



Achieving Harmony

A Harmony House Newsletter

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Hello!

In March of this year Harmony House completed its 9th year of providing Children's Advocacy Center services to our communities. Without the support of all of you this would not have been possible. It has and continues to be an amazing journey!

For the past nine years I have been fortunate to witness the growth of Harmony House and to work with many wonderful people. In its early stages Harmony House was under the Junior League of Wheeling and the King's Daughters' Child Care Center. After a couple of years Harmony House was able to sustain itself and became incorporated functioning as a non-profit recognized as an IRS 501c3 entity.

The Center started out with one employee and today we have six – four full time and two part time employees. Initially our service area was Ohio County, WV and now we serve not only Ohio County but also Marshall County, WV and Belmont County, OH. Harmony House has gone from one center to two centers (one in each state). In 2003 the Center served 43 clients and last year 741 children and non-offending family members received services through Harmony House.

Harmony House works to strengthen our communities' response to child abuse and to ensure that the child's well-being is the first priority throughout the process. Our National Children's Alliance's (a Children's Advocacy Center membership organization based in Washington, D.C.) ten standards for accreditation require us to provide specialized child forensic interviews and treatment, including medical and mental health. The interview provides the child with a neutral, non-leading opportunity to tell his or her story as it relates to child abuse allegations or concerns. The information from the interview lays the groundwork for treatment and safety for the child.

In its first year of existence, Harmony House completed 18 interviews, while last year 248 interviews were conducted. Treatment during 2011 included 85 medical exams coordinated and referred by Harmony House. During this time period, over 60 children were referred to therapy and Harmony House conducted 132 counseling sessions on site. These services included those provided to 95 children and adults with developmental disabilities.

So often we read or hear about an alleged crime against a child who lives in our community. That child has probably come through Harmony House's door for specialized Children's Advocacy Center services. It is so important that each child we help, with your help, receives services based upon respect for the child's competency. As a child journeys through the many systems involved with child abuse allegations and treatment, it is vital that we remember each child is unique.

Harmony House is grateful to each of you for your continued support. We continue to need your financial and emotional support to help ensure every child dealing with allegations of abuse has an opportunity to tell his/her story and to receive the appropriate services needed. Please remember Harmony House when you are making annual charitable contributions, wanting to volunteer, planning your estate, or scheduling to attend special events. Thank you for caring. Working together we continue to make a difference and the world a better place for children!

Warm Regards,

NO CHILD SHOULD LIVE IN FEAR

To report abuse in Ohio County, WV call (304) 232-4411

Marshall County, WV call (304) 843-4120

To report abuse in Brooke/Hancock County, call (304) 794-3062

Belmont County, Ohio call (740) 695-1074



A tip for parenting a child that has experienced Trauma

Teach your child to think positively!

Traumas can lead children to develop a more pessimistic view of the world and the future. Remember to take time to enjoy the things with your child that you enjoyed before.

Help them to remember the good people around them and that they can enjoy life

WISH LIST

Tissues

Juice boxes

Snacks

CDs for teenagers to listen to while waiting for appt.

Hand held (DS) computer games for older children

Coffee/creamer/sugar for team member meetings

Coordinators report - Joanna Merriman

As you may already know a year ago we opened another center in Belmont County. So far we are very happy with the center and it is much easier for the families, workers and law enforcement in Belmont County to not travel so far for appointments. We are receiving funding from BC Jobs & Family Services, BC Board of Developmental Disabilities, BC Commissioner's and fundraising to maintain the center there.....which, of course, leads me to tell you about a new fund raising event especially to benefit our Belmont County Center! On October 13th we will hold our first annual Monster Mash Bash at the St. Clairsville Rec. Center from 7-10pm. Everyone is encouraged to wear a costume and there will be prizes! We will have a DJ for dancing, a chance auction and there will be food and beer provided. Tickets are \$20pp and will be available soon. Please mark that date on your calendar. We are also in search of a few people who are able to give up some time to become members of our Belmont County auxiliary.



Please call Joanna 740-695-0812 for more information.

Another date to remember is September 15th. This is our annual Toast of the Vineyard. A wine and specialty beer tasting held at Stratford Springs. This year we have already been given some amazing prizes for our live, silent and chance auctions - including a Callaway golf bag, putter and driver with a Oglebay Golfing package, and 4 Disney Hopper passes for 1 day plus a hotel stay. Tickets remain at \$50 pp (\$60 after 9/1) and are available now.



Please call 304-230-2205 for more information.

The staff at Harmony House would like to take this moment to thank Leigh Ann Turbanic and her Home Economic students from Shadyside High School for the donation of pillows and blankets to Harmony House.

When children come to Harmony House they often have to talk about things that have happened to them, usually by someone they know and trusted. We understand how difficult this can be for a child and try to do the best that we can to make the child feel comfortable while here. After each interview the children are able to pick a "comfort" item from our shelf. These items include such things as blankets, pillows, books, and stuffed animals. The students at Shadyside High School donated home-made blankets and pillows for the children served at Harmony House.

I can personally say that it brings a smile to the faces of Harmony House staff when a child chooses an item and we are able to see that it makes them feel special. We truly appreciate the donation of the items and hope that the students realize how important they may have been to a child's well-being.

Christa Wensel, Child and Family Advocate

A quote that Leslie would like to share with you.

"There is no trust more sacred than the one the world holds with children. There is no duty more important than ensuring that their rights are respected, that their welfare is protected, that their lives are free from fear and want and that they can grow up in peace." --Kofi Annan

Statistics January - May 2012

Number of new children referred to Harmony House for interview:	59 boys,	91 girls
Types of abuse reported:	Sexual 114	Physical 26
	Drug Endangered 7	Neglect 2
	Witness to violence 15	Forensic Interviews: 140
Number of children needing a medical examination:	36	
Mental Health referrals:	72	

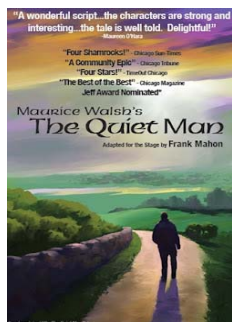
Hear the cries. See the pain. End the abuse



Michael Kuhn and Joanna Merriman accepting donations from Ann Railing, Halle Guzolik, Anthony Gentile and Alyssa Blake of St. Michaels Parish School. Items were collected by the 8th Grade as part of April's Child Abuse Prevention Month.

Thank you to everyone at SMPS!

Lunch With Books presents:



A live reading of the PUB-version of
The Quiet Man

Wheeling Public Library
August 30th @ 7pm

Presented in partnership with
O. I.'s Towngate Theater

All tickets are \$10
Live music and Pub Grub!

100% of proceeds to benefit
Harmony House

304-232-0244 or 304-230-2205

**Children are often the silent
victims of drug abuse and
domestic violence.**

Children and trauma by Michael Kuhn

Many of the children we serve at Harmony House are victims of trauma. This may be primary trauma which they suffered by being a victim or secondary trauma which develops after witnessing violence or trauma occurring to someone else. At Harmony House we focus on minimizing the effects of the trauma as the child begins the process of healing. Children who have suffered through a traumatic experience have to deal not only with the memories of the experience but often suffer from several other symptoms of trauma. Many of these symptoms include mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, and trauma related disorders such as PTSD.

Minimization of trauma is one of our goals from our first contact with the child or the family. While at the center Harmony House staff works to foster an environment of empathy, care, and safety for the child. During the interview the interviewer works to ensure that the child feels comfortable, safe, and secure. Following the interview the child returns to the waiting room where they are met by a staff member who again works to help the child decompress from the interview process.

Research and best practice suggests that therapeutic interventions are highly effective for helping children to begin to heal from the trauma they may have experienced. Harmony House works with children and adults to help them process the trauma. Several staff members are trained in Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy which is a brief therapy method which works to help the trauma survivor process the traumatic experience and overcome the effects of this trauma.

Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavior Therapy (TFCBT) is a semi structured interview process which follows a defined treatment path. Aspects of the therapy include educating the child about the feelings they harbor regarding their trauma, teaching the child ways to deal with these feelings, and eventually creating a trauma narrative which enables the child to use his or her creativity to produce something which actually tells the story of their trauma. Working with a child as they create this trauma narrative is a very powerful experience not only for the child but for the therapist as well. Along with TFCBT Harmony House staff attends various workshops, trainings, and conferences to expand their skills to work with trauma survivors. The therapy sessions, as with all services offered at the center is free of charge to the client and their family.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION by Kate Monroe

Senate Bill No. 161 passed on June 8th of this month. This bill was an act to amend and reenact laws pertaining to the mandatory reporting of abuse and neglect of children. Categories that have been added to the list of people mandated to report abuse are: youth camp counselors and administrators, employees, coaches or volunteers of an entity that provides organized activities for children, as well as commercial film or photographic print processors. There are also additional reporting requirements regarding child sexual abuse: Any person over 18 who receives a disclosure from a credible witness or observes sexual abuse or sexual assault of a child shall report the circumstances or cause a report to be made to the Department or the State Police or other law enforcement agency having jurisdiction. Reports should be made immediately and not more than 48 hours after the incident.

To expand knowledge with this topic Harmony House offers free trainings on reporting child abuse and neglect. This training provides information on how to recognize abuse and neglect, full discussion on reporting laws, what happens when a report is made, and the best ways to respond if a child discloses abuse. It also goes on to highlight protective factors that we can incorporate as community members than could help prevent abuse before it happens. If you or your agency is interested in this training please call Kate Monroe at the Wheeling office.

There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children. Nelson Mandela

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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 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 _____ ticket(s) to the _____ event.

Check enclosed for: _____

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