

Achieving Harmony

A Harmony House Newsletter

Summer 2013

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A message from Executive Director Leslie Vassilaros

Dear Friends of Harmony House:

Happy Tenth Anniversary, Harmony House!! Harmony House could not have achieved ten years of service without your support. It has been and continues to be an amazing journey. In 2003 we served 43 clients and last year 933 children and family members received services. During Harmony House's first year of existence 43 specialized child forensic interviews were completed. Last year 359 interviews were conducted. Community education outreach reached 487 people ten years ago and last year we presented to 7,544 people. Harmony House's growth includes now having two centers serving three counties in two states, Ohio and Marshall Counties in West Virginia and Belmont County in Ohio. This is a rare achievement for Children's Advocacy Centers but we did it working together!

With your help Harmony House is able to fulfill its mission to reduce the effects of abuse on all children, as well as individuals with developmental disabilities, their families, and the community by serving as a community resource to facilitate identification, intervention, and prevention of abuse. Most importantly we are able to celebrate and embrace the resiliency of abused children.

Harmony House is about strengthening how our communities respond to child abuse. With this in mind, Harmony House would like to recognize those with whom we work with and could not do what we do without them – prosecution, law enforcement, Children's Services and Child Protective Services, the medical community, the mental health professionals, and all other service providers who provide assistance and hope to these children and their families.

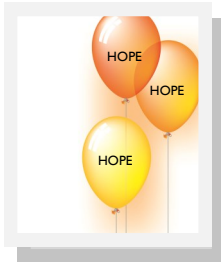
To list individuals would be endless because so many of you have made Harmony House's journey possible. I do want to thank all the past and present board members for their gift of outstanding governance. I also want to acknowledge the staff – Joanna, Christa, Scott, and Erica – for their dedication to jobs that are often emotionally difficult. I also thank past staff – Melissa, Kate, Claudia, Angie, and Mike – for their hard work.

Harmony House does not charge for its services so major funding is essential. Our agency is immensely appreciative to all our funding sources over the past decade. I would like to acknowledge and thank our current main funders, the State of WV through the CAC grant and Belmont County Commissioners, Belmont County Board of Developmental Disabilities and the Belmont County Department of Job & Family Services through a contract with BCDJ&FS. We also can't forget Ohio Valley Medical Center and the Belmont County Board of Developmental Disabilities for providing physical homes for Harmony House.

I would like to end with this quote from Nelson Mandela, former president of South Africa, "Safety and security don't just happen, they are the result of collective consensus and public investment. We owe our children, the most vulnerable citizens in our society, a life free of violence and fear." Once again, thank you for caring about the children we so humbly serve. Thank you for helping make a difference in the lives of so many local children!

Warmest Regards,

Leslie



**“Volunteers
aren’t paid
because they
are worthless,
but because
they are
priceless”
Anon**

Hope for Spring Fling & Hope Soars

In April we held our annual “Hope for Spring” Fling and Hope Soars balloon release. This was very successful raising over \$13,000. We would like to thank our Title Sponsor : Christian Fellowship Foundation, and event sponsors: Advanced Family Practice, American Medical Billing, Ancient Order of Hibernians Dr. & Mrs. Daniel Joseph, Dr. W. Mercer, Paree Insurance Centers, Raymond James Financial Services Inc. FINR/SIPC, The Heart, Lung & Vein Surgeons - Drs. Rahbar, Maevsky & Akhavan, Touchstone Research Laboratory West Liberty University.



Balloons to honor the bravery of the 359 children who attended a forensic interview at Harmony House in 2012 were released. This was, as usual, a moving occasion. This evening was organized by our Ohio/Marshall County auxiliary and we are truly grateful to them for all their hard work all through the year. Thank you to everyone who attended and we look forward to seeing you all next year.

(April 12th 2014!)

Please see list on front page for our auxiliary members and if you know them please thank them for their hard work!

Belmont County Auxiliary



Diana Flanagan, Amanda Bennett, Kayla Bassa, Christina Williams, Bob Flanagan, Penny Zdanski and Wendy Thompson

As you can see we now have an auxiliary group dedicated to increasing awareness about Harmony House and child abuse. They would welcome new members, for more information call: Scott at Harmony House 740-695-0812.

This year they will be helping us organize our 2nd annual Monster Mash Bash on **October 26th** in St. Clairsville. This event was great fun last year with many interesting costumes (there are prizes too!) Tickets will be available later in the summer. Any businesses interested in sponsoring this event should also call Scott.

Please Save this Date!

WISH LIST

Juice boxes

Snacks

CDs for teenagers to listen to while waiting for appt.

New stuffed animals/toys

Hand held (DS) computer games for older children.

Coffee/creamer/sugar for team member meetings.

Staff changes: Michael Kuhn has moved on to work as a supervisor at Wellspring and Kate Monroe has gone to the YWCA to work with the Family Violence Prevention Program. Christa Wensel has moved into Michael’s job as a forensic interviewer and Erica Gump has filled Christa’s position. Erica used to work for the Victims Assistance Program and more recently was a WV Extension Agent.

We wish Michael and Kate every success in their new ventures and welcome Erica into our family!

Statistics January - May 2013

Number of new children referred to Harmony House for interview: 142 (53 boys, 89 girls)

Types of abuse reported:	Sexual 100	Physical 19
	Witness to violence 6	Drug Endangered 2
	Neglect 0	Other/Precautionary 22

Forensic Interviews: 131

Number of children needing a medical examination: 26

Mental Health referrals offered: 71

**To report abuse in Ohio County, WV , call (304) 232-4411
To report abuse in Brooke/Hancock County, call (304) 794-3062**

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

10 Years of Hope Celebration

On May 26th we celebrated our 10th anniversary. We were thrilled to have as our guest speaker Katie Beers who as many of you will know from the news was kidnapped and held in captivity as a young child. She recounted her early life leading to that abduction and details of what followed in her life. Happily she is now married with children but bares those scars. Harmony House presented plaques to groups who were involved since the beginning and those who have continued to help fund our center. Plaques were given to the Junior League of Wheeling, Kings Daughters, Christian Fellowship Founda-

tion, Brothers of the Wheel, Wine & Beverage Merchants of WV, Senator Manchin, Belmont County County Commissioners, Belmont County Jobs & Family Services, and Belmont County Board of Disabilities.



Brothers of the Wheel accepting award from our Board president David Huggins



Harmony House staff Joanna, Scott, Leslie, Katie Beers, Kate & Christa



Leslie with BC Commissioners Matt Coffland, Ginny Favede and BC Prosecutor Chris Berhalter.

9th Annual Toast of the Vineyard



This years Toast of the Vineyard will be in the West Wing at Stratford Springs on September 14th. This is a wine and specialty beer tasting with wonderful hors d'oeuvres and a silent auction.

For those of you who attended last year we will be going back to the previous years format of a silent auction as we realized that too much time was taken up with such a long live auction. We do expect to have 4-6 live auction items. Music will be provided by Ron Retzer. Tickets remain at \$50pp and will be available for purchase in July. As usual tables for 8 can be reserved with payment of 8 tickets. Sponsorship forms are available. Please contact Joanna or Leslie for sponsorship or ticket information 304-230-2205

Triathlon to benefit Harmony House & YWCA

September 7th 2013 Meet at YMCA 6:45 Start time 7:00
Entry fee: YMCA members \$55; non-members \$65; teams \$105

Bike course : 20k (12.4 miles) Rte 40 - Middle Creek - Union Hill - Rte 40 - YMCA

Run : 5k Elm Grove area

Swim : 400 meters (16 lengths) YMCA pool, 12 minutes max time allowed, heats go every 15 minutes

Age group and team awards
Entries available at YMCA, Hole n Run, Quick Service Bike Shop and Harmony House or email ymcajmg@comcast.net for electronic form.

Mail entry forms to Harmony House, Attn. Lance Tarr
Questions? Lance Tarr: ltrunn77@yahoo.com or Ron Woloshan rwoloshan@aol.com

**“Let no
child
live in
Fear”**

Tips to keeping your child safe over the summer

Now that school is out for 2-3 months many families are left with the problem of juggling daycare/summer camps/family members and other options to look after the children while they are at work. Others are only left with the option to leave their child(ren) home alone. Regardless of your child's age it is important to :

- * Know where your child is.
- * Know who your child is with.
- * Give him/her at least 2 emergency contacts.
- * Ask at the end of the day how his/her day went, if he felt safe, is there anything he/she needs to share about their day. Did anyone make them feel unsafe?
- * Be aware of any change of behavior or mood.



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.

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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 | _____ |

This donation is to honor: _____

This donation is in memory of: _____

I would like to purchase ___ \$50 ticket(s) to the Toast of the Vineyard at Stratford Springs on September 14th.

I would like you to send me a sponsorship form for the Toast of the Vineyard Monster Mash Bash

Check enclosed for: _____

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