

*Annual Report*

2003



*center for* **child protection**

**HELP. HOPE. HEALING.**

## *Center for Child Protection*

*Formerly the Children's Advocacy Center*

They come with wide eyes and fearful hearts, both child and adult. What will be asked of them? Who will they meet with? Will anyone care? They enter the front door of a large old home. They are greeted by a caring voice and welcomed to this house. They are shown a special place to wait—adults in family rooms, children in a playhouse that is “just for” them. Caring people with soft, reassuring voices are all around. Their space and reticence is respected. Their questions are answered honestly. An opportunity is provided to talk about the experience that has impacted them all—child and adult alike. The next steps in the investigation are reviewed. Ways to access community services are given to the family. An informational packet is provided and the invitation to call if we can help, or if they just need someone to talk with. The family is on their way and the professionals continue to investigate. At some future date there may be a courtroom meeting as a case is prosecuted. The child and adult have been to Court School and are more relaxed because of that learning opportunity. Adult and child have been in counseling at the Center, or in the community, or have participated in a class or group at the Center. This coordinated process contributes to healing and being able to withstand the rigors of courtroom appearances.

*Marcia Wilson  
Former Clinical Director*





*Help.*

**Hope.**

**Healing.**

## *From the Executive Director*

Just as it is impossible to think about the well-being of a child without considering the child's family, it is also difficult to think about children at grave risk without considering the future we want for them and for all children.

We want our children to learn to make healthy choices. We want each and every child to learn to be kind and respectful of others. We want our children to be motivated to be all that they can be and have the resources to do so.

In 2003, 683 children walked through our doors. They were the victims of the bad choices of others. Their boundaries were not respected and kindness, in many instances, was used to violate their trust. Their opportunity to live fully may depend on how receptive you are to hear and see these children as they are when they come into the Center...innocent, young and hoping for the possibility of protection, healing and a return to childhood.

They are often seen in terms of their behavior, or for who their parents are or are not. They are often discussed in terms of statistics and then dismissed because the odds are against them. Some of us view them only as victims and categorize them in neat rows of numbers. But, you won't know about most of the 683 children unless you are willing to really see them as the children they are. See them as you see the children in your life. See them as innocence lost with a window of opportunity to trust again...to be innocent again.

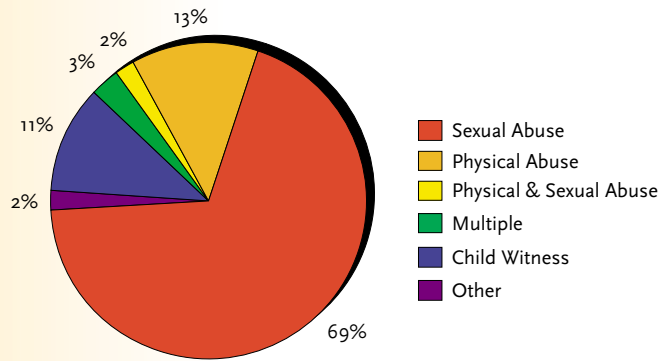
We often implore our children to "do as I say and not as I do." This is a hard message for young children. They learn by watching what we do.

Since 1992, when the first little boy walked through our doors, we've provided 6,053 children with forensic services. When our doors first opened, we used an Elizabeth Barrett Browning quote to challenge this community. "*Do you hear the children weeping?*" We've heard the weeping and now we know that just hearing will never be enough. We all must see each little face as unique with the potential to make good choices...show respect and kindness, and live motivated lives. We must see them as children without choices unless each of us makes the choice to see our role in their future...a future they will share with the children in my family and your family. We see them all as children who deserve and need what we as a caring community can provide—the opportunity for a different tomorrow.



*Sandra A. Martin  
Executive Director*

Types of Abuse

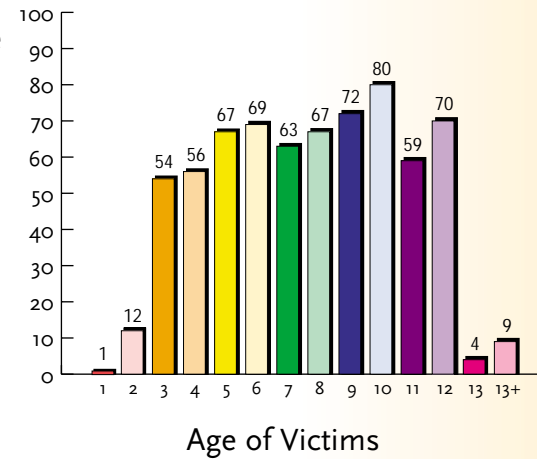


Of parents who reported the family income level, 81% of the children fell at or below 80% of the Travis County Area Median Family Income (\$71,000) according to the Housing and Urban Development Guidelines.

At the conclusion of the interview process, 97% of families reported a better understanding of their child's case. Parents noted that the child's well-being was the central focus and that everyone listened and took time to answer their questions in a very difficult situation.

Forty-seven children, an 18% increase, went through the Court School program. Many also testified in their cases. One child, a seven-year-old boy, Sam\*, was able to use what he learned to ask the judge for help when he became upset while testifying about his abuse.

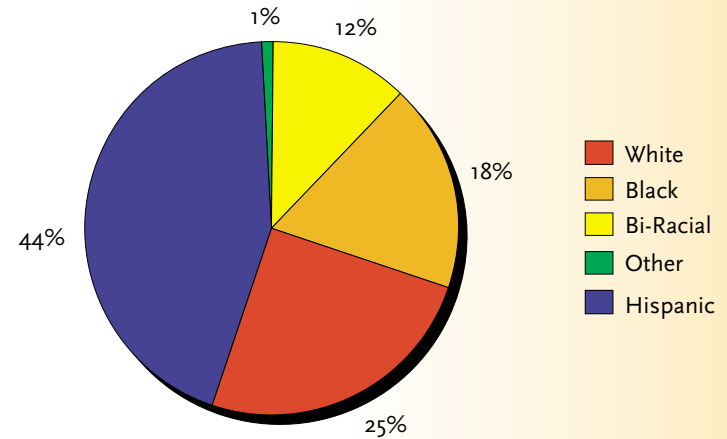
Child witnesses to violent crimes such as domestic violence, homicide and kidnapping continue to benefit from a child-friendly environment when their statements are needed in a criminal investigation. Thirteen homicide witnesses were interviewed in 2003, a 160% increase from 2002.



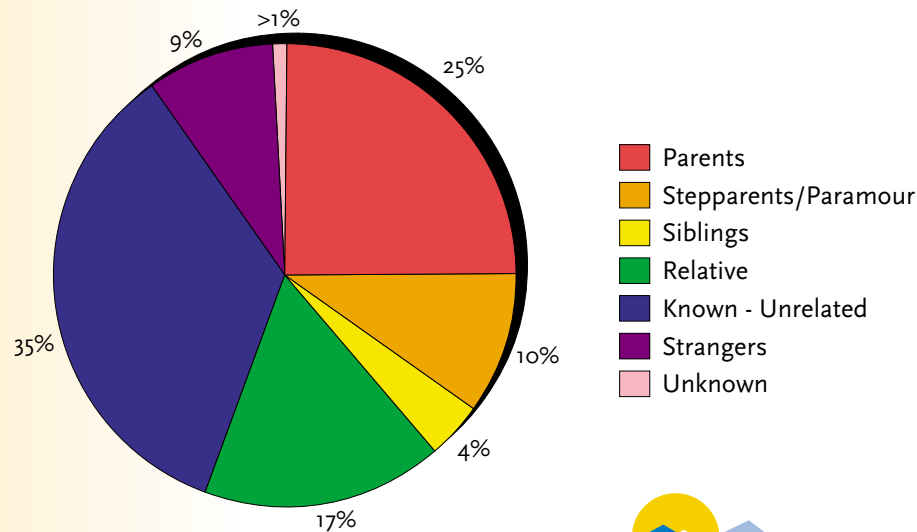
\*Names of victims have been changed to protect privacy.

A common theme for many of these children is loss of trust. They were victimized by someone that was supposed to care for them and often unable to trust the “non-offending” parent to protect them from the offender. Such was the case of a six-year-old named Becky\*. Becky was being battered at home. Although there had been many investigations, Becky had denied any problems at home. If injuries were noted, she attributed them to falls. She was wary of telling. One day, when Becky went to school, she could not talk. Although she finally admitted her father had accidentally hurt her, we learned Becky had a broken jaw. After the investigation, Becky was left in the care of her mother, and her father went to jail for the abuse. Becky came for services at the Center where she

Ethnicity and Race of Victims



Offender’s Relationship to the Victim



began working on her ability to trust. She was able to make significant progress in her weekly therapy sessions. As Becky began to find her voice, we learned Becky’s mother was taking her to visit her father as he awaited trial. Even worse, Becky reported she was also being beaten by her mother. After an investigation, Becky was placed in a safe environment and has blossomed since being away from the abuse. Becky’s time at the Center helped her to trust that not all adults would hurt her or leave her unprotected. She was able to ask for and receive help that led to her safety and healing.

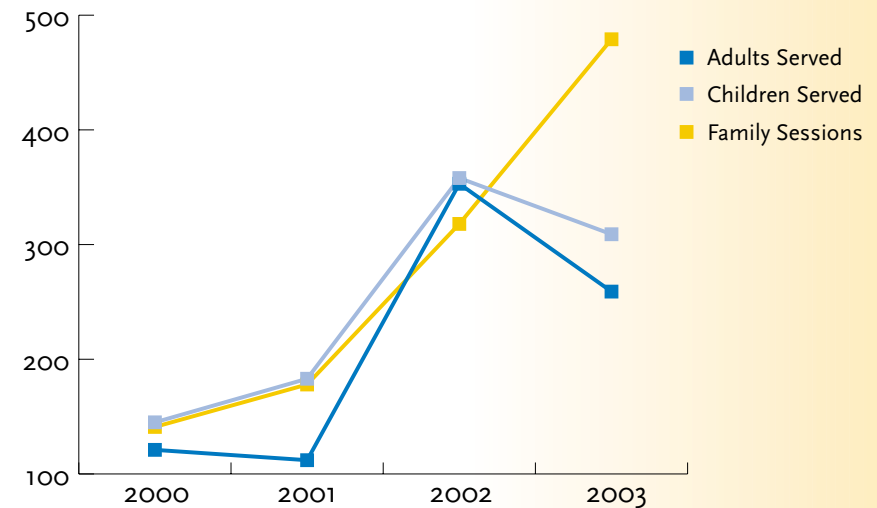


\*Names of victims have been changed to protect privacy.

One hundred thirty-three children and adults came to the Center for counseling. Many of the children were victims of sexual abuse, often by caregivers or family members. Others, like a four-year-old, Maria\*, a pre-schooler, are here after witnessing traumatic events. Maria witnessed the violent death of her 2-year-old sister. In a therapy session she had at the center to process her fear and pain, she drew her fears as a picture of a “monster” choking her sister. Regular therapy is helping her come to terms with the emotions of helplessness, sadness, and fear caused by the loss of her sister.

The Center’s staff therapist conducted 807 individual and family sessions in 2003. Some 479 of those sessions were for family therapy, a 51% increase over 2002. These families are in therapy, working together to identify the factors that place the child at continued risk for abuse. Additionally, families work through difficult behaviors that often occur as a result of abuse.

Number of Individual and Family Therapy Sessions Provided by the Center



\*Names of victims have been changed to protect privacy.



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Every day, the staff and agency partners involved with the Center for Child Protection deal with the issues relating to sexual and physical abuse of children in our community. They work with the children and families hurt by rape, beatings, burnings, and other assorted violent crimes. They succeed when a child is placed in a safe environment and a family receives assistance through counseling, parenting classes and support throughout the judicial process. Each month and year, the number of children referred to the Center for Child Protection grows larger. The time has come to shine a very bright light on this community problem.

Our common purpose in this struggle against child sexual and physical abuse is clear. The effect on the lives of these children and eventually on the life of our community is devastating. The cycle of abuse continues whenever intervention is absent. The cycle of pain and guilt, of hurt and loss, of waste of life will continue until we decide to take action. The time is now for us to raise the status of children to a higher level and take responsibility as a community. When we say children are our future, believe it. What kind of future do you want?

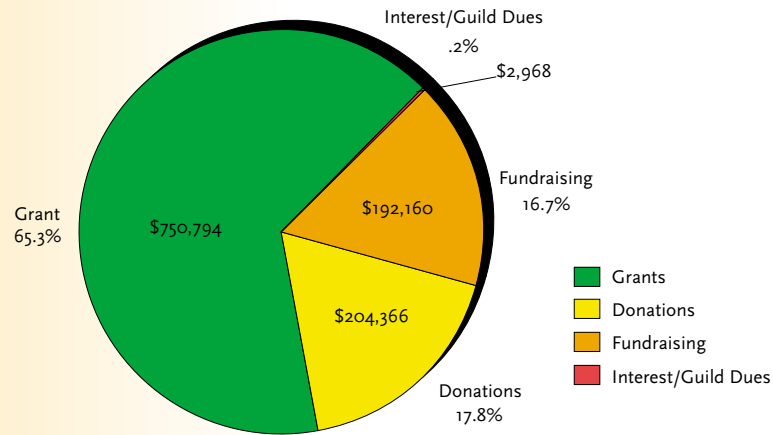
Some ask, why do we do this work? If not us, then who? You, the community, are the answer. Your time, your money, your power can make a real difference in the life of a child. That is the real answer.

Mary E. Wilbur  
President, 2004 Board of Directors

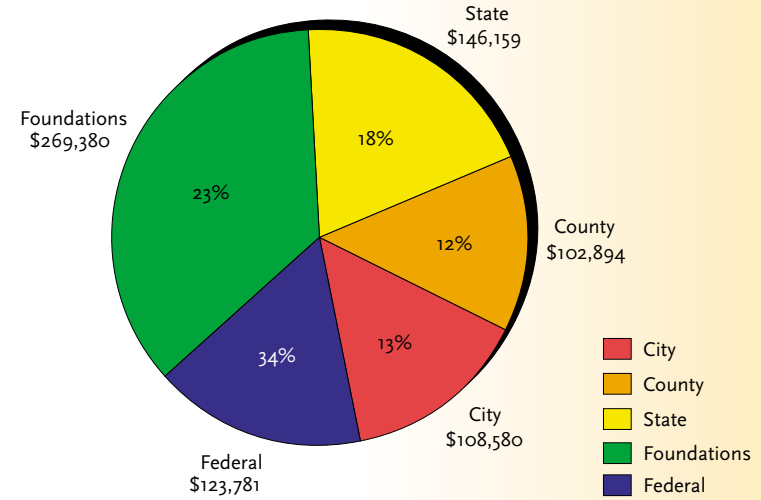


# Financial Information

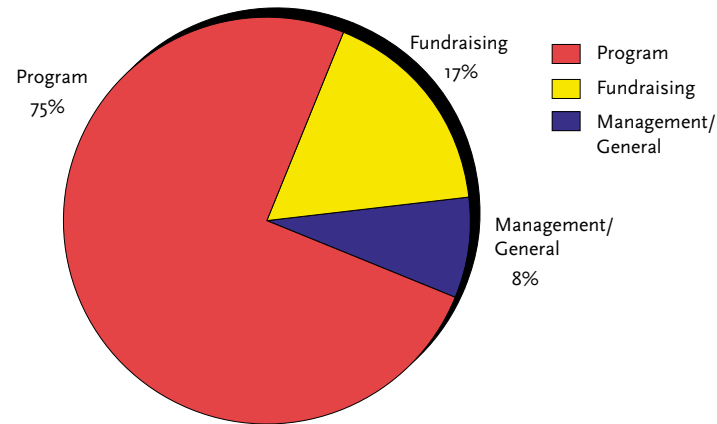
## Funding Source



## Source of Grant Funding



## Functional Expenses





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**Hope.**

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## Special Thanks to Our 2003 Heroes for Children\*

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