



CornerHouse™



## CornerHouse Newsletter Volume 8, Issue 2

May/2008

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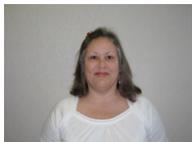
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### Get To Know CornerHouse

CornerHouse is pleased to welcome two new staff members to our team:



**Barbara Graham Bettelyoun, Ph.D.**

Barbara is the newest Forensic Interviewer at CornerHouse, working 2 days a week. Originally from

Happy Spring to you! We hope the weather in your part of the world has been as lovely as our Minnesota springtime. Take a look at what we've been working on!

### Child Abuse Prevention Month

April is Child Abuse Prevention month. As it has for the past several years, CornerHouse sponsored and prepared a display in the Hennepin County Government Center Gallery on the A-Level.



The theme of this year's display was breaking the cycle of silence surrounding child abuse. Display posters suggested how we all can send children the message that we are willing to listen.

The posters suggested we accept and express feelings to help our families develop an environment in which all feelings are acceptable. Children will often tell someone outside their family before they tell their parents or close relatives. Consequently, it is important that children can identify trusted adults outside of their family such as teachers, clergy, family friends, and neighbors.

The display also shows the role CornerHouse plays in ending the silence around abuse. The CornerHouse interview protocol includes a process for helping the child identify a number of safe adults, both family members and non-family members, whom they could tell about future abuse.

CornerHouse also trains professionals to see the signs of abuse and respond as best they can. CornerHouse provides educational materials and referrals to caregivers, community members and other child welfare professionals. CornerHouse provides all non-offending caregivers with educational materials and support to encourage positive, supportive messages to children. CornerHouse collaborates to provide a free therapy group to children and support/ education group for caregivers.

CornerHouse supports Law Enforcement and Child Protection by coordinating child friendly forensic interviews and medical exams of children suspected of being abused.

Michigan, she is a member of the Rosebud Lakota tribe, mother to two grown children, Jennika & Christopher, co-parent of 5 adult stepsons and 3 teenage stepdaughters, and newly married to educator and professional landscape designer, Francis. Barbara has lived in the area since 1993, originally moving here to attend the UMN where she earned a doctorate in Child Clinical Psychology. In addition to her work at CH, Barbara provides clinical and research consultation to agencies and organizations in the Twin Cities and Indian reservations in South Dakota. She currently resides in Chaska with her husband and teenage stepdaughters. Barbara and her family often spend long weekends in Spencer, SD, renovating their 100+ year-old farmhouse, growing organic produce, and enjoying the peace and star-filled nights of country living.



**Megan Alama**

Megan joined the CornerHouse staff in April as the Forensic Services Program Assistant. Megan holds a B.A. in Sociology from the University of Minnesota, where her focus was on intersecting forms of violence against women and children. As a Community Engagement Scholar, Megan volunteered extensively as a crisis and legal advocate for victim-survivors of sexual violence. She also volunteered as a violence prevention educator for students and staff at local universities and victim service programs. Megan says, "My passion for the work we do at CornerHouse stems from my work with

## A Developmentally Appropriate Approach to Interviewing Children

As a training center, CornerHouse is constantly challenged to ensure that our training materials are cutting edge. Although regular curriculum updates are completed each summer, maintaining high-quality training sometimes requires more substantial changes. For four months in 2007, several CornerHouse staff members and one consultant, Mindy Mitnick, worked to update our training materials regarding a developmentally appropriate approach to interviewing children. This recent project was made possible by a grant from the Otto Bremer Foundation.

This project not only allowed for the materials to reflect current information in the field, it also provided an opportunity to improve the efficiency of the manner in which the information is taught to training participants. What was once a series of independent, but related, lectures has become two substantial, all encompassing lectures titled "Child Development" and "Questioning Children." The "Child Development" section is comprised of information regarding memory, language, cognitive functioning, and sexuality development. "Questioning Children" includes recommendations for constructing, formatting, and focusing questions in a manner that maximizes the competency of each child.

Professionals who have been trained in the RATA<sup>®</sup> CornerHouse interviewing protocol should note one significant change in the "Questioning Children" section. Trainees have received a written training tool titled "Age-Appropriate Guidelines," which outlines what elements of an event children are developmentally capable of reporting. Updates to this chart are included in the following summary.

According to the CornerHouse Age-Appropriate Guidelines, three-year-old children can generally answer concrete and simple questions about "who" was involved, "what" happened, and sometimes developmentally appropriate questions about "where." By the ages of four to six, children can generally answer questions about "who," "what," "where," and sometimes questions about "when" something occurred.

By the ages of seven or eight, children can additionally begin to give a more "Structured Report." In other words, while describing a single incident, children can begin to answer questions about the organization of the event: "What happened first?," "Then what happened?," "After she told you to sit down, what happened next?" When reporting multiple incidents, children of these ages can generally begin to give details about the first or last time something happened, or a time that was different. Encouraging children to give a structured report requires interviewers to assist with appropriate open-ended questions and, when necessary, more focused questions. This section was previously titled, "Number of Times," which could be narrowly and erroneously interpreted to mean that at these ages, children can answer the question, "How many times did that happen?" While older children are more likely able to answer this question, this category is intended to reflect that children can give a more structured report, not simply a number of times; hence, the name change.

By the ages of nine and ten, children are developing cognitive skills that will allow them to give more full disclosures, including various "Contextual Details" (previously titled "Circumstances"). Children of these ages can usually provide many more specific details about the context of their experiences. For example, they can sometimes provide idiosyncratic details, such as the alleged offender having a tattoo, what the "white stuff" looked like and where it went, or that the offender was wearing purple earrings. Children can provide sensory descriptions about what they saw, heard, smelled, tasted, or felt. They can sometimes give peripheral details such as the room arrangement or the color of sheets on the bed. Furthermore, they can often provide information about possible physical evidence, such as creams, magazines, or clothing. It is important to remember that even young children can give some of these details; however older children are more capable of providing more information.

In addition to these title updates, the following statement has been added to the chart: "With all age groups, avoid asking "Why?"" While this concept has always been taught as a part of the Age-Appropriate Guidelines, it was not previously included on the chart. As many of you already know, asking "why" questions is often developmentally inappropriate, as it requires advanced cognitive skills that are usually absent until about the ages of seven to ten years old (Walker, 1999). In addition, even when a child can developmentally answer "why" questions, such questions could be perceived by children as shaming or accusatory, i.e., "Why did you go into the bedroom with him?" Information resulting from "why" questions can be critical to investigations and/or to children's safety. Therefore, some suggestions for "softening" these potentially critical questions are: "How did he get you into the bedroom?," "What made you go into the bedroom?," "What happened just before you went into the bedroom?"

As always, interviewers must remember that these guidelines should be utilized according to the child's "developmental age," not the child's "chronological age." When assessing a child's developmental age, interviewers should consider such factors as gender, developmental disabilities, mental health diagnoses, special needs, interactions with other children (i.e., siblings, school, daycare), and socioeconomic opportunities.

### Reference:

adults who never received help for abuse they experienced as children and adolescents. The best way to end family violence is to interrupt the cycle of violence in childhood." In her free time, Megan enjoys photography, hiking, fiber arts, and spending time on Lake Superior with her fiancé and their dog, Willie.

**We are grateful for the service of our Board of Directors, including:**



**Ike**

**DeLugo**

A twenty-eight year law enforcement veteran, Ike DeLugo has been on the CornerHouse Board of Directors since 2002. The Minneapolis Police Chief initially appointed Ike as his representative on the Board while Ike was serving as the Commander of the Minneapolis Police Department's Family Violence Investigative Unit. Although he has changed positions since that time, at his request he has continued to serve as the appointee of the Minneapolis Police Chief. Ike is married, has two children and lives in Apple Valley. He enjoys sharing the sports and activities of his children - and wouldn't have any other way.

**Save the Date**

**Eagle's Golf Tournament**  
**July 26, 2008**

**Twins Event**  
**July 29, 2008**

**Second Annual CornerHouse Gala**  
**September 20, 2008**

**Wish List**

**\*Snacks for Kids (no**

Walker, A.G. (1999). *Handbook on questioning children: A linguistic perspective*. Washington, D.C.: ABA Center on Children and the Law (Second Edition).

**CornerHouse Collaborates with NAPSAC and NCPTC**

CornerHouse is proud to announce a new training relationship with the National Association to Prevent the Sexual Abuse of Children (NAPSAC). NAPSAC is a national organization working to prevent childhood sexual abuse through focus on hope, solutions, justice, and healing. CornerHouse and NAPSAC will work together through NAPSAC's National Child Protection Training Center (NCPTC). NCPTC is a federally funded partnership between Winona State University and NAPSAC. NCPTC is the only national organization to have developed a concrete, peer-reviewed plan to significantly reduce, if not eliminate, child abuse in the United States within three generations. This plan calls for the development of "...state of the art forensic interviewing courses...that [are] locally run and taught" (Vieth, 2006). To further this goal, CornerHouse, NAPSAC and NCPTC are committed to assisting states in the development of high-quality, forensic interview training courses through a train-the-trainer model.

CornerHouse has been actively engaged in the creation and dissemination of on-going, collaborative training courses for a decade. In 1998, CornerHouse adapted our existing CornerHouse Child Sexual Abuse Forensic Interview Training curriculum and began teaching it in partnership with the National District Attorneys Association and the National Child Protection Training Center, in a format entitled *Finding Words™*. Through sustained collaboration with NCPTC and with our new partner, NAPSAC, CornerHouse will continue to provide training courses modeled after the CornerHouse training program that teach the our forensic interview protocol, RATA<sup>®</sup>. CornerHouse, NAPSAC and NCPTC will also support states that participate in our train-the-trainer program. The course delivered through our new agreement with NAPSAC and anticipated agreements with state programs will be called, *ChildFirst™* after our Child First Doctrine:

*The child is our first priority.  
Not the needs of the family.  
Not the child's "story."  
Not the evidence.  
Not the needs of the courts.  
Not the needs of police, child protection, attorneys, etc.  
The child is our first priority.*

candy or treats please)  
\*Gift Certificates for  
Volunteers  
\*VHS Tapes (6 hours)  
\*Napkins, Paper Towels,  
and Coffee Stirrers  
\*Window Washing  
\*Magazine Subscriptions  
(for family area)  
\*Printing of Brochures  
\*Copier Toner  
(please call for details)  
\*General Office Supplies

### CH STAFF

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*Assistant Executive Director*

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Julie Stauffer  
*Forensic Interviewer/Trainer*

Barbara Bettlyoun  
*Forensic Interviewer*

Miriam Maples  
*Family Liaison/Volunteer  
Coordinator*

Sandy Heitkamp  
*Training Assistant*

Krista Kemp  
*Program Assistant / Intake*

Shao Lee  
*Program Assistant / Video Tech.*

Megan Alama  
*Forensic Services Assistant*

# Join us for a flying good time

AS CORNERHOUSE PREPARES TO EMBARK ON ITS 20TH ANNIVERSARY  
AND RECOGNIZE TWO SWEETHEARTS FOR KIDS

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2008

## Golden Wings Museum

ANOKA COUNTY AIRPORT • BLAINE, MINNESOTA  
VISIT [WWW.CORNERHOUSEMN.ORG](http://WWW.CORNERHOUSEMN.ORG) FOR DETAILS

Presentations from Minneapolis Chief of Police, Timothy Dolan  
and the 2007 Sweetheart for Kids, President and CEO of  
Children's Hospitals and Clinics, Dr. Alan Goldbloom

AIRPLANE RIDES & GUIDED AVIATION MUSEUM TOURS  
RECEPTION • AWARDS • DINNER • LIVE MUSIC & DANCING

CORNERHOUSE PROVIDES FORENSIC INTERVIEWS AND MEDICAL EXAMS FOR CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS SUSPECTED OF BEING  
PHYSICALLY OR SEXUALLY ABUSED. CORNERHOUSE HEARS THE CRIES OF APPROXIMATELY 500 CHILDREN EACH YEAR AND RELIES  
ON PRIVATE DONATIONS TO CONTINUE ITS VALUABLE WORK. IT IS A PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP ORGANIZED AS A NON-PROFIT.

### For Professionals

**Please use the links below to access articles authored by CornerHouse staff:**

Best Practices In Child Forensic Interviews: Interview Instructions And Truth-Lie Discussions

[http://www.hamline.edu/law/journals/law\\_policy/articles/Russell\\_final\\_edits\\_.pdf](http://www.hamline.edu/law/journals/law_policy/articles/Russell_final_edits_.pdf)

Forensic Interviews of Children Who Have Developmental Disabilities Part 1 of 2

[http://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

[http://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)

Drawings in Forensic Interviews of Children

[http://www.ndaa-apri.org/publications/newsletters/update\\_volume\\_16\\_number\\_3\\_2003.html](http://www.ndaa-apri.org/publications/newsletters/update_volume_16_number_3_2003.html)

Using Interpreters in Forensic Interviews

[http://www.ndaa-apri.org/publications/newsletters/update\\_volume\\_15\\_number\\_12\\_2002.html](http://www.ndaa-apri.org/publications/newsletters/update_volume_15_number_12_2002.html)

The Use of Anatomical Diagrams in Child Sexual Abuse Forensic Interviews

[http://www.ndaa-apri.org/publications/newsletters/update\\_volume\\_15\\_number\\_5\\_2002.html](http://www.ndaa-apri.org/publications/newsletters/update_volume_15_number_5_2002.html)

Using Anatomical Dolls In Child Sexual Abuse Forensic Interviews

[http://www.ndaa-apri.org/publications/newsletters/update\\_volume\\_13\\_number\\_8\\_2000.html](http://www.ndaa-apri.org/publications/newsletters/update_volume_13_number_8_2000.html)

As always, thanks for your interest in CornerHouse and your support of the work we do for children. If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please make use of the unsubscribe option at the top of the page.

**Sincerely,**

CornerHouse Staff

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