



CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER OF SMITH COUNTY
ANNUAL REPORT



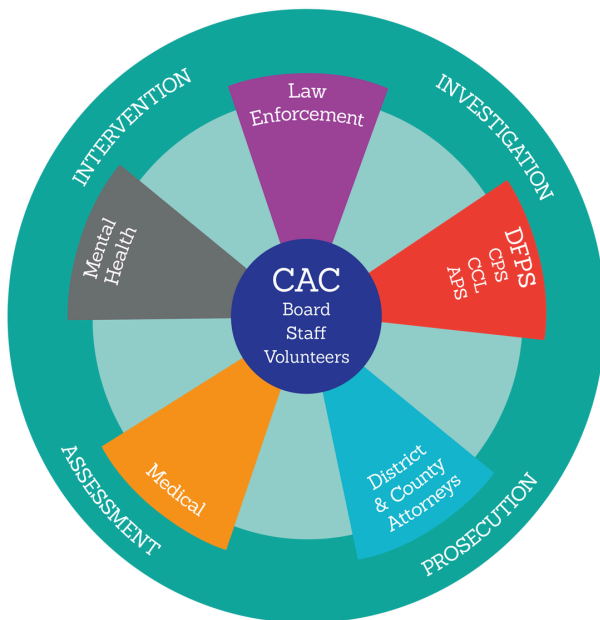
2024

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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.



MULTI-DISCIPLINARY TEAM

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.



LETTER FROM THE CEO

Dear Supporters,

As we reflect on the past year, I want to express my deepest gratitude for your unwavering support and commitment to our mission at the Children's Advocacy Center of Smith County. Together, we have navigated challenges, celebrated achievements, and made strides in our efforts to serve children whom others did not love enough to respect.

Last year 1108 children visited our center for an initial service, which was either a forensic interview, medical exam or for trauma therapy. In a community that clearly treasures our children, this is important as it means an opportunity for help and healing and a life free of the adverse effects that we know trauma can have on a child.

The stories you will read in this report serve as a reminder as to why we do this work. It is our belief in our mission and your invaluable support that empowers us to continue pushing forward and seeking solutions to serve children brought to us by law enforcement and child protective investigators. You are part of a network of advocates, volunteers, and donors who understand the importance of the Children's Advocacy Center of Smith County. Your involvement amplifies our reach and effectiveness, allowing us to remain agile and responsive to the needs of children who have been sexually abused, severely physically abused, witnessed a violent crime or been sex trafficked. We will continue to share our journey with you, providing insights into how your support makes a difference. Together, we can expand our impact. Thank you once again for believing in our mission and for being an integral part of our journey. Every single contribution, whether time, resources, or finances, has played a pivotal role in bringing our mission to life. With your continued support, we can continue to bring healing, safety, hope and justice to the lives of those we are honored to serve.

With gratitude,



TERRI SMITH
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



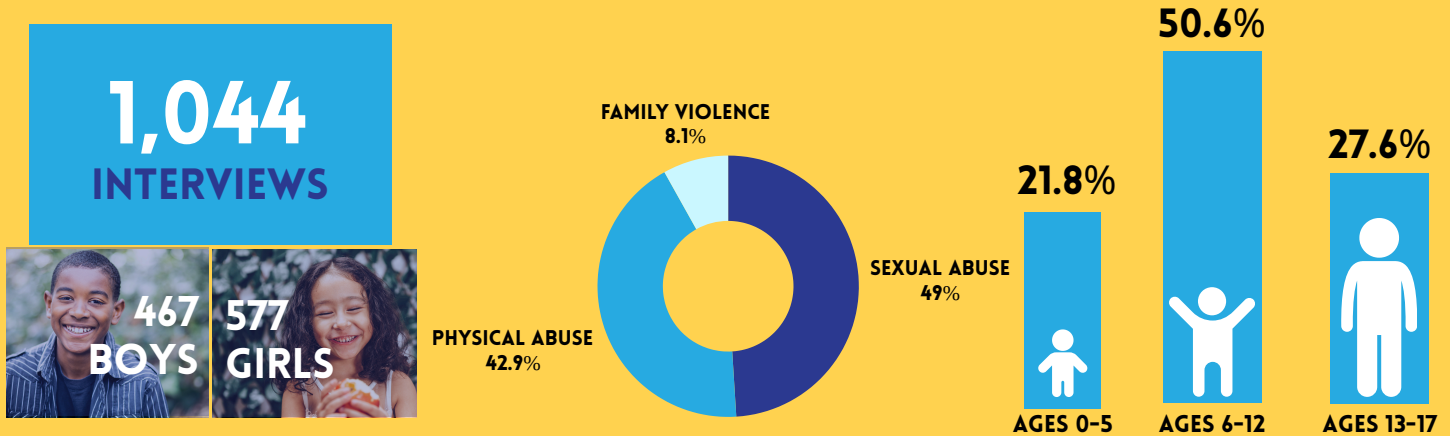
THANKS TO YOUR GENEROSITY,

1108,

CHILDREN RECEIVED INITIAL SERVICES AT CACSC

FORENSIC INTERVIEWS

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 to ensure the child's safety and for case investigation and prosecution.



"THIS IS WHERE THE HURTING STOPS"

Inside the Center, the lobby features 360-degrees of internal windows. The second floor has a unique touch to it: over 2,000 handprints cover every inch of this glass, representing the children who have bravely told their story to a Forensic Interviewer. Romelia, a Bilingual Client Engagement Advocate, shares a powerful view of these handprints. "When the children come from the elevator to the lobby to wait for their forensic interviews, many times they are nervous since this is their first time to share their story of abuse with anyone. I tell them, 'You are welcome here – you are safe here.' I try to treat them like I would if I were hosting them in my home. I talk about the handprint wall and explain that 'these hands each represent a person, a story. The brave children that outline their handprints are a reminder that you are not alone.' The staff stands beside them, as do the thousands of children who have walked these halls before. Then I invite them to outline their hand to help us add their print to the wall. Some of them are hesitant, but I remind them that these hands also represent 'STOP – the hurting stops here.'"





MEDICAL

FORENSIC HEALTH EXAM

Medical Forensic Health Exams are performed at the CACSC in a welcoming and safe environment 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.

166 

children received medical exams and treatment.

137

initial examinations regarding sexual abuse.

18

initial examinations regarding physical abuse.

11

initial examinations regarding neglect or family violence.

18.1%



AGES 0-5

40.3%



AGES 6-12

41.6%



AGES 13-17

"WHATEVER IS BEST FOR THE CHILD."



FAMILY ADVOCACY

The Family Advocate works with a 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.



COURT EDUCATION

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



WALKING WITH CLIENTS EVERY STEP OF THE WAY

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.

2,113

INDIVIDUALS BENEFITED FROM THE RAINBOW
ROOM EMERGENCY RESOURCE CENTER





GROUP SERVICES

PARENT SUPPORT

Family Advocates provide group services to caregivers and children. Parents spend a couple hours weekly in the Support Group, learning together how to best care for themselves, access beneficial resources, and ultimately, gaining support from peers who have gone through similar experiences.

LOVE 146 - NOT A NUMBER

Love 146- Not a Number is an interactive child trafficking and exploitation prevention curriculum designed to provide youth with information and skills in a manner that inspires them to make safe choices. Youth learn to identify and utilize healthy support systems that may decrease their vulnerabilities. Our Family Advocates and interns work with girls ages 12-17 that have been identified as 'at risk'. In 2024, we hosted this group session for approximately 15 girls three times throughout the year.

CARING FOR FAMILIES AT THEIR MOST VULNERABLE

At just one year old, Clara* was sexually abused by her babysitter's boyfriend. When she was taken to the ER for a medical forensic health exam, they found DNA evidence of the abuse. From this, Clara became a client of the Children's Advocacy Center. Upon arriving at the Center, Clara's mother was met by a staff member designated to be their Family Advocate. The advocate bridged the gap, as they do for thousands of children like her, while her family dealt with the life-altering trauma of abuse. For Clara's household, this meant providing tangible help in varying categories to support a single mother with young kids.

After assessing Clara's substantial immediate needs, the advocate quickly connected her mom with resources, starting with essential items from the CACSC's Rainbow Room, including clothes, diapers, and other supplies for the baby. Living in an RV, the family struggled with the summer heat. Their advocate ensured they were provided with an air conditioning unit. At Christmas, Clara's family attended the Client Christmas party. They also received gifts through the Holiday of Hope program, including a stroller and a bike for her mom to get to work. The support didn't end there. The advocate acted as a liaison, ensuring Clara's mother was not alone in this difficult journey. She connected the family with CACSC therapy services, where both the mom and kids were able to complete Child and Family Traumatic Stress Intervention, a modality of therapy designed to decrease post-traumatic stress reactions and onset of PTSD by increasing communication and family support. The Family Advocate assisted Clara through every step of the journey toward healing, all at no cost to her family.

*fictional name

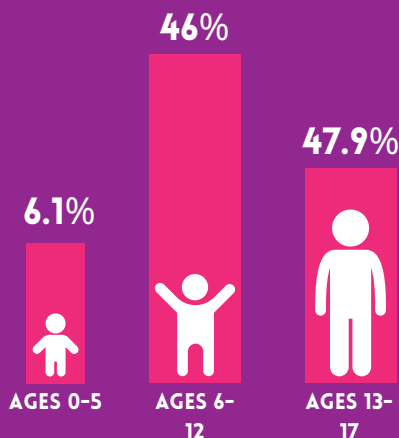
THERAPY

CACSC therapists utilize a number of evidence-based treatments proven to be highly effective interventions for child victims of abuse. Having a menu of modalities ensures the therapists can provide the best treatment for each individual child. Therapy is provided onsite at CACSC and also at Lindale High School.

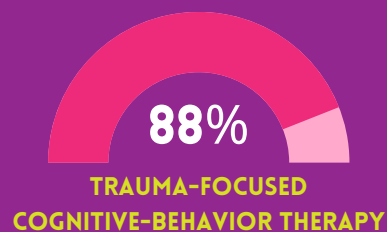


The Children's Advocacy Center is here to provide hope and healing to child victims of abuse at any point in their journey. We could not do this without generous donors like yourself. You help us make a difference in these children's lives and give them a brighter future as they recover and move beyond their trauma. Thank you for partnering with us to do this life-giving work.

THERAPY RESPONSE HIGHLIGHTS:

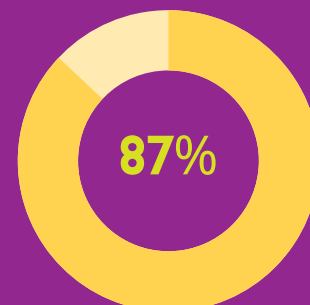


REDUCTION RATES IN POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS SYMPTOMS BASED ON MODALITY:



286
CHILDREN RECEIVED THERAPY
SERVICES AT CACSC

OVERALL, 110
THERAPY CLIENTS
WERE GIVEN TWO OR
MORE ASSESSMENTS
DURING THE YEAR.



96 OF THOSE
CLIENTS SHOWED
A REDUCTION IN
POST-TRAUMATIC
STRESS SYMPTOMS.

LEVI'S* STORY

Levi first came to the Children's Advocacy Center (CACSC) at the age of 6 after an outcry from his cousin. Levi was living with extended family at the time because his mother was struggling with her mental health. In this new home, a caretaker's live-in boyfriend abused Levi. Raised by a single mom and having a father who was in and out of prison, Levi was vulnerable to this child predator. Living with his abuser was a nightmare for Levi. When he finally built up the courage to tell his abuser to stop, the man beat him and threatened to kill him to keep him quiet. Then one night it ended with the secret revealed by his cousin, and the predator fleeing his home.

Levi came to the Center, still scared for his life and fearing his abuser would return. As a result, he refused to talk about what happened and did not want to participate in therapy. The abuser was arrested, convicted, and sent to prison. Levi tried to put the abuse behind him and move on with his life, but once he became a teenager, he had to admit that he was having difficulty coping.

Levi was finally ready to face his trauma and how it had impacted him.

The first counseling session was nerve-racking for Levi, as he was not used to opening up about his feelings. Slowly but surely, the relationship between Levi and his CACSC therapist developed into a safe space for Levi. The CACSC therapist used Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavior Therapy (TF-CBT) to help Levi cope with what happened to him. Levi learned about the symptoms of post-traumatic stress, practiced relaxation techniques such as deep breathing and mindfulness, and learned how to regulate his emotions. Levi also learned how his negative thoughts affected his feelings and behaviors and that he could change those thoughts.

Levi, who loves writing songs, was then able to utilize the CACSC's Music Therapy Room to process the abuse. This environment was the first place Levi shared his story, and his talents, with someone else. He told his therapist that it was hard to speak about it, but that he felt relieved and like a weight had been lifted off his shoulders. Levi went on to process not only the abuse, but other traumatic events of childhood and the difficulties he faced growing up. Throughout the time spent in therapy, Levi grew stronger, his post-traumatic stress symptoms and grief subsided, and he could enjoy his life again. Levi thanked his therapist for allowing him to open up and face his past with non-judgmental support. Levi completed trauma therapy and was ready to focus on his future as a musician in high school and beyond.

*fictional name

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

The Children's Advocacy Center 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.



In 2024, with a goal of being in all the spaces Smith County children are served, Community Education expanded training efforts to summer programs, childcare centers, camps, and even our local zoo staff. Beyond direct work with children, the educational reach expanded by training staff and volunteers to act as trusted adults for youth in their care. Several high school campuses were added to the 2024 calendar, bringing prevention programs to more high school campuses than ever before.

57

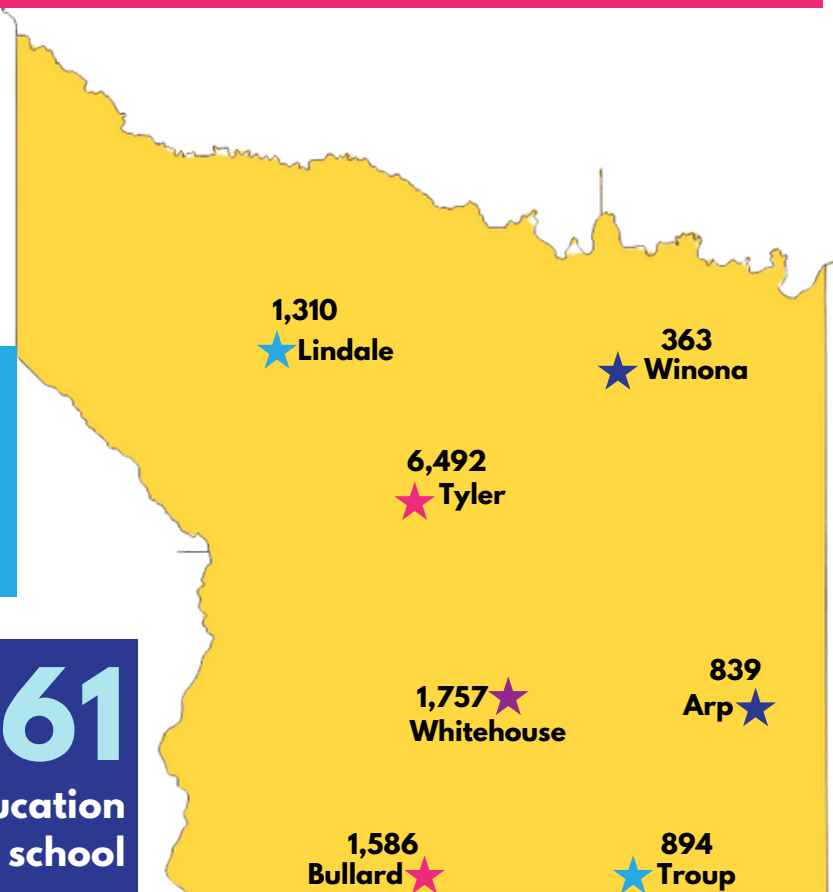
Smith County schools and organizations were served

504

adults trained in
Recognizing and Reporting

13,961

children attended a community education presentation at their school



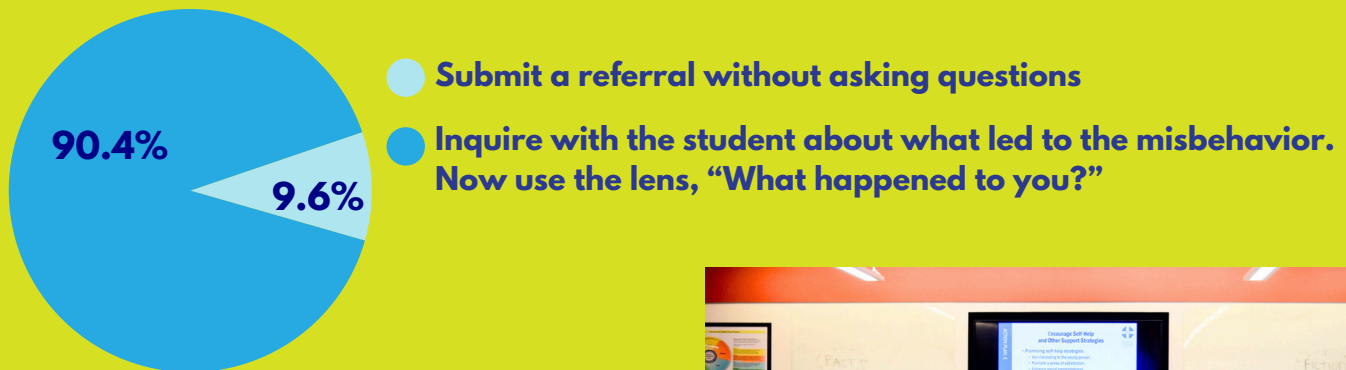
TRAUMA INFORMED SCHOOLS

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.

“I’m sad [this training] is over. It is vital to our role as teachers. Sometimes we are the only positive, safe, and loving contact our students experience daily. We have one shot with them and need to make the most of it for our students’ benefit. I have already started implementing what I’ve learned.”

TIS Trained Educator

Trauma-informed training’s influence on educators responses to misbehavior:

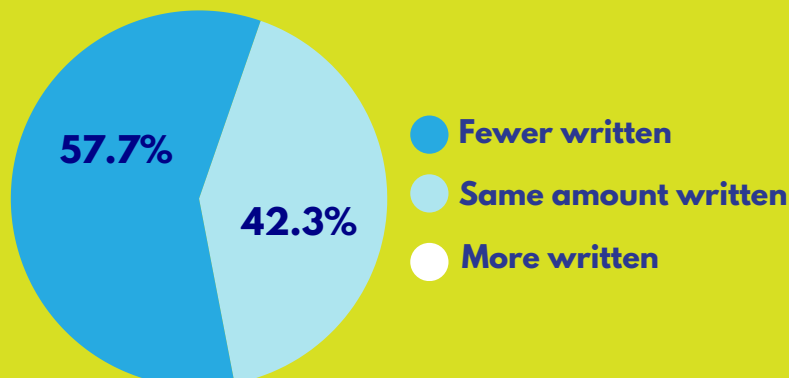


257

SCHOOL PERSONNEL PARTICIPATED IN A TRAUMA INFORMED SCHOOLS TRAINING



Since receiving trauma-informed training, educators have noticed a difference in discipline referrals:



CELEBRATING



YOUR IMPACT

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDTABLE

This year, we had the incredible opportunity to host U.S. Senator John Cornyn, U.S. Representative Nathaniel Moran, and child abuse overcomer and advocate, Jenna Quinn, in a roundtable discussion with our CEO, Terri Smith, as they advocated for “Jenna Quinn Law”, a bill intent on bringing abuse awareness training to students and adults in all public schools across the United States. This bill models the 2009 Texas “Jenna’s Law”, which was the first child sexual abuse prevention law named after a survivor, requiring K-12 training for both students and school staff, and was amended in 2017 to include sex trafficking prevention education in schools. Jenna has been a long-time friend of the Children’s Advocacy Center of Smith County, partnering with us as a keynote speaker, ambassador, and featured video guest.

The United States Senate passed The Jenna Quinn Law unanimously with a 100 - 0 vote in 2020, 2022, and 2024. In December, the United States House of Representatives passed the Jenna Quinn Law, moving it to the President’s desk. Today, the Jenna Quinn Law is federal legislation, known as Public Law No: 118-193.



VOLUNTEERS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



THE VALUE OF VOLUNTEER TIME:

As of April 2024, the estimated national value of each volunteer hour equated to \$33.49*. While there is no way to fully encapsulate the worth of our volunteers’ efforts and time, we recognize the effect of their willingness to advocate without compensation. Because of their generosity, the Children’s Advocacy Center of Smith County saved **\$61,473.90**.

*cited from Nonprofit Leadership Center

1,836

HOURS VOLUNTEERED BY
COMMUNITY MEMBERS

197

NEW VOLUNTEERS

2,247

HOURS COMPLETED BY INTERNS

188

CHILDREN RECEIVED GIFTS THROUGH
THE HOLIDAY OF HOPE PROGRAM

OUTCOMES OF

\$445,182.09

RAISED FOR THE KIDS

293 PEOPLE

DONATED FOR THE FIRST TIME

1,400 ATTENDEES

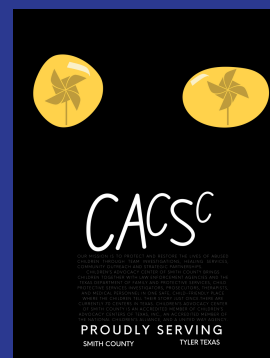
WERE EDUCATED AND EMPOWERED AS
ADVOCATES BY PARTICIPATING IN BLING-OSM

52 SPONSORS

PARTNERED WITH US TO BRING THE MAGIC



BLING - OSM
THE LADIES NIGHT OUT BENEFITING
CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER OF SMITH COUNTY



BLING-OSM EXPLODED IN 2024. THE ELEVENTH ANNUAL LADIES NIGHT OUT HAD A RECORD ATTENDANCE, AND WITH THIS YEAR'S INCORPORATED FOCUS ON EDUCATION AND AWARENESS, MORE WOMEN THAN EVER BEFORE WERE EMPOWERED TO JOIN THE FIGHT AGAINST CHILD ABUSE. AS PART OF OUR FALL INITIATIVE, WE EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF PREVENTION, SHARING A SNEAK PEEK AT THE EVENT THROUGH JENNA QUINN'S STORY AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF 1,500 AWARENESS AND PREVENTION PAMPHLETS.





PLANTING SEEDS OF HOPE AND HEALING

JUDITH'S STORY

BY DEANNA SIMS

I received a phone call in November of 2021 from an elderly lady who had read about our fundraising efforts for a new facility to serve children. Judith introduced herself and said she and her friend Roger* would like to jointly make a multi-year commitment to the capital campaign. Gratefully, I gave her our mailing address and for almost three years, she regularly gave to our building fund. I was surprised to see the address when her first check arrived - it was Salvation Army subsidized housing. Someone with a very fixed income had such a generous heart for others. Volunteering one Saturday at a local family assistance center, I finally met Judith face to face when she came for her "monthly senior food box". After a warm hug, we sat side by side while Judith shared her story. She explained that it was difficult to accept help at this season of life, but knew it was necessary. She had experienced the all-too-common experience of abuse as a child and wanted to do all she could to help other children in a similar circumstance. She was widowed at a very early age and raised her children mostly as a single mother. She worked a variety of jobs - from assembly lines and cafeterias to cleaning homes. Despite the demands of life, planting flowers in her yard brought her great joy. When the neighbors commented on her beautiful beds, she would surprise them by planting flowers in their yards as well. One of her greatest joys the last few years was knowing she could still help children who were hurting like she had as a young girl. And so, she continued to regularly mail her check to the Children's Advocacy Center. And then in August 2024, I quit hearing from Judith. I called her apartment, but no answer. In January of this year, I received a hand-written note from her friend Roger with his regular check. But this one was given in memory of Judith- she had passed away in September. Judith was not able to attend our ribbon-cutting service and was never healthy enough to see her name on the wall of our new lobby welcoming the children. But I see it every day when I come to work, and I remember. Her life teaches us that giving in whatever ways we can truly makes a difference.

*NAMES CHANGED FOR PRIVACY

LILY'S GIVING CIRCLE

In 2024, Lily Emerson completed her courageous fight with cancer right after her 26th birthday. Her family chose to honor her memory by creating a monthly giving circle that bears her name, benefitting the kind of cause that reflected her compassion. Like Judith*, things grew when Lily was near: hope, healing, a wild idea. She lived on mission, planting love and connection everywhere she went. Whether repairing an old building or encouraging a friend to fight to see another day, Lily saw potential all around. Lily embodied the work of the Children's Advocacy Center of Smith County. She enjoyed hands-on work, cultivating beautiful things, and tending to whomever crossed her path. More than anything, Lily loved caring for the underdog.

The Emersons' decision to start a giving circle inspired a ripple effect of generosity. Through their vision, a group that is dedicated to the safety of children was given a new name and a mission to call their own: Lily's Giving Circle. A display of these monthly donors was installed in the Center's Training Room, and this tribute provides a reminder of the community that tangibly and faithfully advocates for the children and our staff. Those who have joined the monthly giving program honor Lily and all who are remembered for their compassion, care for the vulnerable, and fight for good. Their legacies carry on with every dollar given, as this support tells the most vulnerable members in our society, "We see you. We believe in you. We stand with you."



BY THE NUMBERS

2024 OPERATING FINANCIALS *

OPERATING INCOME

Government Funding & Other Grants	2,016,192.39
Donated Funds	2,957,619.14
Other Income	176,443.83

TOTAL

5,150,255.36

OPERATING EXPENSES

Program Services	2,986,871.68
Administration	581,648.68
Fundraising	566,649.48

TOTAL

4,135,169.84

NET SURPLUS

1,015,085.52

*UNAUDITED FINANCIALS

430
new donors

1,114
households generously gave
monetarily to CACSC this year

12¢
cost to raise a dollar

LEAVING A LEGACY

PINWHEEL ENDOWMENT FUND

As we reflect on another year at Children's Advocacy Center of Smith County, we are filled with gratitude for the unwavering support of our community. Together, we have made significant strides in advancing our mission and impacting lives in meaningful ways.

We are excited to introduce an important initiative: The Pinwheel Endowment Fund. This program allows our friends to make a lasting impact on our organization and the children we serve, even beyond their lifetime. By considering a planned gift, supporters can help ensure the sustainability of our mission for years to come. Whether through bequests, charitable gift annuities or trusts, planned giving options will provide flexibility and can be tailored to a fit donor's wishes. This fund also serves as a way to honor or remember loved ones.

A generous gift of \$200,000 was made in 2024 to launch this endowment, setting an inspiring example of philanthropy and commitment to our cause. We extend our heartfelt thanks to this donor for their leadership and vision.

LEADING THE WAY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



ANTHONY BROOKS
PRESIDENT



CHRIS PHILLIPS
VICE PRESIDENT



RUSTY BUNDY
TREASURER



PAM GREER
SECRETARY



BRAD BAYS
IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT



JILL HOSSLEY
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



COURTNEY LOGGINS
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

2024 MEMBERS

JENNIE ABLES
MIKE ACE
KRISTEN BRICE
KELLEY BROWNLOW
JACQUELINE CAVENDER
DEBORAH CHELETTE
ANDREW CHESNUT*
SHERRY CONSER
GEORGE COWDEN IV
DAVID ENRIGHT
KIM FRETTE, DDS
BRENT JASPER
ELENO LICEA
ASHLEY MCCAIN
JAY MISENHEIMER
JIM NIPP
MIKAH PELTIER
JACOB PUTMAN*
SHERIFF LARRY R. SMITH*
CHIEF JIMMY TOLER*
ARCHIE TUCKER II, PH.D.

2025 MEMBERS

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COURTNEY LOGGINS VICE PRESIDENT
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PAM GREER SECRETARY
ANTHONY BROOKS IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT
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PEGGY EISELE, RN, MSN, MHA
DAVID ENRIGHT
TERI HODGES
ERIN JASPER
LAURA LATOOF-MARTINEZ
ELENO LICEA
ASHLEY MCCAIN
JIM NIPP
MIKAH PELTIER
JACOB PUTMAN*
SHERIFF LARRY R. SMITH*
CHIEF JIMMY TOLER*
ARCHIE TUCKER II, PH.D.

*PARTNERS BY APPOINTMENT

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

One of the most gratifying aspects of being Board President for the Children's Advocacy Center has been seeing the variety of people who come together on behalf of abused children in Smith County.

The staff team here is an impressive one, professionals who make sure their work reflects the motto on the training room wall – “Whatever is Best for the Child”. Their tireless efforts and program successes are inspiring. The volunteers and appointed partners making up the Board of Directors are proven leaders, dedicated to undergirding the organization with their time and expertise. It has been my privilege to work alongside them for such an important cause.

Engagement from the community is strong, with financial contributions coming from an array of individuals, corporations, agencies, organizations, churches and foundations. We have also seen support from these same institutions allowing for education to be provided to their family, friends, employees, and congregations. Ours is an organization people are proud to support, knowing their investment will bring healing services to thousands of children each year.

Thank you to each one of you who have given your focus and energy to work together to solve a serious problem – children who have not been shown the respect by those they should have been able to trust. Because of you, they can move toward a hopeful future with the restored childhood they deserve.

With Sincere Gratitude,



ANTHONY BROOKS
PRESIDENT



OUR PARTNERS



Arp ISD Police Department



Arp Police Department



Bullard ISD Police Department



Bullard Police Department



Chapel Hill ISD Police Department



CHRISTUS Mother Frances
Health System



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
Juvenile Services



Smith County Sheriff's Office



Texas Department of Public Safety



Troup Police Department



Tyler ISD Police Department



Tyler Police Department



UT Health North East



UT Health
East Texas



Whitehouse
Police Department



Winona ISD
Police Department



CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER
OF SMITH COUNTY

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