LISTEN UP!

Little People
and the
BIG THINGS
they have to say

a story about those who know

center for child protection

HELP. HOPE. HEALING.
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Note: Names and other identifying circumstances in the impact narratives found throughout the report have been changed to protect the privacy of children and families.
Imagine, if you can, that a child has been brutally raped or physically assaulted...frightened within an inch of their life. Picture a child witnessing a violent, bloody altercation between the parents they love. Then imagine having to relive one or more of these events in daydreams, nightmares, in a seemingly never-ending replay. This is the plight of the 705 children who were brought to the Center for Child Protection last year for a forensic interview.

Once children have been traumatized, they may withdraw, regress or become depressed. Their young shoulders carry the heavy burden of shame, responsibility and guilt. These feelings may permeate all aspects of their childhood. No good parent could remain unconcerned when their young child displays any of the many possible symptoms of trauma...vomiting, sleep disturbances, ulcers, difficulty breathing, and yet, small victims often lack the necessary words to explain or ask for help.

Sadly, none of the children have the physical strength or the power to stop what has happened to them. So many aspects of the crime and violence associated with child abuse can be overwhelming even to the compassionate, protective adults who provide their care. Young victims of the crimes of sexual assault or serious physical injury can also be paralyzed by fear: enormous, terrifying fear that manifests itself in invisible scars that can be carried long into adulthood.

There is hope for these children and their families. That hope begins with supporting the collaborative efforts to keep children safe and protected. It means reporting abuse to the authorities. It means getting involved in child abuse prevention efforts. It means being an active participant in the lives of the children in your own life. If an abused and assaulted young child receives intervention, support and direction, their injuries can be ameliorated, and we can break the cycle of abuse. The child can go on to love, trust, laugh and set safe boundaries now and in the future. Since beginning services in 1992, more than 7,000 children have walked through our doors. Many of these children were struggling with the impact of severe trauma and depended on the Center as their lifeline.

It takes enormous courage for a donor, community member, volunteer, elected official or agency leader to become involved in such a disturbing issue. Their commitment and ours is in the wisdom that it is the right thing to do.

Sincerely,

Sandra A. Martin
Chief Executive Officer
During my interview with Sarah early Saturday, she told me that she had been afraid of what the suspect would do to her family if she spoke about what had happened. She said that once the police had come to her house, she thought it was okay to tell because the suspect would be arrested. She looked at me with a somber expression and then said, “But he didn’t go to jail.” In that moment, I thought about how there is no way I would ever be able to explain to this child why it is necessary that the police conduct a complete investigation before arresting a suspect. The only thing she understood was that a person whom she was very afraid of was still living in an apartment two doors down from her. Hearing this child’s words, I was grateful that the Child Protection Team is set up to respond to emergency situations. Rather than waiting until Monday to begin an investigation, the detective worked overtime in order to arrest the suspect and ensure Sarah and her siblings’ safety. Multiple members of our team came together, after hours, to both assist in the investigation and help the children through the process. I consider this case to be an excellent example of how the Child Protection Team can work in the best interests of individual children as well as the community at large.

Forensic Interviewer
The year in Review

Progress for Children
The Center for Child Protection has made significant inroads in its vision to serve more children recovering from trauma whether from abuse or witnessing violence. The Center continues to see increases in the number of children referred for a forensic interview due to child abuse and as witnesses to violent crime.

In 2005, the Center initiated the Family Advocate Program to serve protective caregivers and victims of abuse. Through the use of specially trained, graduate-level clinical interns, the Center began providing an enhanced level of care in the extended support to families in crisis. Last year, 147 adults and 127 children received personalized, professional assistance through the Family Advocate Program.

Team Progress
The Center continues to nurture the growth and collaboration among Child Protection Team (CPT) members. In 2005, the Center for Child Protection generated $17,957 to train 150 team members including caseworkers, medical professionals, mental health professionals, law enforcement officers, and prosecutors. The Center also initiated a continuing education process that provides quarterly training to better integrate and train new CPT members and keep seasoned members well-versed in child protection issues.

Progress in the Community
In December 2005, the Center announced the public phase of the Center’s Capital Campaign to raise $9.1 million to break ground on a new building to be named the Kozmetsky Center for Child Protection. The new Center and training facility will dramatically improve services for all children in Travis County (see pages 14-15 for more details).

The Center for Child Protection provided service to 1,303 children and 917 adults in 2005.
This month I began working with Erica and her five-year-old son, Travis, who was referred to me because he had been a victim of sexual abuse by a family friend. Soon after Travis gained courage to disclose the abuse, his mother became extremely concerned. Upon arriving home, Erica and Travis encountered the former family friend who was very angry. He arrived at their house, began banging on the door, and refused to leave until the police arrived. Consequently, Travis has been very scared of leaving the house without being accompanied by his mother and father. He becomes easily dismayed and has trouble sleeping due to recurring nightmares. Thanks to quick action by the Austin Police Department Victim Services Counselor who responded to the scene, Travis and Erica were referred to me for help and they are now receiving therapy to alleviate their anxiety and distress.

*Counseling and Support Specialist*

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**Forensic Interview**
When children arrive at the Center, they are interviewed in a safe, non-threatening environment and their statement is recorded on videotape or DVD. This eliminates the need for a child to disclose their abuse over and over again. In 2005, the Center conducted 705 interviews of child victims.

**Medical Exam**
Children may be scheduled to receive a medical examination, which may include a sexual assault examination to collect evidence of sexual abuse. In 2005, 81 children received medical examinations.
Court School
Each month, the Center conducts a Court School program for children and their families who will testify in court. The two-hour program introduces children to a courtroom at the Travis County Court House and the roles the judge, witnesses, prosecutor, and defendant play during a court proceeding. In 2005, 19 children and 23 adults participated in Court School.

Therapy
One of the core programs of the Center for Child Protection is the therapy and counseling services we provide children and their families in English and Spanish. By creating a safe therapeutic relationship, children and their families are able to process their experiences and heal from the abuse they endured. In 2005, 174 children and adults attended 1,146 therapy sessions. Of those, 36 children were served at the Austin Children’s Shelter.

Protective Parenting Group
The Protective Parenting Group is a class that meets for two hours each week for 10 weeks where parents are court-ordered to attend because of involvement with Child Protective Services. This parenting group is designed to address issues related to trauma, family dynamics, and child protection specifically. This year 51 adults completed the court-ordered Protective Parenting Group.

Parent Education Classes
The Center’s Parent Education STEP Class meets for an hour and a half for seven weeks and is designed to share information about child development, communication skills, misbehavior in children, conflict resolution, and appropriate discipline. In 2005, 60 adults participated in STEP Parenting classes.

Intensive Case Management
Intensive case management supports at-risk families one-on-one for a longer period of time to prevent child abuse or neglect. The Center’s clinical staff makes home visits to assess a child’s developmental needs and to provide support. A total of 81 children and adults were provided case management services in 2005; 54 of those were children.

Family Advocate Program
Launched in 2005, the Family Advocacy Program’s primary focus is to provide protective caregivers with immediate crisis intervention, ongoing case management, therapy, and follow-up so caregivers have the support they need to take care of their child, family, and themselves. Last year, clinical staff members and trained clinical graduate interns performed 131 family assessments and provided services to 147 children and 127 adults.
I interviewed five-year-old Yolanda who was a victim of sexual abuse by her father. When the interview started Yolanda asked me if I would promise not to tell anyone about her secret. I explained to her that I could not do that because I worked with a team of people who were there to keep her safe. Yolanda talked to me about the incidents of the abuse. When we were getting near the end of the interview, she moved very close to me and told me, “You know you’re my best friend now, don’t you?” After completing the interview, I thanked her for talking to me and she thanked me for wanting to “keep her safe”. This five year old seemed to understand that even though her father told her to keep everything a “secret” she trusted that our team was there to keep her safe and that she could trust me enough tell me about her abuse.

*Forensic Interviewer*
The Center for Child Protection provided 3,284 services to 1,303 children and 917 adults in 2005. A total of 705 new children were brought to the Center for a forensic interview. A majority of the children came to the Center because of sexual abuse (62 percent). Fewer children were referred as a result of physical abuse (17 percent), witness to violence (16 percent), multiple abuse (4 percent), or kidnapping (less than a percent). Twenty-one percent of cases had a domestic violence history.

Of children served at the point of interview, 46 percent of children were of Hispanic origin. Some 16 percent spoke only Spanish. A total of 25 percent of children were White, 19 percent were African American, 10 percent were bi-racial, and less than 1 percent were of other race/ethnicity. Just over a quarter (28 percent) of children served were between one and five years old; 68 percent were between six and 12 years old; 4 percent were 13 to 17 years old.

Though 40 percent of children served, whose families reported their income, were at or below the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines, the Center continued to see children from a variety of backgrounds and income levels. Children who were referred to the Center in 2005 represented nearly every zip code in Travis County, from rural areas to urban areas and from poor neighborhoods to those who were very wealthy.

Profile of Offenders
In 2005, children reported that 90 percent of the persons who harmed them were people they knew. Only 8 percent of children were harmed by strangers; 2 percent had an unknown relationship with the offender. Of the offenders reported, a majority were male (87 percent) and age 17 or above (78 percent).
Each year the Center for Child Protection produces an Annual Report with statistics, pie charts, graphs, and financial information. While this is the best way to tell the community and donors about the progress of the Center and the outlook for the future, the real story is not apparent in the pages of any report.

The real story of the children and families that come to the Center needs to be told in more intimate terms. It is the story of three young girls age seven, ten, and thirteen. The seven- and thirteen-year-olds supported their ten-year-old sister’s statement of repeated rape by their father. He was their only caretaker.

It is the story of a three-year-old boy brought to the Center to be interviewed after his infant brother’s death by scalding. He had cigarette burns over his arms, legs, and torso.

It is also the story of a prison inmate on death row who wrote a letter to the Center asking if he could help us help abused children. He wrote, “Abused children are my heart, because I am one...I always wished there was a Super-hero that went around avenging abused children.” In 1998, after a long history of abuse and torment, he killed his parents.

What will it take to stop this pernicious treatment of children?

You, the community, working hand-in-hand with professionals in law enforcement and Child Protective Services, are these children’s best hope for a better future. Child abuse can be stopped and the cycle can be broken. We are poised at a unique moment of opportunity to bring the issue of child abuse into the light of day and remove the secrecy and shame that children who are victims carry with them. It is up to us. You can be the Super-hero to a child wishing to be rescued. Please help.

Sincerely,

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The Center for Child Protection is a good steward of the funds that are entrusted to our care. In 2005, the Center spent $1,642,733 toward total operations, and held $4,472,688 in net assets at the end of the year. The large ending net assets number was due to the Center’s Capital Campaign to construct a new building which was publicly announced December 11, 2005.

The Center spent 78.7 percent on program expenses including costs for forensic interviews, therapy, parenting classes, clinical staff, and more. Fundraising expenses held steady at 15.5 percent, and 5.8 percent was spent on administrative expenses. All of the services provided to children and families are offered without charge.
A majority of the Center’s funding came from donations (74.4 percent) in 2005; the remaining funding (25.6 percent) came from grants, fundraising, and interest income. When comparing funding by private versus public sources, a majority of the Center’s funding comes from private sources (89.7 percent); government funding accounted for 10.3 percent of funding in 2005. The Center’s sources of grant funding continue to come from diverse sources, the largest being private foundations (42.2 percent) followed by the state (16.3 percent), county (12.9 percent), city (12.8 percent), federal (12.3 percent), and corporations (3.5 percent).

The Center for Child Protection reports financials that comply with General Accepted Accounting Practices (GAAP). The Center’s Form 990 is on file with the Internal Revenue Service, and the Center’s Audited Financial Statements are available on request. The Center’s independent auditors are Gindler, Chappell, Morrison & Co., P.C.
The Center for Child Protection announced on December 11, 2005 the public phase of the Center’s Capital Campaign, whose goal is $9.1 million to construct a new building and training facility. The Capital Campaign brings to life the Center’s long-held plan to create lasting, systemic change to break the destructive cycle of abuse and trauma for all children.

The new Center will help co-locate the Child Protection Team, bringing all the agencies that serve abused children together. It will also make it possible for the Center to offer a full range of age-appropriate, coordinated services for children up to age 18. Among the features of the new building are the addition of an onsite medical assessment wing, new therapy rooms with space for enhanced volunteer support, more forensic interview rooms, and a children’s closet for donated toys, clothing, and books.

“The Center for Child Protection’s new site will ensure that as a community we are doing all we can to support the children who are victims of child abuse. This project sends the message that the safety and protection of our children is a community priority. It is critical that every citizen demonstrate his or her commitment to our children.”

Will Wynn, Mayor of Austin
Ronya Kozmetsky, a founding board member and philanthropist, gave a generous gift to lead the effort. To motivate community support, she graciously agreed to lend her family’s name to the new Center, which will be named the Kozmetsky Center for Child Protection. Other lead gifts include those from founding board member, Maxine Roberts, and from the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation. Local developers Peter Barlin and Manny Farahani donated 4.5 acres in East Austin on which the new Kozmetsky Center for Child Protection will be located. The new site is located on Martin Luther King Boulevard (FM 969), just east of US Highway 183, at the site of the old Austin State School. Construction will begin in September 2006 and be completed in early 2008.
This month I interviewed a 9-year-old girl named Emily who was sexually abused by her stepfather. The little girl outcried to a police officer who arrived on the scene after her mother called 911 for help when her husband became violent. Emily, her mother, and three siblings were living with a friend because they were afraid that her husband might carry out his threats to find them and hurt them. However, Emily’s mother was determined to move forward and to support her daughter even as she dealt with her own crisis. While she was at the Center, the police officer, caseworker, intern, and myself all worked to assist Emily’s mother with filing a protective order to accessing counseling to explaining her emergency shelter options. Emily’s mother became very emotional when she learned about the details of Emily’s victimization because she wanted to keep her safe. As the appointment was drawing to a close, Emily’s mother confided that she felt powerless that she could not even buy her daughter Christmas presents. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, there were extra gifts all categorized by age and gender, which allowed us to collect a large bag of toys that her mother could hide under blankets in the car to be opened Christmas Day. Though Emily’s mom was in a situation without any easy answers, we could help her maintain her holiday tradition in the midst of so much upheaval.

*Forensic Interviewer*
Through their generous gifts of time and talent, volunteers filled important roles in the care of children and families. They greeted and comforted children and families who came to the Center for a child to be interviewed. They held a child’s hand while assisting the doctor for medical exams. They carefully supervised children whose parents were attending classes in the evening or whose sibling was in session with the Center’s staff therapist. In these and countless other ways, the Center’s volunteers were an integral part of the Center for Child Protection.

In 2005, more than 125 volunteers provided a total of 12,271 hours of service, a 33 percent increase over the previous year. Based on the 2005 hourly volunteer rate as calculated by Independent Sector, these hours of service were valued at $221,369. Twenty interns from local universities logged 4,368 hours of service, and 87 volunteers from local corporations such as Comerica, TD Industries, Freescale Semiconductor, SBC, Austin Ventures, Sematech, and Principal Wellness, contributed 371 service hours in support of the Center.

Volunteers received awards for their service to the Center. Brandon Moore, a 13-year-old who completed his Eagle Scout Project at the Center, was recognized by KVUE Five Kids Who Care; Lauren Peters, Principal of PetersGroup Public Relations, was honored by Helping Hand Home for Children with a Champions for Children Award; and Ben Bentzin, board member, received Austin’s Under 40 Award for his accomplishments and work with the Center.

The Friends of Christopher Guild
Founded in 1992, the Friends of Christopher Guild is a women’s volunteer organization dedicated to sustaining and expanding the safety net for abused children in Travis County through support of the Center for Child Protection. A diverse membership of Guild volunteers assists the Center through fundraising and direct service to children and families in need. In 2005, the Guild was composed of 40 active members. Together, they held their second annual signature fundraiser PlayBingo on October 29, 2005, which raised awareness and nearly $45,000 in resources to support the Center’s services. Additionally, the Guild sponsored the 14th Annual Luxury Raffle held in Fall 2005 which gave participants the chance to win a 2006 Lexus.

Projects Supported by Center Volunteers and Friends of Christopher Guild

PROJECT GRADUATION is a year round drive for teenagers aging out of foster care to help them start their own household. In 2005, the Center for Child Protection served 54 young men and women with 66 “Life Kits” which were valued at $200 each.

THE BACKPACK PROJECT helps children with school supplies at the start of the school year. In 2005, 163 children received a backpack, pencil box, pencils, crayons, paper, glue, and other supplies for their first day at school, a 150 percent increase over the previous year.

HOLIDAY GIVING is an annual drive where holiday gifts and all the fixings for a holiday meal are collected for children and families in need. In 2005, the Center served 55 families, including 84 adults and 152 children.
With Gratitude to Our 2005 Donors

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Betty Woods
LaRue & Fred Woody
Robert Wynn
Elizabeth & Scott Zodin
The Center for Child Protection’s Mission is to reduce the trauma for children during the investigation and prosecution of child abuse cases.

In 1989, as a result of the deaths of three small children in Austin, the community realized it had to do a better job of helping children who were victims of abuse or neglect. The Center for Child Protection, an accredited child advocacy center, was established to bring together the agencies that serve children who are victims of sexual assault or serious physical injury or who witnessed a violent crime. In a pioneering and highly successful approach, the Child Protection Team was established with the Center serving as its coordinating agency. For more than 12 years, this team has worked to provide a safe setting in which children are able to tell what happened and receive the support they need to begin healing. More than 7,435 children have been interviewed at the Center for Child Protection since 1992.

Child Protection Team Members

- Austin I.S.D. Police Department
- Austin Police Department
- Cedar Park Police Department
- Center for Child Protection
- Children’s Hospital of Austin
- Jonestown Police Department
- Lago Vista Police Department
- Lakeway Police Department
- Leander Police Department
- Manor Police Department
- Mustang Ridge Police Department
- Pflugerville Police Department
- Rollingwood Police Department
- Sunset Valley Police Department
- Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
- Travis County District Attorney’s Office
- Travis County Sheriff’s Office
- West Lake Hills Police Department

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