



TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAIR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	3
WHO WE ARE	4
OUR SERVICES	6
OUR IMPACT	8
STATEWIDE EVENTS	10-17
TRAININGS LEGISLATIVE	18



2020 proved to be a challenging year for everyone during a worldwide pandemic with so many unknowns. It was during this time that the New York State Children's Alliance (NYSCA) staff

members proved their dedication by providing ongoing technical assistance to our 46-member Child Advocacy Centers statewide.

As a CAC Director, I remember sitting in my office alone wondering what I was supposed to do as COVID-19 restrictions continued to change on a daily basis. It was then that I joined a peer support call and cannot even begin to explain how supportive these calls were during a time when things were so unpredictable. It's reassuring to know that the NYSCA staff is always available to provide guidance and support to our member Child Advocacy Centers across the state.

As the NYSCA Board Chair, I am amazed by the intense work that the board members put towards updating the strategic plan and setting more clearer and defined priorities inline with the ever-changing environmental conditions.

As we move forward in 2021, please know that the NYSCA Board of Directors is a dedicated and passionate group of individuals who are working diligently to continue to support the mission and goals of NYSCA, our membership and all the children of New York State.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kristen Beard".

Kristen Beard, NYSCA Board Chair



As we reflect back on 2020, one word comes to mind: Superheroes—a person who does heroic deeds and has the ability to do them in a way that a normal person could not. A superhero is an exceptionally skillful or

successful person. There were many superheroes in 2020, people who do this difficult work who deserve our gratitude.

The multidisciplinary team members of the Child Advocacy Centers continued to provide support and services to abused children in creative ways, yet always mindful of safety concerns. They worked with skeleton and remote staff, provided victim advocacy by phone, offered tele-health and tele-medicine services, while always meeting the highest of standards.

With schools shut down and remote learning becoming the new norm, parents and kids became superheroes. Parents had to learn to work from home and become teachers while kids showed tremendous resiliency learning to "attend" school online.

The NYSCA board of directors – many of them as CAC directors not only supported their CAC, but also supported NYSCA staff and the entire statewide membership with "super professionalism." As a sounding board for us, they always were recognizing how our priorities shifted in 2020 and helped in any way that they could.

For me, the NYSCA team members are all superheroes. Pre-pandemic, we had all kinds of plans for 2020. It was the organization's 10th anniversary, and we were excited to celebrate this milestone. But in the blink of an eye, our work shifted. This amazing staff quickly went into high gear to support the CACs in every way they could. Between creating numerous resources, booking virtual trainings, providing individualized technical assistance and huddle calls, they were also someone to lean on for both CACs as well as for each other. There were exhausting days keeping up with "normal" work, while working feverishly on everything that we could do for our membership. They are truly super to me.

As we begin 2021, we hope for a better, safer and healthier year for everyone. We could not have done it without all of you—the superheroes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linda Cleary".

Linda Cleary, NYSCA Executive Director

WHO WE ARE

The New York State Children’s Alliance, Inc. is a 46-member organization serving 60 counties and 6 tribal nations.

We are committed to improving the community response to children and families impacted by abuse.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the New York State Children’s Alliance, Inc. (NYSCA) is to promote the development, growth and continuation of Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs) and Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) throughout New York state in order to provide healing and justice to abused and neglected children and their families.

OUR VALUES

We will work tirelessly to realize our vision by drawing on our values.

- Children deserve to be safe from abuse
- Communities are where our work will, and should, have the greatest impact
- Respect for all is paramount in everything that we do
- Leadership builds change that lasts, and lasts through change

NYSCA serves as a unified voice advocating in the best interest of our membership at the local, state and national levels on matters related to child abuse and childhood trauma.

SERVING THE COUNTIES OF:

Albany	Herkimer	Richmond
Allegany	Jefferson	Rockland
Bronx	Kings	Saratoga
Broome	Lewis	Schenectady
Cattaraugus	Madison	Schoharie
Cayuga	Monroe	Schulyer
Chautauqua	Montgomery	Seneca
Chemung	Nassau	Steuben
Chenango	New York	St. Lawrence
Clinton	Niagara	Suffolk
Columbia	Oneida	Sullivan
Cortland	Onondaga	Tioga
Dutchess	Ontario	Tompkins
Erie	Orleans	Ulster
Essex	Orange	Warren
Franklin	Oswego	Washington
Fulton	Otsego	Wayne
Genesee	Putnam	Westchester
Greene	Queens	Wyoming
Hamilton	Rensselaer	Yates

OUR TEAM

NYSCA STAFF

- Linda Cleary**
Executive Director
- Clare Robinson-Henrie**
Director of Statewide Programming
- William Starliper**
Finance Director
- Patricia Maio Mullin**
Communications & Marketing Coordinator
- Jami Bolton**
Education & Training Coordinator
- John Kelly**
MDT Enhancement Coordinator
- Tebo Cossa**
Professional Development & Data Specialist

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Kristen Beard** Board Chair
Richard Neal Board Vice Chair
Kathy Colgan Secretary
Joshua Hanson Treasurer
- Nancy Arnow
Safe Horizon
- Stephen P. Forrester, Esq
Community Volunteer
- Kimberly Haight
The Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse
- David Mann
Buffalo Police Department
- Luanne Mansfield
Three Brothers Wineries and Estates
- Joseph Muroff
Office of the District Attorney, Bronx County
- Michael Polenber
Safe Horizon
- Deb Rosen
Bivona Child Advocacy Center
- Ann Marie Tucker
Community Volunteer

I think a hero is an ordinary individual who finds strength to persevere and endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles.

—SUPERMAN



OUR SERVICES

A comprehensive investigation is initiated with each new case of abuse referred to a Child Advocacy Center. With the safety and protection of the child as its highest priority, a highly skilled team including advocates, forensic interviewers, law enforcement, child protective services, prosecutors, medical and mental health professionals assess each case with sensitivity and care.

19, 984 CHILDREN HAVE SHARED THEIR EXPERIENCES OF ABUSE WITH NYS CA MEMBERS IN 2020.

10,812 FORENSIC INTERVIEWS

Specially trained Forensic Interviewers work with the MDT to ensure victims are not interviewed unnecessarily and allow them to do so in a safe, legally sound and neutral setting.

29,360 VICTIM ADVOCACY

CACs stand in the gap for the healing of child abuse victims, focusing on reduced trauma for the child. Victim Advocates provide resources, support and training with a compassionate, listenieng ear, so that each child gets the care they deserve.

3,358 MEDICAL EXAMS

A medical exam, similar to a pediatrician’s check-up, may be offered to a child to determine the nature and extent of the abuse. These exams provide the team with valuable information to prosecute the offender and help the child heal.

3,590 MENTAL HEALTH CARE

Each child and their family are offered specialized evidence-based, trauma-focused, mental health services, proven to be effective in coping with the trauma of sexual and physcial abuse.

WHO WE SERVE

One in every 10 children in New York state will be a victim of sexual abuse by their 18th birthday. The New York State Children’s Alliance exists to change the numbers listed below and lead the fight against the cycle of child abuse through a stronger, more approachable model.

SEX	
FEMALE	62%
MALE	38%

AGE	
0-6 YRS OLD	35%
7-12 YRS OLD	40%
13+ YRS OLD	25%

TYPES OF ABUSE	
SEXUAL	64%
PHYSICAL	24%
NEGLECT	12%
WITNESS TO VIOLENCE	4%
OTHER	3%
DRUG ENDANGERED	2%

ETHNICITY	
CAUCASIAN	38%
BLACK	21%
LATINO	17%
BI-RACIAL	7%
ASIAN	2%
UNDISCLOSED	15%

You are going to make a difference. A lot of times it won't be huge,
it won't be visible even. But it will matter just the same.
—COMMISSIONER JAMES GORDON



OUR IMPACT ACROSS THE STATE

The Outcome Measurement System (OMS) helps CACs define their successes in serving children and families while helping them benchmark their progress against the work of a nationwide movement. CACs use the OMS program to demonstrate the value of the work CACs provide to children and families and the success of the CAC model in the eyes of the partners that make it possible.

The OMS gives families and team members a voice in the CAC process, which in turn allows Centers to demonstrate their success and find areas for improvement.

I believe my child felt safe at the Center. 97.6% AGREE	I was given information about possible behaviors I might expect from my child in the days and weeks ahead. 89.4% AGREE
When I came to the Center, my child and I were greeted and received attention in a very timely manner. 99.4% AGREE	The staff members at the Center were friendly and pleasant. 99.5% AGREE
My questions were answered to my satisfaction. 98.4% AGREE	After our visit at the Center, I feel I know what to expect with the situation facing my child & me. 94.4% AGREE
The process for the interview of my child at the Center was clearly explained to me. 97.8% AGREE	The Center staff provided me with resources too. 96.3% AGREE

HERE’S WHAT CAC CLIENTS ARE SAYING:

- “Thank you for making my child still comfortable through this situation.”
- “Thank you for guiding us through this overwhelming situation.”
- “It was a wonderful experience despite the reason for the visit.”
- “The CAC is amazing and has amazing people. They make my child feel very comfortable.”
- “I didn’t know this place existed until we needed it. It really made everything less overwhelming.”

OUR 2020 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

REVENUE:		EXPENSES:	
Government Grants	796,730.63	Administrative	70,370.51
Membership Dues	10,875.00	Program Service	721,089.42
Donations and Fundraising	22,763.38		
TOTAL REVENUE	830,369.01	TOTAL EXPENSES	791,459.93





Each year, NYSCA’s Leadership Conference brings together almost two hundred professionals to participate in workshops to increase their knowledge and skills, network with their peers from across the state, enjoy beautiful Saratoga Springs, and have some fun. The 2020 conference, however, didn’t happen the way it was planned. One of the key words in 2020 was “virtual” and that’s exactly how the conference took place.

Over 225 individuals attended the one-day virtual conference on October 5th, thanks to Zoom! The keynote, and closing, was presented by Françoise Mathieu, CEO of TEND, an organization that offers training and education on compassion fatigue, trauma and vicarious trauma. Her keynote, The Edge of Compassion – Staying Well While Working in High Stress, Trauma-Exposed Environments was a huge hit.

Twelve workshops were offered throughout the day on topics such as Post Trial Advocacy, Cultural Humility and Responsiveness, Clinical Interviewing Strategies for Children and Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder, How to Survive Cross Examination for Forensic Interviewers, and Enhancing Student Safety During a Pandemic. Additionally, two case studies were presented by our CACs.

Loved all of the topics and thought they were timely, informative and engaging.

Well done! Very interesting and I was able to stay engaged for the entire presentation.

The information was current. I didn’t feel like I was listening to presentations that I had heard many times before.

Having the opportunity to learn relevant material in a virtual, safe, way.

That it was still held even in this uncertain time. All the information was very helpful, and I am happy the Conference was still carried out.

I liked all the mental health and leadership topic areas. And am so appreciative we could have it, even virtually!


Knowing that I was able to provide the learning opportunity to multiple MDT members - the variety of topics and the fantastic keynote speaker.


Variety of topics and quality of presenters.


I learned a lot! I found each session engaging and that each presenter genuinely loves their jobs and is passionate about this work.


Excellent job, especially under these circumstances. I generally am skeptical of online programs. This was very well done.


Congratulations! Great job! This is really hard to pull off virtually and you did an amazing job!!



Françoise Mathieu



Lawrence Braunstein



Robert Peters

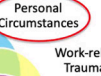

Jane Straub






Socio-Cultural Context

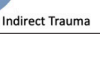

Working conditions



Systems Failure



Personal Circumstances



Work-related Traumatic Grief/Loss


Direct Exposure


Indirect Trauma


NYSCA LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE


2020 Case Study



A woman with long brown hair, wearing a white long-sleeved shirt, is sitting on a white sofa. In front of her, a young child with light brown hair, wearing a red jacket and blue jeans, is lying on a beige shaggy rug, looking intently at a tablet computer. To the right of the child is a red and blue rocket-shaped water bottle. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day indoors.

That's half of being a hero. noticing things.

Noticing. and not being afraid.

—MS. MARVEL

10

11



The pandemic brought many challenges for Child Advocacy Centers. One of those was the cancellation of so many fundraising events and the loss of much needed dollars that CACs count on. At the suggestion of the Cortland County Child Advocacy Center, NYSCA created a virtual 5K run/walk to support Centers across the state. The event was an opportunity for CACs to raise some funds with minimal work. Nineteen CACs participated in the event, raising over \$28,000.

Participants in the virtual One Too Many NY 5K selected any day between September 17th-20th to run/walk, selected any time, and selected any route – their neighborhood, favorite park or even their treadmill. A total of 800 people participated to support the work of our member CACs.

Statewide Awards were given for the Best Time, Best Celebration, Best Decorated Bib, "I'm A Superhero", "Dogs Need a 5K Too", and Best View on the Run. NYSCA also gave a pizza party to the Child Advocacy Center that had the most participants, with the Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse in Poughkeepsie, NY, taking the prize with over 150 runners.

*"This was such a great event!
We appreciate NYSCA organizing the event,
which took so much work off of the CACs."*

*"We were able to bring in runners and health
advocates that had not engaged with us
previously that now know about our mission."*

*"We thought it was a great event, and
we can't wait to take part again in 2021!"*

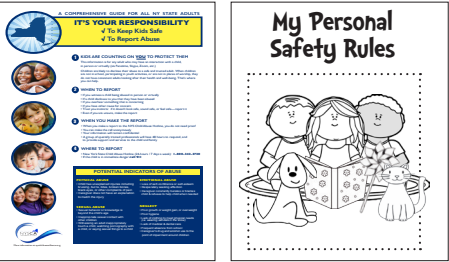
One Child Abused is One Too Many



What a Year It Was! Saying that 2020 was an unusual year would certainly be an understatement. NYSCA's mission is to support Child Advocacy Centers with trainings, resources and individualized technical assistance. NYSCA staff worked non-stop to develop resources for CACs that supported the tremendous work they continued to do during the pandemic.

Here is just a glimpse at some of the resources created in 2020:

- A COVID-19 resource page on our website
- “If you see something, say something” bookmarks in both English and Spanish
- “We Wear Masks for the Kids” posters in English, Spanish and Chinese
- Virtual Platform Protocols
- Press releases to promote that CACs were open during the pandemic
- “Considerations for Reopening during COVID” manual
- Family Resources page
- Mandated Reporter Information sheets and Adult information sheets
- Going to Court coloring book and My Personal Safety Rules coloring book in English and Spanish



Huddle Calls:

Working from home, reduced staffing at the CACs, and virtual meetings and trainings all led to a new way of communicating. The ability to connect with peers across the state to see how others were navigating this new norm became tremendously important. Due to this need, the “Huddle” was developed.



Zoom calls with other MDT members became a lifeline for many. In March, NYSCA started holding Huddle calls for CAC leaders, Victim Advocates and Mental Health Clinicians.

In 2020, NYSCA held:

- 29 Leadership Huddle calls
- 20 Victim Advocacy Huddle calls
- 35 Mental Health Huddle calls

New Database Unveiled:

In 2019, NYSCA embarked on a search for a new statewide database for Child Advocacy Centers that would collect more thorough data for the NY State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS.) An ad hoc committee of CAC leaders researched different systems, demos, and ultimately selected Collaborate by Network Ninja. The export and migration of data from forty-six CACs took place in 2020.

Just as the COVID-19 pandemic was shutting down life as everyone knew it, Collaborate was ready to launch! CACs did an amazing job with the switch over to a new system, participated in webinars and trainings, and began navigating through the database working to continually improve the system.

Our member CACs can now rely on this system of collected data for funding, public policy efforts, gaps in service, and so much more.

A true hero isn't measured by the size of his strength.

but by the size of his heart.

—HERCULES



Child Abuse Prevention Month:

A chapter toolkit was created for our Child Advocacy Center members complete with ideas, guidelines and marketing materials to help create awareness throughout the month of April. The materials could be used to call attention to the good work each CAC is doing in their community to educate people about the crisis of child abuse and neglect, and at the same time highlight the work they do everyday to support and help heal hurting children and their families.

The toolkit could be used in its entirety, in part, or simply for inspiration. Among the ideas presented were: media tips, a sample press release, PSAs, social media graphics and other resources. This new resource helped CACs welcome April as the perfect time to inform and encourage individuals to engage in various activities including Wear Blue Day and purchasing pinwheels to create awareness and make a difference.



NYSCA Website:

As NYSCA's membership grew, so was the need to update, refresh and restyle our website. We needed to incorporate a lot of new information for the general public and create expanded resources for our statewide membership.



Medical Workgroup: In 2020, we built on the successes of our 2018 Medical Summit by partnering with OCFS to develop and facilitate a Medical Workgroup comprised of nurses and physicians actively working in the field. These providers come from across the State, bring their expertise to develop strategies to address the dire shortage of qualified medical professionals who can provide quality and compassionate services to abused children. The group met four times during the year to discuss the landscape of providers currently operating across the state, training opportunities for physicians and nurses, regional programs and most importantly the specific needs that must be met to ensure that any child alleged to have been abused gets a timely medical exam. The group identified needs that include preceptorship opportunities for those wishing to pursue a SANE-P certification, retention of providers, outreach to stakeholders and of course funding. The work continues into 2021 as the group tackles preceptorships and an educational campaign for hospitals to improve emergent responses to acute child sexual abuse cases.

Regional Meetings: Unfortunately, we had to cancel our first round of Regional Meetings in Spring 2020, but we quickly pivoted to virtual for all regions in the Fall. In total five meetings were held with our OCFS partners during which our members discussed topics as wide ranging as case de-briefings, implicit bias, remote case review and NCA funding.



Virtual Trainings:

In-person trainings for CAC/MDT members came to a halt in early 2020. NYSCA quickly re-grouped, started researching virtual trainings and put a focus on the impact working remotely had on everyone. In 2020, NYSCA held 16 trainings, reaching over 1,300 professionals. Mental Health Clinicians were trained in EMDR and TF-CBT models. Victim Advocate trainings included topics such as Motivational Interviewing, Microaggressions and Implicit Bias and the Ethical Advocate.

In April and May of 2020 NYSCA was pleased to offer training opportunities to our members provided by TEND Academy. All of these trainings were presented by Françoise Mathieu, a favorite trainer among many. Her engaging, casual, and relatable style of presenting translated easily into the virtual world, and the feedback showed! Attendance at these trainings was incredible, showing the need for support as CACs navigated a new norm: Dealing with Stress and Uncertainty, Working Remotely and Maintaining a Community, A Steady Hand at the Helm: How to be an effective leader during times of crisis and uncertainty, and Organizational Health in Trauma Exposed Environments.

- 16 statewide trainings were offered throughout the year by NYSCA
- 1,314 MDT members received training utilizing Chapter supported funds
- 75 professionals participated in the “Working Remotely” training by TEND Academy
- 53 Victim Advocates participated in a Motivational Interviewing training



I think the information given was good and related to many of the things that we are all dealing with during these times.

Thank you so much for putting these trainings together and to the wonderful presenter.

I absolutely enjoy these trainings. They are very relatable and it gives me clarity about my own feelings and a sense of professional normalcy.

I can see how everyone is on the same boat.



Public Policy:

In 2020, NYSCA staff, Board and Members took to the halls of the NYS Capital Building and Zoom to meet with State and Federal policymakers. In January, NYSCA staff met with three NYS Assembly Members to discuss our Public Policy Priorities such as giving independent CACs the ability to run SCR background checks on prospective employees. In February, we teamed up with Safe Horizon for a Budget Advocacy Day in Albany, during which we met with five NYS Senators to encourage them to support our legislative add-on. And lastly, in September NYSCA staff and members met with U.S. Representative Chris Jacobs as part of the 2020 Virtual Hill Day.

In the Spring of 2020, we made a special educational appeal to NYS Legislators to address the distressing drop in child abuse reporting as the first lockdowns went into effect. Throughout the year, we supported the NCA's efforts to try to pass the VOCA Fix.



You are much stronger than you think you are.

Trust me.

—SUPERMAN



Creating a Better Response Across New York State

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES | PROVIDING SUPPORT | RESTORING HOPE

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Office of
Victim Services



Office of Children
and Family Services