



THE CHILD ADVOCATE

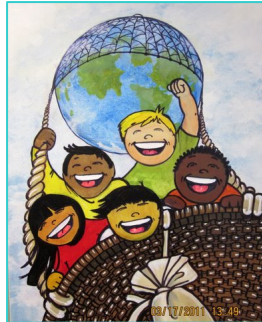


A publication of *New Hope*, Blount County Children's Advocacy Center

Summer 2011

Still Going Strong

New Hope is a proud member of the National Children's Alliance, and as such, we must submit to a very thorough and rigorous accreditation process. In 2006, we became an official accredited member and are so pleased to announce that we have been reaccredited once again in June of this year.



Our preparation began last year with updates to our facility, including the family waiting area, playroom, forensic interview room and therapy space. Thanks to the design efforts of board member, Melinda Headrick with Chatham Interiors, our facelift was completed with pops of kid-friendly color and design throughout the building. Headrick said, "National reaccreditation meant New Hope was under the microscope on so many levels. Focus on the building and its interiors was one of them. I was thrilled that I could contribute my time, talents and resources at such a needed time. The abused kids of Blount County will forever be my favorite clients. I can think of no one more deserving of a warm, safe, and comforting space."

In addition to getting the office ready, we updated our policy and procedures for all service areas. Each staff member took the opportunity to analyze their discipline. Child and Family Advocate Jen Morgan said, "This was a good time to implement new ideas to better serve our clients. It was a lot of work, but the end product has been better relationships with our families and that is, after all, the center of our mission and purpose." The final result was a 5-inch binder filled with every detail of what we do at New Hope on a daily basis. The process culminated with a site review in April. The two visitors came from other CACs in other parts of the United States and found they were very pleased with what New Hope is doing here in Blount County. They presented their findings to the National Children's Alliance board in early June. Thanks to the joint efforts of the staff, Board of Directors and Child Protective Investigative Team, New Hope has been REACCREDITED for another 5 years!



NATIONAL CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE®

Senator Doug Overbey Receives National Honor

Community volunteer, advocate, statesman...New Hope has been privileged to enjoy the leadership, commitment and hard work of Kay and Doug Overbey since founded in 2000. Doug artfully volunteered Kay's service on the founding Board of Directors, and she later passed the baton back to him. One or both served on the New Hope Board for nine years...but the story of their investment in our community and children doesn't stop there.

Last year, Doug was nominated by New Hope and Safe Harbor CACs for the Legislator of the Year Award. Given annually by the Tennessee State Chapter of Child Advocacy Centers, this award is reserved for the legislator/statesman/advocate for children. During his many years of service as a Representative and now Senator, Doug has been an ardent supporter of children's issues, sponsoring legislation that protects children and ensures their optimal growth, development and education. A father of three daughters and a friend of children, he genuinely cares about our youth's futures and demonstrates this through his legislative service and leadership.

Following receipt of that award, New Hope and the Tennessee Chapter nominated Doug for the Bud Cramer Award. This annual award is given by the National Children's Alliance to an individual



who has demonstrated commitment and dedication to children through their extraordinary promotion of the Children's Advocacy Center model...someone who has moved the field forward through vision, leadership, and the ability to reach and motivate great numbers of people. Once again, the masses were in total agreement that Senator Doug Overbey was the person to be acknowledged with this award.

A bit of history on Bud Cramer...when Bud was the District Attorney General in Huntsville, Alabama, he had grown quite frustrated with the often impossible task of successfully prosecuting child sexual abuse cases. He turned those frustrations into action with his leadership in gathering the diverse disciplines who investigated these crimes and from their collaborative work, the CAC model emerged. This was the mid-1980s and needless to say, the growth has been tremendous! From that first CAC located in Huntsville to over 800 nationwide (and several developing in other countries around the globe), one can certainly begin to understand the prestige and importance of this award. Later serving that district in the U.S. House, Congressman Cramer was instrumental in securing funding for CAC services to children as well as funding to develop, pilot and implement

NCAtrak, a database utilized nationally to track and report on child abuse cases. Now retired, Bud Cramer continues to speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves.

So Doug, much like Bud, demonstrates support for the CAC mission, exhibits extraordinary leadership enhancing the CAC model, raises awareness of issues facing abused children and the CAC role in advocating for the best interests of the child and the community, and takes significant action to promote CACs beyond his own community, creating legislation, raising resources, improving practice...ensuring hope, healing, and protection for our community, our state and our nation's children.

And don't forget about Kay. She's come out of a short respite to join DCS once again (Kay worked on behalf of children when the state agency with responsibility was DHS). Commissioner O'Day has tagged Kay and challenged her with enhancing the Foster Care Review statewide system...we can't think of a more intelligent, competent and committed person to accomplish this than Kay Overbey!

Please join all at New Hope in our appreciation and thanks to Doug and Kay Overbey for the many ways they bring hope and healing to our children, families, community and state.

The Faces of Hope – Volunteer Spotlight



Each time the Summer Newsletter rolls around, I am tasked with picking our volunteer of the year award. This year, my job was made a bit easier because the entire Board of Directors unanimously voted for long-time

volunteer Shirley Huskey to receive our Inaugural Nediva Award. The word Nediva is a Hebrew name meaning noble and generous from the root word "nedivut" meaning giving of self, origin of the word volunteer. This award is representative of all that a volunteer embodies – passion for the mission, commitment and invaluable contribution. Shirley is all of these things and more. She has come to the center without fail each week for the past six years and helps to support families and staff alike while here. During my maternity leave, she took over QuickBooks so our Administrative Assistant could handle other things. This big undertaking was a BIG help to our staff. Although, this work pales in comparison to Shirley's interaction with the kids. When children are here waiting for their appointments, Shirley can be seen playing ponies in the toy room or rocking an infant. She is always very helpful, and her calming nature and soft spoken tone are comforting to the clients.

We can never return the blessings that Shirley has given us, but our utmost thanks and the offering of the Nediva Award are our very best efforts to show our appreciation to this wonderful volunteer!

With sincere appreciation,
~*Jen Morgan*, Volunteer Coordinator

Focus on Child Abuse Prevention & Awareness

We watch it on the news, hear stories about it from a friend of a friend: children who have been sexually abused. The common reaction is outrage, but often, this outrage does not manifest into action. For a fleeting moment, we express a reflexive emotion at the harm to an innocent child, but then move on with our lives. Perhaps we simply do not know how to channel this outrage into action. The remedy is adult education about child abuse, equipping adults with knowledge, and reinforcing that the responsibility is the adult's alone. Such is the mission of Darkness to Light, an international non-profit that provides adult education programs on how to "prevent, recognize and react responsibly to child sexual abuse."



New Hope has adopted the Darkness to Light 7 step training program and is now offering it within the community. Our goal is to reach over 5,000 local residents in the next 5 years. It might seem like a huge number, but we are already well on our way, and the outcome will be a decrease in child abuse in our community. Here is a brief overview of the 7 steps of Darkness to Light:

Step 1 revolves around establishing the relevance of child abuse statistics. Over 40 million adults were abused as children. One in four girls and one in six boys will be abused. Forty percent of sex offenders were victims as children. Ninety percent of the victims know the abuser. Step 2 begins to answer the question on how to reduce these numbers for the sake of our children by minimizing the opportunities for your child to be abused. Darkness to Light reports 80% of abuse occurs in one-child/one-adult situations, so parents should attempt to reduce circumstances in which their child is in a one-on-one situation with another adult. Further, adults should check that there are multiple adults who supervise children and who have been trained in child abuse prevention in youth-serving organizations and activities.

Both of these steps are helpful with organizations outside of the family, but the next two steps are specifically for the relationship between the parent/guardian and the child. As is true in any relationship, communication is key, so Step 3 is simply to "Talk about it." Fewer than 30% of parents talk about abuse with their children, creating communication barriers if a child is abused. Even without this barrier, effects of the abuse, such as shame, make it difficult for children to open up. Further, abusers may manipulate children and make them believe parents will be angry or that the abuse is the child's fault. It is imperative for parents to praise children for being open with them. Step 4 -staying alert- is also important for recognizing physical signs of abuse, including redness and swollenness of the genitalia and behavioral signs from "perfect" behavior to inexplicable emotions.

Just as important is knowing what to do when the unthinkable happens. Such is the purpose of Steps 5 and 6. Step 5 instructs adults not to overreact and to have a plan ahead of time. Overreaction can cause children to shut down or change their

story, which can prove detrimental both psychologically and legally. It is important to be supportive and to know which professional help to contact such as child protection services. Children's advocacy centers like New Hope are an invaluable resource as they will facilitate social, legal and medical services. However, none of this action is worthwhile unless adults report suspicions of abuse. Regardless of how much evidence one has, suspicions should always be reported. Have courage to report it. Resources such as the Child Abuse Hotline, 1-877-237-0004, have professionally trained staff to assist you in your questions and suspicions. Statistically, sex offenders have multiple victims, so your report could protect multiple children.

Step 7 of Darkness to Light's program is to get involved from volunteering at children's advocacy centers, financially supporting organizations that help victims, hosting educational seminars on abuse, and supporting legislation that protects children. All of these would aid the 39 million survivors of child abuse as well as to help reduce that number for future generations.

Hopefully, readers have benefited from this brief overview of Darkness to Light's education program, and we thank Darkness to Light for allowing us to use their materials. If you are interested in hosting a Darkness to Light seminar customized for your particular group or organization, please contact our Prevention Coordinator, Diane Darby at 865-981-2000.

Diane Darby's Refreshing Therapy Approach

We are so pleased to welcome therapist Diane Darby back to the team. Several years ago, Diane offered counseling services at our facility to adult sexual assault victims through Safe Haven (now named The Sexual Assault Crisis Center of East Tennessee). Now, we are thrilled to have her as a contracted therapist serving the children of New Hope.

Diane rejoined us in November of 2010 and now carries a full case load in addition to coordinating our Darkness to Light Training Program. While Diane is only with us 3 days a week, she has definitely impacted our therapy program in wonderful ways. Diane makes every effort to treat each client as an individual, and she and Clinical Director Tabitha Damron are pursuing avenues to offer play therapy in addition to their current Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy modality. Many of the play therapy techniques enhance parent and child involvement and allow for creative and imaginative play within the therapeutic realm. Through several generous donations and a grant from the Maryville College Bonner student group, the clinical program has been able to purchase new games, books, art supplies, dollhouse and furniture, sand tray and figurines, and other specific items related to the treatment of trauma in children. We look forward to having Diane with us for years to come as she and Tabitha continue their efforts to improve the outcome for child abuse victims in our area.



Upcoming Events and Fundraisers

Haunting Hope

October 29th at 7:00pm at House on the Hill
\$60 per person will include a killer Halloween costume party, heavy appetizers, drinks, and a howling good time! For an additional \$20, you may purchase a reverse raffle ticket for your chance to win \$2000 bones! Brought to you by our Grand Sponsor Clayton Homes.

Black Tie and Blue Jeans

November 19th at 6:30pm at Ruby Tuesday Lodge
Enjoy a five star evening with gourmet dinner, wine pairings and lively auctions. This event has been the highlight of the holiday season for years, so join New Hope at the Lodge for \$175 per person. Corporate tables are also available.

For additional information on these events visit www.blountkids.org or call 865-981-2000.

REPORT CHILD ABUSE – IT'S THE LAW

According to Tennessee law, **ALL** persons must report knowledge and suspicion regarding cases of child abuse and neglect. This includes family members and friends.

In Tennessee, if you have "reasonable cause to believe" a child is being abused or neglected you are required by law to report that suspicion to the state Department of Children's Services or law enforcement immediately. Failure to report is a misdemeanor.

Report your suspicions to the proper authorities. Keep in mind that not all reports meet the criteria for investigation. If you suspect additional abuse after the initial report has been made, report that as well.

As a mandated reporter you are protected by the state in terms of liability and confidentiality. Reporters who "act in good faith" are immune from any civil or criminal liability.

CALL 911 or any of the following:

DCS 24-HOUR TOLL FREE LINE

1-877-237-0004

ALCOA POLICE DEPARTMENT

865-981-4111

BLOUNT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

865-237-5000

MARYVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

865-237-8000

The Summer 2011 Newsletter was written and edited by
New Hope Staff, Volunteers, and Board Members

Stewards of Children Training

**September 15th
6-9pm**

FREE

Lawson Auditorium

Stewards of Children is the only nationally available program (provided by trained facilitators) scientifically proven to increase knowledge, improve attitudes and change child-protective attitudes. The training provides increased awareness of the prevalence, consequences and circumstances of child sexual abuse, new skills for adults to prevent, recognize, and react responsibly to child sexual abuse, proactive, positive change to organizational policies and procedures, and an individual commitment to action (D2L.org). Maryville College and New Hope Children's Advocacy Center will collaborate to provide training to those interested.

Please call 865-981-2000 if you plan to attend

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