

Hill Country Children's
Advocacy Center

2017 Annual Report

Safety, Justice & Healing



TO PROVIDE CHILDREN IN BURNET, BLANCO, LAMPASAS, LLANO, MASON AND SAN SABA COUNTIES A STABLE
PATH TO SAFETY, JUSTICE AND HEALING THROUGH EFFICIENT, COORDINATED AND TRAUMA-INFORMED
SERVICES IN THE AFTER-MATH OF ABUSE OR VIOLENT CRIME.



Hill Country Children's Advocacy Center



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Kelly Forister

Dear Friends,

For more than two decades, the Hill Country Children's Advocacy Center (HCCAC), lovingly known as "The Sunshine House", has been filling a critical, unique need in the Highland Lakes and greater Hill Country region. **Children who have been abused or neglected receive time-sensitive coordinated services in a child-friendly, safe atmosphere.** Now more than ever, we have embraced current trends and best practices proven throughout the nation and the state, validating that we are providing the most up-to-date care in interviewing, advocacy, medical care and counseling services.

Since our doors opened in 1993, we have served more than 5,000 children and their families. This past year alone, we have had the privilege of offering approximately 1,000 services to nearly 300 first-time children and their families. We often see victims and their families more than once as they navigate through the reality of ongoing, life-changing needs. By providing a variety of services such as family therapy, court preparation or victims compensation procurement we are committed to our client's health and well-being long after the initial interview process. In fact, a child can return for assistance even into early adulthood, free of charge.

The partners who make up the **HCCAC Multidisciplinary Team (MDT)** come together in a unique, team approach to ensure that children receive the care and services they need in a timely manner that promotes **SAFETY, JUSTICE and HEALING**. Our staff and team are well trained professionals who put the needs of the child above all else. Providing services at no cost to families is essential for those in crisis and remains one of our top priorities. The comprehensive structure of our model is designed to improve long-term outcomes for children and families as they battle what can be the lifelong impact of childhood trauma. We are proud to be an accredited member alongside 71 Child Advocacy Centers (CAC's) throughout the state of Texas and to work in collaboration with the many non-profits who also serve children in the Hill Country.

Our success has only been possible with incredible **community support** from the private and public sectors. Local, state and federally elected leaders have recognized that our services are vital in each community and provide financial resources to meet the needs of the professionals charged with working to keep children safe, seek justice, and promote healing. The commitment of individual, corporate and faith-based support continues to enable us to fulfill our mission that ensures every child, receives every service, with every effort.

I am grateful to those of you who have joined us in this determined effort to make sure that no child falls through the cracks in the Hill Country and surrounding areas. The HCCAC holds a special place in my heart and as the sun sets on the past 25 years of services to children and their families, I am humbled to carry on the mission, and excited to see the horizon of new adventures, growth, and change that "a better tomorrow" brings. We hope you enjoy taking a look at all we've accomplished in 2017!

Respectfully Yours,

Kristin



THANK YOU for supporting 25 years of Safety, Justice & Healing

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Staff Members

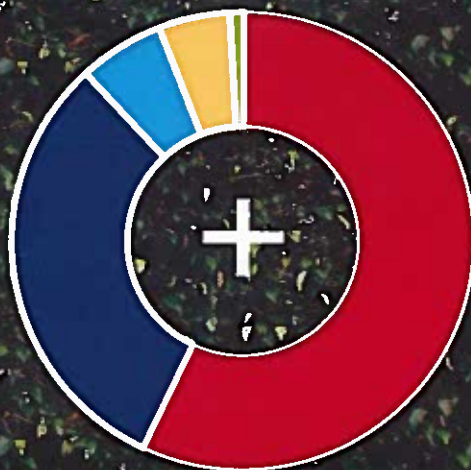
Kelly Forister
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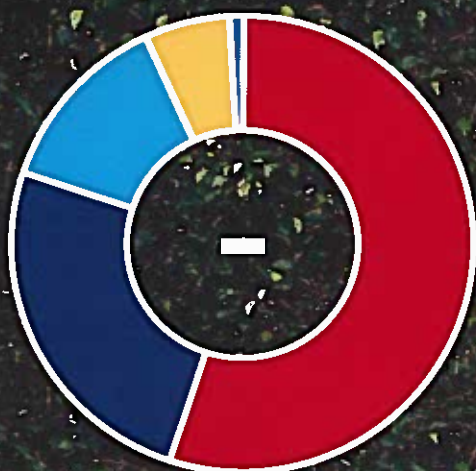
Financials

INCOME TOTALED \$736,000

57% Federal and State Grants
31% Fundraising
6% County & City Support
5% Individual, Business & Church Support
1% Miscellaneous



EXPENSES TOTALED \$715,340



55% Program & Services Costs
25% Administration & Operating Costs
13% Fundraising Costs
6% Team & Staff Training
1% Miscellaneous



A photograph showing the lower legs and feet of several children sitting on a wooden bench outdoors. They are wearing blue jeans and are barefoot. The background is a grassy field with trees in the distance.

Forensic Interview Services

A Forensic Interview of a child is a developmentally-sensitive and legally sound method of gathering factual information regarding allegations of abuse and/or exposure to violence. This interview is conducted by a neutral professional, utilizing research and practice-informed techniques as part of a larger investigative process.

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Forensic Interviews Conducted With Alleged Victims of Child Abuse

"Working with children and families who are victims of violent crime is a difficult, often heartbreaking but necessary role that is vital for the health and healing in all communities. Knowing that I spend the majority of every day offering myself to our smallest citizens in order to effect change is something that I am honored to do. The ability to work within a team to help others find justice and healing is beyond compare."

- Grace Yeager, Forensic Services Manager

67% of Victims are FEMALE

32% of Victims are MALE

Forensic Interview Services

12% ARE A WITNESS TO VIOLENCE

5% ARE NEGLECTED

21% ARE PHYSICALLY ABUSED

62% ARE SEXUALLY ABUSED

21%

Zero to Six
Years Old

49%

Seven to Twelve
Years Old

30%

Thirteen to Eighteen
Years Old



Volunteers

Everyday, we rely on volunteers and philanthropists who are willing to share their time, experience, and finances to serve their community. The HCCAC is supported by a network of volunteers who selflessly serve the community by donating their time to the Advocacy Center. We want you to be a part of this program and have several capacities where you can serve.

This year alone, 124 volunteers invested more than 1,000 hours of their time, worth \$25,503.00 of service to the HCCAC.

"We often take for granted the things that most deserve our gratitude. Though the children are the heartbeat of what we do, our volunteers are the loving arms wrapped around this organization."

- Caren Jacome, Volunteer Coordinator & Program Assistant

Multidisciplinary Team Services

The HCCAC MDT provides a coordinated, child-focused response to sexual abuse and severe physical abuse allegations including intake review, regular case review, scholarships and educational investment in the team.

MORE THAN
\$16,000.00 DOLLARS INVESTED

800 **MORE THAN**
CASES REVIEWED



"You can always rely upon the HCCAC team even for those last minute urgent matters. They are always there to support you when you need them." – Charity Heisler, DFPS INV

1,024

Services Offered

Family Advocacy Services

Family advocacy services are provided to the protective parents and guardians of children who participate in forensic interviews. The following services provided are designed to give support and education to caregivers in a neutral, one on one setting as they navigate through a variety of issues that childhood trauma can bring to their family.

SERVICES PROVIDED:

Crime Victim Compensation filing and procuring concrete services for families and children in need.

Referrals to evidence-based trauma focused mental health treatment and specialized medical treatment.

Assist in court preparation.

Serves as a neutral support for the family outside of Law Enforcement and CPS.

Assessment of individual needs, cultural considerations for the child/family and ensure those needs are addressed.

Maintains community resource information for families and Team.



Medical & Therapy Services

27

MEDICAL EVALUATIONS IN 2017

A medical exam is offered to any child who has allegations or concerns of child abuse and neglect. The HCCAC has a licensed nurse practitioner available, who can perform specialized Sexual Abuse Nurse Exams (SANE) and safe checks on-site in a child friendly, non-threatening environment.

260

INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY COUNSELING SESSIONS IN 2017

Children ages 2-18 as well as their siblings and protective caregivers may be eligible for therapy services at no cost to their family.



"In my experience as a counselor, I have witnessed the intense emotional damage that results from child abuse. I have also witnessed the incredible power of healing. The services provided by the Hill Country Children's Advocacy Center, as well as its

*"Training and education
is the cornerstone of
protecting the children
within our*

*communities. And we
MUST protect them
because they are the
future. For every adult
we train, TEN children
are made safer!"*

*- Kaylee Gaines,
Outreach Coordinator*

Outreach & Prevention

1,145
ADULTS TRAINED

528
STUDENTS EDUCATED

The HCCAC provides community outreach and prevention education through numerous opportunities for child serving professionals, law enforcement and community groups. It is our goal to provide current best practices in child welfare and protection. The trainings we provide include Recognizing & Reporting Child Abuse for adults, Play It Safe for elementary-aged children, as well as various other trainings free of charge in our six county region.



Hill Country Children's Advocacy Center

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PAPER HEART
DESIGN CO. COM