



Achieving Harmony

A Harmony House Newsletter

SPRING 2014

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A message from Executive Director Leslie Vassilaros

Harmony House has just finished another year of working to strengthen our communities' response to child abuse, as well as the abuse of individuals with developmental disabilities. It is amazing to me that Harmony House has been doing this work for almost 11 years now. Every year I continue to hope that these crimes will be eradicated. While that has not happened yet, I do believe that people are speaking out and reporting more as time goes by.

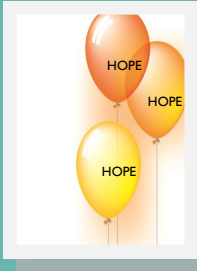
Harmony House does not stand alone in this quest. Our communities are filled with both professionals and community members-at-large who do everything possible to ensure that a child's world is not shattered by abuse. When abuse is disclosed, so many diligently work to make the journey through the assessment, investigation, intervention, prosecution, and treatment as trauma-free and child appropriate as the journey can be.

Harmony House, as a Children's Advocacy Center, provides a comprehensive, child-focused program based in neutral, child-friendly facilities (one in Wheeling and the other in St. Clairsville) that allows prosecutors, law enforcement, DHHR/Job and Family Services, medical and mental health professionals, and victim advocates to work together to address issues of child abuse and abuse of individuals with developmental disabilities. Harmony House is tasked with ensuring, as much as possible, that the child's well-being is always the first priority.

Using the Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) model results in many benefits. Trauma experienced by children is reduced because services are prompt, on-going, and tailored to specific needs. More children receive specialized medical and mental health services to address effects of abuse. Professionals who are involved with the process have more multi-disciplinary team support. Cases are reviewed and tracked minimizing the possibility of children "falling through the cracks." Offender accountability is increased while false allegations are efficiently dealt with, creating safeguards for all.

Harmony House is grateful to all of you for your support. Working together we can and do make a difference in our world. Most importantly, you are making a difference in the lives of our local children!

Leslie



Remember : MAY 6, 2014
12:00 am to 11:59pm

GIVEOV.ORG

Help us make history! Mark your calendars for May 6, 2014 - Harmony House is participating in The Amazing Raise Ohio Valley, a 24hr online giving event for charities, and we'd love your support! All donations given online will receive a partial match - go to **GIVEOV.ORG**, checks will be accepted for local match if received at Community Foundation office by 7pm on May 6th.



Have you, your friends and family "Liked" us on Facebook yet? Please share our page and help us spread the word about our work. Please "like" us on Facebook - <http://www.facebook.com/harmonyhousecac>

Children are often the silent victims of drug abuse and domestic violence. Please seek help if you and your children are living in this kind of situation.

**Upcoming events for April
Child Abuse Awareness & Prevention Month**

"Hope for Spring" Fling - April 26th at Camp Russell Tickets \$25pp

St. Clairsville Wal-Mart "I'm a Safe Kid Day" - April 26th 12-3pm.



Activities Balloons
Snacks Free raffle
Child safety prevention projects

Ohio County Schools "Wear Blue" to school day for child abuse prevention
April 11th (date may vary depending on school)

WISH LIST

- Juice boxes
- Snacks
- CDs for teenagers to listen to while waiting for their appointment
- New stuffed animals/toys
- Hand held (DS) computer games for older children

Harmony House Statistics 2013

Clients served - 858 Children and Non-Offending Family Members

535 children (Belmont County Center 255 & Wheeling Center 280)

289 Forensic Interviews

171 children were offered or referred to therapy

53 children were referred for a specialized medical examination

Community education was provided to 6,662 adults and children. This includes back to school fairs, "Secrets" presentations to young children, and mandated reporting education to teachers and other professionals.

To report abuse in Ohio County, WV , call (304) 232-4411
To report abuse in Brooke/Hancock County, call (304) 794-3060

Marshall County, WV call (304) 843-4120
Belmont County, Ohio call (740) 633-5627

Human trafficking, a form of modern slavery, is something that is occurring at an alarming rate in the United States. Victims are forced or coerced into sex or labor trafficking where the perpetrators make a profit (financial or drugs) from their exploitation. Approximately 100,000 of America's youth are victims of human trafficking, and each year about 1,078 of those children are from Ohio**. Contrary to belief that victims of trafficking are often abducted or smuggled to and from new locations, many are runaways who are persuaded or recruited into the industry and controlled by a "owner" or "pimp". It is also common for parents, family members or boyfriends to exploit and sell the child in exchange for profit. Trafficking does not only occur in brothels and behind the scenes at adult entertainment establishments. It can occur in common places, including established businesses and residential homes that appear quite ordinary.

Vulnerability is the common trait that all victims have, but there is no consistent type or specific profile of a human trafficking victim. Children and adults from any race, background, gender or socioeconomic status may become victims.

Warning Signs that may suggest someone is a victim of human trafficking

Children

- * Is fearful, anxious, depressed, submissive, tense, or nervous/paranoid
- * Exhibits unusually fearful or anxious behavior after discussion involving law enforcement
- * Avoids eye contact
- * Appears malnourished
- * Shows signs of physical and or sexual abuse, physical restraint, confinement or torture
- * Changes in school performance (grades), behavior (acting out, sleeping at school)
- * Has few or no personal possessions

Adults - many of the above signs plus:

- * Is not in control of his/her own money, no financial records, or bank account
- * Not in control of own identification documents
- * Is not allowed to speak for themselves (a third party insists on being present)
- * Claims of just visiting, unable to clarify where he/she is staying
- * Lack of knowledge of whereabouts/does not know what city he/she is in
- * Loss of sense of time
- * Numerous inconsistencies in his/her story

If you know or suspect a person is a victim of human trafficking or you suspect human trafficking is occurring in your community, please contact:

National Human Trafficking Resource Center hotline 1-888-373-7888

**Figures for human trafficking were only available for the State of Ohio.

For more information, please visit
www.thepolarisproject.org

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
DOES AFFECT
CHILDREN!**
Making the Connection



Please visit our newly designed website :
harmonyhousecacwv.org

**“Let no
child
live in
Fear”**

SAVE THE DATE



Toast of the
Vineyard
September 20th



Monster Mash
Bash
October 18th

Note : NEW DATE

Harmony House
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Wheeling, WV 26003
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Fax: 304-234-8479

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US POSTAGE
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Fax 740-695-0781

harmonyhousecac@yahoo.com
harmonyhousecacwv.org



If you would like to be taken off our mailing list please email: harmonyhousecac@aol.com or call 304-230-2205

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

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

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| • Friend of children | \$10 - \$49 | Individual |
| • Advocate of children | \$50 - \$299 | Name: _____ |
| • Protector of children | \$300 - \$499 | Business: _____ |
| • Guardian of children | \$500 - \$999 | Name: _____ |
| • Patron of children | \$1,000 - \$2,999 | Address: _____ |
| • Benefactor of children | \$3,000 - \$4,999 | _____ |
| • Champion of children | \$5,000 or more | _____ |

I would like to take advantage of the 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