

BREAKING THE SILENCE

A publication of The Children's Assessment Center, a safe place serving Harris County's sexually abused children.

The mission of The Children's Assessment Center is to provide a professional, compassionate and coordinated approach to the treatment of sexually abused children and their families and to serve as an advocate for all children in our community.

Media Celebs Hit the Catwalk for a Cause at the Fifth Annual Spirit of Spring Luncheon & Fashion Show

Media celebrities strutted their stuff for more than 250 people at the Fifth Annual Spirit of Spring Luncheon & Fashion Show, presented by Memorial Hermann Healthcare System and benefiting The Children's Assessment Center (CAC) and Houston Aeros Charities. The event was held in the grand ballroom of the beautiful Warwick Hotel on April 2 and raised more than \$54,000 for the two organizations.

The luncheon began with a champagne reception, which gave guests the chance to socialize, bid on silent auction items and buy raffle tickets for the champagne tower with champagne provided by Glazers. The main raffle prizes were a beautiful Tahitian black pearl, donated by JD Designs, and a Veego Electric Scooter, donated by Houston Scooters.



◀ KTRK's Tom Koch



▲ CAC Foundation Board Member Sylvia Brauer and the delightful Deborah Duncan

The silent auction included a wide variety of items, from a suite for 14 at an Astros game, donated by Box & Box Custom Jewelers, to dinner for eight with Deborah Duncan and her husband at The State Grille from Frankie B. Mandola. Tables were adorned with gorgeous orchid centerpieces from Village Flowery.

KHOU's Deborah Duncan hammed it up as Mistress of Ceremonies for the fashion show that featured fabulous new designs from LUCHO, Inc. and Couture. The high-profile models included Butch Alsandor, Lara Bell, Frank Billingsley, Shern-Min Chow, Mia Gradney, Yolanda Green, Tom Koch, Linda Lorelle, Donna McKenzie, Minerva Perez, Roseann Rogers, Dominique Sachse, Kris Sava, Jorge Vargas, Hector Villarreal and Sherry Williams.

Texas Events created a spectacular runway complete with lights and music, while Todd Ramos of Couture choreographed the fashion show. Models were treated to hair and makeup styling by Deanna Andrade of James D and Kevin Roberts of Etheria.

CAC Executive Director Elaine Stolte was delighted with the event: "On behalf of our children, we thank Houston Aeros Charities and our incredible Presenting Sponsor and partner, Memorial Hermann Healthcare System, for such a fabulous affair. Their continued support and commitment to our children is amazing. This year's celebrity models were the best ever, and everyone had a great time."

Houston Aeros Charities provides assistance to charitable organizations throughout the Houston Gulf Coast area serving seriously ill, disabled or disadvantaged youth and their families through fundraising activities, charitable drives, grants or donations.

"Anytime you can raise money for a great children's cause, it's a successful event. What makes the Spirit of Spring even better is being able to



▲ Elaine Stolte, Rachel Capote, Robyn Howard and Kathy Wells

give our guests an entertaining afternoon by combining fashion and fundraising," said Susan Neuhalfen, Executive Director of Houston Aeros Charities.

We would like to extend a special thank you to the event's Planning *Continued on page 3*



Hello, Everyone.

Challenging times always seem to remind me of the strength in our mission. I am so grateful for the many friends, supporters, partners and staff of The CAC. They are all the bright, shining light keeping us focused on the important work done here every day. As Helen Keller once said, "Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, vision cleared, ambition inspired, and success achieved."

I would like to clarify a recent issue regarding The CAC. All advocacy centers do their best to co-house other agencies involved in the investigation and treatment of abused children. It is the foundation of how we operate. The Texas Standards for Children's Advocacy Centers states that a Children's Advocacy Center in the State of Texas shall:

1. Assess victims of child abuse and their families to determine their needs for services in relation to the investigation of child abuse.
2. Provide services determined to be needed.
3. Provide a facility at which the multi-disciplinary team can meet to facilitate the efficient and appropriate disposition of child abuse cases through the civil and criminal justice systems.
4. Coordinate the activities of governmental entities in relation to child abuse investigation and delivery of services to child abuse victims and their non-offending family members, which includes, at a minimum, coordinated investigations of child abuse conducted by law enforcement and Child Protective Services.

The importance of this is so that the system will not revictimize the children. Having everyone under one roof is in the best interest of our children at such a vulnerable time in their lives. Having trained



Forensic Interviewers here at The CAC to videotape the child's disclosure is a huge benefit for the children and each of our partner agencies. Law enforcement can then use the child's taped disclosure for their continued investigation, children's protective agencies can use the videotape to determine if the child is safe at home, the county and district attorneys can use the videotaped information to proceed with their respective legal proceedings in court. Also, if a disclosure has been made, the child will have a medical exam conducted at The CAC by the medical service provider under contract to provide this service.

I cannot tell you how much I appreciate every one of our partner agencies — they each bring their own individual expertise and character. Their commitment to our children is unsurpassed, and so many times the incredible job they do goes by unnoticed and unappreciated by so many.

The independent nature each of us possesses is the strength in our unique collaboration. The CAC needs the neutrality to be who we are and not compromise our mission. This unique collaboration with 17 partner agencies at times confuses the general public as to who and what we really are — children's advocacy centers — collaboratively working together with agencies in the community dedicated to protecting children.

Many times, I refer to myself as the bandleader. I don't know how to play all of the instruments, but I do know how the music should sound. I do my best to keep everyone playing the same song and marching in the same direction with the happiness and wholeness of our children as our guides.

Elaine Stolte, Executive Director
elaine_stolte@cac.co.harris.tx.us



◀ Brenda Koch and Janie Alderman

▶ WB 30's Mia Gradney



▶ CAC Advocacy Committee Member Jana Phillips



▲ Pat Flenniken is ready to take a ride on her new Vego scooter.

Spirit of Spring

Continued from cover

Committee — Lisa Andrews, Trey Bergeret, Kelly Bolton, Lynn Borker, Sylvia Brauer, Janna Brown, Mary Coleman, Yolanda Green, Dragana Harris, Robyn Howard, Brenda Koch, Peppi Lausen, Sharyn Malatok, Mary Martin, Mary Moody, Susan Neuhalfen, Lori O'Donnell, Darci Roche, Laura Shely, Julie Stankus, Elaine Stolte, Kim Watson, Kathy Wells and Phyllis Williams.

And many thanks to our generous sponsors, including Gold Sponsor Everyone's Internet and the following Bronze Sponsors: Annunciation Orthodox School Moms, The CAC Foundation, Baker Botts, Bank of America, Rosslyn Granger, Kelly Lubanko, WB 39, John and Jeanne McDowell, Mary McKerall and Richard Steele, Kelsey-Seybold, Smith Interests and the Watson Foundation.



▲ KHOU's Butch Alsdor

► CAC Foundation Board Chairman Chris DeClaire and Laurie Emmitt



◀ CAC Foundation Board President Susan Wagner and new Board Member Shelly Mulanax



▲ Deborah Duncan and Susan Neuhalfen



◀ KPRC's Roseann Rogers

▼ Mary McKerall and Beth Wolfe



"Anytime you can raise money for a great children's cause, it's a successful event. What makes the Spirit of Spring even better is being able to give our guests an entertaining afternoon by combining fashion and fundraising."

Susan Neuhalfen,
Executive Director of
Houston Aeros Charities



▲ KPRC's Linda Lorelle
◀ WB 39's and CAC Foundation Board Member Yolanda Green



▲ Couture's Todd Ramos and Alicia Smith



▲ Deborah Duncan hands off the beautiful black Tahitian pearl to winner Anne Culotta.



ROSE SWAIN

Our Unsung Hero



Rose Swain, a dedicated employee of Harris County since 1982, has another side to her that may not be completely apparent when one is reviewing her résumé. She is a gifted artist who uses her talents to reach through and heal aching spirits with her beautiful works of art. We at The CAC are fortunate to have many of Ms. Swain's creations hanging on the walls, which fill our hearts with light even in the midst of some very dark days. She donated these gifts out of a need to make a difference, which she says is the main objective of her life.

Elaine Stolte says, "Our children come to us amidst crisis, anger, pain and betrayal — the artwork adorning our walls painted by Rose Swain adds warmth and comfort to ease their suffering. We are grateful for her inspirational art that touches the lives of so many of our children, giving them hope and healing." Her contribution extends far beyond paintings on the wall. She has taken an active interest in teaching many of our sexually abused children how to create art, which boosts their self-esteem tremendously. For example, when we approached her at the last minute to assist us in Athletes for Art's



▲ Elaine Stolte, Commissioner Sylvia Garcia, Commissioner Steve Radack, Rose Swain with her Resolution, Commissioner El Franco Lee, Judge Robert Eckels and Commissioner Jerry Eversole

"Catch Art" program for the Super Bowl this year, she did not hesitate. She dropped everything and came over with art supplies in hand to help our children create two beautiful footballs. The balls were displayed during the weeks surrounding the big game at the new Hilton Americas Hotel. She told the children as they were creating the footballs, "Focus on bright colors and the light that is still inside of you." And that is exactly what they did. The balls are now located on the third floor of The CAC for all visitors to enjoy.

The sexually abused children of Harris County are truly fortunate to have Rose Swain creating and advocating on their behalf. Her work exemplifies hope, creativity and collaboration, which are also keys to our success here at The CAC. For these reasons, we nominated her for WB 39's Unsung Hero Award, which she won in February. She also received a Resolution from the Honorable Judge Robert Eckels and the Harris County Commissioners for her work here at The CAC and at Harris County. While Rose would definitely prefer to remain anonymous in her gracious gifts to humanity, we are grateful that a little of her song has been sung. Thank you, Rose!



Good Grades for The CAC

As report cards arrive in some of your mailboxes, it's worth noting that we have some good grades of our own. The CAC was given a four-star rating, the highest, by Charity Navigator, which is America's largest independent charity evaluator. They work to advance a more efficient and responsive philanthropic marketplace by evaluating the financial health of America's largest charities.

We were also given an M by the Better Business Bureau, which stands for Meets BBB Standards for Charitable Accountability. Before deciding to whom to donate your money or time, check out the charity at these two great resources: www.bbbhou.org or at www.charitynavigator.org.



Get With It!

Get With It Women, a boutique in Rice Village, helped raise nearly \$900 for The CAC. The week of March 4, storeowners Jeff and Lesli Levine donated 10% of all sales to us. CAC Advisory Board Member Dr. Jamie Keller Allen and Sherri Levin kicked off the week of giving by hosting a cocktail party at the store, complete with cocktails and hors d'oeuvres from Prego.

Get With It Women offers casual sophistication for the fashion-forward woman and is located at 2528 Amherst. Drop by, liven up your wardrobe and say thanks!



◀ Jeff Levine, Robyn Howard and Lesli Levine

Expert Training for Area Law Enforcement

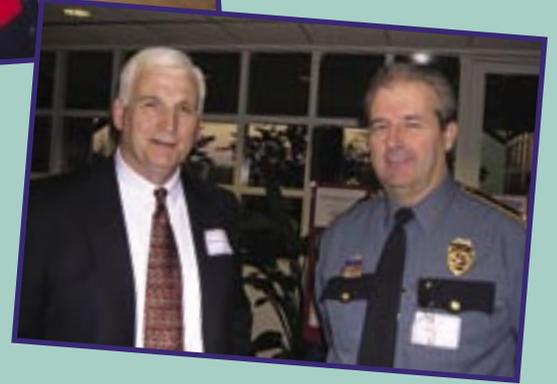
In February, The CAC was pleased to offer its partners and surrounding law enforcement agencies "The Reid Technique of Investigative Interviewing for Child Abuse Investigations." More than 100 people attended the three-day training, which was conducted by David Buckley of John Reid and Associates, the acknowledged leader in the field of interviewing and interrogation seminars. The audience consisted of employees from 22 Harris County law enforcement agencies, the Harris County District Attorney's Office, Harris County Protective Services for Children and Adults and The CAC. The Harris County Child Abuse Task Force and DePelchin Children's Center were co-sponsors of the training.

We also hosted a reception at The CAC the first night of the training for area police chiefs to give those who are not yet partners a chance to tour and learn more about our facility. We would like to thank CAC Training Coordinator Karen Kennard for doing such a wonderful job overseeing the event.



▲ Reid Technique trainer David Buckley, Karen Kennard and Lakeview Police Chief Tom Savage

► West University Police Chief Ken Walker and Captain Neal Leonard of the Hedwig Village Police Department



CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH



▲ CAC Foundation Board Vice President Bruce Rieser and National Children's Alliance Board Member Ted Poe at the donor appreciation reception.

hosting a donor appreciation reception at the JP Morgan Chase Heritage Hall on April 1. The First Lady of Houston, Andrea White, gave opening remarks followed by the presentation of the first-ever CAC Humanitarian Awards. Carroll R. Ray, Susan French and H.O.I.S.T. each

► Rick and Linda Daab of H.O.I.S.T., Elaine Stolte, Andrea White, Carroll Ray, Susan French, and Tammi and Jim Kepner of H.O.I.S.T.

Child Abuse Prevention Month this April brought home the message that abuse is too often a part of the young lives in Houston and Harris County. Last year alone, more than 4700 victims of child sexual abuse and their families were treated at The CAC.

Our Advocacy Committee kicked off the month by

received an award for their unwavering support to our children.

On April 15, The Child Abuse Prevention Summit was held, bringing more than 100 community leaders together to help develop a community-wide prevention program. The Honorable Judge Robert Eckels opened the event with a poignant reading from a poem written by a child abuse victim. The Honorable Mayor Bill White also addressed the crowd, followed by The CAC's Robyn Howard. She presented the findings of community focus groups held during the first three months of this year, which outlined five major concerns and responses to those concerns. The outcome of the Summit was the establishment of a county-city task force that will endeavor to enact a formalized prevention initiative.

According to the National Children's Alliance, one out of every four girls and one out of every six boys is at risk of sexual abuse by the age of 18. This problem is not going away until we focus the community's attention on the importance of prevention.



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▲ Thomas Weber and the Annunciation Orthodox Middle School students, who made Easter baskets for our kids.

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▲ Lisa Andrews and Renee Davis are joined by David McMaster, who rounded up stuffed animals from Rodeo Houston vendors to donate to The CAC.

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◀ Cub Scout Pack 450 from The Fay School conducted a teddy bear drive for The CAC.



▲ Lynden International employees delivered dozens of Easter baskets to our children.

Carla Vanderweide
 WB 39
 Jill Wallace
 Cherryll Walzel
 Laura and David Ward
 Kim Watson

Please Take Notes!

☉ We are thrilled to welcome three new members to The Children's Assessment Center Foundation Board of Directors. Jay Comeaux is the Co-President of Stanford Financial Group and also serves on Boards for the Alley Theatre, the Houston Grand Opera and the Galveston/Houston Diocese. Shelly Mulanax is an active community volunteer, serving on Boards of the Epilepsy Foundation, Theater Under the Stars and various committees for the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. Jeffrey Starke, M.D., is with Ben Taub Hospital and Baylor College of Medicine. He is also a community advisor to the Greater Houston Collaborative for Children. We look forward to having such dedicated individuals on our team.

☉ The 5th Annual Polo & Risotto Festival is Sunday, September 12, at the Houston Polo Club. The event features a six-chukker polo match, celebrity chefs competing for the "best risotto" title, a fabulous auction and fun for the kids, too. For tickets, sponsorships and auction item donations, please call Sean Carter at (713) 986-3536. Don't miss the fun!

☉ November is a way off, but it's not too late to be thinking about sponsoring a team for the Swing Into Fall Golf Tournament. We are hoping to double the number of teams playing this year. Please call Sean Carter at (713) 986-3536 for more information.

We Appreciate Our Volunteers!

On April 29, The CAC hosted the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner at Maggiano's. This annual event allows us to thank all the individuals who together donate thousands of hours to our children throughout the year. Volunteers gathered for cocktails, dinner and awards.



▲ Carol Milam, Cecilia Ruiz and Judy Fred

Elaine Stolte thanked the volunteers for the commitment they make each day to our children, and CAC Foundation Board President Susan Wagner presented each volunteer with special butterfly wind chimes

and a certificate of appreciation. Special recognition was given to Judy Fred and Carol Milam, who have given years of service to our children, especially during the holidays. They are known best for their arts and crafts at the holiday party each year.



▲ Longtime CAC Volunteer David Gomez, who was acknowledged for giving the "Most Volunteer Hours" in the past year, and Lisa Baldwin-Andrews

CAC Children's Services Coordinator Lisa Baldwin-Andrews, who planned the event, had this to say: "Our volunteers are priceless! The CAC would not be the incredible program it is today without their ongoing commitment and dedication to our children."

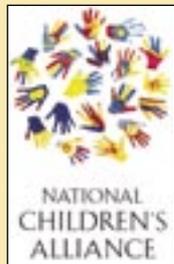
Our volunteers are priceless!

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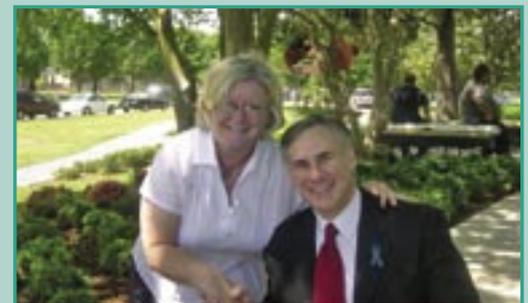
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▲ Mary Coleman with Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott at an observance for National Crime Victims' Rights Week.



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