

The Children's Assessment Center

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.

Houston Comets Score Big for The CAC

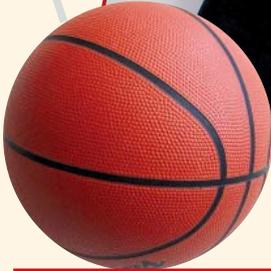
The Houston Comets and Clutch City Foundation teamed up for the Houston Comets Charity Luncheon on July 28, benefiting The Children's Assessment Center. Head Coach Van Chancellor and all the Comets players, including retired star Cynthia Cooper, were on hand at the luncheon to greet fans and pose for photos. The live and silent auction featured one-of-a-kind autographed memorabilia from the WNBA's premier players as well as game and travel packages.

Houston Comets President & CEO, George Postolos, is presented a special gift of thanks from our children by Elaine Stolte.



Basketball Hall of Famer and ESPN Analyst Nancy Lieberman addressed the crowd of over 300 and was thrilled to be a part of such a great event for such a great cause.

"We are very pleased to undertake such a worthwhile endeavor," said Leslie Alexander, owner of the Houston Rockets and Comets, and new Boardmember of The CAC Foundation. "It's great when we can help improve the lives of the children in our community and help The CAC carry out their primary mission."



▲ Elaine Stolte, Houston Comets Star Cynthia Cooper, Robyn Howard, and Sean Carter



▲ Standing: Laurie Emmitt, Christopher DeClaire, Rachel Capote, Bruce Rieser, Katelin Rieser, Matt Newtown, Carlos Ryerson
Seated: Houston Comets Tiffani Johnson and Dominique Canty with Kathy Wells



Hello Everyone!

Congratulations are in order to our entire staff and to each of our partner agencies for continued excellence in providing services for our children.

In June, The CAC received Accredited Membership Status from the National Children's Alliance (NCA), making us one of the first advocacy centers to achieve this level of excellence since the NCA began the process of accrediting member centers. We are extremely proud of the continued collaboration between our partner agencies, our Foundation Board of Directors and Harris County Commissioner's Court.

In August we had the distinct honor and privilege to host the 12-member multidisciplinary team from the Chicago Children's Advocacy Center. Our incredible staff and partner agencies provided an action-packed two days of training, which in turn gave each of us an opportunity to learn from our counterparts from another state.



▲ Our friends from Chicago's CAC

I don't know who enjoyed the visit more, but I can truly say that it reinforced our feeling of appreciation and respect for each other as we continue to work together toward our mission.

Chicago's Executive Director Erin Sorensen said it best: "Our trip to Houston lasted two days, and it could have easily extended to two weeks! There was so much to learn, and The CAC staff was so incredibly knowledgeable and hospitable. You have so much to be proud of in your program. From the immaculate and efficient organization and facility to the dedication and expertise of the all the staff and partners ... you all are a true model of a CAC! We are still digesting what we have learned in Houston. We refer to our notes and your organizational charts during our meeting and our trip has given us a common language to speak in when we want to reference a model program. Thank you for this wonderful opportunity, and PLEASE come to Chicago any time and let us try to pay back your hospitality!"

We look forward to visiting Chicago one day and continuing our efforts to learn and improve the system of care for children across our country.

To complete the summer, I was able to make a presentation at the 12th Annual Colloquium for the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children. I addressed an audience on "Managing an Effective Public/Private Partnership" and our strategies of success. It was very well received, and I am proud Harris County and The CAC are able to be a shining light for many other communities across the country. We continue to pass our baton energized with eagerness, enthusiasm and our hope to make the world a better place for so many children.

Take care,

Elaine Stolte, Executive Director

elaine_stolte@cac.co.harris.tx.us

HATS OFF TO H.O.I.S.T.

Knee-deep mud on the weekend of May 15 did little to dissuade hundreds of loyal participants to take part in the 8th Annual Houston Oilman's Invitational Shooting Tournament (H.O.I.S.T.) and raise \$50,000 for The CAC. The event was held in Fulshear and was two days of nonstop sport, food and fun.

The story began in 1996, when our staff members made a presentation to the Houston Chapter of the American Petroleum Institute. Rick Daab, a member of the audience, was extremely moved by the information presented about child sexual abuse and The CAC's mission in treating these children and their families. Through Mr. Daab's efforts, we were named as beneficiary of the first annual H.O.I.S.T. in 1997. Over the past seven years this event has contributed over \$250,000 to our programs and services.

A huge thanks to the board of H.O.I.S.T. led by Joe and Lauren Byars, and Rick and Linda Daab for their dedication to our children. We honored H.O.I.S.T. this year at our Donor Reception in April, which kicked off Child Abuse Prevention Month. What an incredible group!



▲ The H.O.I.S.T. gang present Rachel Capote \$50,000 for our kids!

ConocoPhillips Makes Back to School Brighter

Another summer break has come and gone, but the gifts from our 4th Annual Back to School Party will last for months. Thanks to a generous \$10,000 grant from ConocoPhillips, we were able to provide 200 children receiving services at The CAC with backpacks, school supplies and uniforms. But that was just the tip of the iceberg. The third floor was a beehive of activity for three solid hours on August 11.

First-time participant Whole Foods Market provided childogs, chips, cookies and soft drinks served by their own staff with winning smiles. The Harris County Sheriff's Department conducted fingerprint identification while the Harris County Crime Prevention Robot "Gismo" delighted the kids with his safety tips. Thanks also to our facepainters Diane Coello, Macy Cassin and Priscilla Richardson, and to our character artists Orlando Velez and Isaac Laryea. Supercuts donated certificates for haircuts, and the children also received any needed immunizations.

The Houston Texans' mascot, Toro, and their gorgeous cheerleaders made the rounds, signed autographs and took photos with their young and old fans alike.

And on the patio, everyone was entertained by the tunes of DJ Red and the amazing moves of dancers from City Dance Studio and by the Youth America Hip Hoppers.

Thanks to the incredible organizational skills of our Children's Services Coordinator Lisa Andrews and her team of volunteers and staff members who made the event run so smoothly!



◀ DJ Red

▼ Gismo and friends



▲ City Dance Studio dancers



▲ Thank you ConocoPhillips!



▲ All set for school



▲ Facepainting with Diane Coello




▲ Isaac Laryea and Orlando Velez drawing cartoons.



▲ Robyn Howard, Whole Foods' Sandra Himes and Deputy Eduardo Rivera of the Harris County Sheriff's Department



▲ Smiles from the Houston Texans cheerleaders.



▲ Toro signs autographs for the children.



▲ Kids receive fingerprint identification.

Congressional Art Competition at The CAC

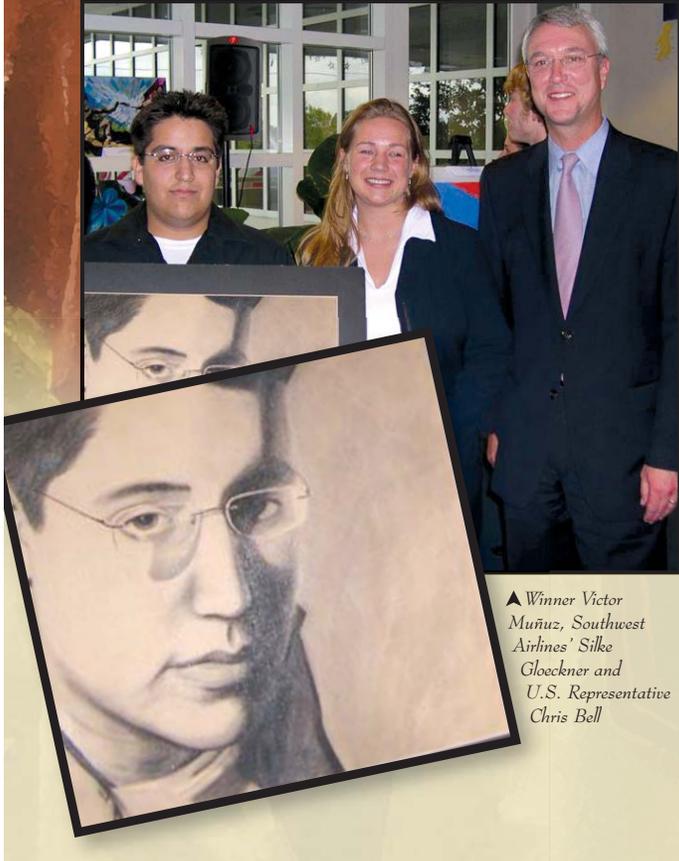
The first week of May turned The CAC into an art venue as we teamed up with U.S. Representative Chris Bell to host the annual Congressional Art Contest in Bell's district. Sixty-three students from 10 public and private schools competed, but there was only one that came out on top.

Victor Muñoz's surprise was evident when Bell announced that the Baytown senior's artwork had earned him and his parents a trip to Washington, D.C., courtesy of Southwest Airlines. In addition, his charcoal self-portrait will hang with the nation's other winners in the Cannon Tunnel, a pedestrian walkway leading to the U.S. Capitol.

Muñoz spent a month and a half of class periods working on the drawing. It was his first self-portrait and second charcoal drawing.

Elaine Stolte told students their pieces brought "hope and healing" to the children of the center who have gone through traumatic experiences. "I wish the artwork could stay here forever, but it really belongs in museums," she told the crowd at The CAC who had come to view the art and find out who won.

The Congressional Art Contest has been conducted annually since 1984, and winners from each of the congressional districts showcase their art in the tunnel for one year.



▲ Winner Victor Muñoz, Southwest Airlines' Silke Gloeckner and U.S. Representative Chris Bell



GETTING STARTED, THANKS TO BANK OF AMERICA

Bank of America



Thanks go to CAC Foundation Boardmember Jim Mercurio and Bank of America! The CAC has been awarded \$15,000 from Bank of America for our "Getting Started" Program in our Therapy and Psychological Services Division.

The purpose of the program is to provide immediate information and education for nonoffending caregivers of children after an allegation of sexual abuse from the child. Licensed therapists present a weekly overview of various topics pertaining to sexual abuse, with the goal of providing caregivers the knowledge and understanding to better cope with the issues surrounding a family during this time of crisis. The "Getting Started" Program has a 10-week curriculum, with classes held every Thursday evening from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. in both English and Spanish here at The CAC.

We are grateful to have this program made possible through this generous grant from Bank of America.

A Letter From Camp

by Diane Vines, MA, LPC

Dear Friends,

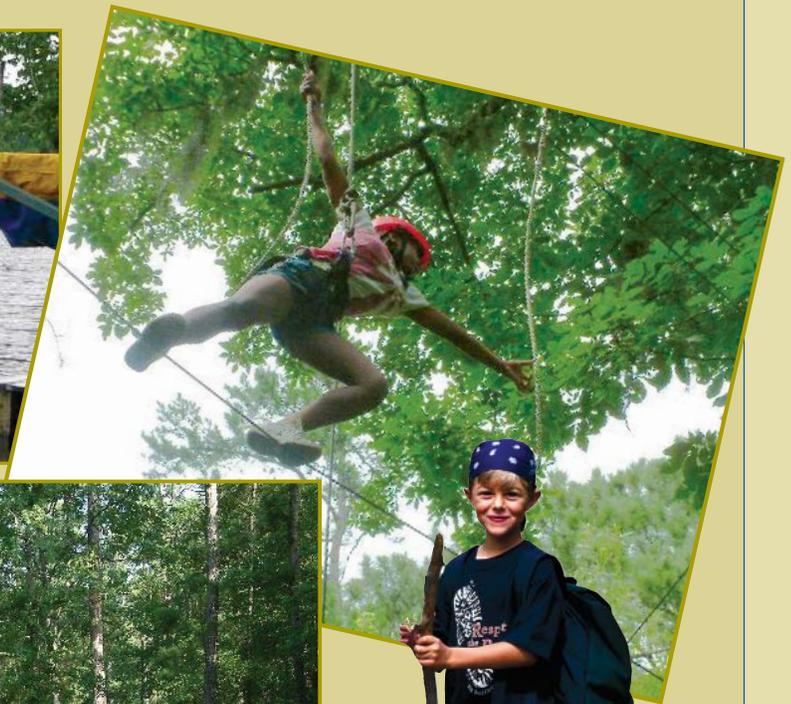
Again this year, it was my privilege to accompany our children to Camp Cullen. For many of them, camp is a brand new experience, and this was their only opportunity to experience what other children take for granted—a week along the beautiful shores of Lake Livingston at summer camp. Many of the counselors and staff were excited to be working with our kids. Some of them had also experienced foster-home placement and “growing up in the system,” creating a special connection between them and the children they were serving.

The children were able to experience water slides (a favorite among the campers), Ropes courses, sailing, water skiing, horseback riding, canoeing and more for the first time. For some children, some of these activities were initially frightening, but the staff was encouraging, and those who tried new things were able to feel a sense of accomplishment because of their efforts. Even those who refused to try some of the more challenging activities due to fear had a good time. From many of these children, and others as well, I heard, “I’m coming back here next year!”

This was the first year that there was no scholarship session. Previously, scholarship week was held the week before the first regular session and was reserved exclusively for children whose parents paid only part or none of the camp fee. It was the session that The CAC children attended. This year, however, our children attended the first regular session, and it was a success. Several of our kids were awarded “Honor Camper” status. Honor campers exhibit the YMCA core values during their week at camp, demonstrating leadership and a positive attitude toward staff, other campers and the activities. I was proud of our kids and the way they represented The CAC and themselves. As always, the staff at the camp was wonderful to everyone! It was truly an honor to be a part of the experience.

Thanks for the memories,

Diane



\$10,000.00 +

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Congratulations to newlyweds Jeannie Edgar and Fred Cataldo, whose wonderful friends also donated to The CAC in honor of their marriage.



Excellence Is Awarded

Lisa Holcomb has been recognized as a statewide leader in the fight against child abuse by the Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas. She has been given the Team Excellence Award for the CAC Staff Member Division. Lisa has been a forensic interviewer at The CAC for the past nine years and has completed over 6,000 interviews with children who are victims of sexual abuse, witnesses of sexual abuse or witnesses of homicides or who have been abducted. She conducts numerous training seminars in the community and among our partner agencies and provides expert testimony in court proceedings.

"The two words that come to mind when I think of Lisa are *dedication* and *dependability*," said CAC Supervisor of Forensic Interviewing Tammy Urban. "She is definitely an enormous asset to the forensic interviewing team, The CAC and the children of Harris County."

Honorable Mention recognitions were bestowed upon Harris County Sheriff Department Sgt. Vincent Battaglia, CAC Foundation Board Chairman Christopher DeClaire, long-time playroom volunteer David Gomez and CAC Therapist Mary Ellen Sherrill. Congratulations to you all, and thank you for your dedication!

The Team Excellence Awards are given annually to individuals who have acknowledged the merits of collaboration when working with abused children and who have brought excellence from their respective fields to the multidisciplinary team approach within a children's advocacy center setting in Texas.



▲ Lisa Holcombe and Texas State Senator Florence Shapiro

Team Excellence

Please Take Notes!

☉ October 19 is the date for the **Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas "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.

☉ **Holiday Gift Time** is just around the corner. Plan a toy drive, fill a child's wish list or simply make a cash donation. Thanks to your generosity last year, we were able to make the holiday dreams of over 1400 children come true. For more information, please call Lisa Andrews at 713-986-3459 or Robyn Howard at 713-986-3482.

☉ We are thrilled to welcome three members to The Children's Assessment Center Foundation Board of Directors. **Leslie Alexander** is the owner of the Houston Rockets and Comets. **Ted Poe** is a former Harris County Judge and serves on the Board of the National Children's Alliance. **Jeffrey Starke, M.D.**, is a pediatrician and the head of emergency services at Ben Taub Hospital. We look forward to having such dedicated individuals on our team.

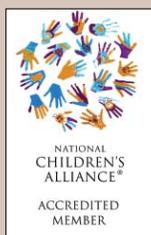
☉ Look ahead to 2005 and mark your calendars for the inaugural **Chic-to-Chic — "Get With It" Gala** on February 20. This unique event will feature a junior "star search" finals competition and a teen fashion show. You've never seen a fundraiser like this before! Get With It, a fashion-forward boutique in Rice Village, sponsors the fun. For more details or to find out about auditions, call Sean Carter at 713-986-3536.

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▲ Marilu Ellis, Director of
the Children's School of Art Houston, volunteered
to help our children paint dozens of beautiful platters to be
auctioned at our Polo & Risotto Festival in September.



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