

Annual Report

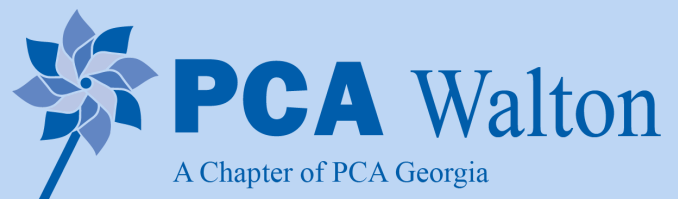
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Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends and Supporters,

2020 was a challenging year for all of our communities and A Child's Voice CAC was no different. Our center staff worked through the challenges of continuing to serve the children and their families needing our services while navigating a new world of the pandemic. The staff implemented ever changing protocols and safeguards to ensure we offered a safe environment for the individuals requesting services and our partner agencies working with the families. I want to thank our partner agencies, the community as a whole and our staff for a job well done in facing the challenges of 2020 and ongoing into 2021.

As you are aware, the goal of A Child's Voice Child Advocacy Center, Inc. is to provide a coordinated community response to child abuse. A Child's Voice Child Advocacy Center, Inc. is a child-centered facility whose focus is to support and protect children and their involved caregivers, while coordinating the community response to abuse. We strive to enhance the response to suspected child abuse cases by combining the wisdom and professional knowledge of various investigative agencies and other professional organizations. These coordinated efforts provide the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to assist suspected victims of child abuse as well as their families.

In 2020, A Child's Voice continued to work with community partners to effectively and compassionately respond to incidents of child abuse in our community, even while individual communities were facing the unknown surrounding the pandemic. With our presence in the community, the network of partner organizations continued to provide quality and timely services to the child victims of abuse.

Since serving our first family in May of 2009, our staff has shown dedication and commitment to providing the best services possible to the children of Newton and Walton counties. Our center continues to maintain full state accreditation with the Children's Advocacy Centers of Georgia (CACGA) and remains one of only 52 fully accredited centers in the state of Georgia. We are also one of only 30 of those CACs in Georgia accredited by both the CACGA as well as the National Children's Alliance (NCA). These accreditations assert that our center is financially sound and that our services are provided in a professional and standardized manner by appropriately trained staff of the highest quality.

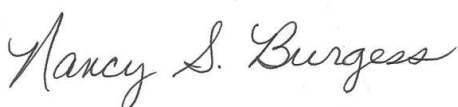
The role of A Child's Voice Child Advocacy Center throughout the criminal investigation is to focus on the child's needs rather than focusing on the crime itself. The forensic interview process is also child-led and child-driven. After completing a forensic interview with a specially trained interviewer, three out of four elementary aged children are relaxed enough to continue talking about non-abusive topics and continue to engage with interviewers.

Letter from the Executive Director

The adolescent age group often describes a feeling of “relief” and a “weight off of my shoulders” after the interview experience. When observing the body language of these teens, one can see a physical transformation take place from the beginning of the interview compared to the end of the interview. Healing begins for these children when the forensic interview ends. The child victim is offered a medical examination based on information shared during the forensic interview process. The child is in control of the examination process and can choose to stop the examination at any time. A Family Advocate is available to provide support and answer questions the child or family may have. The Family Advocate accompanies the child during the medical examination and also discusses concerns with the parents while the interview is in process. Family Advocates make referrals to counselors or therapist, etc. and will follow the case as long as the family requests our assistance.

Our center also offers training to adults in our community regarding child abuse, how to look for signs and how they should respond if a child discloses abuse. We want the community to know we are here to assist in any issues regarding child abuse and our services are free to victims of child abuse. In 2019 we were established as a chapter of Prevent Child Abuse Georgia as Prevent Child Abuse Walton and continue to partner with Prevent Child Abuse Newton in awareness activities.

I would like to thank all of the agencies that partner with us for their dedication to the children in our community and their commitment to the prevention and intervention of child abuse. This was especially evident as we navigated the pandemic and continue with that process into 2021. We are also appreciative of the many community members who have provided the support our center needs to achieve our mission each year. We thank you all for joining us in the fight for happy, healthy childhoods and for helping us ensure that every child has a voice. We look forward to expanding our existing services in 2021 as we continue to work towards our vision of ending child abuse through a coordinated community response: Healing Today's Children – Protecting Tomorrow's.



Nancy S. Burgess
Executive Director
A Child's Voice Child Advocacy Center, Inc.



Letter from the Board Chair

According to one definition, essential workers are “those who conduct a range of operations and services that are typically essential to continue critical infrastructure operations.” Amidst the chaos surrounding allegations of child abuse there is no group of workers more essential than the staff of A Child’s Voice Child Advocacy and the agencies they partner with. During this past year of extraordinary uncertainty these essential workers continued their high level of service to the children of this community and their families.

Thank you to our staff, Law Enforcement, Department of Family and Children’s Services and the District Attorney’s office for your coordinated efforts in response to child abuse. Your work IS essential in the life of a child and to the greater good of our community.

Also essential to this work are our donors and supporters. Thank you for your unwavering support that allows us to provide high quality service in our beautiful, child friendly center. Thanks also to the Board of Directors that has stepped up to provide everything necessary for our staff to continue seamless service while adjusting for a pandemic. We have amazing board members from many unique backgrounds and professions that volunteer their time and share their talents and experience to support and raise awareness of A Child’s Voice Child Advocacy Center.

This is my last letter as Board Chair. When I joined this board in 2006, I was naïve to the extent of child abuse in my own community. I agreed to serve to make a difference in my community, but I believe the difference has been made in me. My heart has been stirred to learn the statistics and facts of abuse. And my eyes have been opened to how difficult and emotionally draining the job is for the investigators, medical professionals, social workers, district attorneys and family advocates that work these cases. I have felt personally blessed by being a part of this organization. While my term on the board has expired, I will remain a part of the Advisory Board and will continue to support A Child’s Voice Child Advocacy Center and mission.



Amy B. Greenway
Board Chair
A Child’s Voice Child Advocacy Center



LEAH'S STORY

Leah had a secret that made her feel sad and ashamed. Leah moved to Georgia with her mother, away from a lot of her family. Her mother was sick at times and they didn't have a lot of help. When her mother was sick, Leah's uncle would come over to watch Leah and her siblings. Leah's uncle began sexually abusing her at the age of 9. Leah's uncle told her that he was "checking her", which made Leah feel confused. She didn't understand what was happening. Leah's uncle continued to sexually abuse her until she was 12. Leah knew her mom was sick and needed help, and Leah didn't want to add any more stress to her mom by telling her about her uncle. When Leah was 12, Leah's mom found sexual material on Leah's phone and began talking with Leah about it. Leah began to feel comfortable sharing with her mom, and disclosed about her uncle. Leah's mom believed her and was supportive, and immediately called law enforcement to make a report and Child Protective Services was notified.

The next day, Leah and her mother went to A Child's Voice Child Advocacy Center. They were both nervous and didn't know what to expect because Leah would be talking about a horrible personal experience. After the tour and talking with the Family Advocate, Leah began to feel more comfortable. In the waiting area, she played with toys and began to relax. She even got to watch a movie.

After a few minutes, a trained forensic interviewer met with Leah and her mother. The interviewer asked Leah if they could talk in the interview room. After spending some time getting to know Leah, the forensic interviewer slowly began asking Leah about why she was there. It was hard for Leah to talk about the things her uncle had done to her for so long. The Child Protective Services worker and the law enforcement investigator watched the interview from another room, and the interview was videotaped so that Leah would not have to recount the painful details over and over again. Leah described in great detail all the horrible things her uncle had done to her.

During the interview, Leah's mom sat anxiously in the waiting room with a Family Advocate. Leah's mom disclosed that she herself had been sexually abused by her brother, Leah's uncle, but it was never reported. It was difficult for Leah's mom to talk about her abuse, and the fact that this was now happening to Leah made her feel extremely guilty. Eventually, she too was able to talk about her anger, grief and feelings of betrayal.

After the interview, the Child Protection Services worker, the family advocate and the law enforcement investigator talked with Leah's mom and realized she would be supportive of her and keep her safe. Leah had a medical examination by a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) in the center and, with the use of telemedicine equipment, a physician with Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, who was able to relieve some of Leah's greatest fears about her body. Leah's mother was also able to speak with the physician and the nurse to have her questions answered.

LEAH'S STORY

Continued

While Leah was receiving the medical examination, the team met quickly to review their notes. It was obvious that law enforcement had enough to proceed with their investigation and began acquiring search warrants and getting statements from Leah's mother and other potential witnesses. After a thorough investigation, the uncle was arrested and interviewed by an investigator trained to interview child abusers.

During the next six months, Leah and her mother participated in therapy to help them deal with the trauma and turmoil created by the abuse. The multi-disciplinary team, consisting of Child Protective Services, law enforcement, the District Attorney's office, counselors, the forensic interviewer, family advocate, and medical professional continued to meet to coordinate the investigation and monitor the family's need for support. Eventually, Leah's case was presented to the Grand Jury, who voted to indict. The case would be going to trial.

When it came time for the trial, the District Attorney's office was having difficulty contacting Leah and her mother. When they finally got in contact with them, Leah told the DA's office that the abuse by her uncle never happened. It was revealed that Leah's entire family had come to town from another state for the trial, and there were concerns that the family was placing blame and pressure on Leah for what she disclosed about her uncle. There were also concerns that her mother was no longer supporting Leah like she had when Leah first told about the abuse.

The prosecutor felt very strongly about the case and proceeded with the trial. When it came time for Leah to take the stand, she had to sit in front of her uncle with all the family sitting behind him in support. Leah wasn't able to talk about what her uncle had done and said that it didn't happen. However, Leah's recording of the forensic interview was played for the jury and they could hear all her detailed statements. The forensic interviewer from A Child's Voice was able to testify about the dynamics of child sexual abuse, including recantation (when a child takes back what they said about the abuse) and what places a child at risk for recantation, including fear and lack of family support. Leah's mother also took the stand and, even though she didn't talk about Leah's disclosures, did talk about her own abuse from Leah's uncle.

At the end of the trial, the jury found Leah's uncle guilty on all counts, and he was sentenced to life to serve 30 years in confinement. Months later, the prosecutor heard from the family and Leah's mother reported that she and Leah were doing well and thanked everyone for all their hard work and help.

This story demonstrates the power of collaboration, the importance of education and therapy, and the vital education that forensic interviewers provide to members of the jury. Names and details have been changed to protect the confidentiality of ACV clients.

PARTNER FEEDBACK

A Child's Voice is an integral part of the Multi-Disciplinary approach to serving child victims of abuse. See feedback from partner agencies below.

"A Child's Voice CAC is truly the first response in diminishing the occurrence of retraumatization for children, in Newton and Walton Counties. With their highly trained and empathetic forensic interviewers and family advocates, these families are guaranteed to get the service they need and deserve, in an impossibly difficult situation. The in-house forensic medical exams, that are performed by a SANE, give another added element of competence, empathy, and best-practice care. A Child's Voice CAC gathers referrals best suited for these children, to ensure they are getting quality therapeutic services from licensed mental health professionals, trained in trauma-based therapies, to continue their healing process. A Child's Voice CAC also efficiently runs mandatory monthly Multi-Disciplinary Team Meetings in both counties, with DFCS, Law Enforcement, The DA's Office, appropriate school personnel, medical consult, and mental health professionals, to ensure the continuance of justice, protection, and healing within these families. A Child's Voice CAC is an imperative service in these communities that works endlessly for the most vulnerable population. Newton and Walton Counties are lucky to have them."

Kelsey Layman-Ferguson, LMSW (Southeastern Psychological Associates)

"A Child's Voice (ACV) is an integral community partner to the District Attorney's Office and an invaluable asset to the communities of Newton and Walton County. Our offices handle a large number of cases every year in which ACV is a part. These cases involve the most vulnerable members of our community, young children. I have been a part of handling 100s of these cases and know firsthand how important the role ACV provides. The forensic interviews conducted by ACV are often played in court during trials and hearings and their team often testifies in court. The forensic interviewers are well trained and in conducting these interviews and the interviewers are always prepared and professional when testifying in court.

Further, ACV is a member of the Walton County Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) that meets every month with law enforcement, DFCS, counselors, and our office to discuss any new cases involving child victims. These meetings provide an invaluable service to not only determine what further action needs to be taken in a case, but also to determine what further steps can be taken to help the child and the family involved.

ACV is also involved in educating the community. They regularly provide trainings for law enforcement as well as seminars to those within the community. I am grateful for ACV and their hardworking, dedicated staff. If anyone has any questions or requires more information, please feel free to reach out to me."

Randy M. McGinley, District Attorney (Alcove Judicial Circuit)

About A Child's Voice

MISSION

A Child's Voice exists to strengthen a coordinated community response to situations of child maltreatment, including sexual abuse, physical abuse, and witness to abuse and homicide, by integrating the existing resources of law enforcement, child protection, prosecution, medical, and therapeutic agencies, so that perpetrators are held accountable for their actions and the children are protected. A Child's Voice also exists to facilitate and support organizations and individuals whose efforts are directed toward child abuse and prevention.

WHAT IS A CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER?

The purpose of a CAC is to provide a child-friendly environment where forensic interviews and medical examinations can be performed in order to assist law enforcement officers and child protective services workers in completing their investigations. This helps to ensure that the child can be protected, the guilty are prosecuted, and the innocent are not wrongly charged. Interviews are conducted by professionally-trained forensic interviewers and are videotaped to avoid multiple interviews and preserve statements for future legal actions. Children are also able to receive specialized medical services from staff that are familiar with such situations and know how to relate to the children's fears as well as the medical issues specific to this type of trauma. Children and families are offered support, education, and crisis intervention while at the center, and are referred as appropriate for counseling services. In addition, CACs engage in community education to help in the prevention of child abuse and to teach appropriate responses by adults.

HISTORY

A Child's Voice is a private 501(c)3 non-profit organization that was established in 2006 as a collaborative effort by different agencies in the child protective services and law enforcement fields of the Alcovy Judicial Circuit, along with the Child Protection Center at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta (CHOA). In December 2008, A Child's Voice CAC relocated to Loganville where we remained until December 2012, when a permanent location was purchased in Social Circle, Georgia. After some renovations, we moved in April 2013. The new location is centralized to our service area and has allowed us more space to provide our services to children in a private and child-friendly setting. In 2018, we acquired additional office space in the same office park to allow us to serve even more families in the same convenient, safe, and confidential manner. In 2009, the center was awarded full membership into the Child Advocacy Centers of Georgia (CACGA), the organization that sets standards and monitors compliance for child advocacy centers in the state of Georgia. Also that year, the Child Abuse Protocol was amended to include participation by A Child's Voice. In 2010, the center received full accreditation from National Children's Alliance (NCA), the national organization that monitors compliance of child advocacy centers across the United States. We have continually maintained full accreditation with both organizations.

About A Child's Voice

FACILITY

When the children come in with their accompanying caregivers, there is a comfortable waiting area with a variety of age-appropriate toys, books, movies, and games. There is also an interview room, a separate viewing room for law enforcement, child protective services, and/or other involved partners, and a private medical exam room. In 2018, we added additional space in the same office park that includes a second interview room, observation room, family advocacy space, and other offices so that we can serve more than one family at a time and still provide a confidential and safe place for children and their families.

SERVICES

Forensic Interviews

A forensic interview is a conversation between a child and specially trained professional that is conducted for the purposes of finding valuable information that can assist law enforcement and child protective services with investigations. Questions are open and non-suggestive, and interviews take place in a non-threatening, neutral, and child friendly environment. During a forensic interview, only the child and the Interviewer are present in the room. Conversations are audio and video recorded to prevent the need for multiple interviews. MDT Partners observe live from a separate room. Interviews are considered evidence in the criminal investigation, and are often played in court. Forensic Interviewers often testify in court as expert witnesses regarding the forensic interview, child abuse dynamics, and more.

Forensic Medical Exams

Forensic medical examinations are conducted following a forensic interview when a child has disclosed sexual or severe physical abuse and the exam is deemed necessary. Exams are performed by highly trained nurses and are supervised by specialized physicians at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta via telemedicine. Exams are tailored to the statements made by the child in the forensic interview and are used for evidence collection, testing and treatment. Medical exams are not invasive, and should cause children no pain. Children also receive reassurance about their bodies and their health, and answers to any questions or concerns they may have.

Telemedicine

Our center continues the relationship with Children's Healthcare of Atlanta as a telemedicine location. This allows healthcare professionals at our center to conduct exams with oversight from a specialized pediatrician or nurse practitioner at CHOA.

This vital partnership allows our clients to receive:

- Increased availability of medical experts to evaluate and provide second opinions during exams
- Reduction in the number of children and professionals traveling to distant locations for medical evaluations or requiring multiple appointments
- Improvement in local expert court testimony with subsequent increase in successful court actions
- Opportunity for a unique training experience for local health care providers

About A Child's Voice

Family Support

Every family who visits our center is assigned a family advocate, who works with them from the initiation of the case. The specially trained family advocate provides support, education, connections to resources, and an on-going relationship to ensure any new needs are met with assistance. The Family Advocate explains the details of the appointment, answers questions, and is a safe space for caregivers to process the many emotions that come with learning your child has experienced abuse, often by someone you know and trust.

Counseling Referrals

Research shows that for children to heal from abuse, they need supportive caregivers and effective treatment. Our Family Advocates work with counseling partners who are trained to treat child victims of abuse to ensure all clients have access to effective, evidence-based treatment. Since child abuse is often an issue that effects the whole family, the Family Advocate is also able to connect caregivers, siblings, and families with counseling when needed. Thanks to the Victims of Crime Act Grant and the Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Fund, financial difficulties or a lack of insurance is no longer a barrier to receiving treatment. These programs allow individuals to receive counseling at no cost, and A Child's Voice handles the paperwork and billing. Should a family not meet criteria for these programs, Family Advocates are creative and resourceful to ensure that families have access to counseling and the support they need.

Support Group

A Child's Voice launched its first Caregiver Support Group in 2020. This group is designed for parents and caregivers of children who have experienced sexual abuse, and is an opportunity to meet others who are working towards healing and understanding, share thoughts, success, and frustrations, and learn coping and communication skills. This group is offered virtually and is open to current clients or any other caregivers who meet the criteria. The Support Group helps ensures caregivers have what they need to support their children's healing.

TRAINING & COMMUNITY EDUCATION

A Child's Voice continues to serve individuals and agencies in the community through training and community education events. We offer Mandated Reporter Training, Darkness to Light's Stewards of Children training, Connections Matter, and can tailor training events to the needs of specific communities. We also strive to bring relevant training to those in our community. These trainings can be offered virtually or in person.

PREVENT CHILD ABUSE GEORGIA- WALTON CHAPTER

A Child's Voice is Prevent Child Abuse Georgia- Walton Chapter, a local affiliate of Prevent Child Abuse Georgia. We serve as the hub of child abuse prevention for our community- leading events in April for Child Abuse Prevention Month and educating the community throughout the year on how they can partner with us to prevent child abuse.

What's new in 2020

COVID-19

Like so many others, staff at A Child's Voice worked hard to adapt due to COVID19 and maintain our ability to continue serving clients. Beginning in March, staff worked primarily from home but came into the office when services were needed. The center never shut its doors and never had to turn any clients away. We finished 2020 with typical numbers of clients served, and move into 2021 with the ability to remain flexible to best serve clients no matter what comes along, including through on-site or virtual forensic interviews when needed.

Our center also recieved an outpouring of community support throughout 2020 and we are thankful to the organizations and individuals that helped ensure we had the supplies and encouragement we needed to continue serving children and families during such a difficult year.

Board Changes

We had a number of changes to our board this year.

Layla Zon, longtime board member, was appointed as a Superior Court Judge for the Alcovy Judicial Circuit in June 2020 and thus resigned her position on the board. Acting District Attorney Randy McGinley filled Layla's position for the remainder of 2020.

Another longtime board member, Dr. Lisa Miller, resigned the board in August due to ongoing health concerns. Dr. Miller has been a strong supporter of our center for years, and we will miss her leadership! Julie Opeka, NP of Grayson Pediatrics has joined the board in Dr. Miller's place.

Additionally, Sheriff Joe Chapman rolled off the board and Chief Deputy Keith Brooks has stepped in to fill his spot.

Monroe Police Cheif RV Watts also joined our board in 2020.

We also want to thank Penny Shirley, Tom Riermaier, and Amy Greenway, who have completed their terms as Board Members but plan to stay involved in an advisory capacity through the agency's Advisory Board.

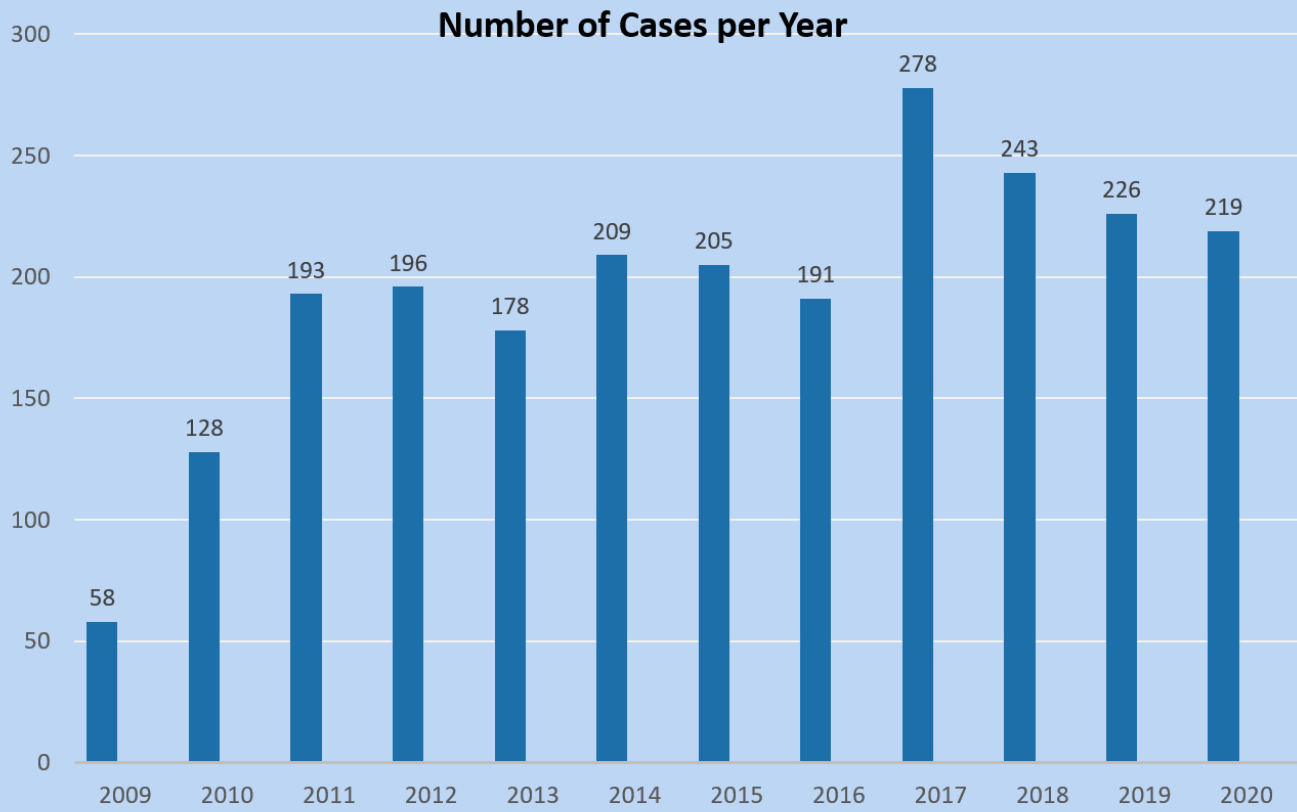
Support Group

A Child's Voice has planned a caregiver support group for a while, and initially planned to start in March 2020, in person. Due to COVID-19, the first caregiver support group was postponed until October 2020 and offered virtually. Planning took place throughout 2020 to ensure staff were ready to support and educate caregivers. Support group will continue in 2021 and we are excited for the impact this will make for our caregivers and clients! The group is an educational support group and is currently facilitated by Family Advocate/ Forensic Interview Specialist DeAnna Fort, LMSW and Client Services Coordinator/ Family Advocate Desiree Thompson, MSW.

NCA Re-Accreditation

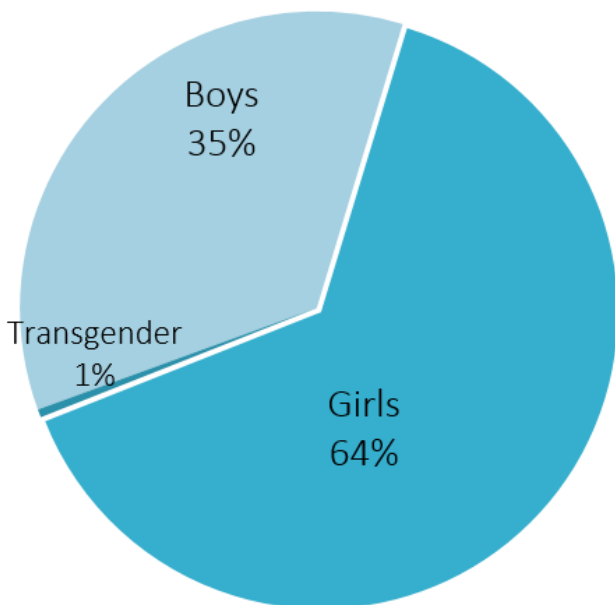
In February 2020, A Child's Voice had its National Children's Alliance Accreditation Site visit after months of preparation to demonstrate through both written documentation and observed practice that the CAC is in compliance with NCA's 10 national accreditation standards. The standards and their accompanying criteria ensure that children and families in your community receive effective, efficient, relevant and compassionate services. The site visit included interviews with partners and staff, demonstration of services, an agency tour, and observation of a monthly case-tracking meeting. The agency received full re-accreditation approval in June 2020!

2020 CLIENTS

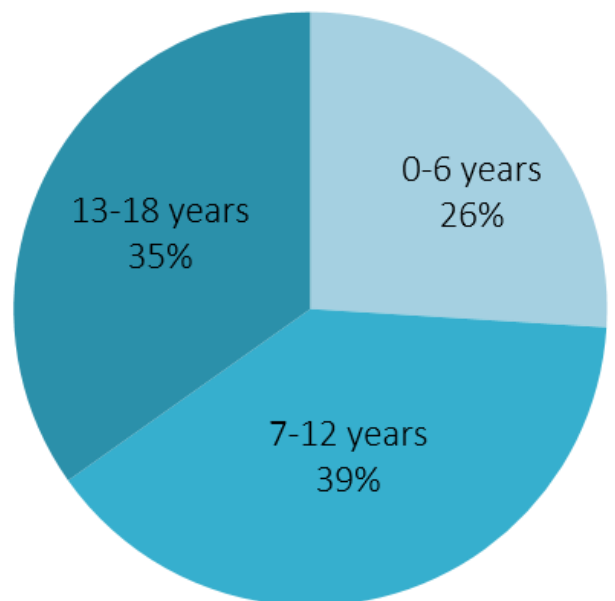


Demographics

Gender



Age



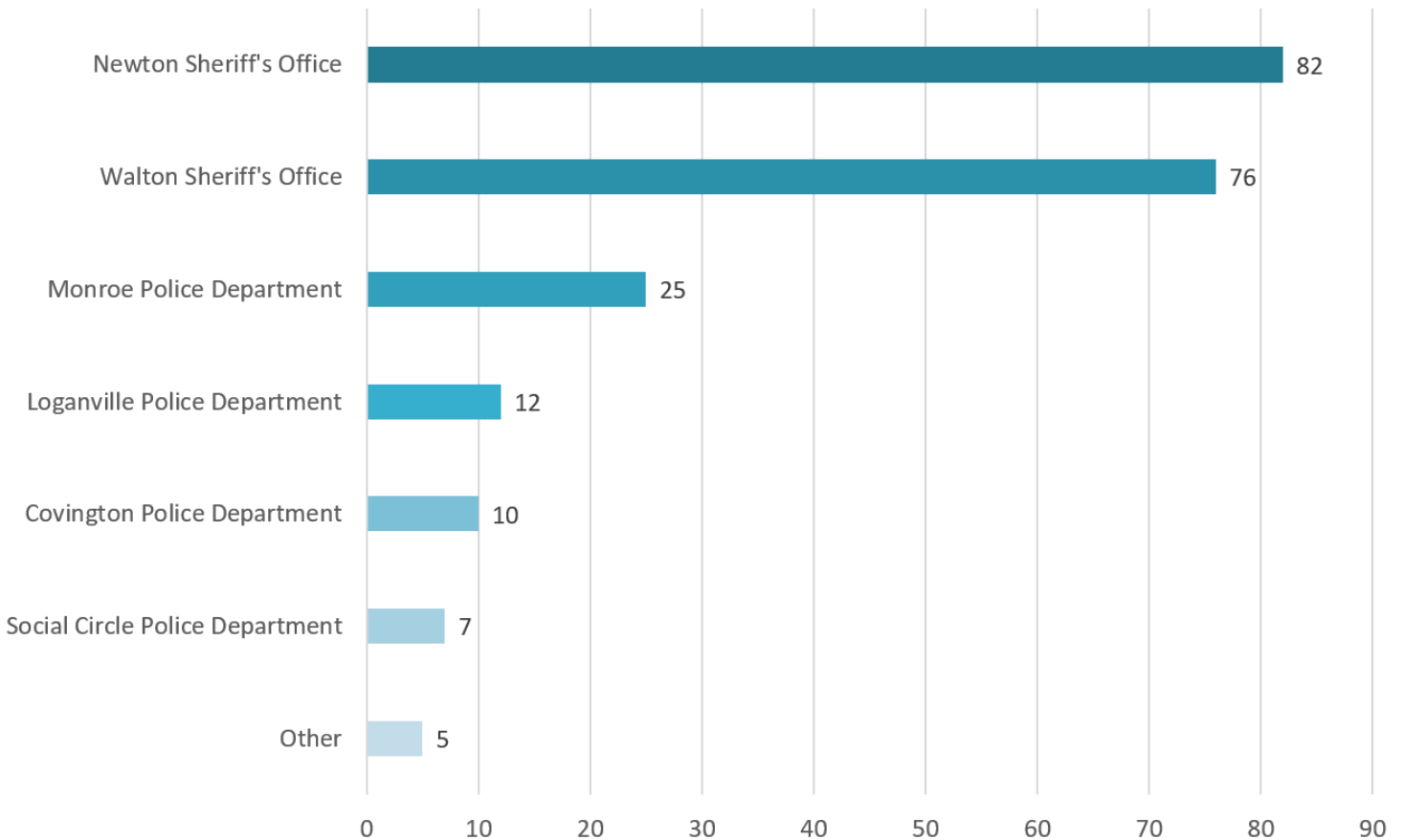
Multi-disciplinary Team

The backbone of the child advocacy center model is the multidisciplinary team. Functioning as a multidisciplinary team allows us to reduce trauma for child victims and effectively coordinate investigation and care for these cases.

The mutli-disciplinary team is composed of representatives from law enforcement, child protective services (DFCS), the District Attorney's office, medical, mental health and A Child's Voice staff. These representatives work together to coordinate the intervention in order to reduce potential trauma for children and families. This team facilitates support for families and children, ongoing involvement of necessary individuals in the case and effective communication between all involved agencies.

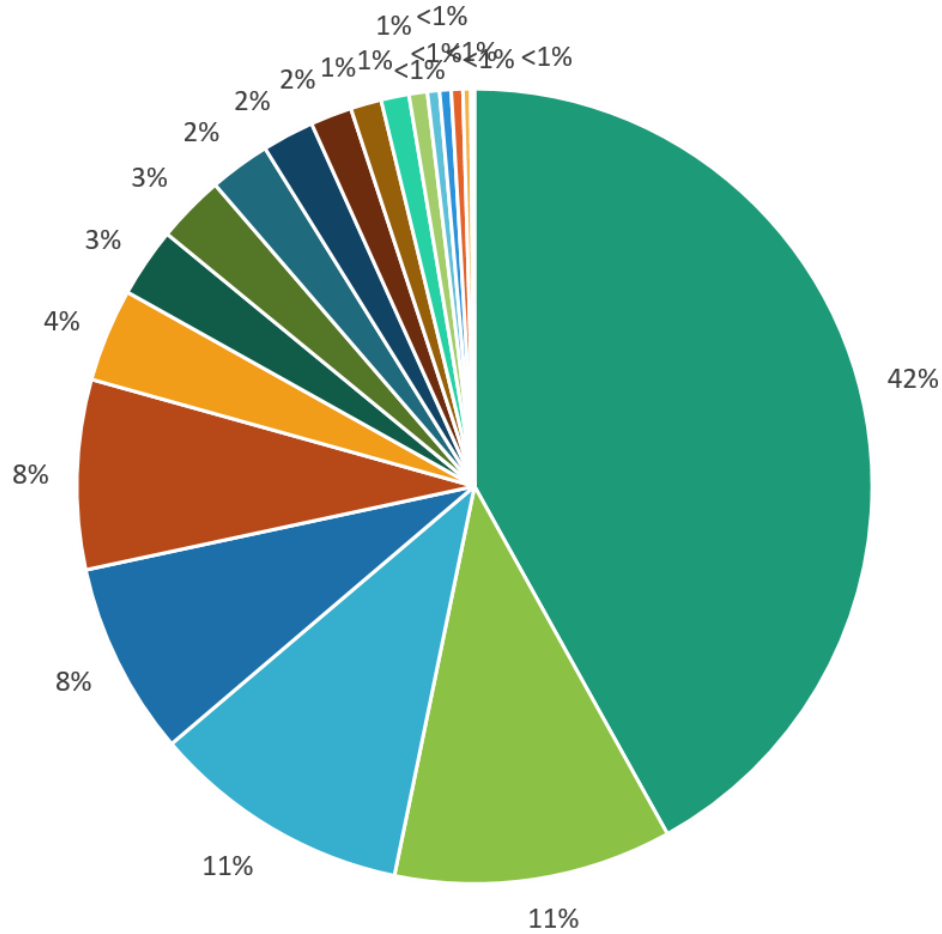
Referrals are made to A Child's Voice when local law enforcement and child protective service agencies initiate an investigation into allegations of child abuse or when a child has witnessed a violent crime. Below are 2020 referring agency statistics based on law enforcement jurisdiction.

Referring Agency



2020 FINANCIALS

Total Income for 2020



- Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Federal Grant- \$267,411
- Payroll Protection Loan (Forgiven)- \$72,000
- Income from Forensic Interviews- \$67,295
- Walton County Health Care Foundation- \$50,000
- Children's Advocacy Centers of Georgia- \$49,150
- National Children's Alliance- \$24,135.50
- Golden State Foods Foundation- \$18,000
- Income from Medical Exams- \$17,554.61
- United Way of Walton County- \$15,796.98
- Walton EMC Operation Round Up- \$13,450
- Contributions- Civic, Corporate, Individual, and Other- \$19,743.33
- BD/Bard- \$8,000
- Fundraising- \$7,246.74
- United Way of Covington-Newton County- \$4752.04
- Interest Income- \$3,125.40
- Charles M. Walker Foundation- \$3,000
- Snapping Shoals EMC Operation Round Up- \$3,000
- Kirby Smart Family Foundation- \$2,000
- WalMart Local Giving- \$750
- Income from Seminars and Trainings- \$216.08

=\$637,626.68

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The efforts of A Child's Voice are supported by a generous and active Board of Directors



Amy Greenway, Board Chair – LongView Wealth Management Financial Advisor

Amy Greenway graduated from Georgia College in 1992 with a degree in history and education and taught high school social studies before leaving to pursue a career in financial planning in 1999. She completed her CFP studies through the College of Financial Planning in 2011 and earned her CFP certification in 2012. She currently works as a Certified Financial Planner with LongView Wealth Management in Loganville. Amy serves on the state board for Children's Advocacy Centers of Georgia. She and her husband Derrell live at Lake Oconee where they are active in their church as well in a local Christian addiction ministry.

Bill Walker, Treasurer – Legacy State Bank



Mr. Walker is President & CEO of Legacy State Bank, located in Loganville, Georgia. Mr. Walker is a graduate of UGA with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration. In addition, he is a graduate of Emory University's Executive School of Management. Mr. Walker has worked in the banking industry for 30 years in the Atlanta, Conyers and Loganville markets. Mr. Walker is a past board member and past President of the United Way of Walton County. In addition, he is currently a Board Member of A Child's Voice Child Advocacy Center and The Rotary Club of Loganville. He has been involved or held board positions with several other civic and community organizations including the Walton County Chamber of Commerce, Loganville Downtown Business Council, Rotary Club of Loganville, Conyers/Rockdale Chamber of Commerce, United Way of Rockdale and Rotary Club of Rockdale. Mr. Walker is a resident of Bogart, Georgia where he has a wife and two grown children and he is an active member of Athens First United Methodist Church.

Dawn Warner, Secretary– Golden State Foods



Dawn Warner, is the Director of Supply Chain, Liquid Protein Division at Golden State Foods in Conyers, Ga. Dawn relocated to Georgia in 2018 from Zanesville, Ohio where she was with The Kellogg Company for 10 years. She graduated from St Leo's University in San Antonio, Florida with a degree in Business Management. As an active member in her community, she was elected as school board member for River View Local School District in Warsaw, Ohio. She also served as Chairman of the board for the First Step Domestic Violence Shelter, President of River View Community Park Board and Warsaw Lioness Club, where she received a Congressional Medal for Humanitarian services for Hurricane Andrew relief work. Dawn and her husband Michael reside in Covington, Georgia.

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Lisa Miller, M.D. - Lisa Miller Pediatrics, PC

Dr. Lisa Miller graduated from Berry College in 1983 with her BA degree in Chemistry. She subsequently attended graduate school at the Georgia Institute of Technology and then went on to medical school at Wake Forest School of Medicine, graduating in 1991. Dr. Miller has practiced pediatrics in the Newton and Rockdale area since 1994. Dr. Miller is a resident of Newton County. She is married to Mike Dauphin and has a college aged daughter, Gracie.

Dr. Miller resigned from the board due to ongoing health concerns in August 2020. Julie Opeka has joined in her place.



Julie Opeka, CPNC. - Grayson Pediatrics

Julie Opeka, CPNP has a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Georgia Baptist College of Nursing (now Mercer University) and a Master of Science from Georgia State University. She is board certified by the Pediatric Nursing Certification Board for Primary Care Pediatrics. Julie LOVES pediatrics and has been in the field since 2001. She previously worked in Emergency Medicine Trauma at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta and is currently the co-founder of Grayson Pediatrics in Grayson, Georgia. Her devotion is to the best long term outcomes for not only the pediatric patients, but for their entire family, encompassing a holistic care model for the family. Julie is privileged to participate in A Child's Voice on the board and looks forward to years of service to our children in local townships.



Penny Shirley – Citizen Advocate

Penny Shirley graduated from North Georgia College and State University with a Bachelor's of Social Work. She was employed for over 20 years at the Walton County Department of Family and Children Services, where she worked as the Social Services Supervisor in child protective services. She is a member of Ebenezer Baptist Church in Monroe where she is a devoted Sunday school teacher. She has been an active member and previous Vice President of Walton County Little League. She lives in Social Circle.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Frank Turner, Jr. - Greer, Stansfield & Turner

Frank B. Turner, Jr. is a partner in the Covington law firm of Greer, Stansfield & Turner, LLP where his practice focuses on local government law, economic development, estate planning, corporate law and real estate. Turner is a graduate of Washington & Lee University and Mercer University School of Law. Turner is a graduate of the Georgia Academy for Economic Development, Class of 2001, and Leadership Georgia, Class of 2004. Turner has served as chairman of the boards of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, the Georgia Housing and Finance Authority, the Covington Redevelopment Authority, the Newton County Land Trust, and the Covington Historic Preservation Commission. He is a member of Good Shepherd Episcopal Church and sits on the boards of United Bank and the Covington Development Authority. Turner and his wife Loy reside in their hometown of Covington where they are raising their three children.



Layla Zon – District Attorney, Alcovy Judicial Circuit

Layla H. Zon joined the District Attorney's office in July, 2000 and began prosecuting cases assigned to the courtroom in which she was assigned in Newton County. In 2003, Ms. Zon was promoted to Chief Assistant District Attorney for the Alcovy Judicial Circuit. Ms. Zon continued to prosecute all misdemeanor and felony offenses that were assigned to her before becoming the Major Felony Prosecutor responsible for prosecuting major cases including homicides, armed robberies, white collar crime, and special prosecutions. In August 2010, Ms. Zon was appointed by Governor Sonny Perdue to succeed William Kendall Wynne, Jr., the former District Attorney, when he was appointed the newest Superior Court Judge of the Circuit. Ms. Zon received a B.S. in Government from Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia in 1996 and received her law degree from Georgia State University in Atlanta, Georgia in 2000.

Layla was appointed to Superior Court Judge and resigned from the Board in June 2020. Randy McGinley has joined in her place.



Randy McGinley – District Attorney, Alcovy Judicial Circuit

Randy McGinley is the District Attorney of the Alcovy Judicial Circuit where he manages an office of over 20 prosecutors and over 60 total employees. His offices are responsible for the prosecution of over 6000 cases a year in Newton and Walton Counties. Randy grew up on Marine Corps bases until his father retired in Albany, GA. After graduating from Georgia Tech, Randy owned a residential appraisal business. Then in 2008, he began law school at Mercer University. While there, he interned for the Cobb and Jones Counties District Attorney's Office. Upon graduating in 2011, Randy started with the Alcovy Circuit DA's Office in the Newton County office. He has worked extensively in both counties and became the Chief Assistant District Attorney in 2017. Much of his prosecution career has been handling cases involving child victims. Randy was elected District Attorney in 2020. In addition, Randy is deeply involved in the community including teaching mock trial, teaching local law enforcement, speaking regularly to community groups, and as a member of the Loganville Rotary Club.

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Sheriff Joe Chapman – Walton County Sheriff's Office

Joe Chapman is a veteran of both the United States Marine Corps and the Georgia Army National Guard. He retired from military service as a Company First Sergeant after over 20 years of service. He was previously the Chief of Detectives with the City of Monroe Police Department before being elected Sheriff of Walton County in 2004. He is currently a member of both the Georgia and National Sheriffs Associations. He has served on multiple other boards, such as the Lt. Governor's Safety Advisory Board, Congressman Rob Woodall's Military Academy Selection Board, and the Northeast Georgia Police Academy Advisory Board. He is involved with the Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, and attends Centerhill Baptist Church. He lives in Walton County with his wife Tammy and has three sons, Jake, Josh, and Jordan.

Chief Deputy Keith Brooks– Walton County Sheriff's Office



Keith Brooks was appointed by Sheriff Joe Chapman to serve as the Chief Deputy for Walton County Sheriff's Office in 2013. As the Chief Deputy, Keith Brooks is responsible for the overall operational efficiency of the Agency and is the senior advisor to Sheriff Chapman and assumes command of the Sheriff's Office in absence of the Sheriff. Employed by Sheriff Franklin Thorton in 1992, Chief Deputy Brooks has served in several managerial level positions throughout his law enforcement career, from entry level Deputy Sheriff to the rank of Major of the Uniform Patrol Division. Chief Deputy Brooks holds a Masters Degree in Public Administration from Columbus State University. Keith, wife Stacie, and their two sons, are life-long residents of Walton County. A graduate from Monroe High School, he remains heavily involved in the community and local events.

Captain Ken Malcom – Covington Police Department



Captain Ken Malcom, MS, is more than a 32-year veteran of police work. He graduated from Troy University with a Master's of Science in Criminal Justice. He is also a graduate of the FBI National Academy and Clayton Regional Police Academy. Captain Malcom has been awarded the Police Star Award for his acts of bravery in a police shoot out. Ken was also awarded the 2003 National D.A.R.E. Officer of the Year. Ken Malcom serves as an adjunct professor for Georgia State University. Ken has been recognized as one of the top crime prevention educators in the state and now travels abroad to educate police officers on various U.S. police tactics. Captain Malcom is passionate about helping those in need in Covington Ga. His efforts with the Covington Police Fuzz Run and Covington Police Who Care has helped raise thousands of dollars that have been designated to help those in need in our city and county. Ken and his wife Lynn and family reside in Oxford, Georgia.

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Commissioner Tyrone Oliver – Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice



Tyrone Oliver was named Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice in July 2019 by Governor Brian P. Kemp. He is responsible for the daily operation of the multi-faceted agency of more than 3,500 employees that holds youthful offenders accountable for their actions through probation supervision and secure detention. Tyrone is a 20-year veteran of law enforcement who, in 1999, began his career as a detention officer with the Newton County Sheriff's Office. In 2013, Oliver was one of the first employees of the Brookhaven Police Department when the new city was formed. In January 2016, Commissioner Oliver was named Chief of Police for the City of Social Circle and in November 2018 he was designated by Social Circle as Deputy City Manager. Commissioner Oliver is a graduate of Columbus State University's Law Enforcement Professional Management Program, completed the FBI's Law Enforcement Executive Development Program and Leadership Trilogy and attended the Georgia International Law Enforcement Exchange to Israel. A long-time resident of Newton County, Georgia, Oliver is married to Aimee and has five children and one granddaughter. He exceptionally active in his community, serving on several youth-focused organizations as a board member.

Priscilla Faulkner, PsyD – Southeastern Psychological Associates



Dr. Priscilla Faulkner holds a bachelor degree in psychology from Converse College. She has a master's in psychology from Georgia College. She also has a master's and doctoral degree in clinical psychology from the Georgia School of Professional Psychology. She has been licensed to practice in Georgia since 1997. She has a special interest in attachment issues, trauma and foster/adoptive families and children. She is a life-long resident of the Newton County area and is very committed to ensuring that the children of this rural community have all the emotional and behavioral health resources of those in a metro area. Dr. Faulkner is cofounder of Horse Time, Inc., a nonprofit equine facilitated mental health center, serves as the clinical director for Southeastern Psychological Associates, and is a staff psychologist for Social Empowerment Center, Inc.

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Jeff Carter- Takeda Pharmaceuticals



Jeff Carter began his career by spending over 15 years as a Firefighter/Paramedic in North West Georgia. During his time serving the citizens of Georgia he provided emergency care to thousands of local children and was recognized in 2008 with the Joseph E. Simon, M.D. Pediatric Award of Excellence for delivery of emergency care to Georgia's children. He holds a Paramedic license through the State of Georgia and the National Registry of EMT/Paramedics. Mr. Carter is a Fire Protection Specialist and active as a National Fire Protection Association advisory committee member. In 2016 Mr. Carter transitioned to the private sector and relocated to Madison, GA with his wife Jeni and their son Brooks. He is currently the Head of Emergency Response for Takeda Pharmaceuticals where he leads a team of specialist that are responsible for the protection of one of the largest bio-pharmaceutical projects in the world and over 1,000 employees.

Sharon Queen, RN- Piedmont Walton



Sharon Queen has been a nurse for more than thirty years specializing in Critical Care and Nursing Administration. She received her BS in Nursing and MBA at Georgia State University. Her current role is Nursing Supervisor at Piedmont Walton Hospital. She is an active member of First Baptist Church Monroe and lives in Monroe, happily married to her husband Hal. Sharon's favorite pastime is spending time with her seven grandchildren.

Chief RV Watts- Monroe Police Department



Chief Robert (RV) Watts is a graduate of Cross Keys High School in Atlanta, Georgia. Upon graduation, he served four years in the United States Marine Corps earning the rank of Sergeant. He served with the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit serving operations in Somalia, Cuba, and Japan. Upon leaving the military he began his 22-year career in law enforcement. RV began his career at Monroe Police Department in October of 2002. Throughout his work at the Monroe Police Department he has served in every capacity including K-9, uniform patrol, criminal investigations, SWAT, administration, and command staff. He served over Daily Operations as Assistant Chief from 2013 through 2018. The Monroe City Council appointed him Chief of Police effective January 1, 2019. RV also holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Criminal Justice from Thomas University and has completed over 2,500 hours of law enforcement training including FBI LEEDs Academy and Columbus State University Command College. Chief Watts is a 2013 graduate of Leadership Walton and actively serves on the Board for the Walton County Boys and Girls Club. He serves as a Deacon and teaches Sunday School at Grace Baptist Church in Monroe, Georgia.

ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

The efforts of A Child's Voice are supported by a dedicated advisory board.



Tom Riermaier – Walmart Distribution Center

Tom Riermaier graduated from the University of the Ozarks in 2005 with a bachelor's degree in Sociology. He has worked with Wal-mart since 2005, and has had many different roles in the company, currently an operations manager for DC 6055. Tom worked with troubled adolescents from 1999 - 2001 in a Residential Treatment Center called Positive Impact located in Bahia de Kino, Mexico. Here Tom oversaw training of Milieu Managers and ran group therapy for adolescents in the program. He has taken an interest in the success of our youth in the community. Tom is a member of Athens Church, and lives in Watkinsville, Georgia with his wife Sommer, and two daughters, Cloe and Sky.



Lee Garrett – Liberty First Bank, President

Born in Monroe, Georgia December 28, 1969, Graduated from Loganville High School with honors in 1988, Graduated from the University of Georgia in 1992 with a bachelors degree in Business Administration, 2002 graduate of the Graduate School of Banking at Louisiana State University. Currently, President at Liberty First Bank, Monroe, Georgia. Current Chairman of Trustees of the Walton County Foundation. Past Chairman and Board Member for the Walton County Chamber of Commerce and the United Way of Walton County. Member, Adult Sunday School Teacher and Deacon of First Baptist Church Monroe. Board Member and Treasurer of A Child's Voice Child Advocacy Center. Middle School Basketball Coach at George Walton Academy. Member of the Monroe Rotary Club. 2013 recipient of the Walton County Chamber of Commerce JL McGarity Citizenship Award. 2015 Recipient of the Walton Tribune's Community Spirit Award. 2017 Voted Best Banker in Walton County by the readers of the Walton Tribune. A Graduate of Leadership Georgia 2012, Graduate of Leadership Athens 1998 and Leadership Walton 1995. Formerly, Senior Vice President and Community Executive with the National Bank of Walton County. Former President – Walton County Little League, Loganville Lion's Club, Kiwanis Club of Loganville, Member Athens Regional Medical Center Foundation Corporate Relations Committee. Former member and director of the Monroe and Athens Rotary Club, Athens Clinic for the Homeless Advisory Board, Athens Area Chamber of Commerce Chairman of Ambassadors and member of the Business Council. Enjoys coaching youth sports, hunting, running, golf, and following University of Georgia athletics. Currently resides in Monroe with wife Lisa and is proud of his two children :Tripp, age 27 who is a Physical Therapist with Athens Orthopedic Clinic and Kendall, 20, who is a sophomore and Track Athlete at UNC Asheville.

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"A child's voice, however honest and true,
is meaningless to those
who have forgotten how to listen".
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