



# ACHIEVING HARMONY

Spring 2015



## April is Child Abuse Awareness Month

April is Child Abuse Prevention and Awareness Month and a busy month for Harmony House staff. This year we are once again presenting our "Secrets" program to all the classes at Madison Elementary School. We are attending the Marshall County Children's Fair on April 15th to give away prevention material and are presenting the dangers of sexting to St. Clairsville Middle School and Harrison County Schools. Leslie is being interviewed for the John Marshall HS television channel which will be run on Channel 14 during April.

On April 16th in Belmont County we will be attending the Job and Family Services Luncheon where people working in the child abuse

field are honored. We look forward to seeing who will receive the Child Advocate of the Year Award. We continue to be grateful to social services and law enforcement in Belmont County for their support and understanding

**REPORTING HOTLINES**  
 Child Protective Services  
**WEST VIRGINIA**  
 1-800-352-6513  
**BELMONT COUNTY**  
 740-633-5627  
 or call your local  
 law enforcement

that by using our services, it benefits the child and family in their healing process.

Driving around the Ohio Valley you may see blue pinwheels planted in gardens and outside businesses. They symbolize the need for a safe and happy childhood for all children.

Some of you may have started to hear about human trafficking and may not think it is relevant to our area. Sadly this is not the case. There are children in our schools who are being used for financial reasons by their "boyfriends", parents, relatives and other known people. Please look around you. If you see a child who you think is in trouble, report it to the authorities.

The trafficking hotline is 1-888-373-7888.

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## What can you do to help prevent child abuse?

Be a friend to a parent you know. If he seems to be struggling, offer to babysit or run errands or just lend a friendly ear.

Be a friend to a child you know. Remember her name, smile when you talk to her, ask about her day at school. Show her that you care.

Talk to your neighbors about looking out for each other's children around your block/apartment. Show that you are involved.

Give your used clothing, furniture, toys for use by another family to help reduce financial burdens.

Volunteer your time and money for programs in your community that support families and children.

Advocate for public policies, programs and issues that benefit children and families.

### Ohio Auxiliary

Kayla Bassa

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## A message from the Executive Director - Leslie Vassilaros

I would like to thank the Community Foundation for the Ohio Valley for the opportunity to take part in the second annual Amazing Raise Ohio Valley on May 5, 2015. This is a wonderful opportunity for our community to donate to local non-profits, including Harmony House!

Starting at 12:01 a.m. May 5th, for 24 hours, it will be a day to celebrate the Ohio Valley's spirit of generosity and support the work of non-profits.

To donate, go to [giveov.org](http://giveov.org) and once there, you will be able to choose which non-profit you would like to donate to. Thank you for considering Harmony House in your giving. *Leslie*



## Upcoming Events in Support of Harmony House

### "Hope for Spring" Fling

Harmony House WV auxiliary present "Hope for Spring" Fling on Saturday, **April 18, 2015** at Camp Russell in Oglebay Park from 6-11 p.m. This is a fun evening with food, dancing to a DJ and a chance auction. Tables for 10 are available for reservation.

We will also release balloons - "Hope Soars" - to honor children who had the courage to talk about their abuse at Harmony House in 2014.

Tickets are \$25 per person and can be obtained by calling 304-230-2205. This event is BYOB.

### Toast of the Vineyard

On Saturday, **August 1, 2015**, you are invited to the 11th "Toast of the Vineyard" at Wheeling Country Club.

From 6:30 to 10:00 p.m. you may sample as many of the 20 or so wines that have been donated by Wine & Beverage Merchants of West Virginia, enjoy wonderful appetizers and join in with our live auction. There will also be music for dancing later in the evening.

Tickets are \$60 per person. Sponsorship is also available for this event.

### Monster Mash Bash

The Harmony House Ohio Auxiliary will hold its 4th Annual *Monster Mash Bash* in St. Clairsville on Saturday, **October 24, 2015**. This is a chance for adults to dress up and come and dance the night away to ghoulish music.

Please save this date! More details coming.



[www.krogercommunityrewards.com](http://www.krogercommunityrewards.com)

If you shop at Kroger, please go to the Kroger Community Rewards' website and register your Rewards card. When you do, Harmony House will get money every time you shop and use your Kroger card!

If you are already registered, it expires April 1st, so please re-register at [www.krogercommunityrewards.com](http://www.krogercommunityrewards.com)

## We have new floors!

Thanks to the Smith-Goshen-Rice Enrichment Fund, Harmony House was able to put new floors in most of the rooms in our Belmont County site. The work has been completed and it looks wonderful.

We feel so lucky to have this space, which has been donated by Belmont County Board of Developmental Disabilities for our use. It has made it easier for families in Belmont County to attend interviews and receive our services.



## Some comments from children about their abuse and parents about their experience at Harmony House



*"You talk to lots of kids? So, you talk about this sex stuff all the time, so it's easy for you. It is hard for me. Thank you for being here for me." "Mary" - age 13 (Victim of sexual abuse by her stepfather).*

*"I was scared to tell. He said he would whip me if I told. I told you cause you're nice." "George" - age 4 (Victim of sexual abuse by mother's boyfriend).*

*"Shhhhh, I don't tell nobody. Just you. Cause we don't have to keep secrets in this room cause you said so." "Jommie" - age 5 (Victim of sexual abuse by a teenage family friend).*

*"Can I come back tomorrow because this is a fun place?" "Sissy" - age 6 (victim of sexual abuse, physical abuse and neglect by multiple offenders).*

*"Everyone listened, understood and talked."*

*"Harmony House made me feel comfortable in an uncomfortable situation."*

*"I appreciate the honesty of what they are doing. The Center is more than what I expected."*

*"I most appreciated the friendliness, the explanation of services, and that all my questions were fully addressed. Thank you for making my son as comfortable as he could be and truly caring about him, his experience and his safety".*

### Domestic Violence Impacts Children

Domestic violence affects all family members, including children. The impact of domestic violence on children can be severe and unhealthy. Children may feel confused over conflicting feelings for their parents and/or guardians. On one hand, they love this person; on the other hand, they're scared of what they might do. This could cause kids to be unable to form solid bonds out of fear that they may also be violent towards them. Children can feel pressure from keeping the "family secret." Additionally, kids may experience regression in development, such as bedwetting, thumb-sucking, or throwing tantrums.



Children can be impacted emotionally, behaviorally, socially, and physically by domestic violence. It is important to provide trust, security, time, support and affection to your children while caring for yourself, also.

### Stories of HOPE

I HOPE

*I hope*

*For love, joy & laughter*

*I hope*

*We'll have more than we ever need*

*I hope*

*We'll have more happy ever after*

*I hope*

*We can all live fearlessly*

*And we can lose all the pain and misery*

*I hope, I hope*

Last month Harmony House staff attended a training in Morgantown. One of the speakers was Tina Frundt, who has been working hard to raise awareness of commercial sexual exploitation of children in America (trafficking). She told us her story of how she was befriended as a young teenager by a "nice boy" and then gradually manipulated into a horrible life of child prostitution. Since escaping that life she, and Courtney's House, which she founded, have rescued over 500 victims of trafficking.

At the "One with Courage" Luncheon, we heard from Matt, the adopted son of Jerry Sandusky, about his childhood of abuse. He also had a survival story and is now happily married and is spending his time teaching others on the impact of child abuse.

We were deeply honored to hear both of these speakers and it gave more strength to our commitment to prevent child abuse and help those affected begin the healing process.



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# Invest in the lives of children by supporting Harmony House, Children's Advocacy Center

I commit to supporting abused children in my community with a donation of:

- |                          |                  |                 |
|--------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| * Friend of children     | \$10 - \$49      | Individual      |
| * Advocate of Children   | \$50 - \$299     | Name: _____     |
| * Protector of Children  | \$300 - \$499    | Business: _____ |
| * Guardian of Children   | \$500 - \$999    | Address: _____  |
| * Patron of Children     | \$1000 - \$2,999 | _____           |
| * Benefactor of Children | \$3000 - \$4,999 | _____           |
| * Champion of Children   | \$5,000 or more  | _____           |

I would like to take advantage of NIP credits (contributions of \$500 or more) if they are still available.

This donation is to honor: \_\_\_\_\_

This donation is in memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send check to Harmony House, 2000 Eoff Street, Wheeling, WV 26003