

**Lighting  
the way for  
a child's  
future.**

**ANNUAL REPORT  
2022**



# Introduction:

## A Message from our Executive Director

Dear Friends and Supporters,

This past year has been an incredible journey, filled with gratitude and the profound sense of purpose that comes from knowing we are making a real difference in the lives of the children and families we serve here in Lapeer County.

One of the highlights of this year has been the opportunity to join the Child Advocacy Center team. It has been an immensely rewarding experience, and I am deeply grateful for the privilege of working with such a dedicated and passionate group of individuals who are committed to our mission. Together, we have navigated the challenging work of supporting children and families during one of the hardest times of their lives.

As we walk alongside these children and families, we do so with a knowledgeable team that possesses the experience and passion required to help them navigate the physical, emotional, and lifelong impacts of the abuse they have endured. It is our collective determination and commitment that make our mission possible.

In 2022, we embarked on a mission to strengthen our partnerships within the community, increase awareness of our work, and expand our reach. This effort led to a significant increase in the number of children and families referred to our center. We are encouraged by this outcome as it signifies the growing recognition of the importance of our work and the ability to support more children and families. One of the major challenges we faced was the growing demand for forensic interviews. The need for our services has continued to rise, and we recognized that it was time for a change. Our current building was no longer adequate to meet the needs of our community effectively. Thus, in 2022, we took a decisive step forward and initiated a capital campaign to build a new, more suitable home for the Child Advocacy Center in Lapeer County. The new building will provide additional space and will be thoughtfully designed in a trauma-informed manner. This eliminates confidentiality barriers and maximizes the provision of our critical services. We believe this new space will enable us to reach even more clients and continue to be a place of hope in our community.

I am genuinely excited about what lies ahead for the Child Advocacy Center of Lapeer County, and I invite you to explore our accomplishments for 2022 in this annual report. Your ongoing support and partnership have been instrumental in our success, and we look forward to your continued involvement in our journey as we strive to make our community a safer and more supportive place for children and families.

Thank you for your dedication, your belief in our mission, and your unwavering commitment to the children and families of Lapeer County.

With gratitude and hope for the future,

Casey Schlinker, Executive Director

# Background information:

Since its establishment in 2008, The Child Advocacy Center of Lapeer County has been dedicated to seamlessly coordinating the investigation and treatment of the most severe cases of child abuse in Lapeer County. We provide a comprehensive range of essential services for children, including forensic interviews, medical care, advocacy support, and counseling, all within a secure and child-friendly facility. Our center is built upon the fundamental principle of fostering collaboration among community agencies and professionals within the child protection system. We are a nationally accredited, non-profit organization that provides all services at no cost to the victims and their families.



## Mission:

### Empowering Children to Find Their Voice

The mission of the Child Advocacy Center of Lapeer County is to reduce the trauma to children during the investigation of alleged sexual or severe physical abuse through advocacy, education, intervention, and treatment.

The CAC works with a multidisciplinary team (MDT), which is made up of a skilled team of professionals including law enforcement, child protection services, prosecutors, and forensic medical professionals. Together we respond to allegations of child sexual abuse, severe physical abuse, witness to violence, sex trafficking, child pornography and other severe maltreatment.



## Vision:

Eliminate Child Abuse



# Her Story

## Her Story

It was the middle of summer, and I remember shivering as I walked into The Child Advocacy Center of Lapeer County (CAC). I was scared, and even though I had my mom and Gigi with me, I had never felt so alone. You see, after two years of not telling anyone, I finally decided to be brave and tell my neighbor's "Little secret." I was embarrassed to talk about the things that happened, and so afraid that no one would believe me. He had told me that they would call me a liar and that it was best to keep it between us. He said adults never talk about this kind of stuff and that it happens to everyone. At fifteen I felt like an adult... so I kept the secret.

Now I know he was wrong. When I told my mom, we both cried. She promised me that she would keep me safe, but she also said I would have to tell other people. I felt shy, nervous, and embarrassed to talk about my body and what had happened to it. When I arrived at the Center, I was met by CAC staff, a forensic interviewer, family advocate, and a therapist. They all had kind faces and welcomed me and my family warmly. As I followed the forensic interviewer back into a room, she explained that other people including police officers and prosecutors would be listening from another room. She explained to me that they were there so I would only have to share what happened to me one time.

The longer I sat with her, the easier it was to answer her questions. When I started to cry, she didn't shame me, but offered me a tissue and helped me feel safe in that room. When that was over, a medical professional met with me and asked if she could do a medical exam to make sure my body was safe and healthy. I was scared, but I had so many questions. At school we had just had health class and had learned about symptoms of pregnancy. I was afraid that I could be pregnant after what happened; I had felt so sick lately. She took my questions seriously and never laughed at me when I felt like I was asking a silly question. After a few tests, she assured me that my sick stomach was due to stress, and that I was not pregnant. She told me that my body was healthy and that everyone at the Center would work together to help me and my family.

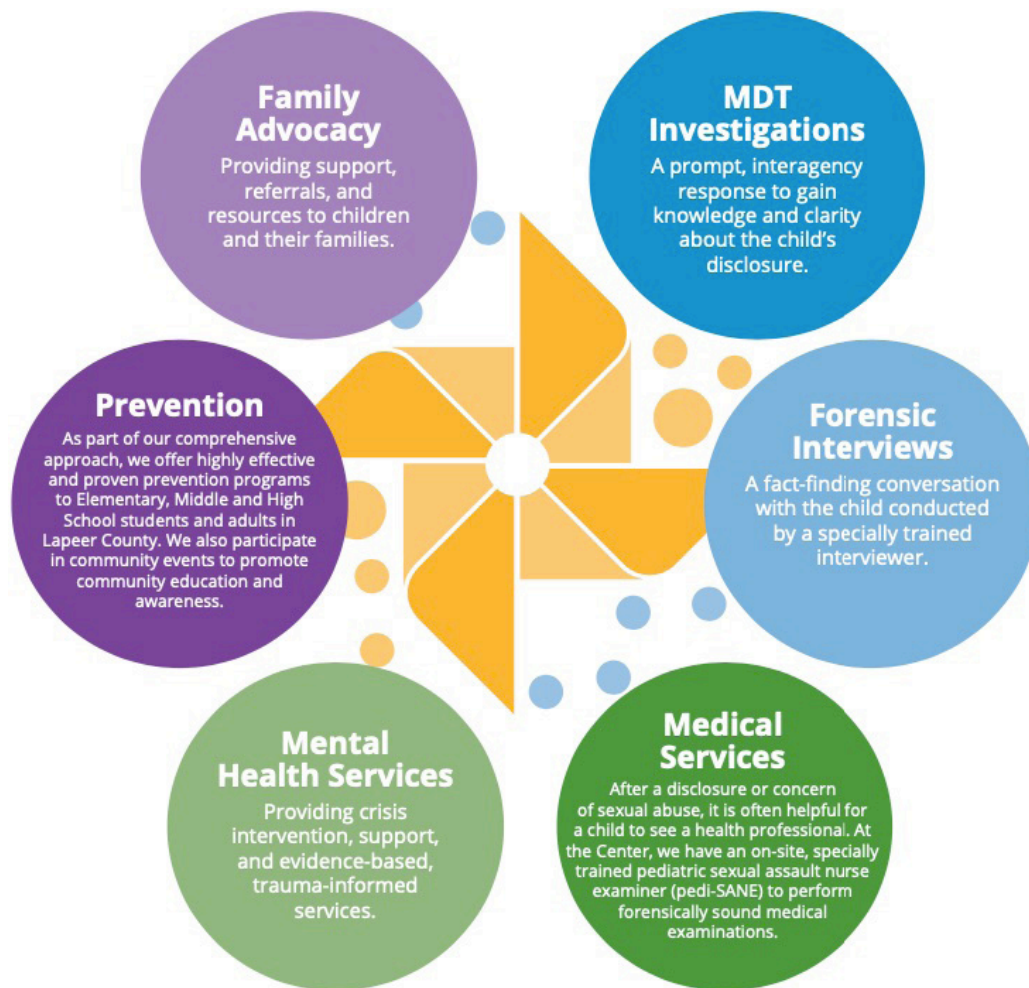
When everything was done, I sat in the front living room area waiting for my mom who was speaking to the family advocate. My Gigi squeezed my hand, and I felt a weight lift off my shoulders. Now, people knew what had been happening to me. Now, maybe they would understand how I had been feeling. What I thought would be the worst experience of my life became the first step in healing. I wasn't alone on this journey. The Child Advocacy Center of Lapeer County was here to help me heal and grow.

# Program Highlights

## Abuse.

The word alone is hard to hear. And when a child has been abused, it is even harder to know where to turn for help, guidance, and understanding. The first step is the Child Advocacy Center of Lapeer County (CAC). Our knowledgeable team has the experience to help children and families navigate a complex system while staying focused on what matters most: child safety and well-being. It requires a coordinated response from expert professionals to reduce stress throughout the investigation of an intervention process. We are the only nonprofit in the county participating in the investigation of crimes against children. We work in partnership with all the necessary agencies, including police, prosecutors, social workers, advocates, medical and mental health professionals, and other specialist to coordinate a plan of action. We provide high-quality, specialized services for children who have experienced abuse and their families in the comfort and convenience of our child-friendly location.

### Description of the organization's programs and services



\*The Child Advocacy Center of Lapeer County provides all services at no cost to the victims and their families.

# Success stories and impact of the programs on children and families

2022 CAC statistics and numbers



**175**

Children found their voice.



**45**

Children and caregivers received mental health services.



**23**

Medical Exams conducted.



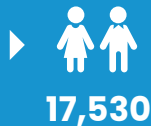
**583**

Children were educated through our Personal Safety and Awareness Program in partnerships with schools in the county, which aims to increase personal safety knowledge.

## Facts & Figures:

### Prevention is Key!

Did you know that 1 in 10 children will be sexually abused before they turn 18?



To put that into perspective, 88,780 people live in Lapeer County, 17,530 are children.



That's 1,753 young lives at risk in Lapeer County alone.

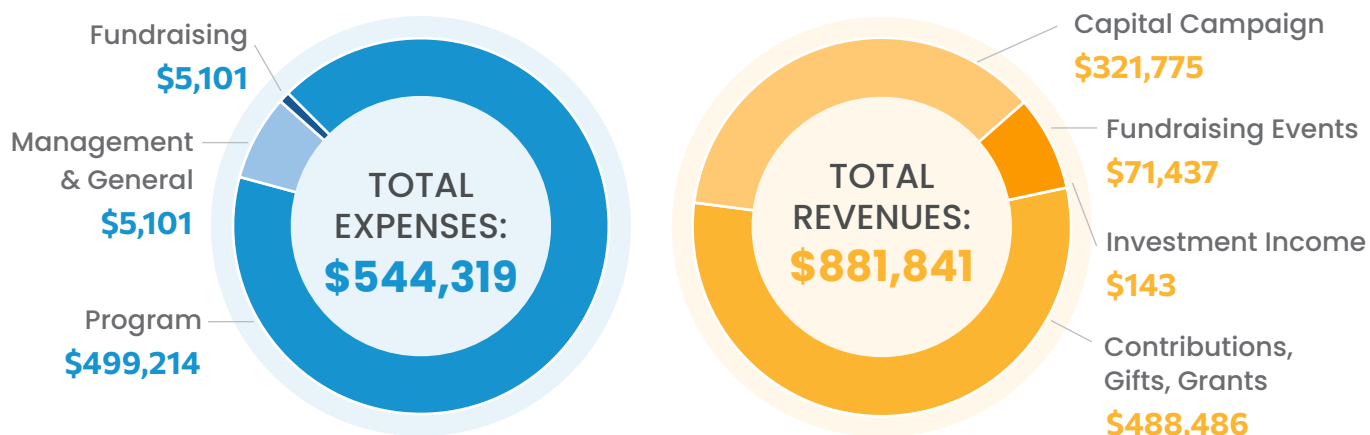
We all have a shared responsibility to the community where we live and work to protect and prevent child abuse, and that includes investing in the children who are the future of our county.

Together, we can be the change and work towards eliminating child abuse.





## Financial Overview



## Governance and Leadership

Board of Directors composition with roles:

Summer Putnam - *President*  
 Steve Zott - *Vice President*  
 Barb Soffin - *Secretary*  
 Amanda Hardy - *Treasurer*  
 Debbie Daley  
 Cevin Brown  
 Brad Keast  
 Eric Cassabon  
 Kelly Watson

Janet Engleman  
 John Miller  
 Kate Spencer  
 Kathy Haskin  
 Kolby Miller  
 Adam Chestnutt  
 Samantha Vinton  
 Matt Wandrie  
 Carrie Powell-Stockley

Karen Southgate  
 Stephanie Shibley  
 Christy Podhorsky  
 Amy Hofmeister  
 Tina Close  
 Amy Hofmeister  
 Susan Shaw  
 Nicole McKenna

## Staff profiles

Casey Schlinker, MPA - *Executive Director*  
 Dawn Wisner - *Director of Development*  
 Sarah Brandle - *Program Coordinator*  
 Ally Beattie - *Family Advocate/Forensic Interviewer*  
 Genna Scarborough - *Forensic Interviewer/Outreach Specialist*  
 Amanda Gunderson, LLMSW-Clinical - *Child & Family Therapist*

# 2022 Community Engagement

Our Community Engagement at the Child Advocacy Center of Lapeer County has been nothing short of extraordinary. This year's highlights are a testament to the amazing support of our volunteers, partners, local businesses, staff, and board members that we can provide crucial support to children and families that we serve. Thank you to our amazing community for making a difference! These are just some of the photos from the year showcasing the heartwarming moments and dedication of those who have come together to support our work.





# Call to Action



## Donors:

The Child Advocacy Center of Lapeer County depends entirely on the generous support of donations, grant funding, and dedicated volunteers to sustain our vital programs. Support our mission today – make a gift or donation by scanning the QR code.



## Volunteers & Interns:

We offer numerous opportunities for you to get involved. Join us as a volunteer or intern, and together, we'll make a difference.

**Email us for more details!**

**Email - Ally Beattie: [Ally@caclapeer.org](mailto:Ally@caclapeer.org)**



## Community:

Join us in our mission to ensure the Child Advocacy Center continues to thrive in our wonderful community. You can make a difference by spreading the word about our vital work at your next meeting, hosting a fundraiser, participating in our annual events, becoming a passionate advocate for children, and sharing our cause with your friends and family. Together, we can create a brighter future for our community's most vulnerable members. Join our cause today and be the change our children need.



## Parents and Caregivers:

Prevention is the key to protecting our children from abuse. Take action now - contact your local school and request that they invite us to present our prevention program to parents and children. Knowledge is power, and together we can equip our community with the tools to keep our children safe. Your call today can make a significant difference in their future.



# Capital Campaign – A Moving Story



In the heart of Lapeer County, a story of hope, healing, and resilience began to unfold over the years. The Child Advocacy Center, dedicated to supporting children and their families, embarked on a journey to expand its services and elevate the quality of care offered to those who walked through its doors. One of the most important goals is to have a comfortable and safe space for the children we serve – one that is welcoming, family-friendly, and above all, confidential. The goal is to provide a safe haven where every child and family could find the solace and support, they needed.

The Child Advocacy Center’s current building had stood as a symbol of this commitment, offering a place where lives were mended. But as the number of children in need of their services continued to grow, the limitations of their current location became evident.

Their facility shares a parking lot with several other businesses, including a bustling gas station, an emergency service, and a public transportation company. To make matters more challenging, the center is near a main intersection, turning its lot into a high-traffic area with inadequate parking and privacy for their clients.

The desire to better meet the needs of the children and families who need the center’s services propelled the Child Advocacy Center into action. In 2022, a capital campaign was launched, not just as a necessity but as hope. It was a call to the community to come together, to help them secure a new place to call home, where their vital mission could continue to shine brighter and provide solace to those they serve. This campaign wasn’t just about bricks and mortar; it was about building a stronger foundation of support for the children and families who looked to them for help.

In this journey for a new home, the Child Advocacy Center of Lapeer County found a renewed sense of purpose and the determination to ensure that every child could step into a safer and more welcoming space, a space that would serve as a sanctuary for years to come.

# Capital Campaign Donors

## Thank you to our donors:

McLaren Foundation	Yvette Kent	Gen Wandrie
State of Michigan	Jeanne Tuski	Ken Hummel
Lapeer Optimist Club	Chris Tuski	Constance Mazza
Choice One Bank	Sheri Sierakowski-Landry	Sam Moore
ITC	Barrett Sefft	Keith & Wendy Byard
Lapeer County Community Foundation	Kally Faris	Summer & Jason Putnam
Carl's Foundation	Amanda Hardy	Norman & Toby Barbieri
Four County Community Foundation	Louise Alberts	Kelly Watson & Family
Murphy's Excavating	Nicole & Joe Rodabaugh	Deb & Wendal Coe
Timbergate Construction	Rick Bebee	Mike O'Brien
GTA Business Systems	Sally Miller	Barb & Mark Soffin
Nancy Laidler	Diane Schneider	Transign LLC / Jamie Lipka
Al & Pam Rush	Carrie Powell-Stockley	Tom & Cindy Kish
Eric & Kristen Cassabon	Lori Angel	Amy Bober
Lorretta & Mark Deneweth	Brian & Deb Hurst	Terry Pickard
Tom & Janet Engleman	Paula Bliss	Tom Stepp
Jeanne Tuski	Debra Bliss	Jonathan Tezzia
Clark Kent	Kevin & Debbie Daley	Darrien Ryans
	Brad Chayka	Vanessa Sparks

\* May not be all inclusive at the time of print.

## Updates and Goals:

We want to express our gratitude for the incredible support we've received so far. The support and commitment to our mission is what keeps us going. We are diligently working to bring our vision to life, aiming to have our new home completed by the end of 2024. We are determined to stay on track, and every dollar raised brings us one step closer to our goal. Together, we can make this dream a reality.

Thank you to all our incredible donors!

# Collaborations and Partnerships



VICTIMS OF  
CRIME ACT



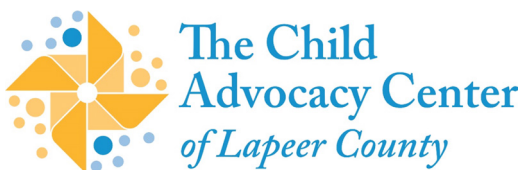
CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY  
CENTERS of Michigan



NATIONAL  
CHILDREN'S  
ALLIANCE®  
ACCREDITED MEMBER

## A special thank you to our supporters, volunteers, and partners.

Many THANKS to our dedicated supporters, selfless volunteers, and invaluable partners. The success of the Child Advocacy Center of Lapeer County in 2022 would not have been possible without your commitment and support. Together, we have made a meaningful impact on the lives of countless Lapeer County children, providing them with the safety, care, and advocacy they deserve. As we reflect on the past year's achievements and challenges, we are reminded of the strength that can be harnessed when a community comes together for a common cause. We look forward to continuing our vital work in the year ahead, standing side by side with each of you in our mission to protect and advocate for the children who depend on us. Thank you for your incredible support and dedication.



The Child Advocacy Center of Lapeer County  
15 E. Genesee Rd, Lapeer, MI 48446

EIN: 32-0262892

Visit our website: [caclapeer.org](http://caclapeer.org)



CAC Lapeer Facebook



Child Advocacy Center of Lapeer  
County (@caclapeer)

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