



# Around the Corner

CornerHouse Interagency Child Abuse Evaluation and Training Center

Volume 7. Issue 2



## New Police Departments Join as CornerHouse Partners



Children and vulnerable adults who have reported abuse come to CornerHouse for forensic interviews and medical examinations. The staff at CornerHouse conducts interviews on behalf of police and child protective services to minimize the number of interviews and to promote a coordinated investigation. CornerHouse contracts with the Hennepin County Attorney's office, the Minneapolis Police Department, the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office and suburban Hennepin County law enforcement agencies.

When opened in 1989, CornerHouse was a joint effort of Hennepin County, the city of Minneapolis, and Minneapolis Children's Hospital. By 1991, ten police agencies had joined the collaborative effort. By 1996, the number reached twenty-five.

This number remained the same until 2007, when the University of Minnesota and Minnetrista Police Departments joined. The Sheriff's Office investigates crimes on behalf of smaller suburban police jurisdictions in the county. All Hennepin County law enforcement agencies that do child abuse investigations now have agreements with CornerHouse for the provision of forensic interviewing services. The Hennepin County Attorney's Office and the Minnesota Department of Public Safety also support the CornerHouse forensic services program. Agencies outside the county bring cases to CornerHouse on a fee for service basis.

The RATAC ® protocol developed by CornerHouse is research based. As a result, the interview is credible and legally defensible. Trial courts regularly recognize CornerHouse Forensic

Interviewers as experts in the trial of child abuse cases. The CornerHouse Forensic Interviewers remain cutting edge professionals in part through the regular training of other professionals and research. Currently CornerHouse partners with the National District Attorneys Association and the Minnesota Department of Human Services to provide national and state training.

CornerHouse has always been a partnership, both in the services it provides and in its base of support. The team approach is promoted and supported both at the individual case level and system wide. Representatives of partner agencies meet monthly to review cases suggest areas for system improvement.

CornerHouse welcomes our new police partners.

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## CornerHouse Staff

- Thomas Frost  
*Executive Director*
- Jennifer Anderson  
*Assistant Executive Director*
- Julie Ellefson  
*Program Director*
- Sharon McLaughlin  
*Business Manager*
- Jodi Lashley  
*Training Coordinator*
- Judy Weigman  
*Forensic Interviewer/Trainer*
- Anne Lukas Miller  
*Forensic Interviewer/Trainer*
- Sara Blahauvietz  
*Forensic Interviewer/Trainer*
- Julie Stauffer  
*Forensic Interviewer/Trainer*
- Miriam Maples  
*Family Liaison/Volunteer Coordinator*
- Sandy Heitkamp  
*Training Assistant*
- Molly Kennefick  
*Program Assistant/ Intake*
- Amy Wollwage  
*Program Assistant/Video Technician*
- Krista Rogness  
*Forensic Services Assistant*

## CornerHouse Events

### Tuesday, July 17, 2007- 16th Annual Minnesota Twins Fundraising Event

The evening includes a picnic catered by Divine Swine Catering at the Metrodome, live and silent auctions, plus exciting door prizes and goody bags for the kids. All of this will be followed by an exciting baseball game, Twins vs. Detroit Tigers. The event begins at 4:00 at the Twins picnic area, near Gate D on the southeast side of the Metrodome. We were able to raise \$150,000 in 2006 at this event. It is chaired in 2007 by Damon Noga and Sara Stafford. The tickets will go on sale soon so watch for announcements. Information is always available on the website, [www.cornerhousemn.org](http://www.cornerhousemn.org).

### Saturday, July 28, 2007- 2nd Annual Eagles Golf Tournament

The Eagles Club #3208 has again chosen CornerHouse to be the beneficiary of their Annual Golf Charity Tournament. Last year's even raised \$4,276 for CornerHouse. This full day event features lunch and golf at Crystal Lake Golf Course in Lakeville, followed by dinner, door prizes, and a silent auction at the Eagles Club.

## CornerHouse Provides Training for the International Criminal Court



Above: Outside the International Criminal Court, (ICC).

Last Fall, CornerHouse staff Jennifer Anderson accompanied an international team of trainers from UNICEF to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, The Netherlands. The ICC, known as a court of last resort, concerns itself only with cases not investigated or prosecuted by national judicial systems. Tried by the ICC are those accused of crimes such as genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes; among these crimes are those perpetrated against children.

The workshop “Children and the Investigative Process” was hosted by the ICC’s Office of the Prosecutor for its prosecutors and investigators. Perhaps the first formal training on children for any branch of the International Criminal Court, the workshop was designed to provide investigators with the necessary skills for working with children all over the

world who are victims of and witnesses to crimes. The expertise of CornerHouse was sought to provide instruction on the topics of trauma and memory, the process of disclosure, and best practices as well as specific techniques, in forensic interviewing. The response to CornerHouse’s presentations was overwhelmingly positive; as one trainee noted, “[the] presentation was excellent – relevant, focused, practical and aimed for people that had prior knowledge (all of us).”

It was an honor for CornerHouse to be asked to train such an esteemed and committed group of professionals who are so clearly paladins of the world’s people, including its children.

**Save the Date**

2007 Champions for Children Gala

October 13th  
At Golden Wing Air Museum in Blaine



## For Professionals

Please use the links below to access articles authored and co-authored by CornerHouse staff:

- Forensic Interviews of Children Who Have Developmental Disabilities Part 1 of 2  
[www.ndaa-apri.org/publications/newsletters/update\\_vol\\_19\\_number\\_1\\_2006.pdf](http://www.ndaa-apri.org/publications/newsletters/update_vol_19_number_1_2006.pdf)
- Forensic Interviews of Children Who Have Developmental Disabilities Part 2 of 2  
[www.ndaa-apri.org/publications/newsletters/update\\_vol\\_19\\_number\\_2\\_2006.pdf](http://www.ndaa-apri.org/publications/newsletters/update_vol_19_number_2_2006.pdf)
- Indicators of a Healthy Multidisciplinary Team  
[http://www.ndaa-apri.org/publications/newsletters/han\\_newsletter\\_winter\\_2005.pdf](http://www.ndaa-apri.org/publications/newsletters/han_newsletter_winter_2005.pdf)
- Key Factors in Forensic Interviews with Native American Children  
[http://www.ndaa-apri.org/publications/newsletters/update\\_vol\\_18\\_number\\_6\\_2005.pdf](http://www.ndaa-apri.org/publications/newsletters/update_vol_18_number_6_2005.pdf)
- Forensic Interview Room Set-up  
[http://www.ndaa-apri.org/publications/newsletters/han\\_newsletter\\_fall\\_2004.pdf](http://www.ndaa-apri.org/publications/newsletters/han_newsletter_fall_2004.pdf)

Also see the recent article written by former CornerHouse Executive Director, Amy Russell in the *Hamline Journal of Public Law and Policy*:

- Russell, A. (2006). Best practices in child forensic interviews: Interview instructions and truth-lie discussions. *Hamline Journal of Public Law and Policy*, 28(1), 99-130.

## April: Child Abuse Awareness Month

In April CornerHouse created the display in Hennepin County Government Center Gallery (A-Level) to promote Child Abuse Awareness Month. Highlighting the cost of child abuse, the display explains that the annual estimated costs of child abuse and neglect are approximately \$94 billion in the United States.

The display uses data from Prevent Child Abuse America report "Total Estimated Cost of Child Abuse & Neglect in the United States" to illustrate the direct and indirect costs of child abuse and neglect. ([www.preventchildabuse.org](http://www.preventchildabuse.org))

The report uses various statistical sources to put a dollar amount on everything from hospitalization of abused children (more than \$6 billion), the cost of the child welfare system (an estimated

\$14 billion) and indirect costs, such as special education, since more than 20 percent of abused children require special education (an estimated \$223 million).

The exhibit is free and open to the public Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Hennepin County Government Center, 300 S. 6th, Minneapolis.



Aside from the financial costs, this display also captures the cost in the lives of children.

## Get to Know CornerHouse



**Sharon McLaughlin** has been at CornerHouse for almost four years. She is responsible for the finances of the organization. She assists in the creation of the annual budget, oversees the financial health of the organization, and manages the completion of the annual financial audit. Sharon also is responsible for the development and management of the employee benefits. Sharon and her husband Dan live in south Minneapolis. They have two lovely daughters.



This month **Judy Weigman** will complete 17 years as a forensic interviewer and 12 years as a trainer at CornerHouse. Judy began her professional career as an elementary school teacher. Later, while married and with 3 young sons, she completed her Master's program, writing her papers on a portable Smith-Corona typewriter on her dining room table and utilizing large amounts of White Out. Prior to CornerHouse, Judy was a child protection worker in Hennepin Co., and enjoyed doing therapy in private practice. Judy and husband, Roland, enjoy being grandparents to a 20 month old, Olivia, and visiting with their 5 adult sons and 2 daughters-in-law.



**Amy Wollwage** is a 2005 graduate from Concordia College, Moorhead and is currently pursuing a Masters of Social Work degree from the U of M, where she's a Child Welfare Scholar. She has worked at CornerHouse as the Video Technician since November of 2005, working with interview and training audiovisual equipment. Amy is engaged and planning an August wedding in Fargo, where she'll make her new home.

## Save the Date

2007 2nd Annual Eagles  
Golf Tournament

Saturday, July 28th  
Crystal Lake Golf Course in  
Lakeville.

## CornerHouse Interagency Child Abuse Evaluation and Training Center

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www.cornerhousemn.org

Providing Children with a Safe  
Place to be Heard Since 1989.



## CornerHouse Wish List

*Below is a list of ideas for donations to CornerHouse. Due to the nature of work done, some donations cannot be accepted. CornerHouse staff are happy to work with you as you select items for donations. If you have any questions or wish to make a donation please contact Julie Ellefson at 612-813-8300 or e-mail [info@cornerhousemn.org](mailto:info@cornerhousemn.org)*

### Training Snacks

- Soda, coffee, tea
- Creamer, sugar, sweetener, coffee filters...
- Subway sandwiches, pizza, chips...

### Outdoor Maintenance

- Trim bushes
- Flower Planting
- Lawn service

### Window Care

- Window washing
- Paint window trim

### Magazine Subscriptions

### Copier Toner

- HP Laser Toner for laserjet 1300 series
- HP Brand Drum for 4500 CTN
- HP Brand toner for HP4000 series laser CTN

### Daily Supplies

- Dishwasher detergent
- Hand soap
- Napkins
- Paper towels
- Bleach
- Cups-- hot and cold

### Gift Certificates for Volunteers

## E-Mail Distribution of Newsletter

In order to cut mailing costs and increase timeliness, CornerHouse will be converting to electronic distribution of our Newsletter.

If you now receive a paper copy and would like to stay on our mailing list and receive electronic newsletters or if you are not receiving our newsletter and would like to, please send your e-mail address to [Krista.Rogness@childrensmn.org](mailto:Krista.Rogness@childrensmn.org)

If you don't have an e-mail address but want to continue to get our Newsletter, please send confirmation of your mailing address to us at  
2502 10th Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN 55404

Thank you!