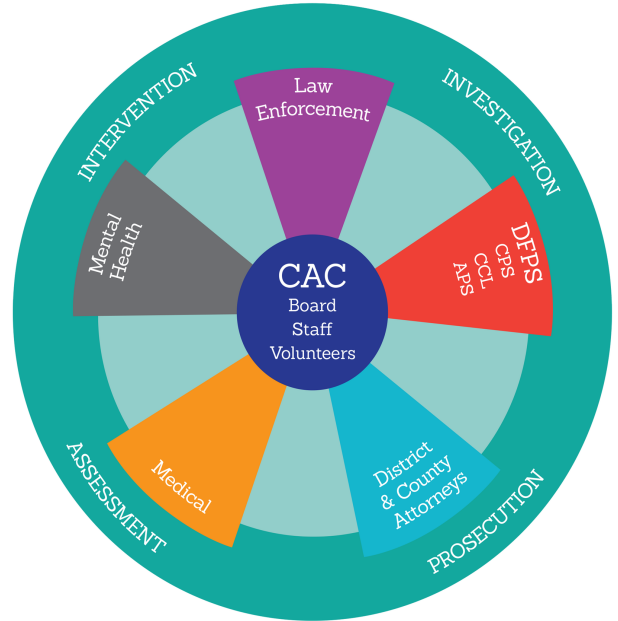
a united front

Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT)

Our Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) is a group of highly trained child abuse professionals, each with their own area of expertise, who work in collaboration in child abuse investigations with the CACSC serving as the “hub”. As a result, investigations are completed more effectively, which leads to stronger cases for prosecution, and better support is provided to child victims and their families to reduce trauma.

“MDTs require significant time and coordination to work effectively, and the CACSC has sustained the effort to ensure that our children are well served.”

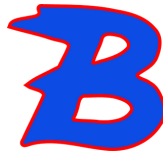
- Jacob Putman, Smith County District Attorney



Arp ISD Police Department



Arp Police Department



Bullard ISD Police Department



Bullard Police Department



Chapel Hill ISD Police Department



CHRISTUS Northeast Texas Region



Department of Family and Protective Services:
Child Protective Investigations, Child Care
Investigations, & Adult Protective Services



Federal Bureau of Investigation



Lindale ISD Police Department



Lindale Police Department



Overton Police Department



Smith County Criminal
District Attorney's Office



Smith County Sheriff's Office



Troup Police Department



Tyler ISD Police Department



Tyler Police Department



UT Health North East



UT Health Tyler



Whitehouse Police Department

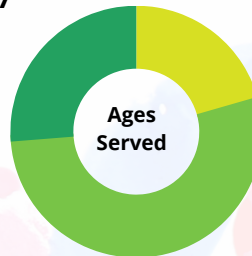
2022 by the numbers

Who We Served



1,034
children

Ages 13-17
26.3%

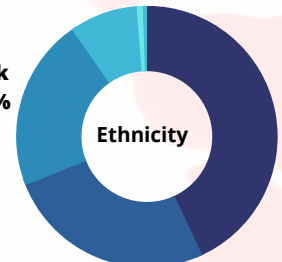


Ages 0-5
20.5%

Ages 6-12
53.2%

Multi-Racial
8.5%

Black
21.3%



White
43%

Hispanic
25.9%



576 girls



456 boys



Sexual Abuse
52.9%



Physical Abuse
40.5%



Family Violence
5.9%



Other
0.7%

Types of Abuse

2022 Operating Financials*

Operating Income

Government Funding & Other Grants	1,824,334.98
Donated Funds	1,143,964.24
Other Income	124,095.29

Total 3,092,394.51

Operating Expenses

Program Services	2,018,343.27
Administration	538,258.90
Fundraising	369,140.71

Total 2,925,742.88

Net Surplus

166,651.63

*Unaudited Financials

education

"In my 10 years of teaching,
this has been the most useful and honest
training I have ever received."

- High School Teacher

Trauma-Informed Schools

Classroom behaviors displayed by children of trauma can be misunderstood as acts of defiance when underneath the misbehavior is a child suffering from abuse, chronic stress, shame and broken trust. Being a Trauma Informed School (TIS) is a commitment to identify, understand and address the needs of children of trauma through daily practices that focus on building trusting relationships and emotional safety. Through the TIS training provided by the CACSC, schools undergo a paradigm shift which shapes school culture, classroom climate, and social interactions so students of trauma build resilience and are able to self-regulate their behavior and emotions. Following the TIS training, the Trauma Informed Strategist continues to meet with educators throughout the year to provide support and assistance in implementing the new trauma related strategies they have learned. In 2022, one local elementary school reported office referrals were down 65% after the TIS training and a high school reported a 35% decrease in office referrals by TIS teachers. In addition, a Trauma Informed Therapist was added to the Education Team to provide crucial therapy services to students at no cost to the family or the school.



12 schools completed TIS training
with 72 total hours



7,000 students impacted by TIS
training on their campus



3 entire school districts in Smith
County are TIS trained and certified

Community Education

Sixty-two percent of child abuse victims will never disclose they have been abused. CACSC saw a need to give children the tools they need to stay safe and began the Community Education program for students in Smith County. Our specially trained staff work with school counselors to present to students ages Pre-K to 12th grade using evidence-based, research-informed curriculums called Play it Safe!® and Teen Safety Matters. Play it Safe!® uses videos and interactive conversations to teach body safety, what touches are appropriate and inappropriate as well as rules and the importance of talking to a trusted adult. This curriculum also covers other important topics such as bullying and internet safety. CACSC also offers education to help adults know how to recognize and report child abuse. In 2022, our Education team began first year implementation of the Teen Safety Matters curriculum for both middle school and high school students across Smith County. Community Education is on the front line of empowering children and educating adults to help stop abuse.

12,190 children attended
a community education presentation



48 body safety presentations in
middle schools across Smith County



room to grow

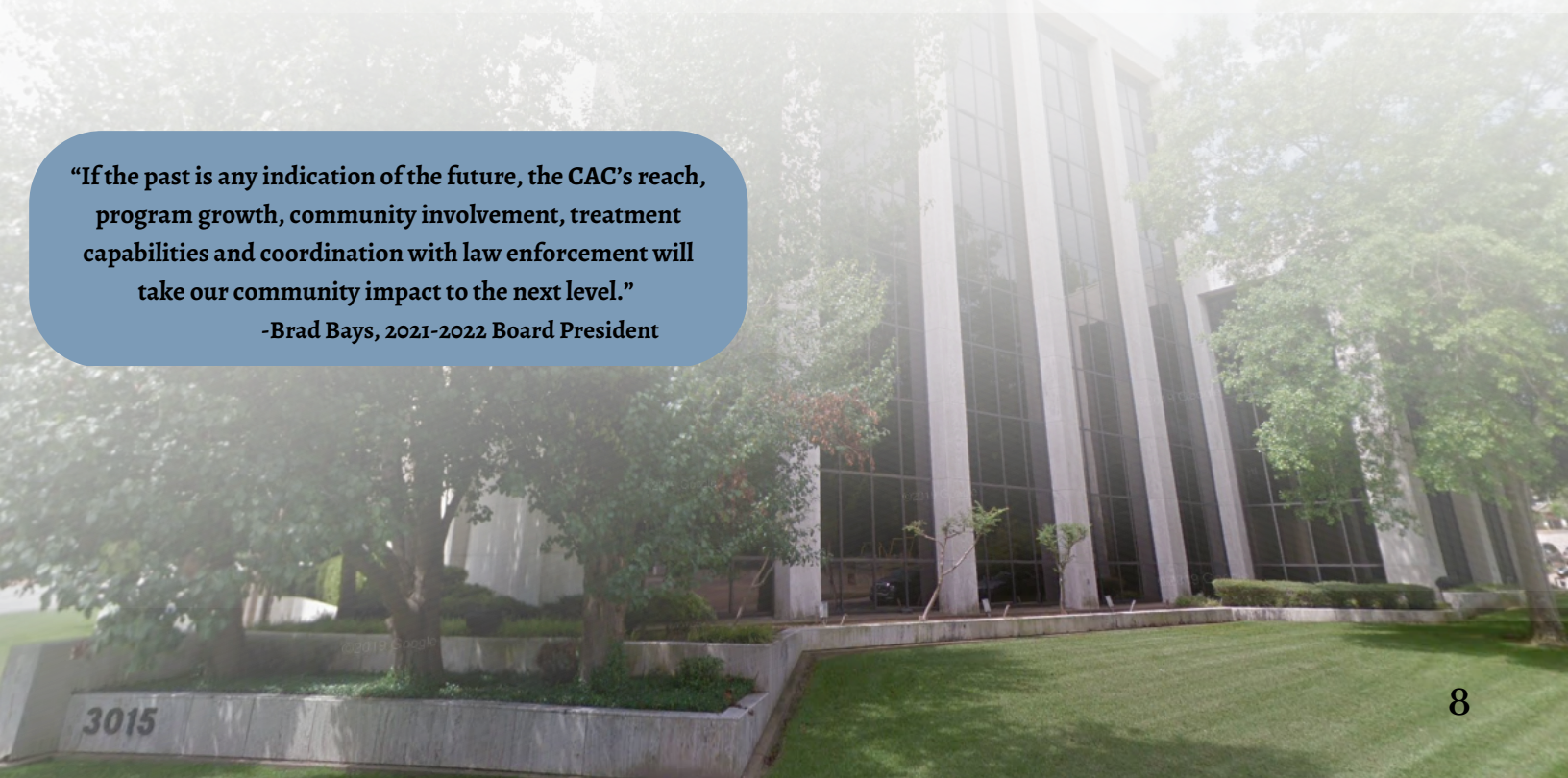
Because our programs necessitate children receive services in a secure facility, as our programs grow, so must our space. Once again last year, thousands of children and protective caregivers were interviewed and provided access to emergency resources, family advocacy, medical exams and trauma-focused therapy. To address this need, the Children's Advocacy Center purchased the former TCA Cable Building at 3015 SSE Loop 323.



Renovations to the building are creating child-friendly spaces on five floors, each designated to specific programs. These include multiple forensic interview rooms, medical exam space, therapy offices, training rooms, emergency resource supply rooms, separate waiting rooms for forensic, therapy, and medical clients, as well as additional office space for staff and law enforcement. This 39,000 square foot building provides almost five times the space of the current CACSC facility to accommodate current growth and expand future services to thousands of Smith County's children. We anticipate moving into our new home in Spring of 2023!

"If the past is any indication of the future, the CAC's reach, program growth, community involvement, treatment capabilities and coordination with law enforcement will take our community impact to the next level."

-Brad Bays, 2021-2022 Board President



hope



Hope. To expect with confidence. The belief that the future will be brighter than days past. A drive to push forward toward the goals we have set, regardless of the obstacles in our path. A light in the darkness, pushing us to never give up, even in the midst of pain and hardship.

Hope is one of the four pillars at the Children's Advocacy Center of Smith County and what our staff strives to help provide for every child that comes through our doors. It is a way of thinking that encourages action and perseverance, even when everything around you is telling you to give up. Many children who come to the CACSC desperately need hope, to be told that they are seen and valued, that they can move forward, and that they have a bright future, regardless of the trauma they have endured.

Hope comes in many forms at the CACSC, and one is our Room Makeover program. Sometimes, the abuse happens in the home, in the child's bedroom, and unfortunately the family is unable to move to a new location for various reasons. Imagine having to stay in the same room where an extremely traumatic event took place. This often leads to nightmares or sleeping elsewhere due to feeling uncomfortable or to escape the memories left there. This is where our Room Makeover program steps in to surprise the child with a completely redesigned bedroom, including new paint, furniture, and décor, to help that child reclaim their space and have a fresh start! CACSC staff, partners, and volunteers all work together over a two-day span to complete the project with supplies and funds donated by corporate businesses and local organizations.



In 2022, our Room Makeover team was able to completely change the life of a teen who could no longer sleep in her own room because of the abuse that had happened there. Even though she wanted her own space, she chose to sleep on the couch or in a different room rather than stay in the room where a family member had hurt her.



When she walked into her room and took in the new bed with a fluffy comforter in her favorite color purple, freshly painted walls, the twinkling lights strung across the ceiling, and CACSC staff yelling "Surprise!", the biggest smile light up her face. As she enveloped her Family Advocate in a big hug, you could see the infinite hope and joy she felt in that moment. The truth that there are people who deeply care about her and want her to succeed was evident in the hard work and care that the CACSC staff and volunteers had put into making her room brand new.

Following the room makeover, she felt empowered, finally able to take back her space and feel safe there. Her outlook on life became much brighter and she now has hope. Hope that she will overcome the trauma she has endured, and hope that it will no longer have a hold on her life.

Leading the Way

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Brendon Reily

Sheriff Larry R. Smith

Chief Jimmy Toler

youer on my **TEAM!**

A drawing of a cloud and a sun. The cloud is blue and fluffy, and the sun is yellow with rays.

Artwork created by a child who received services at the Children's Advocacy Center of Smith County



CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER
OF SMITH COUNTY
HEALING • SAFETY • HOPE • JUSTICE

903-533-1880 | www.cacsmithcounty.org

