



CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER
OF SMITH COUNTY

HEALING · SAFETY · HOPE · JUSTICE

ANNUAL REPORT

2023



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



In May of 2023, the Children’s Advocacy Center of Smith County moved homes. From the small space we occupied for 20 years on Frankston Highway to the spacious building on South Southeast Loop 323, we relocated to accommodate the growth we experienced in the past decade and the continued growth we anticipate.

More space means a greater ability to expand partner co-location, adequate space for specialized staff, room to expand programming, and most of all, to create a child-friendly facility for children who have been abused or who are suspected victims of abuse.

The interview of a child by specially trained CACSC forensic interviewers is often the first service a child receives; in 2023, our team interviewed 1093 Smith County children.

When we speak of numbers in our conversations, we remember that each number represents a child, a life, an opportunity for the staff of the CACSC to pour into the lives of young victims of abuse. We know the devastating results of untreated trauma, and it is our goal to help children heal from the abuse suffered and live productive and healthy lives.

We appreciate our supporters walking alongside us and providing the resources to make our goal of safety, healing, hope, and justice a reality. From advocacy and medical exams to therapy and meeting the tangible needs of a family, it is a privilege to do the work we do in partnership with them.

We are also proud to work with our partners at the District Attorney’s Office, in law enforcement and with Child Protective Investigations and the medical community as we make every effort to provide every service for every child.

When we make a decision based on “whatever is best for the child”, we do so on behalf of a community who believes in and supports our work and who believes in and supports the children we serve.

Gratefully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Terri Smith".

**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

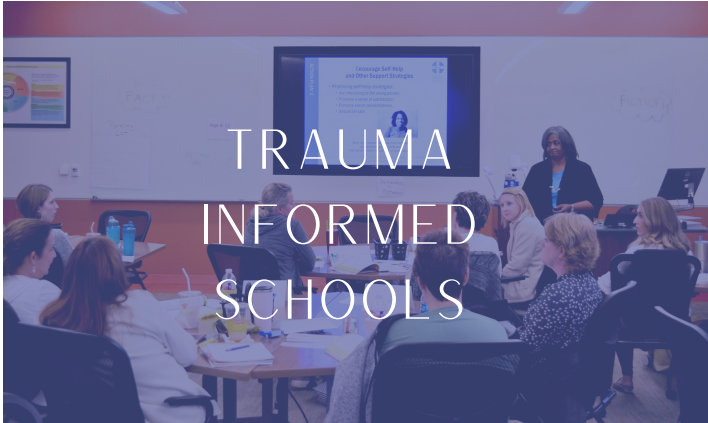
The primary therapy provided is an evidence-based treatment proven to be a highly effective intervention for child victims of abuse, Trauma Focused-Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT). Other modalities are used when a client's needs indicate the need for a different approach. Therapy is provided onsite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

WHAT WE DO



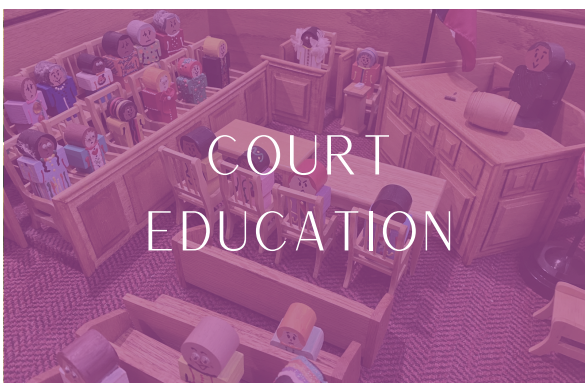
TRAUMA INFORMED SCHOOLS

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.



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.



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 NEW CHAPTER

Nina* and her protective caregiver arrived at a small brick building along the busy highway for her first session with her trauma therapist. The main lobby was full of other children, some waiting to tell their story for the first time, others for a therapy appointment or to receive a medical exam. The room was noisy with lots of adults walking in and out, a little overwhelming for a small child like Nina who had just experienced abuse at the hands of someone she thought she could trust.

She met her new therapist, who told her that soon the CAC would be moving to a brand-new building specifically designed for kids just like her. Nina was so excited to see it! After several weekly visits, her therapist told her she was making great progress and would soon “graduate”. Nina begged her to let her keep coming to therapy until after the move so she could see the child-friendly space for herself.



In May of 2023, thanks to the incredible generosity of so many, the Children’s Advocacy Center of Smith County (CACSC) moved into a renovated facility almost five times the size of the former space and Nina got her wish! Her family parked at the private entrance at the back of the tall building and walked through its front doors for the first time. Her eyes traveled up, up, up to the high ceiling where pretty, colorful pinwheels hung, and a huge grin spread across her face. What she had imagined was nothing compared to what she saw! There was even an elevator just for kids, wrapped with animated pictures of happy children riding bicycles. She stepped off the elevator onto the third floor, where a private waiting room full of toys entertained her until her appointment. Walking with her therapist to the art therapy room, she realized she felt valuable, understood, respected, and secure – all feelings she had not felt for a long time.

What does all the new space mean for the children like Nina and their families who will walk through our doors?

It means...

JUSTICE - Multiple forensic interview and observation rooms, where CACSC staff can conduct up to four interviews at a time.

PRIVACY - Three separate client lobbies, for forensic interviews, therapy, and medical examinations, placing clients with other families at the same stage of healing.

SPECIALIZATION - A larger therapy wing with additional room for staff to decrease the client waiting list, and rooms designed specifically for different modalities of trauma-focused therapy.

HEALTH - A private medical suite with its own private waiting area, two large exam rooms, showers and laundry.

EDUCATION - Two large meeting rooms on the first floor, the Training Room, and Conference Room, to host important trainings like Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse and Mental Health First Aid. The more adults educated, the more children protected against abuse.

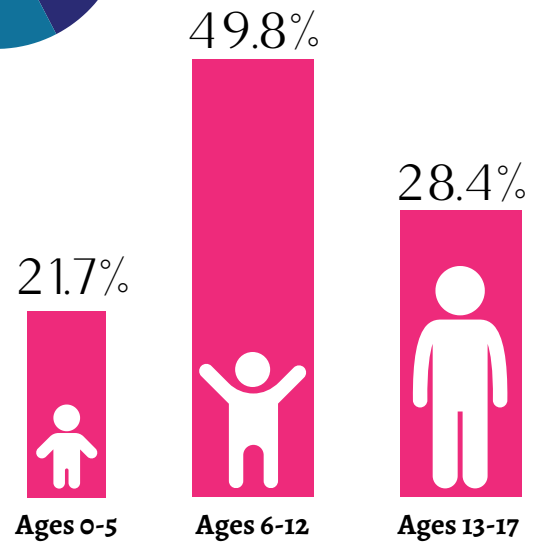
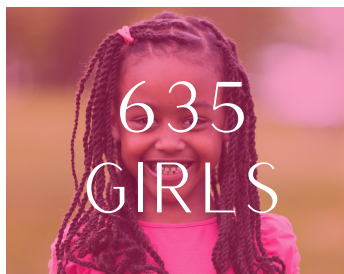
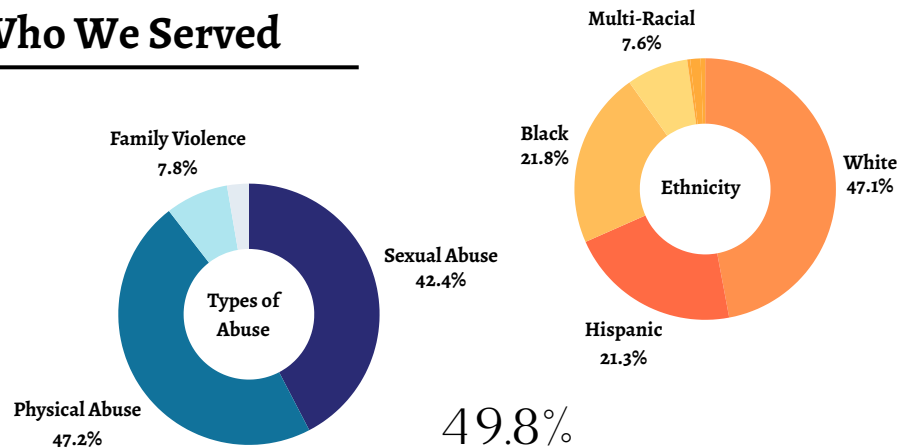
SECURITY – State of the art secure entrances and access to provide safety for children, families and staff.

GROWTH - Additional office space for the entire CACSC staff and partner agencies, with ample room for future expansion.

Every square foot of the facility is designed to serve children like Nina with the upmost care. As more children and adults are educated in abuse prevention, and as more and more children come forward to tell their stories and find healing through therapy, the CAC will be ready to receive them and ensure every child comes to the realization that a community of people have made sure they are safe and deserving of a hopeful future.

2023 BY THE NUMBERS

Who We Served



2023 OPERATING FINANCIALS*

Operating Income

Government Funding & Other Grants	1,988,251.89
Donated Funds	2,255,527.62
Other Income	98,542.79

Total 4,342,322.30

Operating Expenses

Program Services	2,434,173.78
Administration	841,914.41
Fundraising	421,031.44

Total 3,697,119.63

Net Surplus

645,202.67

*Unaudited Financials

WELCOME HOME



In May of 2023, the Children's Advocacy Center of Smith County officially moved into our new home, located at 3015 S SE Loop 323 in Tyler! The new 39,000 square foot facility provides a large room for trainings, peer reviews, and multidisciplinary team meetings, as well as separate waiting rooms for forensic interview clients, therapy clients, and medical exam patients. In addition, there is expanded office space for law enforcement, administrative staff, and our growing Trauma Informed Schools and Community Education programs that provide prevention and education for children, school staff, and professional reporters outside of our Center. This building provides us ample space to accommodate current growth and expand future services to thousands of Smith County's children!



In August, we held a Building Dedication and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony to commemorate the wonderful gift of the new building. Smith County Judge Neal Franklin presented a Resolution to name August 23rd "Children's Advocacy Center Day" in Smith County and following the ceremony, the CACSC's 2023 Women of Courage provided building tours for invited guests.

THANK YOU

The purchase and renovation of our new building was made possible by over sixty-five individuals, families, foundations, corporations, government entities, and fundraising groups joining together to benefit the children of Smith County. We want to recognize those who's generosity made this expansion possible.

Anonymous

Anonymous Fund at the Dallas Foundation

Brad Bays

In memory of Letha Bowen

Brady Environmental Services

Wendy & Steve Bratteli

Valerie & Anthony Brooks

Christina & Garnett Brookshire

Brownlow & Sons Garden Works

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Jane & Les Campbell

Cavender Family

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R. W. Fair Foundation

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Bill McGaughey

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In memory of Caroline Noteware

Sheryl Rogers Palmer

Paragon Construction & Associates

Peltier Family

Erin & Chris Phillips

Mandy & Larry Powell

Rainwater Charitable Foundation

Riter Family Foundation

Randy Rogers, honoring TCA Cable Employees 1985-1999

William & Holly Rohrer

SC Architecture

Smith County Commissioners Court

Smith County Criminal District Attorney's Office

Southside Bank

Penny K. Stephens

Brooke and Franklin Swann

The End-Right Foundation

The Rogers Foundation

The Sue Fletcher Family Legacy Fund

Van Cleave Family

Pat Pinkerton Walker

Carole Wilson

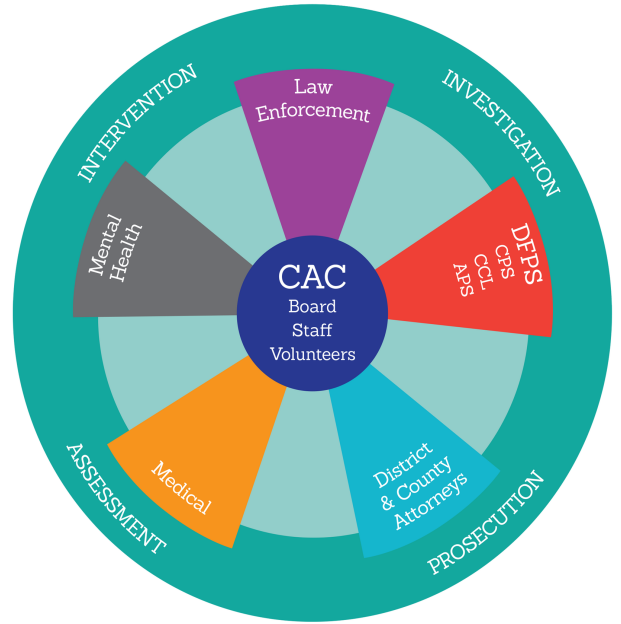
Women's Fund of Smith County

Sharon & James Wynne

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.



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 Protective Services, Child Care Investigations & Special Investigations



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

LEADING THE WAY



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- Kelley Brownlow**
- Jacqueline Cavender**
- Deborah Chelette**
- Andrew Chesnut**
- Sherry Conser**
- George Cowden IV**
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- Eleno Licea**
- Ashley McCain**
- Jay Misenheimer**
- Jim Nipp**
- Mikah Peltier**
- Jacob Putman**
- Sheriff Larry R. Smith**
- Chief Jimmy Toler**
- Archie Tucker II, Ph.D.**



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