



ANNUAL REPORT

JULY
2021
-
JUNE
2022






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President's Message

Strength. Resilience. Focus.

In 2006, as part of a very strong grassroots community effort, the Adams County Children's Advocacy Center (ACCAC) opened its doors to provide support to child victims of abuse. Since that time, with vital community support, the ACCAC has grown to provide advocacy, forensic interviews, medical exams, case management, trauma therapy, caregiver education, support groups and community-based child abuse prevention education. The ACCAC has served more than 2,400 children since it began. In addition to providing services and support to child victims and their families, the ACCAC has conducted community outreach and prevention education activities for more than 19,000 individuals, primarily elementary school children, in the past 16 years.

Due to social isolation and additional stressors of the COVID pandemic, children have become more vulnerable to abuse. In 2015, only 8 % of ACCAC's cases involved physical abuse. In FY 2021/2022, physical abuse comprised 44% of cases. Most alarmingly, 36% of the children visiting ACCAC have suffered multiple forms of victimization (sexual abuse, physical abuse, human trafficking, pornography, stalking/harassment, neglect, etc.)

The Adams County Children's Advocacy Center moves into the years ahead focused on providing a refuge and a voice for abused children while supporting their caregivers and family members to overcome the trauma of abuse and begin to heal. At the same time, we are dedicated to working in a unified approach with our community to prevent child abuse from happening in the first place. Experts believe that when five percent of the adults in a community commit to learning about child abuse, that is the "tipping point" to reducing child abuse community wide. Specifically, with an estimated population of 83,614 adults in Adams County, it only takes 4,181 people who are willing to learn about child abuse prevention to have an impact.

While a tremendous amount of progress has been made in the last sixteen years, it is critical to continue to grow our programs and services to best serve children and families and the Adams County community. For this reason, we have developed a five-year plan for expanding services and will move into a larger facility to better accommodate our children, their families, and our collaborating partners.

We exist and remain steadfast on our path forward due to the roots that anchor us, namely our compassionate and generous community, donors, and partner advocates, who remained focused on our mission from the first day we opened our doors, through pandemic ridden 2020 and 2021, to where we are today.

We begin a new year of hope, deeply grateful for the strength, resilience and focus on our mission by all who have invested their time, energy, and expertise over these past 16 years. We ask for your continued support as we forge ahead together, dedicated to a community where children are safe, families are strong, and our child victims become children again.

--Cindy Small
President, Board of Directors





What Children & Families Are Saying:

*I am thankful that
such a program
exists for kids in
our community.*

*I'm glad I could
come here to talk &
we can figure this out
so it doesn't keep
happening.*

*The conversation
with my Child & Family
Advocate was very
reassuring.*

*Someone listened
to me and actually
heard me.*

*Coming to the CAC
allowed my child to
open up about what
happened.*

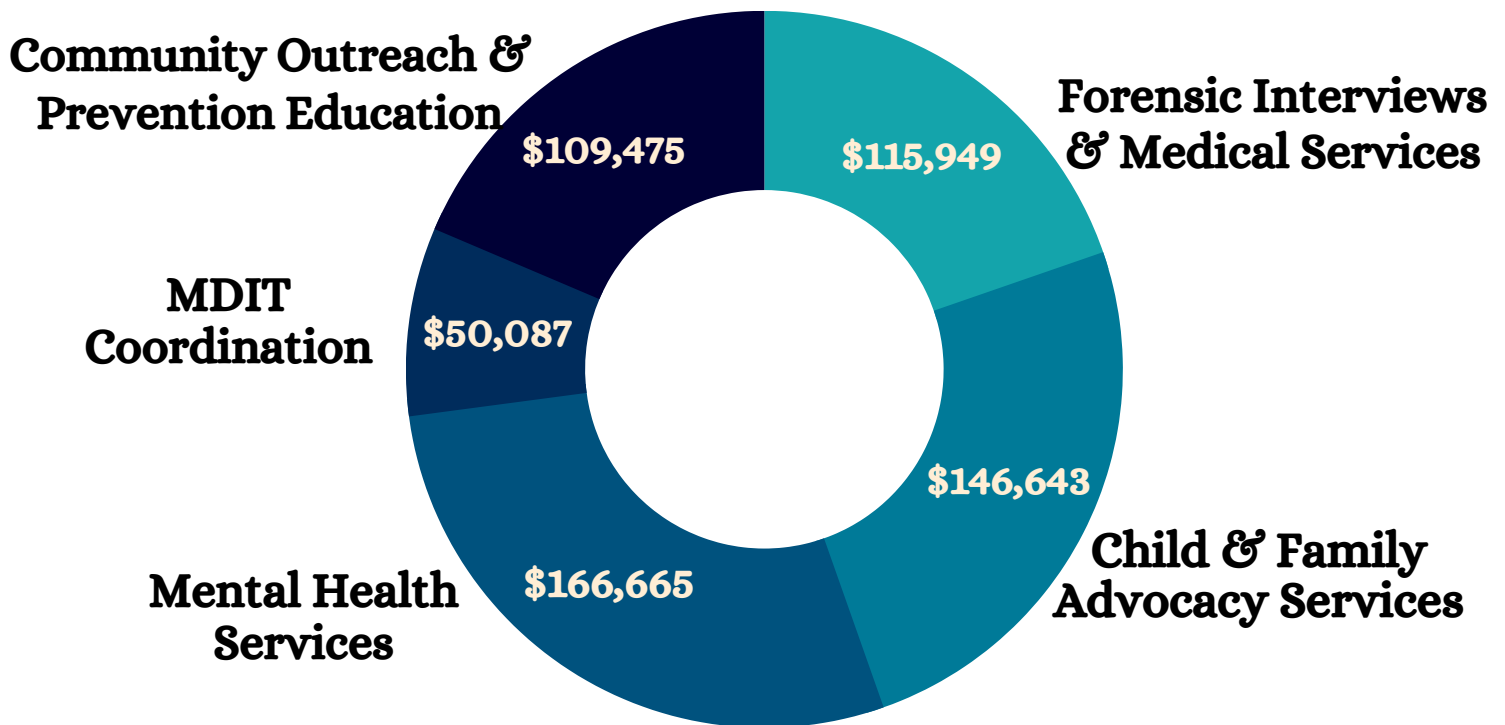
*The staff listened
to us carefully &
gave the resources
and information we
really needed.*

*The ability to
talk to
someone about
what happened
helps me a lot*

*The care my
children received
was monumental!*

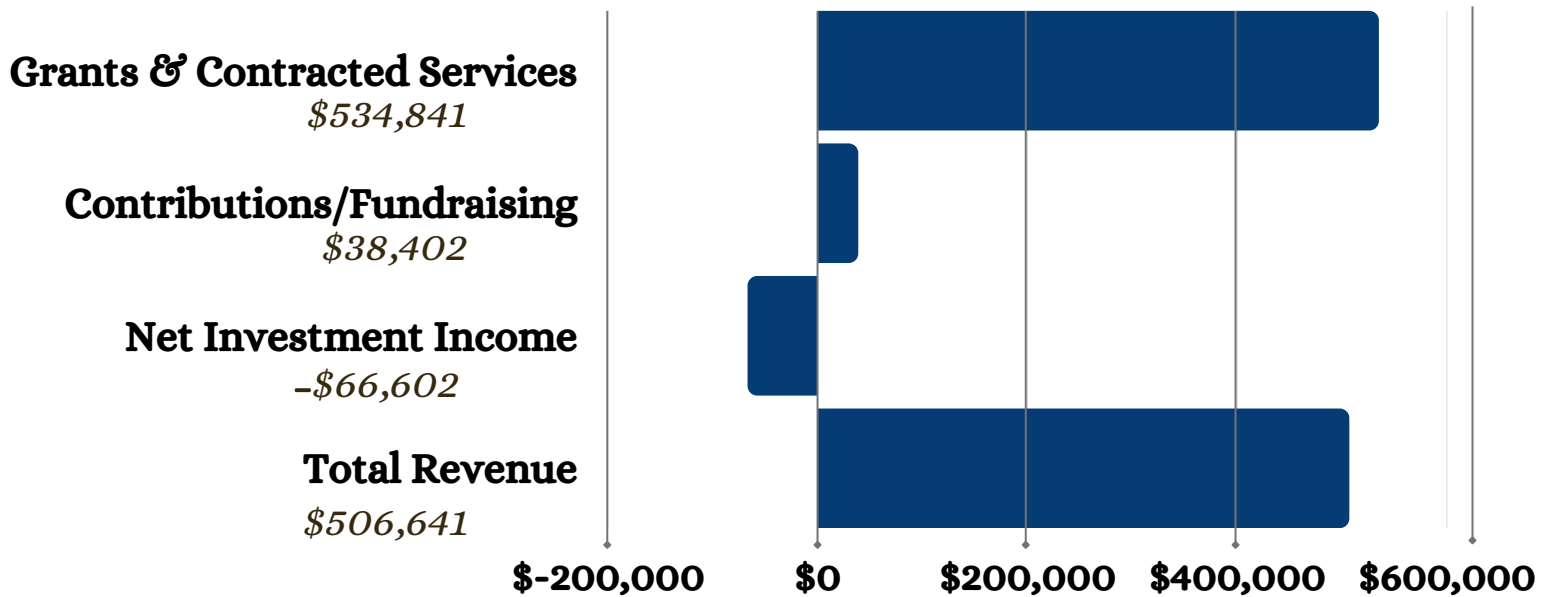
Cost Per Service Area

July 2021-June 2022



Revenue Sources

July 2021-June 2022



Child & Family Advocacy

Advocacy provided to

225
child victims



➤ 36% of children suffered multiple types of victimizations

➤ 90% of victims received personal advocacy, emotional support, and safety services

➤ 219 caregivers and child family members received advocacy supports

Child & Family Advocacy is the starting point of the CAC model. Advocates work with families to identify strengths, coping strategies, and needs.

Advocates meet with non-offending caregivers before, during, and after the child's Forensic Interview.

Each child and family received an average of 5.3 hours of advocacy support.

Advocates receive specialized training on topics such as dynamics of abuse, trauma-informed services, crisis assessment, and interventions.

17 teen girls participated in the Inner Circle Girls Group throughout the year.

Children visiting the CAC have experienced an average of 5.95 Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

This means children have experienced between **5-6 instances** of abuse or neglect, familial violence, mental illness, parental separation/divorce, homelessness, substance abuse, etc.

Mental Health Services

693

mental health sessions
conducted



An average of 38 children received trauma therapy each quarter



64 children received mental health services during the fiscal year



100% of children who successfully completed trauma therapy saw improvement in PTSD & trauma symptoms

ACCAC's Mental Health Therapist is certified in Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) and Art Therapy.

TF-CBT combines trauma-sensitive interventions with cognitive behavioral therapy to process trauma, reduce distressing thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, and enhance overall quality of life.

Mental health services provided at the CAC are always free for every child.

The mental health program serves the most severely traumatized children in Adams County.

Most have experienced chronic or complex trauma.

15 was the average number of children on the mental health *waitlist* throughout the year.

Art therapy supports personal and relational treatment goals as well as improves sensorimotor functions, confidence, conflict resolution, and resilience.

Community Outreach

18

community events
attended



Just 5% of a community's adults learning about child abuse can be the tipping point in reducing child abuse.



272 adults received information and resources through our outreach efforts



348 children received information and resources through our community outreach efforts

What if I Told You?

48% of substantiated child maltreatment cases involved sexual abuse in Pennsylvania in 2016, ranking Pennsylvania cases as happening at the **highest rate** in the nation.

In Pennsylvania, sexual abuse cases occur 5.5 times more than the national average.

In order to reach a wider audience, ACCAC has steadily increased our social media presence across Facebook, Instagram, & Twitter, as well as adding new trainings to our YouTube page.

Volunteers Needed For:

- Speakers Bureau
- Community Events

ACCAC offers a variety of prevention trainings for adults.

We can provide trainings at your location, tailored specifically to your audience.

Our goal is to teach adults how to recognize, react to, and report suspected child abuse.

Prevention Education

3236

children received
prevention services
in schools



➤ 5 school districts & many private schools in Adams County participate in our prevention education services

➤ ACCAC serves students in Kindergarten through 6th grade

➤ Each grade receives 2 age-appropriate sessions every school year

ACCAC uses the Monique Burr Foundation (MBF) curriculum in schools. It is an evidence-based, program used to educate & empower youth to prevent, recognize, and respond to bullying, child abuse, exploitation, and digital dangers.

MBF teaches 5 universal safety rules for children, uses active learning engagement in each lesson, and provides reinforcement materials to teachers & students.

ACCAC provides prevention education services to local libraries, private schools, & summer camps.

All prevention education services are always provided at *no cost* to the schools and organizations.

ACCAC created Internet Safety, a training for parents to learn about keeping children safe while online, which is available on our YouTube.

The 5 Safety rules include:

- Know What's Up
- Spot Red Flags
- Make a Move
 - Talk It Up
- No Blame | No Shame

Forensic Interviews

227

interviews completed



41% of children suffered physical abuse and/or neglect.



64% of children suffered sexual abuse or assault



All child victims of sexual abuse are always offered a SANE-Ped medical exam at the CAC

Forensic interviews are designed to let the child have the opportunity to talk about their experience while gathering as many details as possible.

Interviewing techniques are evidence-based to eliminate suggestibility. Forensic Interviews attend training prior to their first interview and continue training to hone their skills.

How old are the children interviewed?

58% of children were 3-12 years old.

41% were age 13-17.

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners-Pediatric (SANE-Ped) are specially trained nurses and are a valuable asset to each investigation.

Law-Enforcement and Children & Youth Services observe forensic interviews in an adjacent room via closed-circuit television.

SANE-Ped Nurses can answer children's questions about their health & body, as well as ease their anxiety about what has happened.

MDIT Coordination

128

professionals
participate within the
MDIT



MDIT members collaborated on 227 cases at the CAC



194 reports of suspected child abuse were reviewed during MDIT case reviews



More than 75 professional training opportunities were offered to MDIT members

ACCAC coordinates the Multi-Disciplinary Investigative Team with the goals of reducing the trauma of child abuse investigations, encouraging professional cooperation, and promoting education on the prevention of child abuse in the community.

99% of MDIT members agree that resources provided by ACCAC help improve work on the team's cases.

97% of MDIT members agree that children served at ACCAC benefit from the MDIT's collaborative approach to investigations.

As many as 10 individual MDIT members work together on one case, supporting the child and family from the start.

MDIT members include professionals from Children & Youth Services, local law enforcement departments, medical services, mental health services, victim advocacy services, the District Attorney's office, and ACCAC.



Executive Director's Message

Building a Brighter Tomorrow-The Journey to Hope and Healing

When I joined the Adams County Children's Advocacy Center (ACCAC) nearly five years ago, I recognized immediately that Adams County is a community in which people look out for and take care of each other. The outpouring of community support we receive each year allows us to help child victims of abuse and their families towards hope and healing; towards a brighter tomorrow.

This past year has brought positive changes to ACCAC. We have launched a series of community outreach initiatives, including a new website laden with child abuse prevention resources. Out of space at our current center, we have purchased a larger facility which will become the agency's forever home. Meanwhile, we continued our work in the prevention, intervention, investigation and treatment of child abuse, supporting 225 child victims and their families at our Center, and taught child abuse prevention education to more than 3,200 school children.

When children visit our Center, they are often scared and confused. We listen, we show them that we care, and that we believe in them. In the words of one child victim, "the ability to talk to someone about what happened helps me a lot." The sad truth is that child abuse impacts each and every one of us. It is estimated that 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will be abused before they turn 18. We all know someone who has been a victim of child abuse. Perhaps that someone is you.

But there is hope. We want you to know that we are here to support all victims of child abuse while also working to reduce, and ultimately, to end child abuse in our community. We are working diligently to expand treatment services and supports over the next five years, by:

- Continuing to provide high-quality, child-friendly and trauma-informed services to children and families: forensic interviews, medical exams, advocacy, and mental health services
- Ensuring trauma therapy is readily available for child victims
- Providing support groups for survivors, caregivers, and family members
- Increasing community outreach and prevention education efforts throughout the county

For details on The Building Brighter Tomorrows 5 Year Plan, visit <https://kidsagaincac.org/about-us/news-info/>

We could not do this work without the continued support of community partners like you. Thank you for recognizing that child abuse impacts all of us; that when a child is hurt, all of us hurt.

And finally, thank you for recognizing that together, we can build a brighter tomorrow for children in Adams County.

--Elida Murray
Executive Director



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