

OUR MISSION: REPAIR the damage done to child sexual abuse victims and their families, **REDUCE** the risk of re-victimization, and **PREVENT** the cycle of abuse from carrying over into future generations.

May, 2011
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INSIDE

Introducing
Therapist
Sarah Ascienzo

Sibling Incest,
Part Two

Girls' Group
Newspaper

Val Macri-Lind
Award



UPCOMING EVENTS
(Details on
last page)

ArtThrives!
July 29, 2011
Fort Collins Country
Club



Quilt Raffle
Rocky Mountain
Quilt Festival
The Ranch
August 21, 2011

Tees Fore Two Golf
Tournament
Fort Collins Country
Club
September 12, 2011

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AND COUNTING



As we move through our 25th year of existence, something becomes apparent to me. Every day the Fort Collins Coloradoan contains at least one news story about a child in our community who has been sexually abused. Many days there are two or three stories. ChildSafe served 502 clients in 2010 alone. Clearly our community is not immune from child sexual abuse.

Under the guidance of ChildSafe's amazing Clinical Director Val Macri-Lind, all ChildSafe therapists utilize best practice methods of treatment. ChildSafe never provides a cookie-cutter approach to treatment; rather, each client is treated in a way that is most likely to lead to a successful, healthy outcome. Many variables can affect how quickly a child heals. These include family support as well as the extent and length of abuse.

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network states, "Each child's treatment depends on the nature, timing, and amount of exposure to a trauma. Some children may not be ready immediately to talk about their trauma, and therapists must move at a speed that a child can tolerate. But talking about the trauma with a skilled therapist has been a critical ingredient in treatments that have been studied scientifically and shown to be effective."

ChildSafe looks forward to another 25 years of helping children, families and adult survivors of child sexual abuse utilizing best-practice methods of treatment from caring, compassionate, dedicated professionals.

Jane Bradley, Executive Director

POSITIVE RESULTS FOR CHILDSAFE CLIENTS:

"I have learned that the abuse was not my fault, and by other girls sharing their stories, I have learned to trust again." (Age 8)

"I'm not so angry and I can see some kind of light in my future." (Teen)

"I can smile at myself again and be happy with who I am. I was very depressed at first, and now I'm happy and coming out of my shell." (Teen)

"I've noticed a dramatic difference in my children since they started their counseling at ChildSafe. They are much calmer, smile more often, and express affection more freely. I've learned valuable parenting skills that help me deal with some challenging behaviors. ChildSafe has been a great support and resource in a difficult time." (Parent)

"Incredibly helpful...the Love and Logic course, support groups, the resources available. ChildSafe has been so great about providing information." (Parent)



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MEET THERAPIST SARAH ASCIENZO



Sarah Ascienzo brings both training and varied experience to her role as play therapist for clients at ChildSafe. The Washington, D.C. native earned her undergraduate degree in psychology at James Madison University. After graduation, she worked with AmeriCorps for a year on the Wind River Indian Reservation in Wyoming, mostly with the Head Start Program. She remained in the area for another two years as a case worker with Youth Services of Fremont County, where her clients, ten years and older, were involved in juvenile court cases.

Sarah received her Master's Degree in Social Work in 2005 from CSU. During her first year of study, she worked at Laurel Elementary School and interned at a community-based outpatient treatment program for sex offenders, giving her a perspective for the "other side of the fence of child sexual abuse cases." Her second year of internship was with the Child Advocacy Center working primarily doing forensic interviews. She remained with the Center for five years before deciding she wanted more clinical work. "I heard the stories, but I wasn't able to do anything about helping the children." Sarah transitioned into her job at ChildSafe in 2009 and became a full time therapist in 2010.

Seeing a child go from being hurt to being empowered is her greatest joy, but accepting that sometimes she can't overcome circumstances to put other children in a safe place is her deepest sadness.

"Through play therapy, the children move forward in their treatment by experiencing rather than talking, healing in a safe place," Sarah explains. She heals herself by practicing yoga and spending time in the outdoors.

**Effective Therapeutic Intervention for Victims of Sibling Incest
Newsletter Series: Sibling Incest, Part Two Sarah Ascienzo**

The focus of treatment for sibling incest survivors includes many components. First and foremost, these children must begin to feel safe enough to explore their thoughts and feelings about the abuse. The child will be unable to work through the underlying trauma if the child is not feeling safe—physically or emotionally.

Victims of sibling incest are left traumatized; the abuse is often shrouded in secrets and manipulation, leaving these children with inaccurate thoughts about the abuse. These misperceptions are formed at times of important developmental growth, furthering their impact and significance. Sexually abused children also frequently experience psychological symptoms such as anxiety and depression. To manage what they are experiencing internally, children often act out behaviorally, resulting in issues at home and school.

In therapy, the child will learn more effective coping skills to mitigate the effects of the abuse, skills as simple as learning how to breathe correctly, but also including relaxation techniques, EMDR resourcing, creating better outlets for strong emotions, and increasing affect tolerance and regulation.

The child will also process the trauma from the abuse. Depending on the needs and developmental level of the child, this can be done in a variety of ways, including experiential play therapy, EMDR, trauma-focused cognitive-behavioral therapy, and group therapy.

Through therapy the child will begin to correct inaccurate thoughts, develop an understanding of healthy relationships and boundaries, and develop a stronger sense of self. This will help the child to stop the cycle of abuse from carrying over into future generations.



Girls' Group Newspaper

Advice for Kids by Girls Who Know

Unfortunately, sexual abuse is happening to kids in our community. If you're being abused, don't think that you are the only one. There are other kids out there who know what you're going through.

The first thing you should do is tell someone you trust that you are being abused. It's important to tell right away so that you won't be getting molested again and again.

Sometimes kids are scared and feel like they might be in trouble if they tell. But you won't be in trouble if you tell, because you haven't done anything wrong. And it's not your fault that you're being molested. It's not right for anyone to molest you—ever.

Sometimes you might like and trust the person who is molesting you. Maybe you have a lot of fun with this person (when they aren't molesting you) and you might feel like this person is your friend. You may even feel like this person really cares for you. Or you might miss them when they aren't around. But even if all of this is true, you still need to tell someone about what they are doing to you, because they have no right to molest you.

If you tell someone about what is happening to you and they don't believe you, keep telling other people who you trust until someone does believe you.



Advice for Parents...by Kids Who Know



Parents, if your child comes to you and tells you they are being molested...**BELIEVE THEM!** Listen to whatever your child has to say, but don't talk about the abuse if your child doesn't want to talk to you about it.

Please don't tell everyone about what happened; only tell family members and people you trust.

Don't continue to talk to the person who molested your child. And don't take your child back to the place where they were molested—it brings back memories for them.

Reward your child for being brave to tell you about what happened. But don't fuss over them, because that makes children feel worse.

Don't worry about your child; instead do stuff with your child to help them feel better.

And, it is important for you to know that your child might have a lot of different feelings about being molested.

Kids...Tell Your Story—It Helps

Kids, it can feel really scary to talk about what happened, but it helps to tell your story to those you trust.

Keeping that secret is like a burden, and you'll feel like you're looking through a window. You can see those around you who you want to tell, but you just can't break



that window open, because it feels too scary. But we want you to know that you can break through that window, and you'll be okay. Once you tell, you won't have to worry because the person who has been molesting you won't be able to hurt you again.



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Congratulations to clinical co-director Val Macri-Lind, who received a 2011 District Attorney Victim Service Award of Distinction in the category of field practitioners who develop and implement innovative victim service programs and projects. The award “recognizes an individual or organization that has clearly brought ‘new and improved’ programs, services, delivery methods or other innovation to enhance victim services for the citizens of Larimer or Jackson Counties.” A well deserved award!

The second annual ArtThrives! art auction brought to you by Realities for Children will be held Friday, July 29, 2011, at the Fort Collins Country Club from 5:30-9:00 p.m. Dinner, wine, and beer will be provided. The live auction features a wide variety of mediums and price ranges. The silent auction will include artwork from ChildSafe’s young clients. The popular Champagne Prize will be repeated again this year. The winner receives a week at a Sarasota, Florida, condo located just 30 minutes from the beach donated by Carol Schneeberger from Wells Fargo Home Mortgage. Tickets: \$50/person or \$90/pair which includes dinner and beverages. To purchase tickets, go to: www.blacktie-colorado.com/index.cfm and type in Event Code ChildSafe729.

Brought to you by



For the third year, a gorgeous handmade quilt will be raffled at the Rocky Mountain Quilt Festival at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, August 21, 2011, at The Ranch. All proceeds from the raffle will be donated to ChildSafe. If you would like to purchase raffle tickets for the quilt, contact ChildSafe at 970-472-4133 or ChildSafe@gmail.com. Tickets are \$1 each or 6 for \$5.

The ROMEO Men’s Golf Club is sponsoring its Second Annual Tees Fore Two Golf Tournament to benefit ChildSafe and FREE (Front Range Exceptional Equestrians) at the Fort Collins Country Club on Monday, September 12, 2011. Cost is \$140.00 per golfer. Cost includes the opportunity to play golf at the country club an additional time within a year of the tournament. You can learn more about the event at www.tees-fore-two.com. To register go to: www.blacktie-colorado.com/index.cfm and type in Event Code Tees912.

ChildSafe has been chosen as a featured charity for Logically Local. Purchase a Logically Local card for \$15 and make a purchase from one of the many local businesses; ChildSafe will receive 50 cents for each purchase. Link to Logically Local at www.logicallylocal.com/ll-for-community. You will find a list of businesses that are part of the program and can sign up for weekly emails about specials.

Your feedback is important to us. Contact us at 472-4133 or at childsafecolorado.org. Visit online at www.childsafecolorado.org.