



A Newsletter of the Children's Advocacy Center of Smith County  
Walking hand in hand from outcry to final verdict and beyond....



## PAW and ORDER



*On her afternoon walk home from school on what would seem to be any other day, then thirteen-year old Amy probably had many thoughts floating through her innocent mind: the events of the day, homework assignments or playing with her younger brother. Almost certainly she did not realize that moments later she would become the solitary witness in her own defense against a perfect stranger who would proceed to pull her, from her once very familiar and safe neighborhood sidewalk, into his backyard where he would then sexually assault her. After a thorough criminal investigation and in coordination with the Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) of Smith County, Amy's perpetrator was charged and indicted with Aggravated Sexual Assault of a Child and was awaiting trial. During the course of the investigation, Amy and her family were provided services at the Children's Advocacy Center including counseling and involvement with the Kids in Court program.*

### Kids in Court

Kids in Court (KIC) is a program of the CAC with the goal of supporting child witnesses and their protective caregivers in their involvement with the criminal justice system. The KIC coordinator oversees the program and serves as a liaison of information between child victims and their protective caregivers and the Smith County District Attorney's office. One important aspect of the KIC program is *court education* for child witnesses that provides the opportunity to dispel myths and assumptions which potentially contribute to feelings of anxiety and nervousness.

In September 2010, the KIC program joined forces with the Therapet Foundation to provide some cold-nosed comfort to victims. The mission of the Therapet Foundation is to "use specially trained and certified animals for the betterment of mankind by promoting health, hope, and healing." The Children's Advocacy Center of Smith County became one in about half a dozen communities across the country to incorporate therapy animals into courts and prosecutorial offices (Dellinger, 2008-2009). And with over 700 CAC's nationwide that are registered with the National Children's Alliance there are fewer than 20 that have successfully incorporated the assistance of animals for their child or teen clients (Dellinger, 2008-2009).

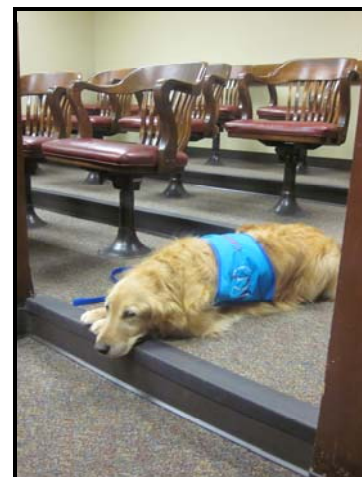
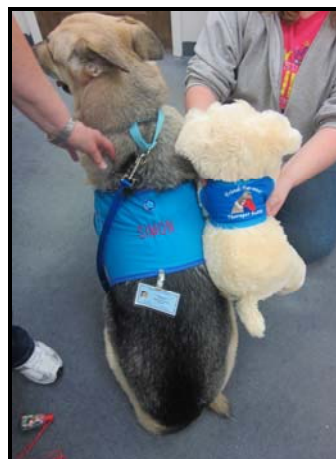
### Emotional Support

The use of service dogs in courts and prosecutorial offices around the nation to support child victims is becoming more and more common. There is a significant amount of research that demonstrates the calming effects that merely being in the presence of a dog can elicit. Interaction with friendly animals promotes feelings of safety and a source of contact comfort, which can decrease anxiety and sympathetic nervous system arousal. Specific physiological benefits include decreasing heart rate and blood pressure, as well as increasing mental clarity and alleviating depression (Justice Marie, 2007).

### Lending a Paw

Amy regularly attended her court education sessions through the KIC program leading up to the eventual court date. Initially appearing very shy and withdrawn, Amy's entire demeanor transformed as she described the three dogs that she has at home, their unique personalities, and her responsibilities of caring for them. At this point, it was obvious that she was the ideal candidate to work with Therapet in court education. Over the course of a few months, many of the Therapet dogs participated in educating Amy about court. Some of her supporters included: Maggie the Golden Retriever, Simon the German Shepherd, and Cooper a Blue Heeler Mix. During her final court education session, Therapet provided Amy a gift to certify her completion in the KIC program. They hoped this would serve as a constant reminder of the friends she had made on her journey and also as a companion for her to take with her to court. Amy's "Therapet Buddy" was a plush dog complete with a blue cape, to match her furry friends, and Amy's name monogrammed on the side.

See PAW and ORDER continued on Page 2



Therapets Simon (above) waiting in court with Amy's "Therapet Buddy" and Maggie (right) in the courtroom

## Carol's Edge



As we continue in 2011 to work our mission of reducing trauma for child victims of abuse and their families through an effective professional network of intervention and support services, I reflect on our 2010 accomplishments that laid the groundwork for the critical and essential work we do today with the children in Smith County:

One of 17 U.S. advocacy centers selected for a Trauma Focused-Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Learning Collaborative with Duke University

Meeting 10 strict standards, achieved re-accreditation for 5 years through the National Children's Alliance. Our CAC was identified as a mentoring center for other CAC's

Our Family Advocacy and Kids in Court Programs were featured in the Nov/Dec 2010 issue of the *Texas Prosecutor* (District and County Attorneys' Association Magazine)

Jason Isham, our Lead Therapist, was selected by Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas to be a state level trainer to assist other CAC's in Texas

Initiated collaborations with Discovery Science Place and the Therapist Foundation to support our Kids in Court Program.

Formalized collaborations with partner agencies re-executing the Interagency Agreement and Multidisciplinary Team Best Practices Guidelines.

Coordinated 267 child physical and sexual abuse cases involving 368 children and 365 protective caregivers

We are grateful to a community that supports our mission. We will continue to strive for excellence in all that we do as we remain dedicated to the youngest and most vulnerable of crime victims. . . *walking hand in hand from outcry to final verdict and beyond...*

Carol Langston  
Executive Director

*"PAW and ORDER" continued from page 1*

The perpetrator's court date quickly approached and Amy was expected to testify publicly about the very personal, private, and embarrassing events which unfolded on her walk home from school. Even so she arrived at the courthouse with her family, Therapist Buddy in hand, ready to face her perpetrator.

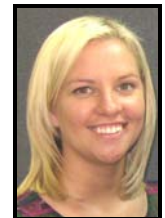
More than one Therapist showed up during the criminal trial to show support to Amy and her family for their courage and strength. In the victim's waiting area of the Smith County District Attorney's office, Amy and her Therapist friends played cards, watched movies, and did art projects. It was an amazing experience to see how the presence of the dogs transformed the energy in the victim's waiting area.

I have accompanied many victims on the arduous journey to the courtroom. Loading into the elevator, Amy was surrounded by people there to support her including her new furry companion. As we made our way from the 4<sup>th</sup> floor to the 2<sup>nd</sup>, the emotion felt almost tangible to me and it made the hairs on my arms stand up. As the ring of the elevator announced our arrival to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, the elevator doors jerked open. Just as they did, a bright orange jumpsuit identifying an inmate appeared in passing outside of the elevator doors. Escorted in ankle shackles and hand cuffs, Amy immediately recognized this as her neighbor and with a Therapist at her side, her grip tightened onto her father. Typically this does not happen. But the Judge was holding a separate hearing and was moving the defendant back to the jailhouse. I later asked Amy if there was anything about her court experience that made her nervous or that she did not like. She told me that she did not like seeing him but she felt safe with all of us there.

Amy was on the witness stand for just over an hour. As she exited the courtroom she was crying and distraught. The Therapist dog was unable to be present during Amy's testimony but patiently awaited her arrival back on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor. Rounding the corner to the victims waiting area, Amy could see the kind eyes and hint of a smile on the face of a Golden Retriever. Immediately dropping to her knees and wrapping both arms around the dog, she cried a little more, took a deep breath and then let go. She seemed instantly comforted in a way that not I or even her mother or father could provide.

Court education with the Therapist dogs equipped Amy with the knowledge and confidence she needed to confront her perpetrator. Once shy and withdrawn, she provided her testimony to a public courtroom with courage and certainty. Amy's perpetrator was sentenced to a life term in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice Institutional Division. The work of the Therapist dogs with the Children's Advocacy Center will greatly contribute to fulfilling the goal of helping children who have been victims of crime. The benefits of animal assistance can leave a lasting impact that affects the process from interview to conviction and for every child who is able to testify with more confidence, the efforts made are repaid tenfold (Justice Marie, 2007).

*This article was written by the CAC's Kids in Court Coordinator, Becky Cunio. She holds a Bachelor of Science Degree from the University of Houston. Becky was a Child Protective Services Investigator before joining the CAC in 2008.*



#### Works Cited

- Dellinger, M. (2008-2009). Using Dogs for Emotional Support of Testifying Victims of Crime. *Animal Law*, 171-192.
- Justice Marie, R. (2007). The Use of Animal Assistance at Child Advocacy Centers. *National Center for Prosecution of Child Abuse*, Volume 20.
- Phillips J.D., A., & McQuarrie, D. *Program Manual: Therapy Animals Supporting Kids Program*. [www.americanhumane.org/task](http://www.americanhumane.org/task).

**January 1-31, 2011, the CAC investigated 25 cases involving 47 children and an additional 49 siblings and protective caregivers. 15 children and 11 caregivers received therapy services.**

**From 1996 to December 31, 2010, the CAC investigated 5,591 cases involving 7,877 children.**



## CAC Implements Evidence-Based Mental Health Treatment



The Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) of Smith County is committed to providing effective mental health therapy to child victims of abuse and their families. As a nationally accredited center, the CAC must use mental health professionals who can demonstrate expertise working with trauma. The trend in mental health, like medicine and other industries, is moving towards using Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs).

With the publication of the *Child Physical and Sexual Abuse: Guidelines for Treatment*, the Office for Victims of Crime in the United States Department of Justice classified **Trauma Focused – Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)** as a well-supported, efficacious treatment. In short, it works and has considerable support in research. As a result, in 2005 the clinical staff at the CAC identified TF-CBT as an appropriate evidence-based treatment for the client population at the center and began to investigate ways to receive training in the model.

In 2010, the CAC was selected through a competitive application process to participate in a Learning Collaborative facilitated by Duke University and sponsored by the Southern Regional Children's Advocacy Center, a division of the National Children's Advocacy Center in Huntsville, Alabama. The Learning Collaborative Model was developed for medical settings to effectively implement EBPs. The CAC was one of 17 centers chosen from throughout the country.

The executive director, the lead therapist and the child therapist were selected to participate in the Learning Collaborative in roles as a senior leader, clinical supervisor and clinician, respectively. The team was required to complete pre-work activities, attend 3 learning sessions in Huntsville, participate in monthly conference calls and meet regularly to discuss implementation goals. In order to successfully implement TF-CBT, an organization must have buy-in at all levels from the Board of Directors to frontline staff members. The Learning Collaborative Model facilitates that buy-in.

### What is TF-CBT?

Trauma Focused – Cognitive Behavioral Therapy or TF-CBT, is a structured short-term treatment model designed to reduce symptoms of trauma in children who have experienced a traumatic event or events such as physical or sexual abuse. In Children's Advocacy Center settings, TF-CBT lasts about 16 sessions. TF-CBT works on several levels. First, it gradually desensitizes children to the traumatic event by gradually exposing children to the traumatic memories in therapy sessions. Second, TF-CBT builds attachment between children and their protective caregivers by actively involving the caregiver in the therapy sessions. Third, TF-CBT helps children integrate their traumatic experience by placing it in the greater context of their lives and identifying positive things they have learned through their experience. Fourth, TF-CBT gives children and protective caregivers tools they can use to support their own mental health. The process of TF-CBT can be summarized in the acronym **PRACTICE**:

**P** stands for Psychoeducation which means the therapist teaches the child and caregiver about trauma and sexual abuse so they reach a level of comfort discussing the topic. **P** also stands for Parenting which means the therapist teaches the caregiver positive parenting skills.

**R** stands for Relaxation which means the therapist teaches the child and caregiver how to use relaxation and coping skills.

**A** stands for Affective Identification and Expression which means the therapist teaches the child and caregiver how to identify and express their feelings appropriately.

**C** stands for Cognitive Coping which means the therapist teaches the child and caregiver the relationship between thoughts, feelings, behaviors and how to identify and change unhealthy thoughts.

**T** stands for Trauma Narrative which means the therapist helps the child document their traumatic experience in a cohesive story format and that story is then shared with the caregiver.

**I** stands for In Vivo Exposure which means the therapist gradually desensitizes the child to things which might trigger traumatic memories.

**C** stands for Conjoint Sessions which means the therapist involves the caregiver in therapy sessions with the child in a compassionate, supportive way.

**E** stands for Enhancing Future Safety which means the therapist teaches the child safety skills and builds a safety plan to reduce potential future victimization.

### Why TF-CBT?

The CAC of Smith County chose to implement TF-CBT because it is the most well supported evidence-based treatment for children who have been sexually abused. Across numerous replicated studies, TF-CBT is demonstrated as an effective treatment to reduce symptoms related to trauma.

Additionally, because TF-CBT is a short-term structured model, the CAC will be able to help more children. Historically, therapy clients at the CAC attended therapy for about 30 to 40 sessions using a play therapy approach. With TF-CBT the number of sessions is cut in half. As a result, the therapists at the center will be able to see more children more quickly. The Children's Advocacy Center of Smith County takes its responsibility to our clients, funders, staff and community seriously. TF-CBT provides a way to fulfill this responsibility by implementing effective treatment for clients, cost-effective services for funders, cutting-edge tools for staff and validated best practices for the community.



*This article was written by CAC Lead Therapist, Jason Isham. Jason joined the CAC staff in 2005. He has been working professionally in child maltreatment since 1996. He is licensed as a Marriage and Family Therapist in Texas and holds a Master of Science in Counseling Psychology from California Baptist University and a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from the University of California, Los Angeles. In addition to his duties at the CAC, Jason is a state level trainer in effective practices in the CAC model.*

## We are grateful many contributed

September 1, 2010 – January 31, 2011

The Very Rev. and Mrs. M.L. Agnew  
Azalea Orthopedics/  
Carey Clark III, MD  
Kathy Babin  
Margo and Mike Ballew  
Darla Bennett  
Leo and Lou Ann Berman  
Boone & Boone Construction LTD  
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V'Ann and Donn Byrne  
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Donor Advised Fund  
of Blake Bailey  
East Texas Peace Officers  
Janet and Allen Fair  
Fairwood UM Women  
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Food Fast Children's Charities  
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Julie and Howard Garb  
Greenberg Smoked Turkeys, Inc  
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Penco Oil Company  
Suzanne and Stan Perkins  
Debbie and Robert Peveto  
Pat Pinkerton-Walker  
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Sherry and Tim Simpson  
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Stanger Surveying Tyler LLC  
Diana and Mark Stodola  
Susan and Mickey Surles  
Carolyn and Don Swift  
Linda and Gary Swindle  
Target Corp.  
Shea and Mike Thomas  
Todd Threlkeld  
Tyler Executive Women's Network, Inc  
Phyllis and John Tindel  
Linda and Terence Tyler  
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship  
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Wendy and Jim Van Deventer  
Kelly W. Walker  
Johnnie Wanger  
Juanita and Dudley Wardlaw  
Brenda and Ben Westbrook  
Mary and Morris Westbrook  
Veronica White  
Wilhite Landscaping & Lawn Care, LTD  
Watson W. Wise Foundation  
Wingstop  
Sandra and Roy Woods  
XTO Energy  
Mr. Sheng and Dr. Pochin Yin



*Honoring . . .*  
**Renee Faulconer** by  
Kim Hackney  
**Michael and Tabitha Raggio** by  
Pam and Jeff Leach  
**Pat Christensen** by  
Jennifer and James Watkins  
**Bill and Cookie Pozun**  
on their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary by  
Jessie and David Enright  
**Teachers, Faculty and Staff at  
All Saints Episcopal School** by  
Mike, Rachel and Denise Jarrett  
**Children's Advocacy Center  
Staff and Multidisciplinary Team** by  
Jason Isham  
**Audrey and Olivia Riepe** by  
Robert Reuter  
**Carol Langston** by  
Marsha and Preston Harrison  
Stephenie and Randy Roberts  
**Becky O'Neal** by  
Sue Hinson  
**Therapet Foundation** by  
Ginger and Kent Walker  
**Carson Richards** by  
Karen Clark



*In Thanksgiving for . . .*  
**Will, Maggie, Addison and Molly Gillen**  
by Carye and Jim Gillen  
**Korey and Kerby Sitton** by  
Lynn and Kerry Sitton  
**Norma Edge Halfpenny** by  
Carol and Jack Langston

*Remembering . . .*  
**Betty Simms** by  
Chip Arnold Family  
**Peggy Hays** by  
Sara Simons  
**Dr. and Mrs. George Orr** by  
Gillian Brasfield  
**Bruce Brookshire** by  
Brenda and Chris Boylan  
**Betty Walker** by  
HAWL 9 Holers WGA  
**Joe Lynn Grubbs** by  
Tisa Hibbs  
**Fran Umlor** by  
Millie and Dick Czurak  
**Bonnie Shank** by  
Jim Dowdy  
**Martha Jenny Guinn** by  
Jean Guley

*Designating for . . .*  
**The Rainbow Room** by  
Greater Texas Community Partners  
Tish and Sam Kennedy  
**The Children**  
Tyler Oilmen's Benefit Association  
**The Children's Christmas Party** by  
an ever-growing anonymous group of  
East Texas area citizens

## A Holiday of Hope

The Christmas Holidays should be a magical time of year for ALL children. This year, with the support of local businesses and individual donors, the Children's Advocacy Center provided gifts for 117 children who would not have experienced the joy of opening presents on Christmas morning. Special thanks to CAC Volunteer Lisa Foreman, who coordinated this huge effort, and to all the donors who made this Holiday of Hope possible.

### A Christmas Party the Children Will Never Forget

For the third year in a row, a local Tyler business man along with several of his friends, co-workers, and peers ensured that the abused children in Smith County felt special during the holidays and enjoyed a Merry Christmas. They provided funding for these children to have a fun filled evening, including games and food, at Discovery Science Place. Santa and his helpers (the TJC Apache Belles) handed out gifts to every child. This party has become an annual tradition that the children look forward to all year.



*Barb Carter delivering Christmas bikes from Chick-fil-A*



*It takes many volunteers for the annual Christmas Party to run smoothly. Thank you to all of the volunteers that took the time to bring smiles to so many little faces. Greta Moore-Dixon and Jackie & Charles Holly (pictured left) filled the air with holiday music, Glenwood Church of Christ (pictured above/center) managed the "Candy Land" booth and the Smith County Young Republicans (pictured above/right) assisted with serving the "kid-friendly" dinner and clean up.*



## April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month

### ◆ Kids Fest – Saturday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>

Booths, games, and fun activities for children at Broadway Square Mall in Tyler from 10:00 am - 2:00 pm.

### ◆ National "Go Blue" Day – Wednesday, April 6<sup>th</sup>

Show your support for child abuse prevention by wearing a blue ribbon, a blue shirt, a blue necktie or anything visible and blue.

### ◆ "Endure For The Kids" 5k – Saturday, April 16<sup>th</sup>

Show your support for child abuse prevention by participating in the 5k at Rose Rudman Park in Tyler. For more information go to [www.endureforkids.org](http://www.endureforkids.org) or call Brandon McDaniel at (903)385-0561. Proceeds will benefit the CAC.

### ◆ National Blue Sunday – Sunday, May 1<sup>st</sup>

Church attendees wear blue and take time during their morning services to pray for the victims of child abuse.



Sunday, June 19<sup>th</sup> – Tuesday, June 28<sup>th</sup>

Bids For Kids is an online auction on Ebay presented through the *Tyler Morning Telegraph*. Bidders will find unique items, experiences and gift cards available.

Beginning June 19<sup>th</sup>, go to [www.TylerPaper.com](http://www.TylerPaper.com) and click on the Bids For Kids icon. You will automatically be taken to the auction website.

For information on how to sponsor the auction or to donate an auction item, call Jennifer at (903)533-1880.



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## Handprints

### 2011 Board of Directors

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Elizabeth Sharkey  
Mary Shelmire  
Gillian Sheridan  
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J.B. Smith  
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Gary Swindle  
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*Tyler Police Department*  
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*Smith County Sheriff's Office*  
Keven Fite  
*Smith County Sheriff's Office*  
Drew Allen  
*Child Protective Services*  
Danny Brown  
*Child Protective Services*  
Adam King  
*Child Protective Services*  
Tonda Curry  
*Smith County D.A.'s Office*  
April Sikes  
*Smith County D.A.'s Office*  
Angela Cabaniss-RN,CA/CP,SANE  
*East Texas Medical Center*  
Kathleen Young-RN,CA/CP,SANE  
*East Texas Medical Center*  
Sue Hinson-RN,CA/CP,SANE,CFN  
*Trinity Mother Frances Hospitals and Clinics*  
Investigators as assigned  
*Child Protective Services, Arp, Bullard, Lindale, Overton, Troup, and Whitehouse Police Departments.*

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## Partner Agencies

Arp Police Department  
Bullard Police Department  
Child Protective Services  
East Texas Medical Center  
Regional Healthcare System  
Lindale Police Department  
Overton Police Department  
Trinity Mother Frances Hospitals and Clinics  
Troup Police Department  
Tyler Police Department  
Smith County Criminal  
District Attorney's Office  
Smith County Sheriff's Office  
Whitehouse Police Department

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The Children's Advocacy Center of Smith  
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organization and welcomes contributions



The Children's Advocacy Center of  
Smith County is dedicated to child  
victims of physical and sexual abuse  
and strives to reduce trauma  
through a unified effort that  
facilitates thorough  
investigations, effective  
prosecutions and the healing  
of the children and their families.

[www.CaCSmithCounty.org](http://www.CaCSmithCounty.org)

