

Child Advocate

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www.calhounprevention.org

The CAN Council Grants \$20,000 for Child Abuse Prevention Projects at Blue Tie Event

The CAN Council awarded seven organizations a total of \$20,000 to work with families and youth in an effort to prevent child abuse and promote positive parenting at the Blue Tie Event in April.

The agencies that received financial support included the following:

Calhoun County Foster Adoptive Parents Support Group: Meeting the support needs of foster and adoptive parents through a supportive forum, offered by Battle Creek Counseling Associates. \$1,500

Sexual Assault Services "Summer Fun Camp" for survivors of sexual abuse, includes counseling and activities which helps build trusting relationships. \$2,000

BC Careers: Parenting instruction and support for people employed by three Battle Creek companies. \$2,500

Calhoun County Sheriff's Department: An Apple Mac forensic computer that will catch internet criminals and prevent the exploitation of children via internet and social networking. \$2,500

Foster Adoptive Family Resource & Support Center: Respite child care to foster, adoptive and kinship care families, as well as families in the community who need child care due to a family crisis. \$3,000

Lutheran Social Services: Provides basic needs services to families with children unable to receive emergency aid services elsewhere in the community. \$3,500

The Haven: Comprehensive services to homeless women and children, including parenting classes, case management and life skills classes for children. \$5,000



Representatives of seven organizations were presented with checks to fund their very important programming at the CAN Council's sixth annual Blue Tie Event on April 17, 2009. The CAN Council puts thousands of dollars into direct services for Calhoun County families each year.

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Family Birth Center

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President's Corner



**By Stephanie Edwards,
Board President**

Wow how time flies. April has come and gone and we are now in the midst of planning our 2nd Annual Family Fun Ride at Fell Park. Summer is here, children out of school playing and running through the streets. Hopefully it will be a safe summer for all.

Our Blue Tie Event was a huge success. Many thanks to the Battle Creek Country Club for allowing us to hold our event in their beautiful club house. We seemed to have our largest crowd yet with 154 in attendance and over \$10,000 raised. Thank you to those that attended the event and/or donated items. Without the support of our community, we would not be able to support all of the wonderful organizations that strive to end child abuse in Calhoun County.

Also I want to give a huge THANK YOU to our wonderful CAN Council Board of Directors. Without the tireless effort to get donations (or make baskets, etc.) we couldn't have pulled off the event. I also want to thank the Albion College Kappa Deltas (for donating over \$4,000), the Pennfield Exchange Club, and our wonderful emcee, Jen Delaney for donating their time to help at the Blue Tie Event.

As the saying goes: "Keep moving forward" so here we find ourselves planning the 2nd Annual Family Fun Ride at Fell Park in the fall. This event is our opportunity to reach out to the community by offering a fun, free event for families. At this event we, as a Council, get the word out to end child abuse and neglect. We provide information for the parents, give-aways and games for the kids, and encourage quality family time for all. Last year it was a huge success and we hope to reach even more families this year. We welcome donations, volunteers and other organizations to bring information and tables to distribute to attendees.

Please remember that anyone can be a member of the CAN Council. If you are interested, or want to learn more about our organization, please visit www.calhounprevention.org for more information.

The CAN Council

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Family Fun Ride

Our effort to reach out to children and families

Last year, the CAN Council was inspired to hold a fun family event after four children were tragically killed in child abuse cases in 2007. The event was so successful that we decided to have it again. Fell Park in Urbandale offers a wonderful location, with a nice, wooded park away from traffic, a large play structure, and running water bathrooms.

The event went so well there was no question that we'd have it again this year. An estimated 250 people came for the event in 2008. The children were eager to play, eat hot dogs and ice cream, and enjoy the day. Parents were receptive to our messages and educational materials on positive parenting.

But YOU can help us! Please fill out the form below if you can provide any of the following:

- **Cash donation:** Attendees to the event receive free educational materials, hot dogs, ice cream, drinks and entertainment. Your donation will go toward this event instead of the CAN Council's general fund.
- **Volunteers:** We need volunteers to monitor the crowds, including keeping children safe from cars entering the park as well as monitoring them while they're playing to keep them safe.
- **Donations:** if your business can spare gift certificates or merchandise, they make great gifts for raffles/drawings.



The Event

Sunday, September 20, 2009
2-4 p.m.

Raindate: September 27th
(same time)

Fell Park, Urbandale

Free Food
(Hot dogs, chips, ice cream)

Giveaways
Positive Parenting Information
Games for the Kids
Raffle to win basketball hoop &
bikes!

Yes! I want to help with the Family Fun Ride to support positive parenting in Calhoun County.

Cash Donation. Please accept my donation of \$_____.

Volunteer. I want to donate my time to this worthwhile event.

Donate. My business has items that would make good raffle/drawing prizes.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Car Seats for Case Management

The CAN Council presented area agencies with two dozen car seats to help transport clients as part of their case management programs.

Family & Children Services, the Department of Human Services, Lutheran Social Services and Community Action Agency all received new, safe car seats to use in agency vehicles.

The car seat grants mark the end of several years of CAN Council involvement in Car Seat safety. Twice a year, the CAN Council held car seat safety checks and gave free car seats to the needy. However, the help of law enforcement is needed in this endeavor, and staffing issues with local law enforcement have made it impossible to have officers on hand to safely install car seats.

Nevertheless, we still feel good about putting these car seats to use. Families and children will benefit from them for years to come, and caseworkers will have safe seats to transport their clients. It's good to know that even though we can no longer provide car seats, we have partnerships with agencies that work closely with vulnerable citizens, and we're happy to help in that way.

— *Karmel Puzzuoli*



*Ted Lindberg (F&CS), NiChole Reynolds (CAA), Trish Harris (LSS) and Larry Sonicksen from DHS line up to receive car seats presented by State Trooper and former CAN Board member George Lehman.
Photo by Loreli Cobb.*

How to be a friend of children and youth

1. Be a role model. Children are watching you. They will learn from what you do, not what you say.
2. Reach out to a child. A smile or a word of encouragement can mean a lot, whether it comes from a parent or a passing stranger.
3. Reach out to a parent. Remember that all parents, rich and poor, want the same things for their children – a home, education, and a chance to succeed.
4. Keep an eye on local and national policy decisions that affect children. Find out who's for kids and who's just kidding, and elect officials who put caring into action.
5. Encourage parents and other people who care about kids to register and vote. Set up voter registration booths in schools, day care centers, clinics, wherever people gather.
6. Make your neighborhood an extended family. Organize a block party, a family clean-up day, or a neighborhood watch. Be sure to include people of all ages.
7. Write letters to the editor applauding people who help children and families. Blow the whistle on those who hurt them.
8. Make your workplace family friendly. Form a parents' support group; campaign for onsite day care; promote corporate contributions to your community schools and recreation programs.
9. Volunteer. Child welfare agencies, churches and temples, schools, recreation centers, children's hospitals, and other organizations need capable, caring adults to work with children.
10. Support the CAN Council and other organizations who work in primary prevention.

from www.cwla.org

Meet Our New Board Members!

We are honored to have these wonderful professionals join our cause of fighting for the children of Calhoun County!

DANNIELLE KOSTRAB-BOYD, LMSW has been a therapist at Sexual Assault Services of Calhoun County since 1998. She received her Bachelor of Social Work degree from Eastern Michigan University and her Master of Social Work degree from Western Michigan University. She works with individuals, families and has co-facilitated various groups, including children, teen, adult survivor, and non-offending parent support groups. She has extensive training in forensic interviewing and in the past, has volunteered her time as a forensic interviewer for the Child Advocacy Center. Dannielle has a strong commitment to advocating for children and helping to create safety in their lives. She believes the CAN Council is critical in helping to prevent child abuse and neglect in our community and is proud to be a part of such a dedicated and caring organization. Dannielle is married and has 3 wonderful children.

SUSAN FERGUSON is the Clinical Director at S.A.F.E. Place, the domestic violence service provider for Calhoun, Eaton, and Barry Counties. She has been working in human services for 16 years. She has a Bachelor's in Psychology from Indiana State University and a Master's in Counseling from Liberty University. She lives in Albion with her husband, Rod, and two kids, Alex and Eric, ages 15 and 10. Susan is currently working on a Masters in Business at Western Michigan University.

RENAE RIVERA is a Registered Nurse at the Family Birth Center at Battle Creek Health System. She has been a nurse for 3 years. Her husband Luis is a Deputy for the Calhoun County Sheriff's Department. They have four children: Taylor (15), Kyle (13), Isabela (3) and Gabriela (1). She says, "I joined the CAN Council Board because this group is a positive influence in our community and because, in my job, it's important for us to educate our new parents. This group is certainly a great wealth of knowledge and information that we can in turn pass on to our patients! I'm very excited to be a part of this group and look forward to helping with our upcoming activities!"

ELISHAE JOHNSON, MA, LLPC is Community Educator/Therapist at Sexual Assault Services of Calhoun County, and backup child forensic interviewer for the Child Advocacy Center of Sexual Assault Services. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies from the University of Michigan in 2002, Master of Arts in Counseling from Spring Arbor University in 2006, and is currently a Ph.D candidate at Walden University in Counseling Psychology. She is currently a psychology intern at Psychological Consultants of Michigan, providing substance abuse and general mental health treatment. Elishae began as a counseling intern and victim advocate at Sexual Assault Services in 2005. As Community Educator she provides education and awareness presentations throughout the county to all age groups on sexual abuse prevention, sexual harassment, dating violence, influence of music and media on sexual attitudes and beliefs, and other issues pertaining to sexual assault. She is an active member of the Women of Color Institute of the Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, Teen Pregnancy Prevention Partnership, Sexual Assault Domestic Violence Coordinating Council, Supporting Those Oppressed by Prostitution (S.T.O.P.), Coalition for Inclusion, and other support service agencies. As a therapist, she provides individual, group, and family therapy.

Photos of the Blue Tie Event are available on our website. Special thanks to Deanna Flora of Flora Fotografia for taking pictures at this event. www.florafotography.com.

Thank you to Tony Geigle for continuing to help with our website: www.calhounprevention.org

Much appreciation goes out to all of our auction donors and those in attendance, including the Battle Creek Boychoir, Jen Delaney (emcee), the Pennfield Exchange Club and the CAN Board of Directors. Without you, our work wouldn't be possible.

**Welcome to
our new board members!**

**The Calhoun
Child Abuse/Neglect**



Prevention Council
16 E. Van Buren
Battle Creek, MI 49017-3916



Children's Trust Fund
Protecting Michigan's Children

**Family Fun Ride Sept. 20th
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Child Abuse Presentation in Dominican Republic

By Paula Manley

For the past 19 years, sometimes twice a year, I have traveled to Haiti or the Dominican Republic on mission trips. This past April I was part of a team including a pediatrician from Texas and nursing instructor from the University of North Texas who gave an in-service to staff of International Child Care in Santiago, Dominican Republic. I was asked to present Understanding Child Abuse and Helping Parents Cope with the Stress of Parenting Special Needs Children.

I spent three hours that afternoon speaking to 40 supervisors who work in programs with developmentally delayed children in the barrios. It was most interesting

to speak through an interpreter as one must keep sentences simple and pause for the translation. These women traveled from all over the area by public transportation to attend. A nursing group in Texas had



Paula Manley, middle, prepares to speak about child abuse to an audience in the Dominican Republic.

donated money to provide a lunch and bus money for the attendees.

Initially I was surprised that the director had chosen child abuse as a topic as I was not certain how the issue was dealt with in that culture.

I discovered in my research that the Dominican Republic has laws similar to ours to protect children. These women were attentive, sharing concerns they have for children and the frustrations they encounter in the work. One woman revealed she had been molested as a child and how that had affected her relationships as an adult. It was very evident that day that protecting children is a world wide concern.