

# M.C.A.C. NEWS

METROPOLITAN CHILD ADVOCACY COALITION



VOLUME 18 - ISSUE 6

DECEMBER 2008

## 2009 M.C.A.C. KICK-OFF BREAKFAST

# Featuring: *Sue Outson: Care for the Caregiver*

Helping professionals give of themselves day in and day out. The combination of challenging clients, sad stories, and a lack of closure can be difficult to manage. Many of these professionals can relate to a state of being called "compassion fatigue" which is, quite simply, "tired of caring." Compassion fatigue can cause helping professionals to feel angry, lost and is often a key ingredient in workplace performance concerns and employee turnover. This seminar will review the elements of compassion fatigue and provide coping strategies for both employees and the organization.

Sue Outson has worked as both a mental health counselor and corporate consultant for 25 years and is currently the Family Treatment Services Director for St. Monica' in Lincoln.

### **Friday, January 9th, 2009**

- 8:00-8:30 a.m. - **Registration and Buffet Breakfast**
- 8:30-9:00 a.m. - **Business Meeting & Annual Awards**
- 9:00-10:30 a.m. - **Featured Program**

Program will take place at:  
**Westside Community Center**  
**3434 South 108th Street**

**REGISTRATION  
FORM ON PAGE 8**

**Continuing Education:**

*This program meets the criteria of an approved continuing education for Social Work, Mental Health Practitioners, and Marriage and Family Therapists for 1.5 contact hours.*

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Life is either  
a daring ad-  
venture, or  
nothing.  
-Helen Keller

## From the Chair...

I would like to thank all the MCAC Board Members and MCAC Members for a wonderful year! How quickly time flies!

January will be a time to welcome some new faces to our Board. Some new ideas are in the works for our Prevention Committee and within the other committees so stay tuned!

The Board is still interested in hearing from you if you have an interest or talent in marketing, promotion of events, passion for developing new ideas or community projects. Your expertise would be invaluable! Please feel free to contact myself, Ivy Riveland [iriveland@projectharmony.com](mailto:iriveland@projectharmony.com) or Linda Stancil-Dowden [ldowden214@aol.com](mailto:ldowden214@aol.com) if you are interested.

I hope you have a safe, relaxing, and happy holiday season!

Sincerely,

*Ivy Riveland*

MCAC Chairperson

## Reporting and Responding to Child Abuse and Neglect

Reporting and responding to child abuse and neglect was the title of the October 31, 2008, MCAC program held at the Omaha Home for Boys. Approximately 40 persons were in attendance. Three presenters gave an overview of the process of making child abuse and neglect referrals and summarized what happens following the referral. Anne Vasilisin with Child Protective Service discussed how to make a report when someone suspects child abuse or neglect and how those cases are investigated by CPS. Suzie Mistry, Forensic Interview Specialist with Project Harmony, provided information on how Project Harmony assists in child abuse investigations, and how the various agencies based at that location work together. Sgt. Tim Woolman, with the Omaha Police Department, discussed the role of the police department in investigating physical and sexual abuse of children. The speakers responded to questions from the audience. The speakers, who are all experts in their field, provided the audience with great information regarding the process of making child abuse and neglect referrals. We thank all three of these speakers for spending their time presenting to MCAC members and friends.

### Child Death Scene Investigations: As part of 1184

Team's continued efforts to reduce infant mortality caused by bed-sharing, a task force was formed to develop guidelines for comprehensive and uniform child death investigations across the state. This has been an ongoing joint effort between Project Harmony and Sarpy, Douglas, and Pottowattamie County attorneys and the final draft is complete. Once approved, Douglas County Attorney Don Klein will approach the Attorney General regarding statewide training on the guidelines and needed legislative changes. This is a huge step forward in the fight to reduce infant mortality.





## Stress Management Strategy #2: Alter the situation

If you can't avoid a stressful situation, try to alter it. Figure out what you can do to change things so the problem is avoided in the future. Often, this involves changing the way you communicate and operate in your daily life.

- Express your feelings instead of bottling them up: If something or someone is bothering you, communicate your concerns in an open and respectful way. If you don't voice your feelings, resentment will build and the situation will likely remain the same.
- Be willing to compromise: When you ask someone to change their behavior, be willing to do the same. If you both are willing to bend at least a little, you'll have a good chance of finding a happy middle ground.
- Be more assertive: Don't take a backseat in your own life. Deal with problems head on, doing your best to anticipate and prevent them. If you've got an exam to study for and your chatty roommate just got home, say up front that you only have five minutes to talk.
- Manage your time better: Poor time management can cause a lot of stress. When you're stretched too thin and running behind. It's hard to stay clam and focused. But if you plan ahead, you can avoid these stress-inducing pitfalls.

## Stress Management Strategy #3: Accept the things you can't change

Some sources of stress are unavoidable. You can't prevent or change stressors such as the death of a loved one, a serious illness, or a national recession. In such cases, the best way to cope with stress is to accept things as they are. Acceptance may be difficult, but in the long run, it's easier than railing against a situation you cannot change.

- Don't try to control the uncontrollable: Many things in life are beyond our control—particularly the behavior of other people. Rather than stressing out over them, focus on the things you can control, such as the way you choose to react to problems.
- Look for the upside: As the saying goes, "What doesn't kill us makes us stronger." When facing major challenges, try to look at them as opportunities for personal growth. If your own poor choices contribute to a stressful situation, reflect on them and learn from your mistakes.
- Share your feeling: Talk to a trusted friend or make an appointment with a therapist. Expressing what you're going through can be very cathartic, even if there's nothing you can do to alter the stressful situation.
- Learn to forgive: Accept the fact that we live in an imperfect world and that people make mistakes. Let go of anger and resentments. Free yourself from the negative energy by forgiving and moving on.

## Stress Management Strategy #4: Adapt to the stressor

If you can't change the stressor, change yourself. You can adapt to stressful situations, and regain your sense of control by changing your expectations and attitudes.

- Reframe problems: Try to view stressful situations from a more positive perspective. Rather than fuming about a traffic jam, look at it as an opportunity to pause and regroup, listen to your favorite radio station, or enjoy some alone time.
- Look at the big picture: Take perspective of the stressful situation. Ask yourself how important it will be in the long run. Will it matter in a month? A year? Is it really worth getting upset over? If the answer is no, focus your time and energy elsewhere.
- Adjust your standards: Perfectionism is a major source of avoidable stress. Stop setting yourself up for failure by demanding perfection. Set reasonable standards for yourself and others, and learn to be okay with "good enough."
- Focus on the positive: When stress is getting you down, take a moment to reflect on all the things you appreciate in your life. Including your own positive qualities and gifts. This simple strategy can help you keep things in perspective.

# CSI & PROJECT HARMONY TRIAGE CENTER

## WHO WE ARE

The Triage Center is a safe and child-friendly facility for children to stay while Child and Family Service Specialist (CFS) and Law Enforcement officials investigate child abuse/neglect concerns, and determine whether or not it is safe for them to return home. Should a child be unable to return, they can remain at the Triage Center while their CFS locates an appropriate placement. Ideally, this will assist in preventing unnecessary placements with caregivers unknown to the child by allowing CFS to assess the appropriateness of relative caregivers. The imminent goal of Triage Center staff is to meet the child's immediate needs, which includes providing meals, care and comfort for the child. Children served at the Triage Center are sent with at least one clean outfit, pajamas, hygiene products, and a new backpack when entering out-of-home care in order to allow caregivers more time to obtain clothing for the child. Triage Center staff also play a more active role in the placement process by gathering information about the child, conducting an assessment, assisting CFS in identifying possible relative placements, arranging for medical examinations and forensic interviews when applicable, and tracking outcomes. In addition, Triage Center staff are available to provide transportation to placement in the event that foster parents or caregivers cannot.

## WHO WE SERVE

The Triage Center serves children and adolescents 0-18 years of age who are being removed from their parental homes due to abuse/neglect or other safety concerns.

## LOCATION AND CONTACT INFORMATION

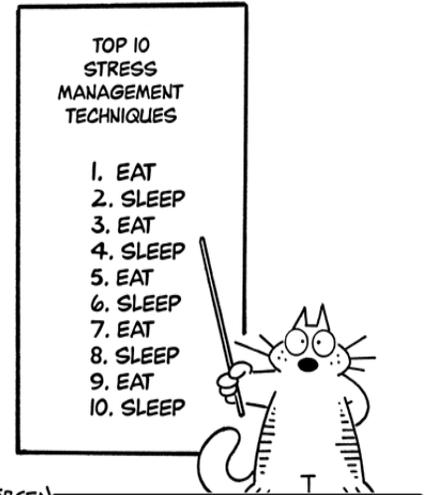
The Triage Center is located at: 7110 F Street, Omaha  
*For more information contact:* Jewel Schifferns, MSW, PLMHP  
402-595-1408 (office)  
402-682-11438 (cell)  
402-595-1321 (fax)  
jschiffern@childsaving.org

Websites: [www.projectharmony.com](http://www.projectharmony.com) [www.childsaving.org](http://www.childsaving.org)



**Reminder:**  
**The next Board Meetings will**  
**be held**  
**Tuesday, December 16, 2008,**  
**and January 20th, 2009**  
**From 11:45-1:00 at**  
**Project Harmony**  
**(7110 F Street)**

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### Healthy Stress Reducers

- Go for a walk
- Spend time in nature
- Talk to a supportive friend
- Sweat out tension with a good workout
- Do something for someone else
- Write in a journal
- Play with a pet
- Work in your garden
- Curl up with a good book
- Take a yoga class
- Listen to music
- Watch a comedy

# Safe Haven Update

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• The majority of children dropped off under the Safe Haven law were in Douglas County and there-  
 • fore reviewed by the 1184 Investigative Team. After staffing 20+ youth a committee was formed  
 • of various Investigative and Treatment Team professionals to examine the systems issues. The  
 • group reviewed a spread sheet prepared by Project Harmony about the families and youth who  
 • have utilized the Safe Haven law since July, 2008. From this, they were asked to identify common-  
 • alities among the cases, discuss systems issues, and make recommendations about addressing those  
 • issues. The legislature has now formed a Children’s Crisis Task Force of professionals from the  
 • community and Senators to work together to address the need for crisis assistance to families.  
 • Their first meeting is December 2nd. The 1184 Team Safe Haven sub-committee will continue to  
 • meet and hope to assist with recommendations for needed system changes. We will try to keep  
 • MCAC members up-to-date as information is available.

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# Training Opportunities

## Training Opportunities

**December 10, 2008 - Brown Bagger Training—Foster Youth: Programs & Experiences.** Presented by The Nebraska Foster Youth Council. Training takes place at Jury Assembly Room, Douglas County Hall of Justice (1701 Farnam St.). 12:00-1:00 For more information contact Deb Anderson at danderson@projectharmony.com. Attendance is free and no registration is required.

**December 11, 2008 - Creating Capacity for Compassion.** Presented by Erick Hill, PhD, Alegent Health Life Coaching Center. Training takes place at the Omaha Home for Boys. 8:00-12:00 For more information or to register contact Kim Marsh at 402-457-7032 or kimm@omahahomeforboys.org.

**December 19, 2008 - Helping Babies from the Bench.** Brought to you by the Omaha Model Court, the Permanency Planning Department of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, Zero to Three, the Through the Eyes of the Child Initiative, Nebraska Health and Human Services Early Development Network, the Foster Care Review Board and Court Appointed Special Advocates. For more information contact Kelli Hauptman at khauptman2@unl.edu.

**January 22, 2009 - Cultural Competency Training.** Presented by Judge Wadie Thomas, Jr. Training takes place at the Douglas County Civic Center in Room 702. 8:30-4:30 For more information or to register contact Debbie at debbie.peck@douglascounty-ne.gov or 402-444-7889.

**January 22, 2009 - Fundamentals of Effective Leadership.** Presented by Patricia Harrold Training takes place at the Omaha Home for Boys. 8:00-12:00 For more information or to register contact Kim Marsh at 402-457-7032 or kimm@omahahomeforboys.org.

**February 9, 2009 - School Refusal Training.** Presented by Dr. Christopher Kearney. For more information contact Steve Snodgrass at Steve\_Snodgrass@ralstonschools.org.

**February 22, 2009—Trendy Drugs** Presented by Chuck Matson Training takes place at the Omaha Home for Boys. 8:00-12:00 For more information or to register contact Kim Marsh at 402-457-7032 or kimm@omahahomeforboys.org.

**March 13, 2009 - Indian Child Welfare Act Training.** Training takes place at Creighton Law School—Omaha, NE. 7:45-4:30

## Save the Date

March 11, 2009—Speaking of Children. Featured Luncheon Speaker: Antwone Fisher, award winning producer/screenwriter, author and child-abuse survivor. Training session for professionals features Dr. Bruce Perry of The Child Trauma Academy and co-author of *The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog*. Qwest Center Omaha. Registration details coming soon.

# JANUARY KICK-OFF BREAKFAST REGISTRATION FORM

*PLEASE REGISTER BY JANUARY 2, 2009*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, I will attend the 2009 Annual Kick-off Breakfast

Enclosed is my check for \$10 for the Program and Breakfast

**Checks payable to M.C.A.C. and mail to:**

**Project Harmony, 7110 F Street, Omaha, NE 68117**

**For more information contact April Anderson at 595-1326**

[www.mcacomaha.org](http://www.mcacomaha.org)

We're on the Web!

Metropolitan Child Advocacy Coalition  
PO Box 6646, Elmwood Station  
Omaha, NE 68106

