

The Adams County Children's Advocacy Center Marks 18 Years Serving Adams County Children & Families

September 2024 marks the 18th anniversary of the start of our work, supporting the first child victim at the Adams County Children's Advocacy Center (ACCAC).

In 2006, a diverse group of caring Adams County citizens worked to establish the ACCAC, a safe and friendly place where, during a child abuse investigation, a child need only be interviewed once by our specially trained interviewers, instead of being interviewed separately by each investigating agency.

Adams County Children's Advocacy Center recognizes the effort and dedication the founders put forth to create the ACCAC in 2006. Their collaboration and belief in the CAC process to start the ACCAC makes our work possible. This group of visionaries includes Frank Donnelly, Phillip Duffy, Kathy Gaskin, Chris Goodacre, Rebecca Hoch, Jim Holler, Ed Keeney, Paul Kellett, Kim Kuntz, Marla Langley, Don Marritz, Kathy McConaghay, Sara Meisenhelter, Linda Moulder, Kathy Nelson-Small, Teresa Polvinale, Cynthia Reimel, Becki Scott, Ivan Taylor, Crystal Tussing, Mary V. Charresse, Peter Vriens, Shawn Wagner, Kim Walker. Thank you!

In total, the ACCAC has supported 2,685 child victims of physical and sexual abuse, neglect and witness to violence cases and their families. With yearly averages of children supported: 66% girls, 34% boys, 46% ages 2-10, 54% ages 11+, 70% sexual abuse, 23% physical abuse and 7% neglect/witness to violence including murder.

In 2006, our services for children and families were limited to coordination of a multi-disciplinary team of local law enforcement and child serving organizations who were part of investigating allegations of child abuse, scheduling of forensic interviews and medical exams.

Now, 18 years later, our center continues to provide those same core services - all at no cost to children and their families, and at significant cost savings to Adams County through this coordinated response effort.

Over the years, our services to child victims of abuse and their families have expanded to include in-house trauma therapy and advocacy services, such as service referrals, support groups for teens and adults who have experienced trauma and a parent/caregiver's educational group.

We believe that keeping children safe from abuse is critical. This is why our services have also expanded to include a county-wide child abuse prevention program, annually empowering over 5,000 Adams County children in pre-schools, elementary and middle schools to learn and understand that their body belongs to them.

While empowering children is critical, adults are responsible for keeping children safe. Did you know that experts believe if 5% of a community's adults learn about child abuse prevention the rates of abuse decrease? To help prevent future abuse, the ACCAC offers adult prevention education programs available at no cost to businesses, community, and religious organizations across Adams County.

We are so proud of our resolute team who are on the front lines of supporting children daily, but each of them would willingly "work themselves out of a job" if it meant no more children would suffer the trauma of abuse. Unfortunately, our work is not done.

Please know that, now, more than ever, we are dedicated to working towards a community where children are safe, and families are strong. As an independent non-profit, we cannot do this work without your support. *On behalf of the children who are suffering today, but also for the children who, because of our prevention education efforts, will not suffer, thank you for your support of the Adams County Children's Advocacy Center!*