

RHONDA'S REPORT: PARENTS CAN PREVENT CHILD ABUSE

No community is exempt from the effects of child abuse. Imagine how many children would be hurt if we stopped protecting them from poisons, swimming pools, strangers, and sharp objects? Now imagine how many children could be protected from child abuse if we put our best efforts forward in this area of protection.



As a parent or guardian, there are many different protective measures we can use to keep our children safe from sexual abuse.

First, minimize the opportunity for abuse to occur. Keep in mind, 93% of victims were victimized by someone they know and love. Most often a child must be left alone with the perpetrator for the abuse to happen.

Second, talking openly about sexual abuse can break down walls and lets your child know they can come to you

with tough issues. Unfortunately, 29% of parents do not discuss sexual abuse with their children. Also, parents often fail to mention that the abuser could be someone they know and love.

Third, many parents believe that it is inappropriate to start discussing these issues with children at an early age. However, the earlier the better. By the time you think your child is ready, it could be too late. When children begin to start talking, you should be teaching them the "rules" of appropriate touching. Talk with your children about when it is okay for someone to touch their private parts and when it is not okay. Teach them that their body belongs only to them and how they should say 'no!' if someone were to touch them inappropriately.

Fourth, many parents are under the assumption that their children tell them everything. That isn't always the case, no matter how close you are with your children. Sexual abuse can be shameful and scary for children, especially if the perpetrator has threatened to hurt them or a family member. Demonstrate on a daily basis that you have the time to sit down and spend quality time with them. Ask questions about school and friends.

Fifth, a child should be taught that it's okay to say 'no,' even to an adult. We probably all remember visiting family

members and being asked to give them a hug and kiss goodbye. Let your child know that they don't have to kiss or hug anyone unless they want to. This is teaching them that they have choices and boundaries.

If your child should come to you and disclose sexual abuse, don't panic! You may have strong feelings of doubt and guilt, but it's important to remember that you have a child standing before you that is depending on your help. If you react with anger or disbelief, you may cause your child to shut down, change their story or make them feel guilty. Believe your child and make sure they know it. Comfort them by letting them know that they have your support. Praise them for disclosing the information to you because it takes a brave child to come forward. Seek the help of professionals.

There are no easy answers in the prevention of child sexual abuse. There are, however, ways for you, as a parent, to protect your children. Knowing the facts is the safest defense. Teach your children early about their bodies and how they can protect it. For questions, please contact our office at 740-779-7431.

*Rhonda Kinzer-Carver,
Prevention Specialist*

JULIE'S FORUM

As I reflect upon the year, I remember the families that we have helped. I am amazed by the internal strength of the parents and the resiliency and trust of the children. Many times, we focus on all that we have not done well or the times in which we can do better. We forget the little things that we do that inspire and influence those around us. While you are reading the message that follows, remember the little messages that you have sent. There are more ways to communicate to a child than by words.

*Have a Happy New Year!
Julie A. Oates, LPCC*



When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you hang my first painting on the refrigerator and I immediately wanted to paint another one. When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you feed a stray cat and I learned that it was good to be kind to animals. When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you make my favorite cake for me and I learned that little things can be special things in life. When you thought I wasn't looking, I heard you say a prayer and I knew there is a God I could always talk to and learned to trust in Him. When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you make a meal to take to a friend who was sick, and I learned that we all have to take care of each other. When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you give your time and your money to help people who had nothing and I

learned that those who have something should give to those who don't. When you thought I wasn't looking, I felt you kiss me goodnight and I felt loved and safe. When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you take care of the house



and every-one in it and I learned we all have to take care of one another. When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you handle responsibilities even

...Continued on pg 4

Body Safety Program

- Presented in the elementary schools, grades K-3rd, to teach the children at a young age how to protect their body from inappropriate touches.
- Presented to over six-hundred students last year.
- Presented to all county and nearly all city schools.
- Statistics have shown that one out of four girls and one out of six boys will be a victim of sexual abuse by their eighteenth birthday.
- Only one out of every ten victims ever report their abuse.



FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

I hope your holidays were happy and you are ready for the new year! We have had to say good-bye to two very dedicated and committed individuals. I wrote about the passing of Dr. Ater in June in the last newsletter. We have since framed and hung a dedication to him in our waiting room so that all the families that come to the center can remember the good work he did here.



Dr. Scott McCallum

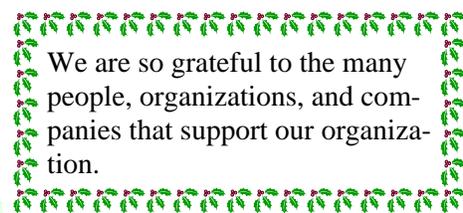
Dr. Ater thought that Dr. Scott McCallum (a good friend and co-worker of his) would be a good addition to our staff. And, so he is! We are very happy to welcome him to our agency and the important work of protecting children.

Coletta Danneker

Rock for Tots supports the Child Protection Center again! For the past 18 years, Rock for Tots has raised money to support children in our community at Christmas time.



Paul Pollard making a donation from this year's Rock for Tots!



We are so grateful to the many people, organizations, and companies that support our organization.

Karen Flint Retired

We have also had to say good-bye to another outstanding professional, co-worker and friend as she has been forced by her health to retire.

Karen Flint has worked at the Child Protection Center since 1996. She brought to the agency her knowledge of the system and her dedication to the victims of child abuse. She worked hard to create a children's advocacy center that is an integrated part of the system and unwavering in its commitment to children. Karen has struggled with Lupus for much of her life. Those of us who worked with her know that she never let her medical condition get her down. In fact, she continued to work during the many complications she experienced during 2003 and 2004. In spite of her tenacity, she was forced to resign at the end of August. We miss working with her a great deal. We keep in contact with her and hope that she will one day be able to continue her commitment through volunteer work. Please keep her in your thoughts.

Coming in 2005

Kid's day will be earlier than usual. Mark your calendar.

This year we are scheduled to have Kid's Day on Saturday, April 30th!

We are planning special activities that the kids will love. Watch for the flyers being distributed in the schools in March. Since April is Child Abuse Prevention Month, we are planning activities here at the agency in remembrance of the children we've seen in clinic.

Planning for the Dr. David Ater Memorial Golf Classic is in the works. Please contact us if you would like to help with either fundraiser.

Parent Resource Classes 2005

Jan. 27th	April 14th
Feb. 24th	May 5th
March 24th	June 2nd

Call Marie Vukin for more information at 779-7431.

Families in Transition Classes are now being offered at the Child Protection Center.

These classes are required for couples who are going through a divorce, separation or custody change and are designed to provide insight into how this affects children.

Parent Support Group

For parents of sexually abused children. Please call for details.

Welcome to ...

Teresa Esselstein has returned as the Office Manager after a four-year retirement. We are thrilled to have her back! She returned in August to continue her work here keeping us organized and the office running smoothly.



"The healing begins here"

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**Your tax deductible donation
ensures that the
Child Protection Center
can continue to provide
services to children in need**

Continued from Page 2

when you didn't feel good and I learned that I would have to be responsible when I grew up. When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw tears come from your eyes and I learned that sometimes things hurt, but it's all right to cry. When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw that you cared and I wanted to be everything that I could be. When you thought I wasn't looking, I learned most of life's lessons that I needed to know to be a good, productive person when I grow up. When you thought I wasn't looking, I looked at you and wanted to say thanks for all the things I saw when you thought I wasn't looking.

Anonymous

Happy Holidays



The staff would like to wish everyone the best for the coming year! Clockwise from the middle: Marie Vukin, Teresa Esselstein, Marilyn Davis, Julie Oates and Rhonda Kinzer-Carver (not pictured, Coletta Danneker and Doris Clary).