



**children's  
advocacy  
center** Since 1992  
of Tom Green County, Inc.

**Annual Report 2015**

# Table of Contents

2015 Board of Directors	3
From the President	4
Hope House	6
Court Appointed Special Advocates	9
Family Enrichment Services	12
Child Fatality Review Team	14
Fundraisers & Events	16
Financial Highlights	23
Contact Information	24



# 2015 Board of Directors

Vicki Housley, President  
Todd Sanford, Vice President/President Elect  
Michelle Perkey, Treasurer/Finance Chair  
Mason Vaughan, Secretary  
Brian Thomma, Member at Large  
Dr. Greg Dunham, Medical Director

John Best  
Sharanda El-Masri  
Mike Hennings  
Susan Looka  
Isaac Lopez

Derek McIntyre  
Ron Sanders  
James Skinner  
Wilson Stokes  
Bette White  
Diane Wilson

Community Advisory Members  
Lisa Eady  
Richard Webb



## Our Mission

To ensure for each child a safe and nurturing home.

# From the President

The Children's Advocacy Center of Tom Green County was able to reach new heights in our mission to ensure a safe and nurturing home for each child this year because of the selflessness and generosity displayed by our community. Because of your dedication and support, the CAC has been able to provide hope and healing to children and families through our four main programs, Hope House, CASA, Family Enrichment Services, and the Child Fatality Review Team.

As an umbrella agency, we operate on a prevention and intervention continuum. On the prevention side, the CAC offers Family Enrichment Services to anyone in a caregiving role. FES provides classes, support groups, teaching materials, and even a one on one parent mentor program based on individual family needs, all for no cost. The intervention side of our agency hosts the Hope House, a safe haven for kids when an outcry of abuse has been made, where a forensic interview can be conducted with purpose of eliminating the need for the child to tell their story multiple times, as each telling leads to re-lived trauma. Our Hope House staff works with various responding agencies, such as law-enforcement, mental health professionals, and CPS, in order to conduct a thorough investigation, all with the child's best interest remaining paramount throughout the process. Additionally, we run a Court Appointed Special Advocate program, or CASA, that trains and oversees volunteers who advocate in court on behalf of children who are now in the foster care system.

Supporting a thirteen county area, our staff, volunteers, and board members work extremely hard to provide exceptional care for the children and families in our community. The tireless efforts of these passionate people are fueled by our equally passionate community, and their willingness to participate in fundraisers and other events throughout the year that provide not only financial support, but a boost in morale as well. The contributions made by each of you are profoundly important, and will positively impact the lives of children and families infinitely.

Vicki Housley,  
Board President

# Hope House



Hope House provides a cooperative approach to the successful prosecution of child abuse and sexual abuse cases with a thorough investigation. Each case is carefully coordinated with a team of experts from Child Protective Services, police department, sheriff's office, district attorney's office, medical personnel, therapists and other community service agencies all working

collaboratively to keep the child's well-being and safety foremost. If a forensic interview is necessary for the investigation, the child recounts the story only once, in order to prevent further traumatization. The forensic interview gathers pertinent information in a neutral, non-leading, and legally defensible manner to ensure justice and advocacy for every child. All children and non-offending caregivers referred to Hope House receive counseling and community services to ensure healing that will allow a life full of hope and limitless opportunities.

## Hope House Multi-Disciplinary Team Member Agencies

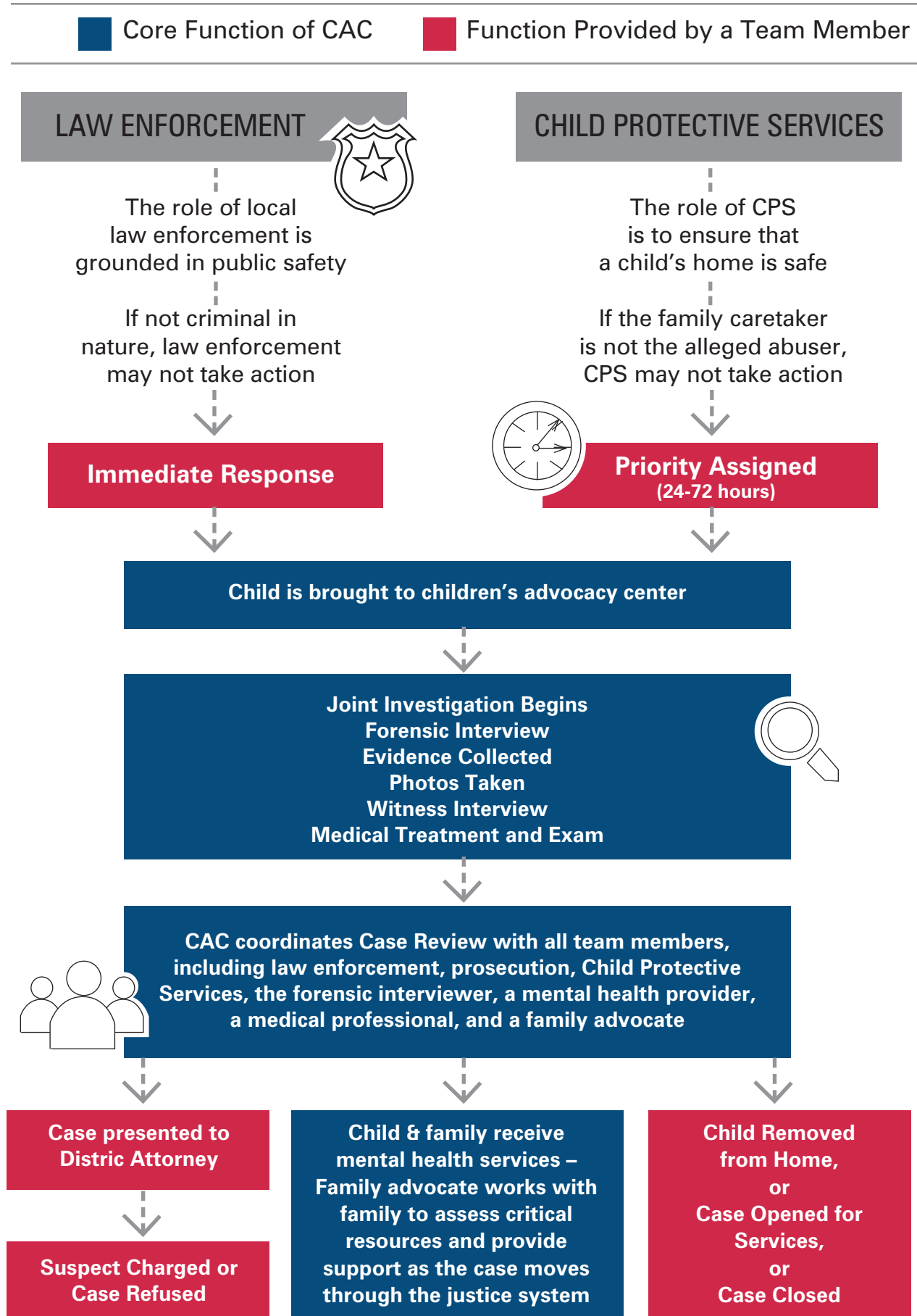
Children's Advocacy Center  
San Angelo Police Department  
Tom Green County Sheriff Department  
District Attorney's Office  
The Medical Director/SANE Program  
West Texas Counseling & Guidance  
Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

## Community Resources and Trainings

The CAC offers free training to the community, professionals, child care facilities, school districts, organizations, or individuals.

- **Recognizing and Reporting Training:** The training provides the tools to recognize the signs of child abuse and how to properly report to Child Protective Services. The CAC trained over 500 individuals in Recognizing and Reporting training from the following: TLCA, Head Start SAISD, Wall ISD, St. Luke Child Development Center, Sierra Vista Methodist Church Preschool, Early Childhood Center, and Mosaic Child Care Center.
- **Shaken Baby Syndrome, SIDS, and Early Brain Development:** Training to educate adults and childcare providers regarding important preventative steps and stress management.
- **Darkness to Light (D2L) Stewards of Children:** Training to raise awareness of the prevalence and consequences of child sexual abuse by educating adults regarding the steps they can take to prevent, recognize, and react responsibly to the reality of child sexual abuse.

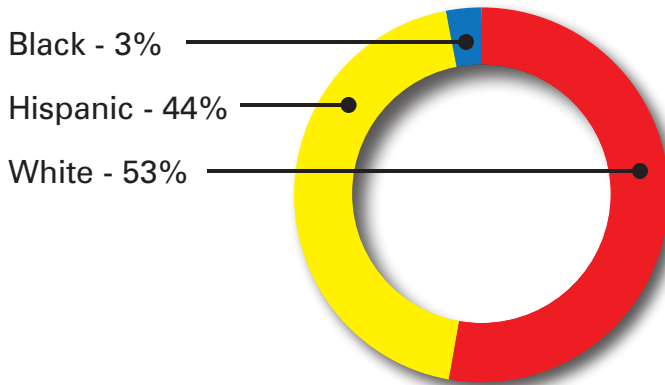
# HOW DOES THE CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER MODEL WORK?



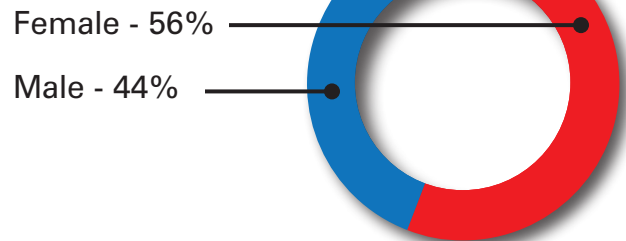
# Hope House Statistics

In 2015, 241 children received forensic interviews; 71 children and 5 adults received counseling and community services.

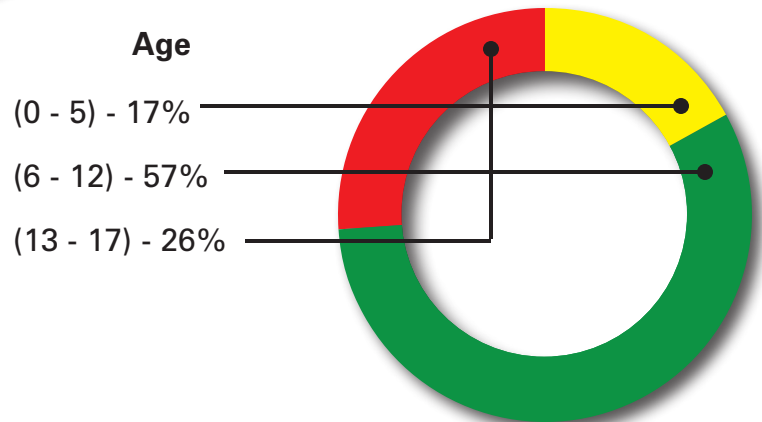
## Ethnicity



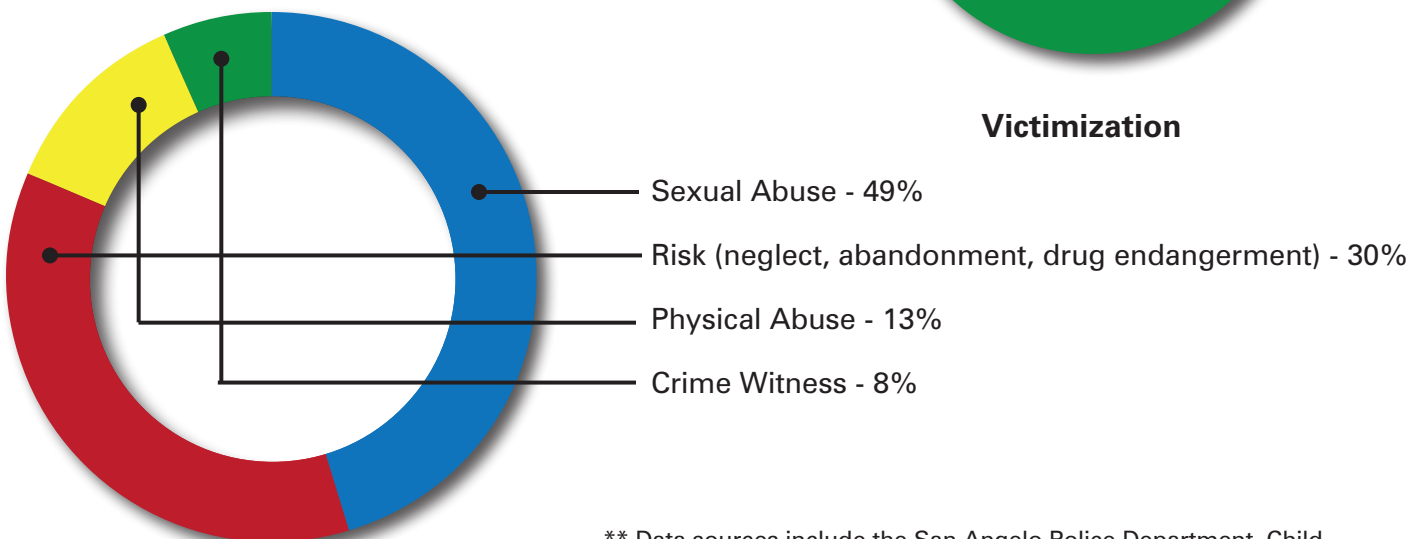
## Gender



## Age



## Victimization



\*\* Data sources include the San Angelo Police Department, Child Protective Services, Reagan County and Tom Green County Sheriff's Departments and the Children's Advocacy Center case tracking and files.

# Court Appointed Special Advocates



**Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)** joined the Children's Advocacy Center of Tom Green County, Inc. in 1998. The program's mission is to speak for the best interests of abused and neglected children whose futures are being decided in a court of law. CASAs are community volunteers who have completed a 30-hour court-approved training. Upon completion, volunteers are sworn in as "officers of the court" and act as advocates during the entire life of a case. CASA's goal is to provide each child a safe, permanent and nurturing home, and quality volunteer representation is crucial to meeting that goal. As child abuse reports continue to increase in our community one thing is clear, CASA volunteers are vitally needed.

## **Who are our volunteers?**

CASA volunteers are ordinary people who are trained by a court-approved program and appointed by a district judge. In the life of a case, a CASA volunteer monitors the child's situation to make sure he or she remains safe. The CASA is instrumental in ensuring that a child or family receives services the court has ordered including therapy, substance abuse counseling and/or special medical or educational needs. In a child welfare system challenged by increasing caseloads, a CASA volunteer can make the single greatest difference in a child's life.

Volunteers are the heart of CASA. In 2015, we had 55 CASA volunteers who donated over 5500 hours and traveled approximately 30,000 miles in service to their children.

**Research shows that a child with a CASA volunteer is more likely to be adopted, half as likely to re-enter foster care, more likely to have a plan for permanency, and substantially less likely to spend time in long-term foster care. CASA volunteers improve representation of children, reduce the time needed by lawyers, are more likely than paid lawyers to file written reports, and are highly effective in having their recommendations adopted by the court.**

## **Counties Served:**

**Tom Green, Concho, Crockett, Coke, Runnels, Reagan,  
Sutton, Sterling, Schleicher, Irion**



# COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES **CHANGE LIVES**

"Being in foster care is living in a constant state of flux. Homes, schools, families...everything is always changing, often suddenly and without warning. The only constant was my CASA volunteer. Without her I would have been lost in the system." **MELISSA, FORMER FOSTER YOUTH**

## THE PROBLEM: **OVERWHELMED SYSTEMS**



will find themselves in U.S. foster care this year.



The average child will spend nearly **2 years (20 months)** in foster care



On average each one of those children will **change homes three times**

## THE SOLUTION: **CITIZEN VOLUNTEERS**

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), trained volunteers who help abused and neglected children find safe, permanent homes.



**A WISE INVESTMENT**  
One year of CASA/GAL advocacy costs less than one month of foster care.



**1** staff member



supports **30** volunteers



serving **75** children

## THE RESULTS: **BRIGHTER FUTURES**



**CASA PROGRAMS CHANGE LIVES**  
A child with a CASA/GAL volunteer is more likely to find a safe, permanent home.



A child with a CASA/GAL volunteer is **half as likely to re-enter the foster-care system**



And, they are **more likely to succeed in school** and less likely to spend three or more years in care.

## OUR VISION: **SERVING EVERY CHILD**



**76,000**  
CASA/GAL volunteers help change children's lives every day.



**251,000**  
abused and neglected children served through CASA or GAL programs in the last year.



**400,000**  
children are waiting for a volunteer empowered to find them a safe, loving, permanent home

"CASA is an organization of people with a proven record of service, excellence, high standards, determination and an unwavering commitment to abused and neglected children and to advocating for justice for all children." **JUDGE JOYCE WILLIAMS WARREN**

The National CASA Association is an organization of 949 programs recruiting, training and supporting court-appointed volunteers to stand up for the rights of abused and neglected children, in the courtroom and the community.

Prepared with funding from the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation.

**NATIONAL CASA ASSOCIATION | 800-628-3233 | CASAFORCHILDREN.ORG**

SOURCES: CASAforChildren.org/Evidence



# CASA Statistics

In 2015, CASA served 504 children in 249 cases. CASA's primary focus is to keep the child's best interest in the forefront as they receive individual care and compassionate adult representation. In 2015, 87% of the children in CASA care found a safe and permanent home.

## Children with Open Cases Reason for Removal

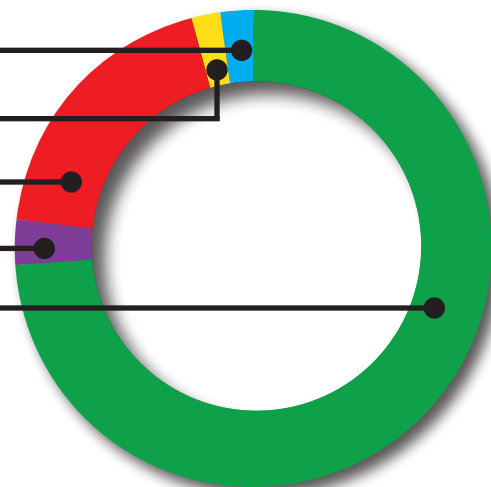
Failure to Accept Parental Responsibility - 2%

Other - 2%

Physical Abuse - 19%

Sexual Abuse - 3%

Neglectful Supervision - 74%



## Children with Closed Cases

Transferred to another jurisdiction - 1%

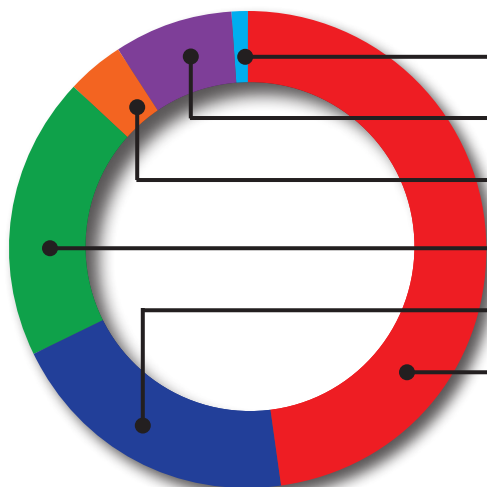
Remain in Permanent Conservatorship with CPS - 8%

Turned 18 years old while in the care of CPS - 4%

Placed with Relatives - 19%

Adopted - 20%

Children Returned to Their Parents - 48%



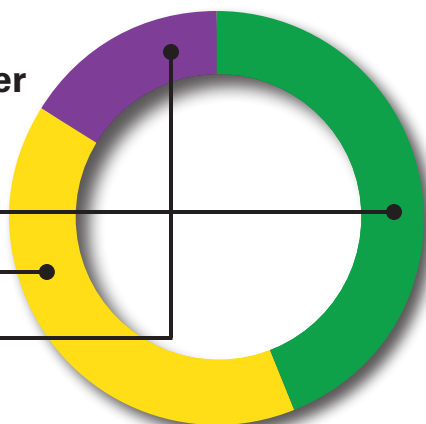
## Age & Gender

Male: 52%  
Female: 48%

(0 - 5) - 44%

(6 - 12) - 40%

(13 - 18) - 16%

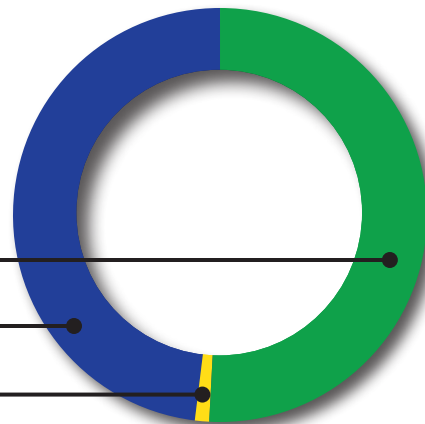


## Ethnicity

White - 51%

Hispanic - 48%

Black - 1%



# Family Enrichment Services



**FAMILY ENRICHMENT SERVICES (FES)** provides families with the tools and support needed to create nurturing homes. Parenting is a life-changing experience that can be both rewarding and challenging. FES provides support, community resources and family strengthening techniques to ensure the whole family remains strong and happy.

**The Parent Mentor Program** is for anyone seeking parenting tips and guidance. Once a week, families work with a mentor in their home, or another comfortable location, and receive services that are specifically tailored to meet their unique needs. The Parent Mentor Program uses the **\*\*Family Connections** model to provide families with education, support, crisis intervention, and coordination of resources. This program is designed for caregivers of children 0-17 years old, or families expecting their first child.

**Parents Anonymous®** is a weekly support group co-led by trained facilitators and parent leaders that affords parents a safe space to discuss their situations with the encouragement of other caregivers experiencing similar issues. By engaging in open conversations with facilitators and parent leaders, parents are able to leave weekly meetings with new strategies to create solutions in their home. **Parents Anonymous®** is designed to accommodate parents by offering a children's group simultaneous to the adult meeting.

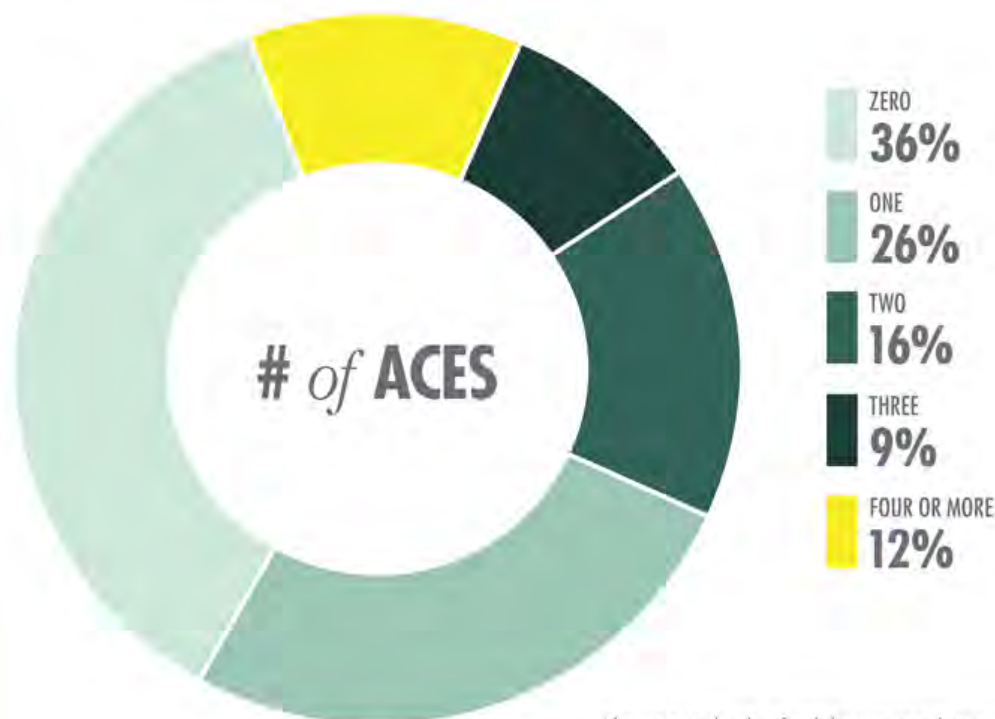
**Family Preservation** serves families referred by the Tom Green County Juvenile Probation Department by providing short-term, one on one, in-home services based on individual family needs. The case manager conducts weekly meetings to improve family dynamics and functioning. Working together in the best interest of the child and family, case managers include community and government organizations, to ensure meaningful and long lasting changes in behaviors.

## **The Parent Project®**

The Parent Project® offers concrete, efficient solutions for parents of children ages 13-17. The step-by-step action plans allow parents to make immediate progress toward preventing and intervening in their child's negative behavior and choices. Classes are age appropriate for the entire family. Parents and teens meet weekly on Thursday evenings for eleven weeks from 6:00-8:30 pm. Childcare and meal provided.

*\*\*Family Connections (FC) Is a nationally replicated multi-faceted community-based program that works with families in their homes to help them meet the basic needs of their children to increase overall individual and family well-being or functioning. The CAC undergoes intensive fidelity reviews with the developer and nationally recognized technical assistance provider.*

## HOW COMMON ARE ACES?

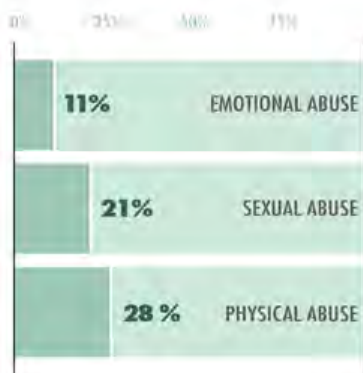


Almost two-thirds of adults surveyed reported at least one Adverse Childhood Experience – and the majority of respondents who reported at least one ACE reported more than one.

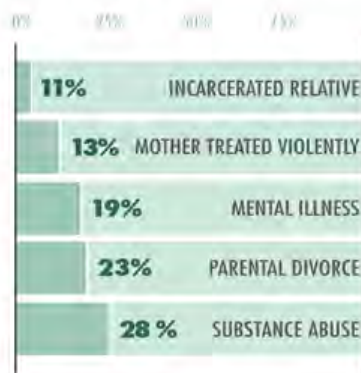
## TYPES of ACES

The ACE Study looked at three categories of adverse experience: **childhood abuse**, which included emotional, physical, and sexual abuse; **neglect**, including both physical and emotional neglect; and **family dysfunction**, which included growing up in a household where there was substance abuse, mental illness, violent treatment of a mother or stepmother, a parental separation/divorce, or had a member of the household go to prison. Respondents were given an **ACE score** between 0 and 10 based on how many of these 10 types of adverse experience to which they reported being exposed.

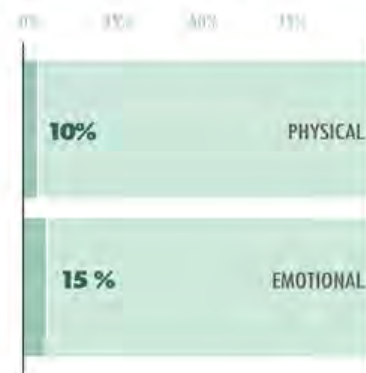
### ABUSE



### FAMILY DYSFUNCTION



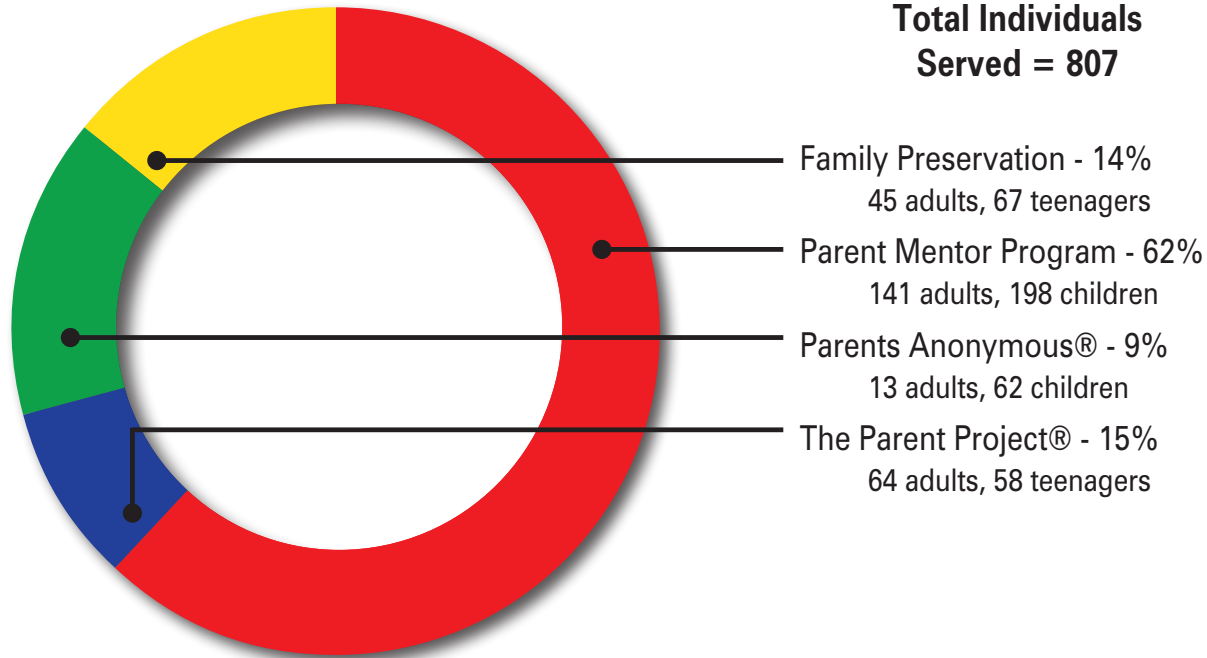
### NEGLECT



Report Suspected Abuse  
Call 1-800-252-5400 or 9-1-1  
[www.txabusehotline.org](http://www.txabusehotline.org)



# Family Enrichment Services



## Concho Valley Family Alliance (CVFA)

The CVFA is a coalition comprised of parents, agencies, business leaders, and other community residents steadfast in the mission to strengthen families by modifying or establishing programs and initiatives aimed at better meeting the needs of families and children in the ten counties served.

Over the past year, the CAC and CVFA provided leadership to foster social change in the community through these programs:

- ***The Pinwheel Ceremony (500 in attendance)*** is an annual event, supported by local schools, churches, and businesses, purposed to represent the need for each child in our community to have the opportunity to thrive by being afforded a safe and nurturing home.
- ***The annual Picnic in the Park (1200 in attendance)*** is a free, community wide event held at Kirby Park that encourages healthy family interaction by providing free food, games, and helpful information to make parenting a little easier.
- ***Recognizing & Reporting Child Abuse Training (500 trained)*** educates child-serving professionals utilizing a facilitator and a video-based format that is statistically proven to make ten children safer per every one adult trained by providing the tools to recognize signals of child abuse and the proper reporting protocol.
- ***Miss Representation and The Mask You Live In (150 participants)*** are films created by The Representation Project that are each aimed at revealing the ways in which media hinders girls from pursuing leadership roles, and perpetuates violence in boys. The films both offer ways for us to fight against these damaging stereotypes, and promote the idea that girls and boys find value in their humanity as whole beings.
- ***Not Buying It*** is an educational, social media platform that seeks to increase the awareness of sex trafficking and exploitation of youth in the Concho Valley, and empower teens to find their voice to speak out against sexual exploitation, all while decreasing their chances of being manipulated into sex trafficking.

# The Child Fatality Review Team



The goal of the Child Fatality Review Team (CFRT) is to improve the response to child fatalities in a 13-county region. A multi-disciplinary, multi-agency team reviews all child deaths, regardless of cause, and strives to identify gaps in services designed to protect children. Team members include law enforcement, prosecutors, medical examiners, justices of the peace, health care professionals, Child Protective Services, public and mental health professionals, educators, child advocates and Hope House staff. The team focuses on reducing the number of preventable child deaths by establishing reporting guidelines, looking for trends, and dispersing awareness materials to the community. In 2015, the CFRT reviewed 28 cases.

Campaign initiatives include:

- “Don’t Text and Drive”
- “Anchor It,” (TV, furniture or appliances falling on children)
- Co-sleeping endangerment (suffocation of young children)
- All-terrain vehicle safety

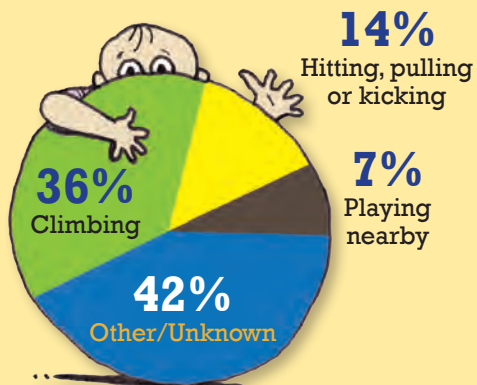
In 2015, CFRT dispersed 125 Anchoring TV Straps and 2500 “Don’t Text and Drive” bracelets to the community to increase awareness for the prevention of child fatalities.

## Child Fatality Review Team of 2015

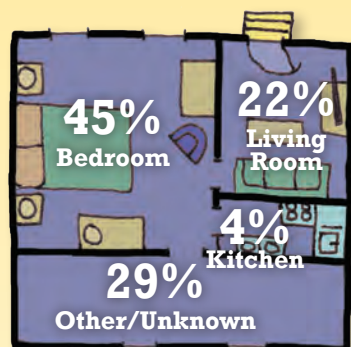
Belinda Braly, CAC-Director of Family Services  
Shirley Davis, CASA Program Director  
John Best, 119th District Attorney’s Office  
Tom Cooper, TDPS-Victim Services  
Brian Ekins, San Angelo Police Department  
Laurie English, 112th District Attorney’s Office  
Jeff Garner, Reagan County Sheriff  
Johnny Garza, Goodfellow AFB  
Shirley Grosshans, Compassionate Friends  
Kelli Hanna, Wall ISD- Counselor  
Nick Hanna, Texas Rangers  
Beth Henderson, ECI  
Rusty Herndon, San Angelo Police Department  
Judge Eddie Howard, Justice of the Peace, Prct 4  
Melody Jeter, CAC-Hope House Program Director  
Toni Keltz, RN, Texas DSHS  
Angela King, Texas DSHS

Kelly Lajoie, San Angelo Police Department  
Dusty McCoy, WTX Counseling & Guidance  
Julie Moorman, SAISD  
Allison Palmer, 51st District Attorney’s Office  
Mike Patton, CASA Volunteer  
Ingrid Russo, ASU  
Ron Sanders, TG County Sheriff’s Office  
Lt. Randy Swick, TG County Sheriff’s Office  
Cathy Sparks, Shannon Medical Center  
Monica Escobedo, CAC-Hope House Case Mgr.  
Steve Torres, DPS State Trooper  
Isaac Lopez, DFPS  
Heather Ward, CAC-Executive Director  
Catie Weidenhofer, Safe Kids Coalition  
Dr. Elizabeth Young, Shannon Clinic  
Melissa Melton, RN, Shannon Medical Center

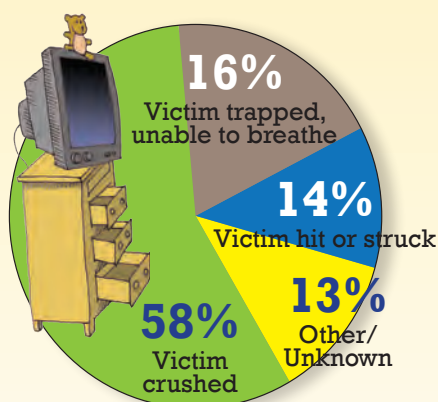
To view state wide statistics, please reference: [dshs.state.tx.uschildfatalityreview](http://dshs.state.tx.uschildfatalityreview)



**Why**  
*does it happen?*



**Where**  
*does it happen?*



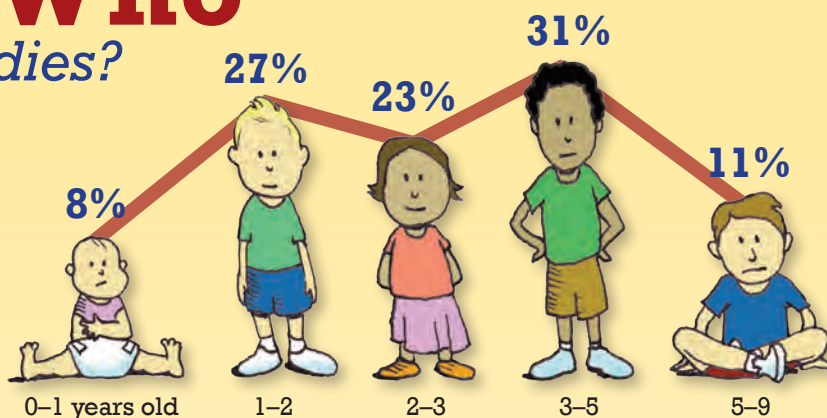
**How**  
*do victims die?*

# 1 CHILD DIES EVERY 2 WEEKS

*When a TV, furniture or appliance falls on him or her*

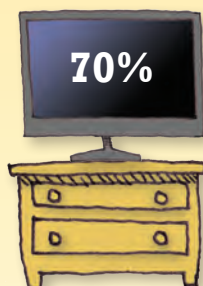
## Who

*dies?*



## What

*falls on them?*



Televisions  
and furniture

70%



Furniture:  
dressers, tables

26%



Appliances, etc.

4%

**Injuries:** about 3 per hour 71  
per day 2,117 per month 25,400 per year

**These tragedies can be prevented by taking low-cost steps to stabilize TVs, furniture and appliances.**

# ANCHOR IT AND PROTECT A CHILD



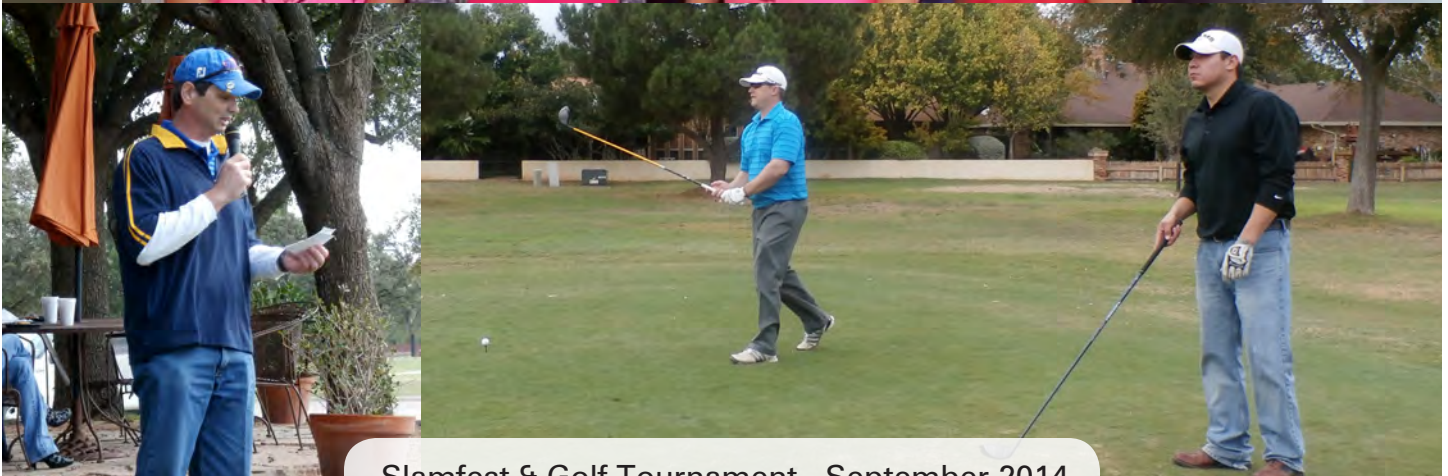
NSN 13-4



# Fundraisers & Events



CAC Staff & Board support Breast Cancer Awareness - October 2014



Slamfest & Golf Tournament - September 2014





# Fundraisers & Events



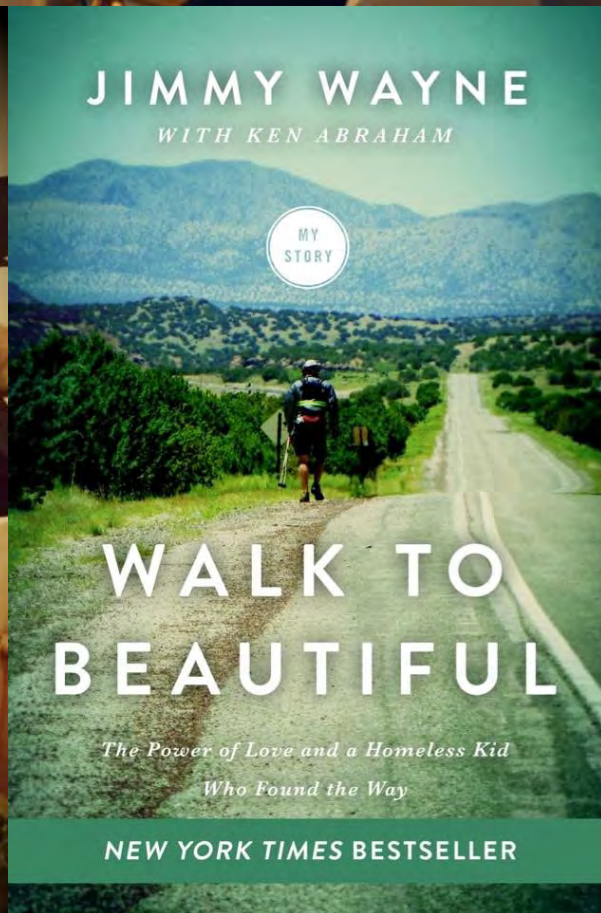
Champagne & Diamonds 2015





# Fundraisers & Events

Champagne & Diamonds 2015





# Fundraisers & Events



## Christmas for Kids

Sponsor a child in need this Holiday Season through the  
Children's Advocacy Center of Tom Green County



The Mission of the Children's Advocacy Center is to champion the prevention of child abuse and to serve as an ally to abused children with a dedication to securing for each child a safe and nurturing home.

Help a child experience the joy and magic of Christmas by participating in our 2014 Christmas for Kids Toy Drive.

There are 3 easy ways to sponsor a child for Christmas!

Call (325) 653-4673 or [cactomgreen.org](http://cactomgreen.org) for more information





# Fundraisers & Events

Pinwheel Ceremony 2015





# Fundraisers & Events

Picnic in the Park - April 2015



MY CHILD IS MY EVERYTHING,  
SO I WILL GIVE ANYTHING,  
AND STOP AT NOTHING.

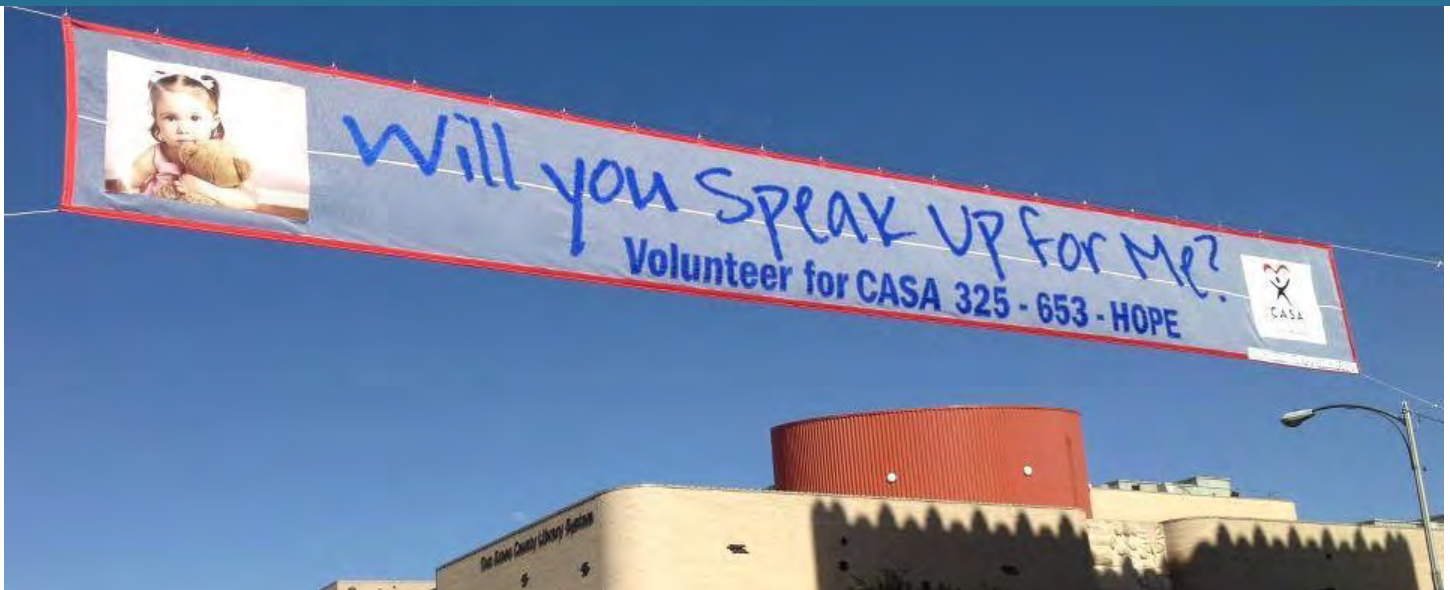
*that is all.*



San Angelo Christian Academy Duffle Bag Drive - April 2015



# Fundraisers & Events



Law Enforcement Appreciation - May 2015

## Save the Date for 2016 Events

- Champagne & Diamonds Fundraiser: February 14, 2016, Cactus Hotel
- CASA Volunteer Training: January 26th-29th & February 2nd – 5th, May 11th - 14th & May 18th-21st, July 20th-23rd & July 27th-30th, September 28th-October 1st & October 5th-8th
- April - Child Abuse Prevention Month: Events held all month to promote awareness
- Pinwheel Ceremony: April 12, 2016 (Noon)
- Picnic in the Park: April 17, 2016, Kirby Park
- Tres Amigos Champions Advocating 4 Children Golf Classic: September 19, 2016
- Christmas for Kids: Toy Drive - November 18 through December 5, 2016.

# Financial Highlights

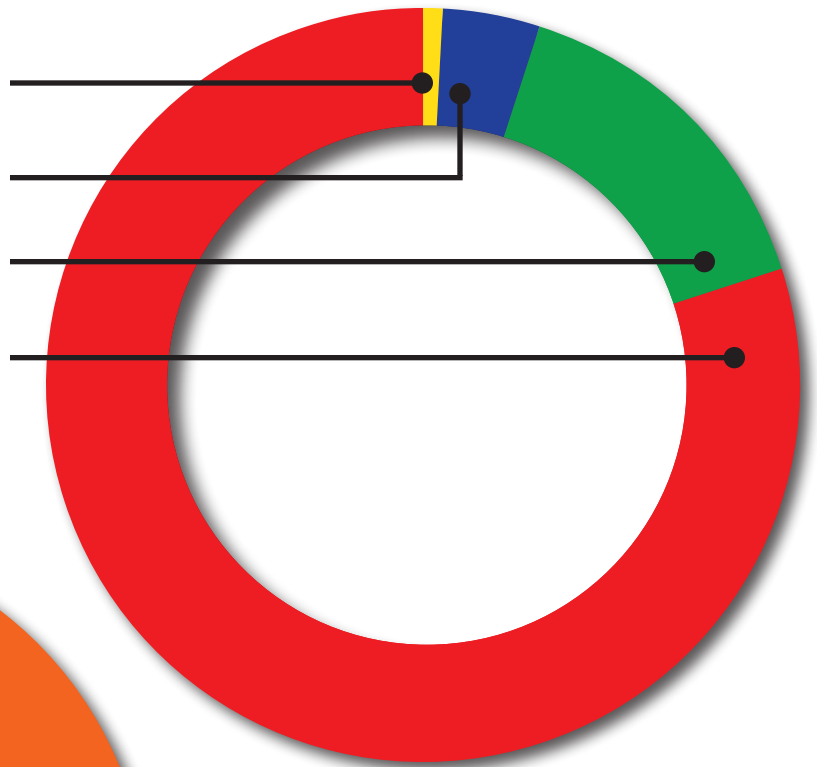
**Revenue: \$1,185,664**

Miscellaneous – 1%

Donations – 4%

Fundraisers – 15%

Grants – 80%

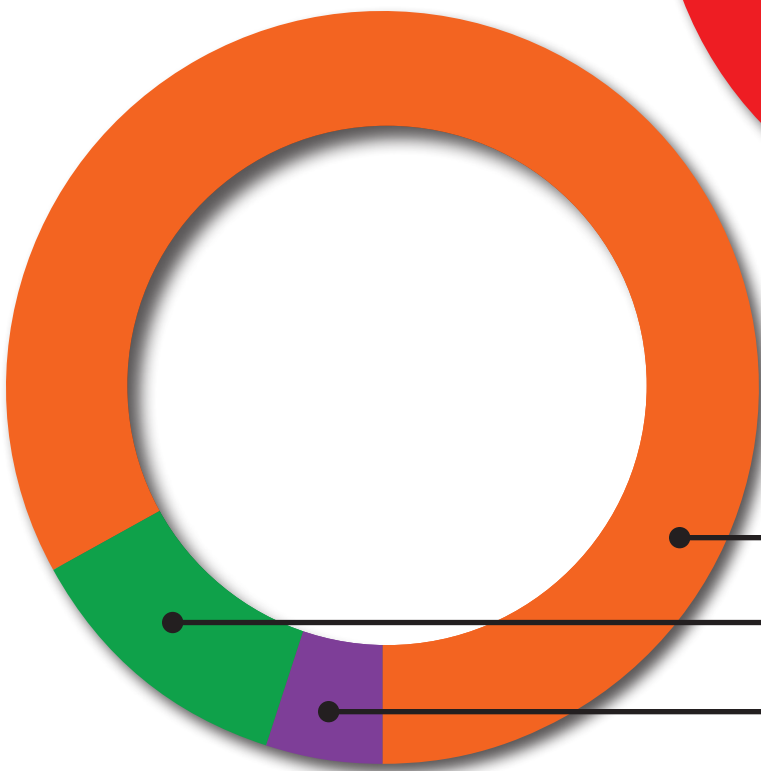


**Expenses: \$1,153,990**

Services & Education – 83%

Management & General – 12%

Fundraising Expenses – 5%



## 2015 Financial Goals

- Increase the endowment fund to ensure the CAC's long-term sustainability
- Enhance planned giving to decrease grant dependence
- Expansion of office space and programs

*Information contained in the Annual Report reflect the fiscal year September 2014 through August 2015*



children's  
advocacy  
center Since 1992

of Tom Green County, Inc.

#### 2016 Board of Directors

John Best  
Ron Sanders  
Susan Looka  
Isaac Lopez  
Wilson Stokes

Todd Sanford, President  
James Skinner, Vice President  
Michelle Perkey, Treasurer/Finance Chair  
Vicki Housley, Past President  
Mason Vaughan, Secretary  
Sharanda El-Masri, Member-at-Large  
Dr. Greg Dunham, Medical Director

Bette White  
Diane Wilson  
Mike Hennings  
Tanner Bryant  
Janet Ridgway

#### Community Advisory Board

Lea Barilleaux  
Lisa Eady  
Clara Light  
Derek McIntyre

Shannon Rushing  
Brian Thomma  
Richard Webb

#### Staff

Melody Jeter  
*Hope House Program Director*  
Monica Escobedo  
*Hope House Case Manager*  
Belinda Braly  
*FES Program Director*  
Melissa Ward  
*FES Coordinator*  
Sierra Mullan  
*FES Parent Mentor*  
Stephanie Starnes  
*FES Parent Mentor*

Heather Ward  
*Executive Director*  
Leann Hubert  
*Director of Marketing Services*  
Jacob Bridgeman  
*Financial Administrator*  
Susan Williams  
*Grant Writer*

Shirley Davis  
*CASA Program Director*  
Shelda Anglin  
*CASA Case Manager*  
Rebekah Beltran  
*CASA Case Manager*  
Connie Gauwain  
*CASA Case Manager*  
Rachel Hoelscher  
*CASA Case Manager*



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children's advocacy  
centers™ of texas

