

Annual Report

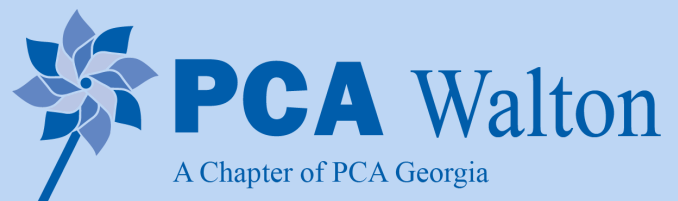
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Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends and Supporters,

The role of A Child's Voice Child Advocacy Center is to focus on the child's needs rather than focusing on the crime itself. The forensic interview process is a child-led and child-driven, allowing children to feel relaxed and engaged with interviewers. 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. Following this process, 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 any 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 therapists and will follow the case as long as the family requests our assistance.

A Child's Voice continues to work with community partners to effectively and compassionately respond to incidents of child abuse in our community. The demand for our services continues to grow, so in 2021 the Board of Directors purchased additional office space in the same office park. This allowed for further expansion of our ability to provide services to the child victim and their caregivers. This purchase of that building allowed expansion of additional training space, office space for staff and partner agencies in order to allow timely access to our services.


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 within the Children's Advocacy Centers of Georgia (CACGA) and remains one of only 48 fully accredited centers in the state of Georgia. We are also one of only 40 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.

Letter from the Executive Director

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. 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.

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. We are 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. I would especially like to thank our board of directors for their continuing dedication and support of our center and staff. Our center could not be the outstanding center we are without the tremendous staff who provide genuine-excellent and professional services to the families in our community who seek services at our center.

We look forward to expanding our existing services in 2023 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

Dear supporters,

It has been my pleasure to serve again as the Board Chair for 2022 and on the Board of Directors in some capacity since 2006. First, I want to thank our donors and assure them that our team of children's advocates and our Executive Director, Nancy Burgess, are good stewards of your money. Our team works tirelessly to meet the needs of the children of our community and fearlessly face tragedy every day, all with a heart for children and their best interests as victims.

Sadly, The Center continues to see record numbers of children, largely due to population growth, but with increased numbers come the need for more services, specifically in follow-up and family counseling after a tragic event. As Nancy Burgess mentioned in her letter, with the purchase of the additional building in 2021, our commitment to family advocacy and counseling continues as we have made a commitment to provide specifically designed trauma-focused counseling for children seen at the center. This counseling will be performed by one of our in-house, long-time family advocates turned therapist who is intimately familiar with the trauma experienced by the children we serve. Local counselors have previously met this need and will still serve our clients, but a six-week waiting period is simply too long for our children to wait. Our hope is this new service, while starting small, will meet the needs of our children at no cost to the families.

For this reason alone, we continue to need your support more than ever. I continue to be excited, humbled, and distressed to see our center grow with expanded need of mental health through therapy. My hope is that you will never have to experience our services, but if you do, please know what a dedicated and thoughtful team we have in place to help our victims persevere and thrive. If you see or meet one of our team members, please thank them for what they do.



Lastly, I want to let local law enforcement how much we appreciate their partnership and our Board of Directors for their commitment to our organization. These Board members offer their time, talent, and resources for the betterment of A Child's Voice and through their guidance the center is well-established and on a firm financial foundation to prosper for many years into the future.

D. Lee Garrett
Board Chair

A Child's Voice Child Advocacy Center, Inc.

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 (MDT), 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 (DA) office was having difficulty contacting Leah and her mother. When they finally got in to 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 came 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 of 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, she 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 of 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.

CLIENT FEEDBACK

All families have the opportunity to complete anonymous surveys about the services they receive from A Child's Voice. Here are some of their responses:

Staff provided excellent service, great communication, friendly staff, very professional, gave great detail about services and answered all questions

The staff were kind, courteous, and attentive. My children and I were very comfortable and felt like we were home.

How comfortable they made my children feel. It felt like they really cared

It was quick very understandable and very reasonable.

I had four children at the center for their forensic interview. The staff there went out of their way to accommodate all my kids by being professional, considerate, nice, and supportive. All of my kids, 3 girls and 1 boy were made to feel comfortable during a difficult time.

The comfortability from the staff, the atmosphere of of office and just the overall vibe is just very reassuring.

How compassionate they were and understanding and sympathetic and worked really well at understanding the process according to her age and making her feel comfortable/safe/secure

The staff was very helpful and welcoming during a very emotional time.

The staff catering to the children and being patient with them.

YOUTH FEEDBACK

Teens now have the opportunity to complete anonymous surveys about the services they receive from A Child's Voice. This is offered to youth ages 10-17 while at the center. Here are some of their responses:

Everyone cared about the situation.

Y'all are every nice people and a great listener too.yall make feel safe and comfortable it's a amazing place to come to if you need help or need advice

The peace and environment. I felt safe with the people, and felt like I could tell the truth.

I liked how they listened to me

I felt like I was safe to answer questions, I didn't feel like I was being interrogated.

That it is a safe space to tell your story

Feels more like a home environment than an office.

The people are really nice and so understanding

What did you appreciate the most about your experience at the Center?



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 re-traumatization 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, LCSW (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 of. These cases involve the most vulnerable members of our community, that being young children. I have been a part of handling hundreds 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 additional 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 (Alcovy 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. ACV does this 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, until 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

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 a specially trained nurse practitioner. Specialists at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta are available for second opinion and peer review. 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.

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 ones child has experienced abuse, often by someone you know and trust.

About A Child's Voice

Counseling Referrals

Research shows that in order 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 affects the whole family, the family advocate is additionally able to connect caregivers, siblings, and families with counseling when needed. A Child's Voice staff work to connect clients to the Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Fund so that financial difficulties or a lack of insurance are not a barrier to receiving treatment. Should a family not meet the criteria for these programs, family advocates use their creativity and resourcefulness to guarantee that families have access to counseling and the support they need.

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 2022

Staff training

Agency staff attended a variety of trainings and conferences in 2022. Some highlights: Courtney was trained as a Mandated Reporting Trainer and was certified as a Credentialed Advocate by the National Advocate Credentialing Program.

Courtney and DeAnna attended Children's Advocacy Centers of North Carolina 28th annual Reflections Symposium on Child Abuse and Neglect at Lake Junaluska.

Pinwheel Paloozas

Giant Pinwheels were installed as permanent displays in Monroe and in Covington. The pinwheels were created by Dr. Alex Rodriguez and sponsored by Monroe Kiwanis Club, Leadership Newton County Class of 2022-2023, Allsouth Constructors, Inc. and United Bank.

During April, community-based pinwheel paloozas were planned in Monroe, Covington, Social Circle, and Loganville where the community sponsored pinwheel gardens and helped us plant the gardens. These were a great way to engage with the community and we look forward to more years of Pinwheel Paloozas!

New Staff

Courtney Farrow, LMSW joined our staff in June 2022. Courtney previously volunteered with us as a young child, and completed a Service Learning Internship during her undergraduate studies. She serves as a Family Advocate, supporting caregivers and families who are seen at the center. She is also willing to do anything else to help keep the place running smooth and is a great addition to the team!

MDT Partner Training

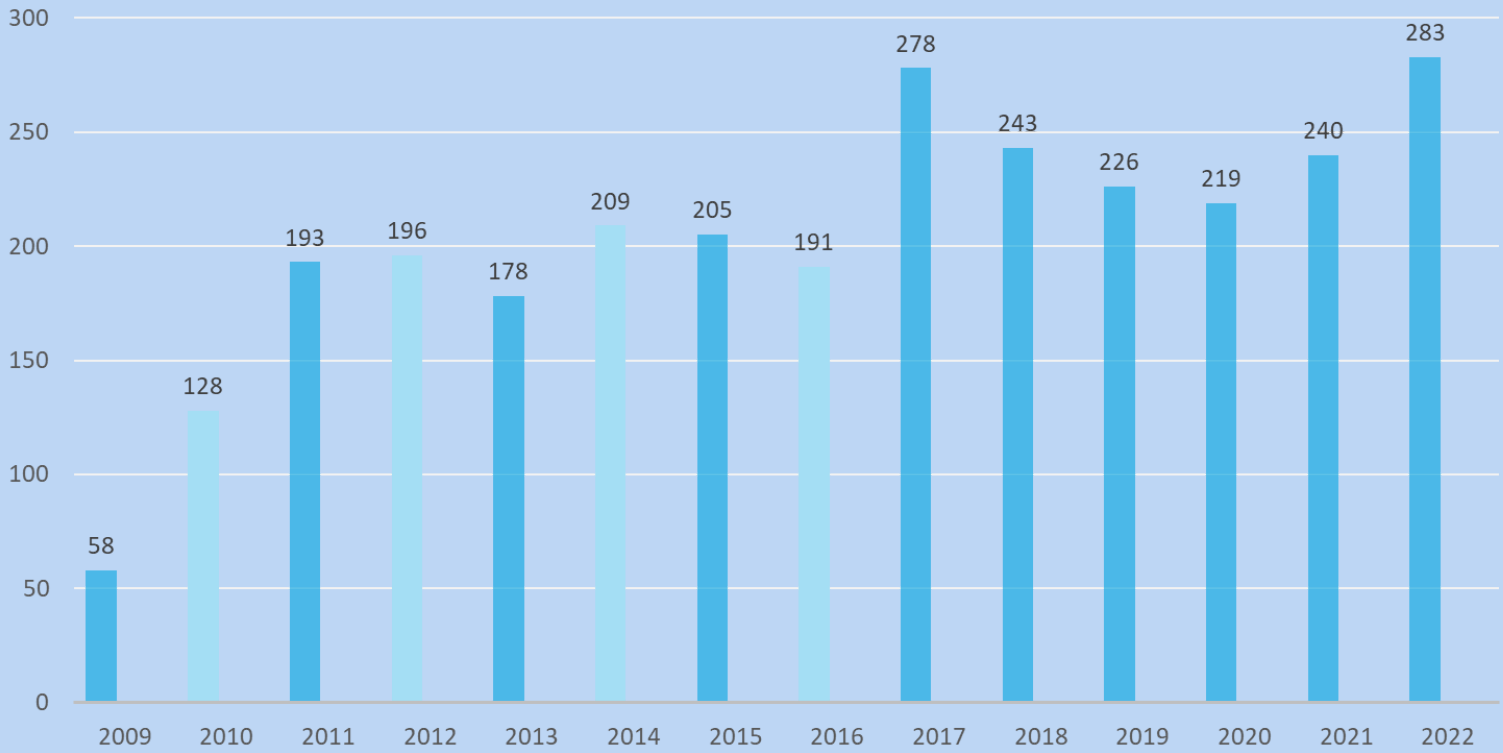
A Child's Voice hosted Mary Beth Nelson from the Georgia Center for Child Advocacy for a MDT Training: Exploring and Explaining Grooming Activities in Child Molestation Investigations. This was offered for our partners to attend at no cost.

New Building

Early in 2022, staff moved into the newly renovated second building. Staff offices are located in this building, and both buildings are used to provide services to families and the community. This new location has allowed the agency to expand services with new offerings and the ability to serve more families.

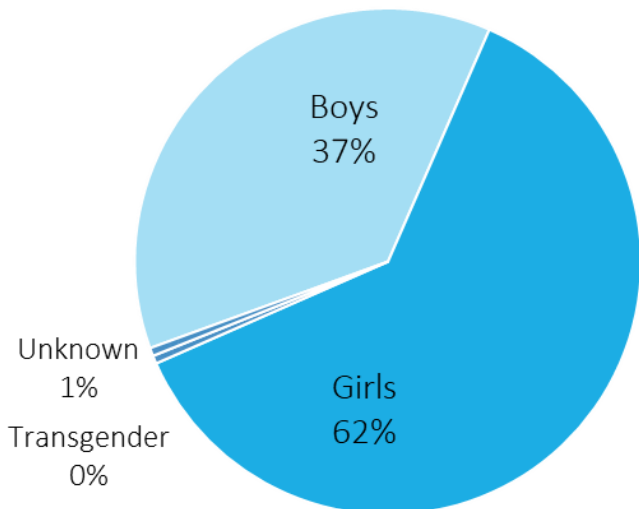
We celebrated the new building with an Open House in April of 2022.

2022 CLIENTS

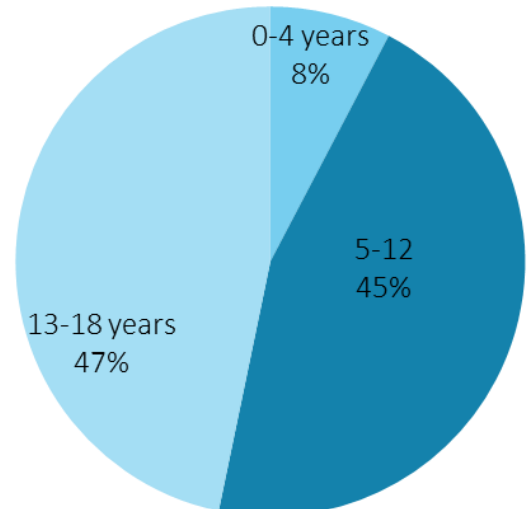


Demographics

Gender



Age



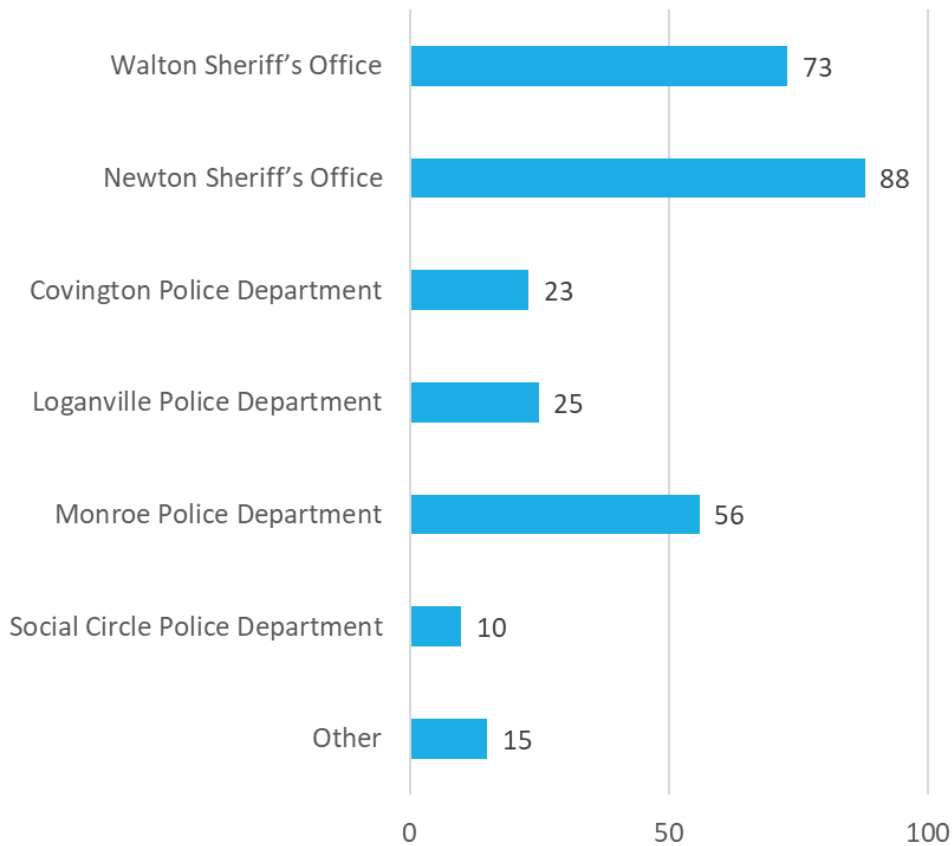
Multi-disciplinary Team

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 multi-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.

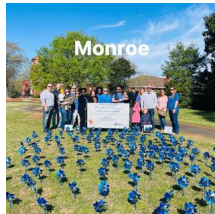
Referring Agency Statistics



COMMUNITY EDUCATION & OUTREACH



Pinwheel Palooza



Giant Pinwheel Planting



MWG & NCG Site Visits and Mental Health Panel



Walton County Chamber of Commerce-Reality Check at Social Circle Middle School



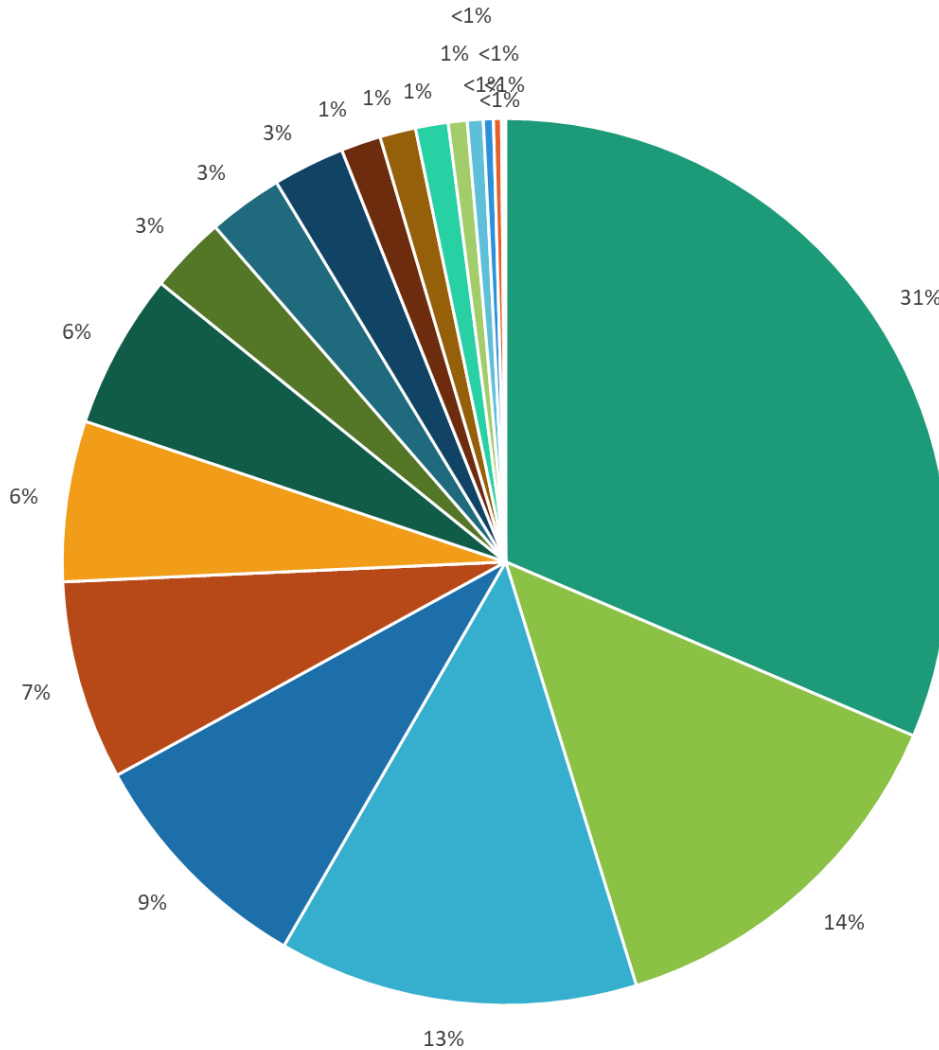
Building 241 Ribbon Cutting and Open House



Keller Williams-Kare Bears and Costco shopping trip



2022 FINANCIALS



- Federal Grants through Criminal Justice Coordinating Council- \$215,966
- Walton County Health Care Foundation- \$95,000
- Income from Forensic Interviews- \$90,060
- Contributions- Civic, Corporate, Individual, and Other- \$59,624.95
- Golden State Foods Foundation- \$50,000
- Children's Advocacy Centers of Georgia- \$40,250
- Income from Medical Exams- \$39,034.65
- Fundraising- \$19,340.23
- United Way of Walton County- \$18,710.96
- BD, Inc. Foundation- \$18,000
- Walton EMC Operation Round Up- \$10,000
- Prevent Child Abuse Georgia Local Council Prevention Funding- \$9,000
- Walton County Foundation, Inc.- \$8,189
- Interest/Investment Income- \$4,723.08
- Charles M Walker Foundation- \$4,000
- Kirby Smart Family Foundation- \$2,500
- United Way of Newton County- \$2,000
- Income from Seminars and Trainings- \$779.63
- Income from Expanded Family Advocacy- \$250

= \$687,428.50

2022 Annual Report

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

Lee Garrett, Board Chair – Liberty First Bank

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 Bachelor's 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 28 who is a Physical Therapist with Athens Orthopedic Clinic and Kendall, 21, who is a sophomore and Track Athlete at UNC Asheville.



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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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.



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.

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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 Master's 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.

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.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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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 1025 Church in Monroe, Georgia.

ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

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

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.

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.

ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

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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.

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.

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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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