



# NYS NEWS

## Spring 2015

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### IN THIS ISSUE

## Legislative Outreach Success

NYSCA is very pleased to announce that the New York State Legislature has voted to include an add-on for Child Advocacy Centers in the amount of \$2,570,000 in the final 2015-2016 State Budget!

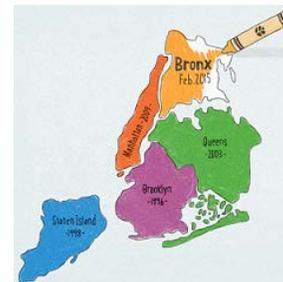
The Third Annual Legislative Awareness Day was held in Albany on February 5, 2015. NYSCA Members were provided with information packets that explained the benefits of Child Advocacy Centers and gave an overview of state funding received since 2007. While CAC representatives met with legislators in the Capitol Building and the LOB, NYSCA Chair, Renee Smith-Rotondo, testified on behalf of Child Advocacy Centers before the Joint Budget Committee on Human Services. Throughout February and March, representatives from Child Advocacy Centers across New York continued their outreach to state legislators, inviting them for center tours and explaining the difficult work being done every day by every Multidisciplinary Team. Information was provided that

highlighted how last year's legislative add-on was put to good use in centers across the state, such as the expansion of CAC service hours, purchase of video recording equipment, and hiring of forensic interviewers and mental health service providers.

These collaborative efforts of the NYSCA membership were a huge success! The New York State Senate was particularly receptive to our message, and included the \$2,570,000 add-on in their revised budget proposal for the second consecutive year. This amount was once again voted into the final budget.

Please be sure to contact your state representatives to thank them for the \$2,570,000 legislative add-on and their continued support.

NYSCA will continue to advocate for these funds to be included in next year's Executive Budget.



### New York's Newest CAC

The Bronx Child Advocacy Center officially opened its doors in February 2015. Safe Horizon now provides CAC services in each of the 5 boroughs of New York City.

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### Child Abuse Prevention Month

Child Advocacy Centers across the state are gearing up for Child Abuse Prevention Month. See what activities are planned for April 2015.

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# Bronx Child Advocacy Center

by Nancy Arnow

It took eight years of determination, a clear vision, collaboration and support from partners, and decades of experience. In February 2015, the vision of bringing Safe Horizon's fifth Child Advocacy Center to the Bronx finally became a reality. Nancy Arnow, Safe Horizon's Vice President of Child, Adolescent and Mental Health Treatment Services, has seen this effort come full-circle. She has been a steadfast figure in the opening of every one of Safe Horizon's five CACs. "Personally, I'm thrilled to have been one of the countless people who have worked over the past eight years to turn our vision into a reality," Nancy says.

This new location brings new team members to the Safe Horizon family, and Fabio Cotza is their fearless leader. A former second grade teacher, Fabio moved to a career in social work after witnessing many of his



students experiencing homelessness, poverty, and other issues at home.

"When the opportunity came up for the Bronx CAC it was like my two passions came together – my interest in trauma and my desire to continue to work and serve the children of the Bronx. A perfect match," he explains. "Having the various agencies together with the same goals, passions, and

desires to create a safe, healing place for the most under-served children in the country is a dream come true."

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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## CAC SERVICE HIGHLIGHTS

### Lily

by Det. Lt. Mary B. Murphy



Those of us who work with young abuse victims see and feel the trauma they experience. As a police officer who

works closely with these children, I continually strive to conduct interviews in a manner that minimizes the trauma they experience in telling their stories. I use many tools to accomplish this goal, the most effective one being Lily.

Lily is a six-year-old purebred Labrador Retriever. She came to Rockland County from Guiding Eyes for the Blind, an organization that trains dogs to be Seeing Eye dogs. She was "released" (we don't say failed) from their program because she is very timid. She did not have the "right stuff" for that difficult job, but was perfect for working with children.

She was purchased by the Rockland County District Attorney's Office and assigned to be my partner. We work at the Spirit of Rockland Special Victims Center, where we help victims who are the most vulnerable among us. Our victims are interviewed, prepared for court and provided social services and advocacy. Lily started working at eight months. First, we took part in basic training to get to know and love each other, which included a lesson in canine manners. Later, we attended therapy dog training and learned to work as partners.

She was a success from the start! While still in training, she would accompany me to the District Attorney's Office to interact with staff. Everyone enjoyed her company! Our District Attorney, Tom Zugibe, commented once that the DA's office was a much brighter place since Lily joined our team!!

There are so many success stories involving Lily. One involves a little boy who came to our Special Victims Center to be interviewed. The first thing he told me was that he would not talk about his experience. I immediately engaged him in play with Lily. A few minutes later, I asked him if he would tell Lily what

happened to him and he agreed. I sat quietly while he sat on the floor with Lily and described his experience. Another case involves a little girl interviewed at the center. We learned she had a younger sister and determined she should be interviewed also. They came back to the center two days later. The girls ran in to play with Lily. The older child telling her sister, "This is Lily who I told you about." I walked over and asked the little girl if she remembered my name. She did not - it is very obvious to me that Lily is the most popular member of our team!

Fast forward five years. Lily and I are working more closely than ever. She has helped hundreds of special victims, children and adults. She has lessened the trauma of people who have experienced horrific things. She has helped us hold offenders accountable for their crimes because successful prosecutions require witnesses who can tell their story.

I would recommend the use of a therapy dog in dealing with children who are victims of abuse. I truly believe Lily is one step in the healing process for these kids!

TRAININGS AND PRESENTATIONS

# 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Bivona Child Abuse Summit

by Adam Cipolla

*Presented by Daisy Marquis Jones Foundation*

Bivona Child Advocacy Center will be hosting its seventh annual Bivona Child Abuse Summit- a multidisciplinary training conference for professionals who work with children- presented by Daisy Marquis Jones Foundation, at the Joseph A. Floreano Rochester Riverside Convention Center on Thursday, April 30 and Friday, May 1, 2015. Nationally recognized as the premier conference in the Northeast region, the Summit was created by Bivona Child Advocacy Center in recognition of the pressing need to build awareness and education about the issue of child abuse in the community of Rochester, New York.

Attracting over 600 professionals from across the country, Summit attendees learn about current trends in child abuse over a two-day conference. With dozens of options to choose from, attendees can select the workshops that interest them; each workshop is presented by national, international and local experts from the many varied disciplines that comprise the professionals that investigate, prosecute, advocate and in all ways combat crimes against children. Participants also learn about the outstanding community resources available for children and families including Bivona Child Advocacy Center.

Among the experts featured this year will be keynote speaker, Kevin Mulcahy and plenary speaker, Joseph Rampolla. Kevin is an Assistant U.S. Attorney in Detroit and Chief

of the General Crimes Unit prosecuting child exploitation cases. As a survivor of childhood sexual exploitation, Kevin will address lessons learned from his experiences both as a victim and a long-term prosecutor. Joseph is a Captain for the Park Ridge Police Department in New Jersey focusing on cyber-crimes, augmented reality/virtual worlds, cyber-bullying and advanced undercover Internet Relay Chat (IRC) investigations. Joseph will share his perspective regarding the utilization of technology by offenders and future technology trends which lead to new threats of victimization.

Children shouldn't be expected to protect themselves against the dangers of abuse. As adults, we have a responsibility to protect the community's children by educating ourselves to recognize and react responsibly to child sexual and physical abuse. Educated adults are our only weapons to prevent future abuse from occurring.

For more information and to register for the Bivona Child Abuse Summit visit [www.BivonaSummit.org](http://www.BivonaSummit.org)



**NYS Child Abuse Prevention Conference**  
 April 13 – 15 at the Albany Marriott  
**Prevent Child Abuse**

New York (PCANY) is pleased to present the 20th annual New York State Child Abuse Prevention Conference. The conference inspires and equips participants with skills and strategies to strengthen families, prevent child abuse, and ensure children's healthy development. Workshops will include six tracks: Parenting Education and Support, Child Abuse Prevention Skills and Strategies, Child Sexual Abuse Treatment and Prevention, Reducing Barriers to Children's Well-Being, Family Engagement and Involvement, and Personal and Organizational Resilience.

**The Otsego County Child Advocacy Center**  
 On April 21<sup>st</sup>, the **Otsego County Child Advocacy Center** will host an MDT training on "Emerging Trends in Child Sexual Abuse Investigations" with trainer Bob Farley of John E. Reid & Associates, Inc.

**The CAC of Oswego County**  
 The **Child Advocacy Center of Oswego County** will host the event "Be the End" on April 23<sup>rd</sup> at the American Foundry. The CAC is pleased to announce nationally acclaimed speaker, Victor Vieth, will be giving the keynote address entitled "Unto the Third Generation: A Call to End Child Abuse Within 120 Years." The Board of Directors and Staff of the Child Advocacy Center (CAC) will provide a description of their work and a snapshot of child abuse and neglect in Oswego County in 2014 at this Annual Meeting and presentation to the community.

## SAVE THE DATE - UPCOMING TRAININGS

*The New York State Police Academy will host the annual NYS Police Crimes Against Children Seminar May 18<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup>. For more information, visit the NYS Troopers website*

[http://www.troopers.ny.gov/Criminal\\_Investigation/Child\\_Abuse/Crimes\\_Against\\_Children\\_Seminar/](http://www.troopers.ny.gov/Criminal_Investigation/Child_Abuse/Crimes_Against_Children_Seminar/)

*The National Children's Alliance Leadership Conference will be held at the Renaissance Washington DC Hotel, May 31<sup>st</sup> - June 3<sup>rd</sup>. For information and links, visit [www.nyschildrensalliance.org](http://www.nyschildrensalliance.org)*

*The NYSCA Annual Membership Meeting is being planned for late October 2015 in Albany. Save the Dates coming soon! For updated information, visit us online at [www.nyschildrensalliance.org](http://www.nyschildrensalliance.org)*

WHAT'S NEW IN NEW YORK'S CACs?

**BOCES Class "adopts" CAC** by Renee Smith-Rotondo



Two years ago, an English teacher from Madison Oneida BOCES called the Madison County Child Advocacy Center to ask if she could bring her class of students to the CAC for a tour. They had read "A Child Called It" and were interested in learning more about the subject of child abuse. They arrived bearing gifts of handmade bears, each with its own unique electronically-recorded message inside, waiting to be heard with the gentle squeeze of the bear.

This past year's class had also planned a trip to the CAC but had to cancel at the last minute. However, BOCES staff presented the CAC with a beautiful quilt made by the students. Each square was a student's handprint fashioned into a sea creature. Unbeknownst to them, the Center's child interview room has an ocean theme. Unfortunately, the quilt was too large to hang on the wall of that room. So, instead, it will serve as comfort for children who use our medical exam room.

**FOUR NEW PARTNERS JOINED BIVONA CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER AS MEMBERS OF THE DARKNESS TO LIGHT (D2L) COLLABORATIVE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE** by Adam Cipolla



Bivona Child Advocacy Center and members of the Greater Rochester Area Darkness to Light (D2L) Collaborative hosted a press conference at The Strong museum, on Tuesday, February 24, to announce the addition of four new D2L Collaborative Members, each a diverse service provider for children – AutismUp, Faith Temple, RESTORE Sexual Assault Services and The Strong. The D2L Collaborative formally signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) demonstrating their commitment to eliminating child sexual abuse from our community.

As a part of their commitment, local organizations in the Collaborative implement policies and trainings for adults to learn how to identify the signs of child sexual abuse and eliminate the potential of future abuse from occurring. The local Collaborative utilizes the Stewards of Children curriculum developed by the national nonprofit organization, D2L, which meets evidentiary standards and is a nationally recognized program offered in all 50 states and in 16 countries.

The local Collaborative continues to do great work- impacting not only Monroe County but also New York State. Of the 14,000 people throughout New York State trained in Stewards of Children, 41% have been trained in Monroe County. Due to the Collaborative's success, D2L has chosen the Greater Rochester Area D2L Collaborative as a model program and published a case study which was distributed nationally.

**Madison County:** With additional OCFS funding this contract year, the **Madison County Children's Advocacy Center** recently hired a computer crimes consultant to assist in MDT cases and in the establishment of a county-wide computer crimes unit to fight the sexual exploitation of children. Alan Cordary, the retired head of the New York State Police Computer Crimes Unit in Troop D, has filled this part time position. He is a 30 year career veteran of the State Police with extensive experience and training in investigations involving computers and computer crimes.

"We are very excited about the addition of Al to our team," said Renee Smith-Rotondo, the CAC Program Director. "He brings a level of expertise to our program that we were previously lacking, allowing us to better respond to our cases, almost all of which in this day and age have a technological component."

The intent is to have the computer crimes consultant assist local law enforcement in their investigations, to train them in data recovery, electronic discovery and how to secure and search electronic devices and in how to preserve evidence found. Cordary has begun working with local police agencies and has developed relationships with the state and federal organizations that can provide equipment and training funds.

**Dutchess County:** The **Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse** is pleased to announce a new position added to their staff. Crime Victim Advocate Cassandra Lotker, joined the team on February 23rd, and will be co-located at the Child Advocacy Center. CCPA Program Coordinator Emily Lyons shared, "Having an in-house crime victim advocate will help us ensure that the victims and their families will get the information, support, and services they need to prosper." Welcome to the CAC world, Cassandra!

**Fulton County:** On March 1, 2015, The *Leader-Herald* featured an article entitled "Child-Neglect Cases Rise in Fulton County", about the county's increase in child abuse cases in 2014 compared to prior years. The article highlighted the **Child Advocacy Center in Fulton County** and noted, "Officials say a team approach involving law enforcement, health officials and counseling is a good way to attack the problem." Center Coordinator, Karen Hasenfuss, was quoted saying, "Without the team effort, it wouldn't work". Great job, Karen!

**Westchester County:** The Children's Advocacy Center at WIHD is proud to unveil its new logo created by Anne Hasegawa of Zero Five Design (zerofivedesign.com). The logo was selected for its simple representation of hands reaching towards a common purpose, linked together by an inner circle, symbolic of the way members of the multidisciplinary team come together for a shared purpose at the Children's Advocacy Center. Congratulations to the CAC at WIHD on their recent reaccreditation from the National Children's Alliance!



CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH ACTIVITIES

**Child Advocacy Center of Putnam County**

The CAC of Putnam County will promote Child Abuse Awareness throughout the month, with various activities including a public forum: "Protecting Our Children: Lessons Learned from Sex Offenders," hosted by the Parent Teacher Associations of Brewster Central School District on Wednesday April 8th from 6:30 – 8:30 pm at Henry Wells Middle School, Brewster, NY. The presentation will be offered in Spanish on Tuesday, April 14th, from 6:30pm-8:30pm. Other events during the month include, the Dad's Only Parenting Workshop offered on April 18th at Putnam Hospital Center from 10:00am-11:30 am. The workshop teaches dads not only basic infant care but also how to bond with their baby and care for the mother. The Program also provides a vital opportunity to present new dads with safety information for their newborn and resources for the prevention of child abuse and neglect. Child Abuse Prevention exhibits will also be displayed at the following locations: Putnam County Health Department & Department of Motor Vehicles, April 1 – 10, Putnam Hospital Center from April 10 – 24.



**Bivona Child Advocacy Center**

**Child Abuse Prevention Month: Niagara Falls Gets Turned Blue** On Wednesday, April 1, 2015, Bivona Child Advocacy Center will kick-off Child Abuse Prevention month by illuminating blue lights on the Niagara Falls. Several organizations and local businesses throughout the community of Rochester, New York, will take part in Bivona's Blue campaign illuminating blue lights outdoors throughout the month of April including but not limited to The Rochester Public Library and all of the community hospital health systems, Rochester Regional Health System, Unity Hospital, Strong Hospital and the Golisano Children's Hospital.

**Memorandum of Understanding** Throughout the month of April, Bivona Child Advocacy Center joins the National Children's Alliance and their thousands of members and supporters across the country to bring attention to the issues of child abuse intervention and prevention. Studies show that most people in the Greater Rochester community do not view child sexual abuse as a significant issue in their neighborhood or the larger community. Yet, children still continue to experience abuse at alarming rates in Rochester area schools and child-oriented organizations, and these cases make the news all too frequently.

In recognition of the need to be vigilant in our community's fight against child abuse, Bivona

Child Advocacy Center will host a press conference on Tuesday, April 7 at 10:00 a.m. where representatives from the 21 partner agencies working under the Bivona umbrella will again formally sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU.) The signing of this document demonstrates the community's commitment to collaboration through investigative and treatment services so that children receive the best standard of care, which ultimately allows them to begin their journey of healing.

**Empty Shoe Mural** In partnership with ABVI Goodwill, a mural containing empty children's shoes will be on display for one week throughout the month of April at four high traffic and well known locations throughout Rochester, New York- Eastview Mall, Golisano Children's Hospital, Midtown Athletic Club and The Strong museum. The mural will be constructed by three 4'x8' pegboard panels slotted into three wooden boxes that list Bivona's tagline, *Trust, Healing and Justice*. 125 pairs of well-worn children's shoes (donated by ABVI Goodwill) will be mounted to three panels to represent the number of children evaluated for sexual abuse at Bivona every single month.

**Pinwheel Display** Beginning on Wednesday, April 1, 2015, 1,500 pinwheels will be featured outside of Bivona Child Advocacy Center's facility representing the number of children served each year.

OCFS UPDATES

Beginning this spring, **The Office of Children and Family Services** will be providing all New York State Child Advocacy Centers with the NCAtrak case tracking system for one year. Centers who are new to NCAtrak will begin a six part online training module in mid-April, followed by two day trainings this June and August to be held in Albany and Syracuse. For additional information about NCAtrak, please contact NCA Coordinator of Information Services, Jonathan Picklesimer ([infoservices@nca-online.org](mailto:infoservices@nca-online.org)) or NYSCA Chapter Coordinator, Lisa Walker ([nysca.coordinator@gmail.com](mailto:nysca.coordinator@gmail.com)).

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