

[To safely unsubscribe, please click here](#)

[Forward to Friend](#) | [If you are unable to read this, click here](#)



## ABOUT US



### **Vision**

Children grow up free from abuse

### **Mission**

Ensure that the voices of children are heard and understood in cases of alleged abuse

### **Child First Philosophy** *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 the police, child protection or attorneys

*The child is our first priority*

### **From the Back of the House**

There are many people who work diligently in the background to serve the children and teens that come to CornerHouse to be helped, supported, and heard. This series will keep you posted on the transitions in the "back of the house" as they occur:

#### **Staff:**

We have 2 staff members that are leaving us:

- Sharon McLaughlin is retiring, after 8 years at CornerHouse. Her last day is Dec. 31.
- Caitlin Jaworski has been offered a job at the Woodbury

## Leadership Message



*"Service rests on the basic premise that the nature of life is sacred...When we serve, we know that we belong to life...Fundamentally, helping, fixing and service are ways of seeing life. When you help, you see life as weak, when you fix, you see life as broken. When you serve, you see life as whole. From the perspective of service, we are all connected. Service heals."*  
- Rachel Naomi Remen.

On behalf of the CornerHouse staff, board and volunteers, thanks to all of you who have joined with us in the honor of serving children at a dark and bleak time. They often come to us with concerns about brokenness and with the help of our multi-disciplinary partners, our donors and our talented staff & volunteers, we are able to assist and coordinate services which will help make a difference. We are not always successful, but I can tell you that without exception, it is the goal of everyone associated with CornerHouse to change the lives of those we serve for the better and for justice.

It's a noble cause and at this time of the year when we reflect on goals achieved and look to the future, it is in the spirit of continuing to strive to make a difference in the lives of children which we keep in our sights.

Happy New Year to you! Thanks for the work together.

Sincerely,

Patricia Harmon  
Executive Director

### **Interviewing Young Children or "Huh?"** *Judy Weigman, Forensic Interviewer*

Nearly 23 years ago, when I first began to do forensic interviews, one aspect of the interview that continually seemed to be "out of reach" for me, was interviewing very young children, ages 30 months to four years. Many children this age are just learning to verbally communicate, and are especially vulnerable to abuse simply due to their young age.

Although some people believe that no child under four years should be interviewed, there is disagreement in the field about this. Children this age can tell us their experience if we ask questions that are understandable for that age.

As a new interviewer faced with the challenge of interviewing young children, I would ask myself, "How do I get to the topic of sexual abuse without asking 'leading' questions?" My questions would seem to go in circles, and attempts to avoid asking leading questions kept me from getting the child's information.

We know the best information comes from open-ended questions, no matter the age of the child. When I finally learned that we cannot expect all young children to respond to open-ended questions in the same way that older children can, it was a good day. Asking focused questions is okay, as young children generally do not understand ambiguous questions or questions without a context. We can explain in court the reasons for using focused inquiry with young children.

Our practice continues to evolve. During the past year, my colleagues and I have been asking young children to respond to more open-ended questions during narrative practice as well as during the substantive phase of the interview. Our narrative practice study at CornerHouse demonstrated that using more purposeful narrative practice in the rapport-building stage pays off. Individuals, including young children, increased the number of details they provided, as they disclosed abuse later in the forensic interview. However, we recognize that at times the child may require more focused questions. We also recognize that young children may provide narrative that is shorter and more concrete than older children. When we tailor our questions based on the child's development, it can make a huge difference.

PD. Her last day is Jan. 2.

And we have some new staff members joining our team:

- Nancy Holladay is starting December 31 as our Accounting Assistant.
- Maren Ott started Dec. 21 as our Forensic Services Assistant - Client Services Lead.
- Jamie Oyen will start January 2 as our new part-time Forensic Services Assistant - Float.

And finally we have one staff member changing positions:

- Noah Inthickack has accepted the position of Forensic Services Assistant - Intake Lead.

**Volunteers:**

We've been fortunate to also add more members to our volunteer team! Please help us welcome: **Raven, Sara & Sue**



**A great BIG Thank You to everyone that supported the Let's Dance event in November and helped us raise over \$60,000.00!!!**

**When Abuse Happens – Parents Can't Be Ignored**  
*Libby Bergman, Family Enhancement Center*

**Volunteer Needs**

We need Volunteers/Interns for the following positions:

- Family Service
- Administration
- Training Department
- Video Production

Please contact Rut if you or someone you know is interested in volunteering!  
[Rut.Kessel@childrensmn.org](mailto:Rut.Kessel@childrensmn.org)

**Volunteer Spotlight**

CornerHouse currently has 88 active volunteers (compared to 79 last year at this time) – 5 of them are Interns!

So far this year, Volunteers have contributed 3,634 hours (compared to last year at this time: 2,112 hours).

**CornerHouse Wish List:**

[find our wish list at Amazon.com!](#)

**Examples:**

- Coloring books
- Stencils, stamps, stickers
- Toy train set
- Children's books

**Or donate Gift cards:**

- Cub Foods
- Target
- Sam's Club
- Ikea
- Amazon

Bliss call

Whenever a parent drops off a child at the daycare center, the school bus stop or with a family member, it is a little leap of faith. For parents facing the sexual abuse of their child, that little leap of faith is more like a hard fall off a steep cliff. Learning your child or teen has been sexually abused, can shake the ground you stand on and create a mountain of self-doubt, especially when parents have been groomed right along with their children. Many parents lose faith in themselves and their community.

Parents facing this extremely difficult situation are never prepared for it and often feel quite isolated. As a society, we find it hard to talk about sexual abuse. This leaves families alone; to cope the best they can.

Although individual counseling or therapy is often recommended for child sexual abuse victims, therapeutic support for parents can have a huge positive impact on the entire family. Research shows that over 55% of mothers of sexually abused children have multiple symptoms of anxiety and many have all of the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. These symptoms can make it hard for parents to be present emotionally for their children at a time when parental care is needed most.

Individual and group therapy for parents can help them reclaim a sense of control over their lives and restore their faith in themselves. A group setting allows parents to regain the feeling of acceptance; being part of a community. The Family Enhancement Center offers a unique group support model where children and parents can heal together from the trauma of abuse in their own peer groups. To heal from trauma, children and their parents need community and therapeutic support. It is time we make sure that both parents and children get just that.

1. Timmons-Mitchell, Jane, Chandler-Holtz, Dawn and Semple, William E. (1998) "Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Symptoms in Child Sexual Abuse Victims and Their Mothers", *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 6:4, 1 — 14
2. Newberger, Carolyn Moore, Gremy, Isabelle M., Waternaux, Christine M., and Newberger, Eli H. (1993) "Mothers of Sexually Abused Children: Trauma and Repair in Longitudinal Perspective" *Amer. J. Orthopsychiat.*, 63(1), January, 92-101.



Please call  
612-813-5937  
if you wish to make a donation.

## Upcoming Child Sexual Abuse Forensic Interview Training

CornerHouse Interagency Child Abuse Evaluation and Training Center would like to announce the following availability in its 2013 training schedule.

### **Basic Child Sexual Abuse Forensic Interview Training at CornerHouse in Minneapolis, MN**

This training teaches a credible, reliable and non-traumatic forensic interview process for children, adolescents and vulnerable adults who allege sexual abuse. Training methods consist of lecture and discussion, review of CornerHouse videotaped interviews, skill-building exercises and an interview practicum. The course is designed for teams of law enforcement investigators, child protection investigators, prosecutors and forensic interviewers. Participants are strongly encouraged to attend as a multi-disciplinary team. Courses are outcome based and include an exam upon completion. Course Fee: \$1,000.00 per person early registration (30 days prior to training) - \$1,200.00 per person late registration

- February 25 - March 1
- May 20 - 24
- June 24 - 28
- August 19 - 23
- October 21 - 25
- December 2 - 6

### **Advanced Forensic Interview Training at CornerHouse in Minneapolis, MN**

This training course is for forensic interviewers, child protection workers, tribal social service investigators, law enforcement officers and prosecuting attorneys who have completed the required prerequisites. The course teaches advanced forensic interviewing skills including: modifications to the CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™ for physical abuse and other violent crimes, physical evidence in the forensic interview, autism spectrum disorders, multi-session forensic interviews, and active participation in peer review using a variety of written assessment tools. Course Fee: \$975.00 per person early registration (30 days prior to training) - \$1,025.00 per person late registration

#### **Prerequisites**

1) Completion of one of the following basic interviewing courses:

- Basic Child Sexual Abuse Forensic Interview Training at CornerHouse in Minneapolis, MN or On-Site Basic Child Sexual Abuse Forensic Interview Training
- ChildFirst™
- Finding Words™
- First Witness™

2) Completion of a minimum of ten (10) interviews using the CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™ (requirement waived for prosecutors)

- March 19 - 22
- July 15 -18
- November 19 - 22

For registration, please contact Sandy Heitkamp at (612) 813-8310 or [sandra.heitkamp@childrensmn.org](mailto:sandra.heitkamp@childrensmn.org)

Visit our website: <http://www.cornerhousemn.org>



Follow us on Facebook and Twitter too!

Managing Editor: Rut Kessel (please email her at [Rut.Kessel@childrensmn.org](mailto:Rut.Kessel@childrensmn.org) if you have any feedback)

Copyright ©2012 CornerHouse

Photos of children on this site are stock photography purchased by CornerHouse.  
The children photographed have no relationship or affiliation with CornerHouse.

[To safely unsubscribe, please click here](#) | [Spam Policy](#)

This email was sent to mark@markohm.com by rut.kessel@childrensmn.org  
CornerHouse | 2502 10th Ave. So | Minneapolis | MN | 55404

Powered By: Trail Blazer Campaign Services, Inc. visit <http://www.trailblz.com>