NEBRASKA ALLIANCE OF CHILD ADVOCACY CENTERS

2013 ANNUAL REPORT
Dear Friends and Supporters,

I completed my term as the Chair of the Nebraska Alliance of Child Advocacy Centers in December 2013. As I reflect on my term, my experience has been inspiring and humbling. I am inspired by the work and accomplishments of the CACs across the state. Yet, humbled knowing the work that is yet to be done to meet the needs of the children and families in our communities.

The mission of the Nebraska Alliance is “To enhance Nebraska’s response to child abuse.” In 2013, the CACs across the state identified the need of training. Education of community members, professionals and team members is key to identifying, investigating and treating child abuse. A grant awarded by Women Investing in Nebraska (WIN) allowed the CACs to provide training to 1,767 community members and professionals across the state.

Looking forward to 2014, the Nebraska Alliance will continue to serve the seven Nebraska child advocacy centers. Providing support to each center ensuring a coordinated response to child abuse victims. Knowing every child across the state has access to the same quality of services from the panhandle to the eastern metro areas. The multi-disciplinary team response results in a more comprehensive investigation and the most effective response for children and families. The CACs will continue to move forward in 2014 meeting the needs of our team members and families we serve.

Yours Truly,
Jamie Vetter
Nebraska Alliance Board Chair

The Nebraska Alliance has been recognized for providing CACs and multi-disciplinary teams with the resources they need to consistently offer unique and vital services to child victims of abuse and their families in Nebraska.

Check out our trainings listed on our website www.nebraskacacs.com! Local, state-wide, and national trainings related to investigation, prosecution, treatment and prevention are listed. Nebraska Alliance and CAC sponsored trainings are catalogued. Many trainings are offered for free or for a nominal fee.
The Nebraska Alliance of Child Advocacy Centers, or the “Nebraska Alliance”, consists of seven (7) fully accredited Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) with the mission to enhance Nebraska’s response to child abuse. Established in 2007 and accredited as a State Chapter by the National Children’s Alliance in 2011, the Nebraska Alliance is recognized for:

- Representing a collaborative effort among our CAC membership, staff and our governing entity
- Providing support services to emerging and existing CACs and multi-disciplinary teams (MDTs)
- Assisting with the development, continuation, and enhancement of the CAC model throughout Nebraska
- Facilitating a collaborative statewide network dedicated to a coordinated and comprehensive response to child abuse, and
- Serving as a leading resource within Nebraska in regard to child abuse issues and the children’s advocacy center model

The Nebraska Alliance’s overall budget for 2013 was $349,840. We received grant funding from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the National Children’s Alliance (NCA), the Midwest Regional Child Advocacy Center (MRCAC), and Women Investing in Nebraska (WIN). Seventy-one percent (71%) of our funding was redistributed as grants to our Nebraska CACs for training related to investigation, prosecution, treatment and prevention. Twenty-six percent (26%) provided training and technical assistance and three percent (3%) was for administrative costs of the Nebraska Alliance.

The Nebraska Alliance works to support all CACs in Nebraska to become fully accredited centers that offer the best possible response for child victims in our state and in coordinating investigations, treatment and services. The Nebraska Alliance provides technical assistance and training to support the following core components of our Nebraska CACs.

- Multi-Disciplinary Team Approach
- Cultural Competency/Diversity
- Forensic Interviews
- Victim Support and Advocacy
- Medical Evaluation
- Mental Health
- Case Review
- Case Tracking
- Organizational Capacity
- Child Focused Setting
Child Welfare Non-Court Involved Cases

Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) have worked with the Department of Health and Human Services to obtain data on cases that are non-court involved. The CACs obtain monthly reports from DHHS and the Coordinators and take it to Multi-Disciplinary Team meetings for review following guidelines set forth by Nebraska Revised Statutes 28-728 to 28-729. From September 1, 2012 to July 31, 2013; through collaboration among the Nebraska Alliance CAC members, the CAC Coordinators developed and refined the tracking of the case information so information is consistently collected, shared, and obtained from the MDTs at the time of review. The areas of focus are: case discussion/review, current case plan establishment, and at the time of case closing—the overall parental compliance, appropriateness of services, and overall success of the case. Please contact the Nebraska Alliance for a copy of the report.

Training Grant- Women Investing in Nebraska (WIN)

Women Investing in Nebraska (WIN) Foundation awarded the Nebraska Alliance $77,425 to work with the CACs to launch a statewide child abuse and neglect training initiative through four programs, including a training workshop for law enforcement personnel; a training program for adults involved with organizations serving youth; a training course to prepare individuals who are mandatory child abuse reporters, such as teachers, day care providers and others; and a web-based training program for anyone wanting to learn more about preventing, identifying and reporting child abuse.

Outcome Measurement System (OMS) Implemented

Outcome Measurement System (OMS) for CACs was created by the University of Texas at Austin with the goal of evaluating client-centered outcomes and program performance. Coordinated through the Nebraska Alliance, the CACs in Nebraska began implementing OMS to participate in this national effort. The system includes five total measures: the Initial Caregiver Survey, Follow-up Caregiver Survey, General Multidisciplinary Team Survey, Specific Multidisciplinary Team Survey, and Individual Client Needs Assessment Form.

From the beginning of survey distribution and data collection (July to December 2013), the CACs collected 655 Initial Caregiver Surveys, 179 Follow-Up Caregiver Surveys, 285 MDT Member Surveys, and 682 Needs Assessments. Participants rated the centers extremely high on safety and comfort of the centers and friendliness of the staff.

98% of caregivers agreed that their child felt safe at the CAC

96% of caregivers agreed that after their visit at the center, they knew exactly what to expect with the situation facing their child and themselves.
Overview of CACs

Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) offer an alternative way of serving abused children through a comprehensive approach to services for victims and their families. Child Advocacy Centers stress coordination of investigation and intervention services by bringing together professionals and agencies as a multi-disciplinary team to create a child focused approach to child abuse cases. Key components of a child advocacy center include forensic interviewing, medical evaluations, advocacy and support, therapeutic intervention, case review, and tracking. The goal is to ensure that children are not re-victimized by the very system that is designed to protect them.

All of the seven (7) centers in Nebraska are fully accredited and offer an array of services. To the right are the CACs and their 2013 budgets.

- Bridge of Hope, North Platte, NE: $193,135
- Capstone, Scottsbluff, NE: $244,628
- Central NE Child Advocacy Center, Grand Island, NE: $193,750
- Child Advocacy Center, Lincoln, NE: $837,874
- Family Advocacy Network, Kearney, NE: $211,686
- Northeast NE Child Advocacy Center, Norfolk, NE: $236,821
- Project Harmony, Omaha, NE: $2,850,971

STATE-WIDE NUMBERS ACROSS THE STATE

Each CAC has provided services since they have opened their doors. Let’s take a look at the numbers from the beginning of the Nebraska Alliance until now.

**Forensic Interviews**
When requested by law enforcement, child protective services or county attorneys, a Child Interview Specialist will conduct a recorded forensic interview with the child.

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<th>2007</th>
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<td>2469</td>
<td>3716</td>
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**Medicals**
The medical staff performs complete examinations for children referred for sexual abuse, physical abuse and neglect, and for children entering the foster care system (varying on location).

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<td>1359</td>
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**Advocacy**
An Advocate will assess each child’s needs and refer them to appropriate therapy, support groups, and other resources. Families also receive help in “understanding the system.”

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<td>10,278</td>
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**Multi-Disciplinary Case Reviews**
A multi-disciplinary team consisting of law enforcement, child protective services, medical professionals, prosecution, school personnel, and Child Advocacy Center staff regularly reviews cases and discusses general issues.

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<td>11,525</td>
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The Bridge of Hope Child Advocacy Center opened in 2007 and was initially accredited by the National Children’s Alliance in 2008. The Center is housed in a 5,000 square foot Victorian home and provides services to Arthur, Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Grant, Hayes, Hitchcock, Hooker, Keith, Lincoln, Logan, McPherson, Perkins, Red Willow and Thomas Counties. The Bridge of Hope Child Advocacy Center offers a welcoming location for multi-disciplinary team (MDT) members to complete investigations and provides advocacy services to children who have been abused.

Since the Bridge of Hope Child Advocacy Center opened, the number of children served each year continues to grow. Continued commitment from each MDT in our service area has enabled the children and families we serve to routinely receive specialized investigation and intervention services by a team of highly trained professionals. These services include recorded forensic interviews, hair testing for exposure to illicit substances, SANE exams, general medical exams and ongoing advocacy throughout the duration of the case.

Bridge of Hope Child Advocacy Center also coordinates two case review teams for each county in our service area and monitors policy compliance for the MDT for each of the ten standards as required under the National Children’s Alliance Standards for Accreditation.

In the fall of 2013, Bridge of Hope Child Advocacy Center was awarded re-accreditation by National Children’s Alliance following an extensive application and site review process. This process demonstrates the hard work and commitment of the staff, MDT and community. We are proud to be a part of a growing movement stressing a multi-disciplinary team approach during the child abuse investigations and implementation of intervention services in the lives of the children we are honored to serve.

Bridge of Hope Child Advocacy Center is actively involved in our community through a number of awareness activities, training opportunities and fundraising events. A new fundraiser implemented in 2013 was the “It Sale” which is a vendor based craft, gift and rummage sale. Our parking lot and Center were filled with a variety of vendor booths selling a little bit of everything including food, crafts, jewelry, antiques, furniture and thrift items. The “It Sale” was a popular event that brought awareness to the Center and raised funds used for direct services to children. We are happy to have plans underway for our second “It Sale” event! We encourage you to visit our web site at www.bridge-of-hope-cac.org.
CAPstone

The CAPstone Child Advocacy Center, located in Gering, is fully accredited by the National Children’s Alliance. CAPstone serves 11 counties in the Panhandle of Nebraska. In 2013, trained interviewers conducted 348 interviews, bringing the number of children interviewed to 2,539 at CAPstone since we opened our doors in 2000.

Satellite offices are open in Sidney, Chadron and Alliance. These satellite offices were opened to reduce the need for children to travel for interviews and so they could be served in their home community. The Chadron office is close to two hours away from our main office and the Sidney office is an hour and half away so it greatly reduces the travel time for children in the northern and southern panhandle.

Part of our mission is to provide a Panhandle-wide coordinated multi-disciplinary approach to the problems of child victimization. Our goals are to reduce the trauma suffered by the child during an investigation, to increase successful prosecution of the child abusers, to work with victims and their families through the court process and to assume a proactive approach to child abuse prevention through education, training and networking.

Trainings and Staff

CAPstone sponsored several trainings in 2013, including Darkness 2 Light, Field Interviewing in Child Abuse and Neglect, and Cyber Crimes against Children. CAPstone meets in nine counties for multi-disciplinary investigative and treatment teams with some of the meetings combined.

We are supported by our local communities, including financial support from United Way of Western Nebraska, Soroptimists, CA Story and local businesses. The Superhero Run brought out over 149 costumed runners and we held our fifth annual Light of Hope Breakfast in cooperation with C.A.S.A. (Court Appointed Special Advocates), raising awareness for over 200 people and funds for both agencies.

In 2013 CAPstone was able to hire a full time Forensic Interviewer, Shelley Thomas. Shelley has thirty-five years of prior experience and brought with her a wealth of knowledge regarding child abuse/neglect and social work experience. Holly Brandt, started in December of 2013 as the new Executive Director, she came with fourteen years of experience working with children and families at the Department of Health and Human Services. She looks forward to being able to continue to serve children and families in her new capacity. Winne Voss has been with CAPstone since 2010 and continues to provide excellent services to the children and families that CAPstone serves.
Central Nebraska Child Advocacy Center

Central Nebraska Child Advocacy Center in Grand Island was incorporated in September 2001, became fully accredited by the National Children’s Alliance in 2005 and earned reaccreditation in 2011. CNCAC covers an 11 county area in Central Nebraska providing interviews, medical exams and advocacy services to more than 200 children each year.

CNCAC works with local organizations including the Crisis Center, the Association for Child Abuse Prevention and Grand Island’s Child Well-Being committee on community issues and education. CNCAC operates with a full board of directors and continues to build fundraising activities.

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PHONE: 308-385-5238
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COUNTIES SERVED: Adams Clay Garfield Greeley Hall Hamilton Howard Merrick Nuckolls Webster Wheeler

UNDUPLICATED CHILDREN SERVED 2013: 157

Central Nebraska Child Advocacy Center works closely with the Department of Health and Human Services and Law Enforcement to achieve the best possible outcomes for the child victims and families served. CNCAC has three full-time staff members – one executive director, one advocate and one MDT coordinator/forensic interviewer. Contracted providers include a second forensic interviewer and medical staff.

Central Nebraska Child Advocacy Center’s goal is to continue to improve programs and services provided by CNCAC and to offer community education and awareness throughout the year.

2013 brought new faces to Central Nebraska Child Advocacy Center. Brady Kerkman is the new Executive Director and Gretchen Wagner joined the team as a full-time forensic interviewer and MDT coordinator.

CNCAC works with local organizations including the Crisis Center, the

2013 BRINGS NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO THE CNCAC!
Child Advocacy Center– Lincoln

It’s been a busy year in Southeast Nebraska. The number of children we serve has tripled over the past ten years. We have an amazing staff of 13 who work every day to put kids first. The feedback we receive from the families we serve really underscores the impact we are making:

- “I think the CAC was the first time we received compassion. We felt we could receive the help we needed and not be judged.”
- “I feel good knowing that I’m no longer fighting for my daughter’s safety alone.”
- “My child felt safe and protected.”
- “You let my child still be a child within all the darkness.”

Satellites

We focused much of our time in 2013 to opening two new satellite offices in York and Nebraska City to better serve children and families closer to home. For some families, it was over an hour’s drive one way to access services in Lincoln.

With the satellite offices in place, we have a forensic interviewer and child advocate who travel to York on Monday and Nebraska City on Tuesday to provide forensic interviews, and hair testing along with immediate and ongoing advocacy and support. It was amazing to see the support of the neighboring communities as our satellite offices opened.

At our Sneak Peek in Nebraska City, one of our staff members greeted an investigator saying, “You found us.” His reply was priceless, “No, YOU found US.”
Family Advocacy Network

The Family Advocacy Network (FAN), located in Kearney, opened their doors to children and their families in 2001. FAN is a fully accredited member of the National Children's Alliance. FAN is a comprehensive, victim-focused program facilitating the coordination of law enforcement, Health and Human Services, prosecutors, healthcare professionals, mental health professionals and advocates to provide an experienced, multi-disciplinary team response to child abuse/neglect and sexual assault.

The Family Advocacy Network serves 13 counties in central Nebraska. FAN's services include forensic interviews (English and Spanish), on-site medical evaluations, hair testing for positive exposure and/or ingestion to methamphetamine and other drugs, training, case coordination, advocacy, deposition assistance and referral sources to the victims of child abuse, adult sexual assault and abused vulnerable adults.

FAN welcomes a new Team Coordinator in January 2014. Terri Miller, B.S., is a Cozad native and will facilitate the LB1184 team meetings in 13 counties. FAN's 4 full time staff, along with seven PRN medical staff; three pediatricians and four SANE trained nurse practitioners work every day to make a difference for children we serve. On-call FAN staff are available to our multi-disciplinary team members 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

FAN, in collaboration with the University of Nebraska at Kearney and the SAFE Center, is able to provide mental health services to child victims and their families by appropriately trained mental health practitioners at no cost to the family. The Mid-Nebraska Telehealth Network provides telehealth services to rural communities in Nebraska. Being located in rural Nebraska, Telehealth allows professionals, such as law enforcement and DHHS who are unavailable to travel to FAN, to direct the investigative process via video conference without leaving their jurisdiction.

COLOR FOR A CAUSE

The first annual “Color for a Cause” adventure color run/walk took place at the scenic Fort Kearny State Park on August 17th, 2013. We had over 300 participants and volunteer present for the event. The Kearney Optimist Club provided lunch following the run. The 2nd annual “Color for a Cause” adventure color 5K run/walk will be held on September 13, 2014, at Fort Kearny State Park.
Northeast NE Child Advocacy Center

The Northeast Nebraska Child Advocacy Center (NENCAC) in Norfolk is a non-profit organization located in a hospital setting. The Center opened September 2004 and serves children, as well as adult victims, from 24 counties in Northeast Nebraska. The Center has been fully accredited by the National Children’s Alliance since 2005.

NENCAC consists of two forensic interview rooms, an observation/conference room, a child abuse/adult sexual assault examination room, office space, and a large family-centered waiting area. NENCAC offers a child-friendly facility to conduct and coordinate child abuse, adult sexual assault investigations and family advocacy services. Services are available 24hrs/day with normal work hours from 8am–4:30pm and include forensic interviews, forensic exams, mental health referrals, multi-disciplinary team coordination, prevention education and hair/nail testing for exposure and/or ingestion of drugs.

NENCAC’s full-time Forensic Interviewer specializes in working with children. The Center also employs forensically trained providers to perform medical exams on site. NENCAC provides ongoing advocacy and support through the work of the Child Advocates. NENCAC's Team Facilitator coordinates services for the Multi-disciplinary Child Abuse and Neglect Teams in each of the counties served. Community education and prevention research services are conducted by our on-site Prevention Specialist. NENCAC also offers various training opportunities which are open to law enforcement, protection and safety workers, and prosecutors from the service area.

NENCAC AWARDS AND EVENTS

Each year, the NENCAC presents the “In the Spirit of Children” Award to an LB1184 Child Abuse and Neglect Team Member. This year’s recipient was an investigator with the Norfolk Police Department, Det. Ben McBride. During an award dinner, Dave Bos, his Sgt. and nominator, said “When I hear the word spirit, that is Ben. He puts everything he has into the child abuse cases he investigates. There is not a better person to work on this type of case.” “My main goal is to be a positive experience for these kids, and be part of a positive event in each child’s life,” stated McBride. “This work is a true calling.”

The NENCAC also hosted their 6th annual Fish & Chip fundraising tournament, Northeast Nebraska’s only fish and golf event. The tournament encourages both adult and child participation, and this year’s winning team was comprised of 2 adults and 2 children. This year’s champions were Jared Rossman and Lane Werner along with their children, Kellen Rossman and Tate Werner.
Project Harmony

Project Harmony opened in 1996 and was accredited by the National Children’s Alliance for the first time in 1999, serving fewer than 250 children at that time. Today, Project Harmony serves over 2,000 children from the Douglas and Sarpy counties in Nebraska and surrounding counties in Southwest Iowa.

Project Harmony employs 30 staff providing a full array of medical exams, forensic interviews, case coordination, and family advocacy services.

Building Changes

Project Harmony hired Ying Zhu from the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts to design and install a Lego wall in the atrium entryway. Volunteers from youth baseball teams, high school students, and major corporations showed up to help put together the thousands of Lego pieces that made up the wall.

SPEAKING OF CHILDREN 2013

The highlight of 2013 was the Speaking of Children event with key note speaker, Ashley Judd, spoke to a crowd of over 1300 regarding the impact of being sexually abused in her youth.
CAC Coverage Across the State

To report suspected child abuse or neglect, please call: 1-800-652-1999

Bridge of Hope- North Platte
Arthur, Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Grant, Hayes, Hitchcock, Hooker, Keith, Lincoln, Logan, McPherson, Perkins, Red Willow, Thomas

Capstone– Scottsbluff/Gering
Banner, Box Butte, Cheyenne, Dawes, Deuel, Garden, Kimball, Morrill, Scotts Bluff, Sheridan, Sioux

Central Nebraska CAC- Grand Island
Adams, Clay, Garfield, Greeley, Hall, Hamilton, Howard, Merrick, Nuckolls, Webster, Wheeler

Child Advocacy Center- Lincoln
Butler, Cass, Fillmore, Gage, Jefferson, Johnson, Lancaster, Nemaha, Otoe, Pawnee, Polk, Richardson, Saline, Saunders, Seward, Thayer, York

Family Advocacy Network- Kearney
Blaine, Buffalo, Custer, Dawson, Franklin, Furnas, Gosper, Harlan, Kearney, Loup, Phelps, Sherman, Valley

Northeast NE CAC- Norfolk

Project Harmony- Omaha
Douglas, Sarpy (also serves 16 counties in IA)
NEBRASKA ALLIANCE:
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NEBRASKA ALLIANCE LEADERSHIP

2013 Board of Directors

Lynn Ayers, Child Advocacy Center, Lincoln
Holly Brandt, CAPstone, Scottsbluff/Gering
Brady Kerkman, Central Nebraska Child Advocacy Center, Grand Island
Gene Klein, Project Harmony, Omaha
Kelli Lowe, Northeast Nebraska Child Advocacy Center, Norfolk
Anne Power, Bridge of Hope Child Advocacy Center, North Platte
Jamie Vetter, Family Advocacy Network, Kearney

Nebraska Alliance Staff

Ivy Svoboda, State Chapter Coordinator

FUNDING PARTNERS

ACCREDITED BY: