

# M.C.A.C. NEWS

METROPOLITAN CHILD ADVOCACY COALITION



VOLUME 16 - ISSUE 4

SEPTEMBER 2006

## **FROM CHILDHOOD TO ADULTHOOD: The Impact of Intimate Partner Violence on our Kids** —What you Need to Know

Every year an estimated 3-10 million children are exposed to violence in their homes. Intra-parental violence increases the risk of emotional, psychological, physical, and sexual harm to the most innocent of victims, our children. This educational seminar will address the significant effects of intimate partner violence on children from birth to adulthood. The seminar will explore the prevalence, dynamics of abuse, related forms of violence, and provide many useful tools for working with children exposed to violence in the home. Participants will come away with a comprehensive understanding of the correlating issues, solutions, and helpful methods to deal with the ever increasing societal problem that affects every one of us.

**Featuring:**

**Sue Michalski, RN, MS**  
Training and Education Director,  
Domestic Violence Coordinating Council

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2006**

8:30-9:00 a.m. - **Networking and Business Meeting**

9:00-10:30 a.m. - **Program**

Program will take place at:

**Omaha Home for Boys**

**4343 N 52nd Street**

**Wurdeman Learning Center**

**(South Entrance)**

For Questions about this free program, please contact April Anderson at 595-1326 or [aanderson@projectharmony.com](mailto:aanderson@projectharmony.com)

**Continuing Education:**

1.8 contact hours awarded. Children's Healthcare Services is an approved provider of continuing nursing education by the Nebraska Nurses Association, an accredited approver by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation. Code #NE05-08H9.

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.

You must be an MCAC member to receive continuing education credit for this program.

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**PEOPLE MIGHT  
NOT GET ALL  
THEY WORK FOR  
IN THIS WORLD,  
BUT THEY MUST  
CERTAINLY  
WORK FOR ALL  
THEY GET.**

**-FREDERICK  
DOUGLASS**

## From the Chair...

October is Domestic Violence Awareness month and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who work with victims of domestic violence. We know that children learn what they live. Unfortunately in domestic violence situations children are witness to the violence—they see it, hear it, and are often used in it. There are usually more children in battered women’s shelters than women. There is a significant need for us to collaborate and coordinate our response as a community. MCAC will host a training on domestic violence at our quarterly program on October 13<sup>th</sup> in an effort to promote community awareness and prevention efforts (details to follow). For more information on domestic violence, local efforts, and community resources, visit the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council’s website at [www.dvccomaha.org](http://www.dvccomaha.org).

As part of our strategic planning efforts, we have developed a short survey (found in this newsletter). We really want feedback on your views of MCAC, your thoughts on future advocacy efforts, and your training needs. I **strongly** encourage you to complete this survey to guide us in our future endeavors and urge you to volunteer your talents/skills as we embark upon future events in advocating for children, who are our *most vulnerable population and our most valuable assets*.

We also need your help in identifying past MCAC Board Members as we would like to host an event in honor of those who have paved the way for us to be a strong community force of 400+ members . If you are a past board member or can assist in identifying previous members, please send their name and contact information to me at [croth@projectharmony.com](mailto:croth@projectharmony.com). *Thank you for your continued support and involvement in MCAC!*

Thank You,

**Colleen Roth**, LMHP

MCAC Chairperson

“The key is not to prioritize your schedule, but to schedule your priorities.”

(Unknown)

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### **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: WARNING SIGNS OF AN ABUSER**

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Before an abuser starts physically assaulting their victim, they typically demonstrates their abusive tactics through certain behaviors. The following are five major warning signs:

1. Charm: Abusers can be very charming in the beginning; they may be very engaging, thoughtful, considerate and charismatic. This is often to gain very personal information about their victim.
2. Isolation: Abusers isolate their victims geographically and socially. Moving them away from friends and family, and limiting contact.
3. Jealousy: Jealousy is a tool abusers use to control

the victim. They will constantly accuse them of having affairs.

4. Emotional Abuse: The goal of emotional abuse is to destroy the victim’s self-esteem. Over time they no longer believe they deserve to be treated with respect and they blame themselves for the violence.
5. Control: Abusers are very controlled and controlling people. They control every aspect of the victims life, from what they wear to who they talk to. They also control who, when, and where they will batter.

*From: Mid-Valley Women’s Crisis Service*

## August Conference Review

The MCAC August Conference, "Meth & Its Effect on Children and Families," was held at the Westside Community Center on August 25, 2006. Chuck Matson provided a morning session with an introduction to methamphetamine



and Dr. Kathryn Wells completed the morning and continued on through the afternoon. Dr. Wells, the Medical Director of the Denver County Fam-

ily Crisis Center, presented on the medical effects and societal harm of methamphetamine, along with drug endangered children, and how we can build community solutions. Dr. Wells and Chuck Matson enlightened the audience with their expertise and knowledge, while providing valuable information and cooperative solutions to fighting the battle against methamphetamines. Thanks to all of you who attended the conference; we hope to see you all again next year!

## THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

Domestic violence tends to follow a specific pattern over time called the "cycle of violence."

The cycle of violence has three stages:

During the tension-building phase, abusers often verbally harass their partners. They are afraid that their partners will leave them and they become more possessive, jealous, and aggressive. During this phase, partners may do anything to try and keep the peace. They are very nurturing and go along with whatever the abuser wants. Some victims may try and set the abusers off in order to get the abuse over with. Partners often make excuses for abusers' behavior during the tension-building phase.

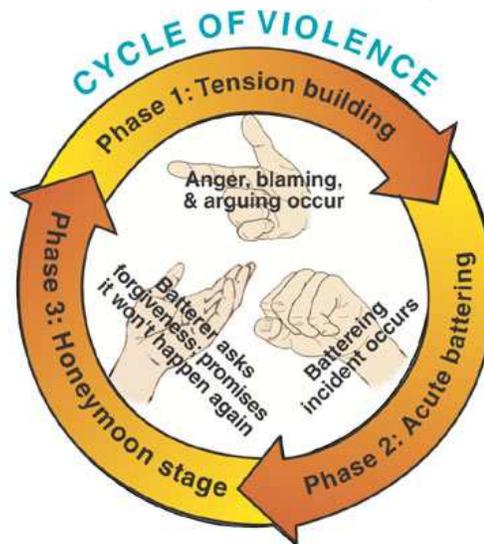
The second phase involves acute battering. Abusers are extremely unpredictable and often seem to be out of control. Abusers blame their partners for the abuse and may fail to confine their abusive behavior to the home. Abuse may not necessarily be physical. It can involve humiliation or intimidation as well. Partners are left to passively accept the abuse and often minimize the abuse to themselves or others who may question them.

The last phase is often referred to as the honeymoon period because abusers are calm, loving and apologize for their actions, promising their partners that "it will never happen again." Partners often feel guilty about possibly leaving the abuser. They often hope that the abuser will change.

Over time, the tension-building and honeymoon stages get shorter and the battering increases. This pattern results in battering incidents that become increasingly longer and more severe.

This cycle works to keep partners in abusive relationships by controlling them. Partners hope that abusers do not mean to harm them and will change. Secrecy, fear, lack of opportunity, and low self-esteem all

combine to make leaving an abusive partner extremely difficult. Leaving may also be difficult because abusers often escalate violence in order to keep their partners in the relationship. If abusers detect that their partners may leave, their partners' risk of injury or death increases.



From:

<http://muextension.missouri.edu/explore/hesguide/humanrel/gh6608.htm>

# The Sexual Abuse Case Consultation (SACC) Lunch

September 15, 2006 12:00-1:30

Termination of Parental Rights

**NEW FORMAT!** All meetings will have a one-hour educational component (12:00-1:00) with case consultation during the last half hour (1:00-1:30).

Meetings are held at **Project Harmony** in the upstairs conference room from **12:00-1:30**. Although **Nancy Thompson** facilitates the meetings, all in attendance are invited to offer feedback on cases presented. CEU's are available and, of course, you are welcome to bring your lunch.

Please e-mail **Carole Nelson** at [cnelson@childsaving.org](mailto:cnelson@childsaving.org) regarding your plans to attend and to staff a case at a SACC Lunch. Staffing is not required; you are welcome to come and listen! Although priority is given to cases involving sexual abuse issues, participants are also welcome to present any case to Nancy and the team of professionals in attendance.

Professionals of all disciplines (no foster or adoptive parents, please) are invited to attend—it is often helpful to have therapeutic, educational, and legal perspectives available. Please plan to attend the full hour and a half.

See you there!

MCAC sponsors this peer consultation group that is **free of charge** to MCAC members and employees of member agencies. Non-members are charged a \$5 admission fee.



**Reminder:**  
 The next  
**Board Meetings**  
 will be held **Tuesday,**  
**September 19, 2006 and**  
**October 17, 2006**  
 From **11:45-1:00** at  
**Project Harmony**  
**(7110 F Street)**



## MYTHS & FACTS ABOUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

**MYTH: Domestic violence is not common.**

**FACT:** Every 9 second in the United States, a man beats a woman.

**MYTH: Domestic violence happens only in low-income families.**

**FACT:** Domestic violence happens in all kinds of families, rich and poor, urban, suburban and rural, in every part of the country, in every racial, religious and age group.

**MYTH: Alcohol and drugs cause domestic violence.**

**FACT:** Alcohol and drugs do not cause domestic violence. Domestic violence is a choice. Many abusers will make sure they have alcohol or drugs on hand, in order to use them as an excuse for their actions. Abusers will also claim their actions resulted because they could not have the alcohol or drugs.

**MYTH: Domestic violence is an anger control issue.**

**FACT:** Domestic violence has nothing to do with anger. Anger is a tool abusers use to get what they want. We know abusers are actually very much in control because they can stop when someone knocks on the door or the phone rings; they often direct punches and kicks to parts of the body where the bruises are less likely to show; and they are not abusing everyone who makes them “angry,” but waits until there are no witnesses and abuses the one he says he loves.

**MYTH: Most assaults are really just a couple of slaps and they are not really harmful.**

**FACT:** More than 30 percent of hospital emergency room admissions are women who have been abused. Domestic violence is the single greatest cause of injury to women in the United States.

**MYTH: Domestic violence only happens once or twice in a relationship.**

**FACT:** Abusers usually escalate violent behaviors in frequency and intensity over time.

**MYTH: Some women want to be beaten. They ask for it. They deserve it. Some women go from abuser to abuser—it must be something about them.**

**FACT:** No one deserves to be abused. Everyone has the right to live free of violence. No one would want to have their partner be abusive. Women who find that their second or third partner are abusers will often be blamed by others for the violence—“it must be something about her” or she will blame herself—“I always seem to pick abusers.” In reality, the abuser uses the tactic of charm early in the relationship to find out that she was previously abused. He uses this information to blame her for the violence—“it must be something that you are doing wrong, or there would not have been two of us” or to silence her—“you are not going to tell anyone, because if you do they will never believe you because you said that before.”

**MYTH: Children aren’t aware of the violence in their home.**

**FACT:** Studies show that most children are aware of the violence directed at their mother.

**MYTH: Children are not at risk for being hurt or injured.**

**FACT:** Men who abuse their partners are more likely to abuse the children in the home. Domestic violence is the number one predictor for child abuse.

*From: Mid-Valley Women’s Crisis Service*

## EFFECTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON CHILDREN

Millions of children see, hear and sense domestic violence. Even if they are not physically present, they are aware of the violence. How children react to and cope with witnessing violence may depend on their developmental level, coping skills, age, access to resources, and the existence of support persons in their lives. Researchers have found that many children may show resilience to the violence by learning to cope with it in a number of constructive ways.

### Factors that assist a child in developing resilience:

- ✧ Healthy relationships with others
- ✧ Well-developed problem-solving skills
- ✧ A strong sense of self-worth
- ✧ Stable belief system
- ✧ Sense of purpose and future

### Healthy ways that children may use to cope with

### domestic violence:

- ✧ Talking with a safe adult
- ✧ Excelling in school
- ✧ Reaching out within the community
- ✧ Getting involved in after school/extra curricular activities

### Unhealthy ways that children may use to cope with domestic violence:

- ✧ Withdrawal
- ✧ Acting-out and/or aggressive behavior
- ✧ Depression
- ✧ Anxiety
- ✧ Nightmares
- ✧ Physical complaints

*From: Mid-Valley Women's Crisis Service*

## MCAC Board Member Spotlight

### Mary Beth Hanus—MCAC Vice Chair/Secretary

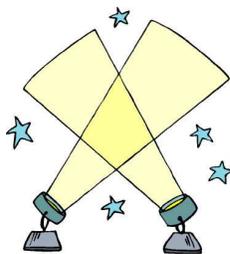
**Agency:** Archdiocese of Omaha

**Position:** Victim Assistance Coordinator

**What I do:** I represent the Archdiocese in the pastoral and compassionate outreach to victims/families and the community who suffer direct/indirect effects of sexual misconduct of church personnel. I am involved in educational, preventive and collaborative efforts for adults and children to decrease future victimization.

**Educational/Career Background:** I am a licensed LMHP. I worked at Children's hospital for 15 years as a clinical social worker specializing in the area of child abuse and neglect. I had the honor of participating in the opening of Project Harmony and was one of their first forensic interviewers.

**Family/Pets:** I grew up in Omaha and am blessed to have my mother still here. My sister died in 1993. I had the honor of assisting my brother-in-law in nurturing and parenting their three children ages 12, 10 and 6 for 11 years. I have a 2 year old shitzu, Benedict Micheal (Benny Mike) who is quite delightful and always challenging.



**Most Memorable Accomplishment:** My past and current relationship with my sister's children.

**Favorite Vacation Destination:** I like any place near the ocean.

**Favorite Quote:** "Do small things with great love" Mother Teresa



# CHANGE—A LOOK AT TOMORROW

Heartland Juvenile Services Association 11th Conference

**September 18-20**

Holiday Inn Convention Center  
Omaha, Nebraska

*Find out more at <http://hjsti.tripod.com>  
or contact Tami Steensma  
at 402-537-7000*

## Omaha Home for Boys Youth Service Worker Certificate Program

is designed to prepare youth service professionals to work effectively with at-risk youth. You can earn your Youth Service Worker Certificate through the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

### UPCOMING SESSIONS:

**Teaching & Motivating Youth**

September 18, 2006 9:00-4:00

**Social Skills Replacement**

October 12, 2006 9:00-4:00

**Working with Aggressive Youth**

October 26, 2006 9:00-4:00

For more information or to sign up contact:

**Kim Marsh** at 457-7032 or email  
[ti@omahahomeforboys.org](mailto:ti@omahahomeforboys.org)

\*Scholarships Available\*

## WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF CHILDREN?

MCAC is looking for motivated volunteers to help in the advocacy efforts for children and families. There are several committees who need your help, so now's the time to become an active member of our team. If you are interested in helping out contact the MCAC Chair, Colleen Roth at [croth@projectharmony.com](mailto:croth@projectharmony.com) or check out our website at [www.mcacomaha.org](http://www.mcacomaha.org) and contact us at [mcacomaha@gmail.com](mailto:mcacomaha@gmail.com).



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



Check out the NEW, UPDATED MCAC WEBSITE. You will find information about MCAC, the Committees, upcoming Programs, resources, how to get involved, and other invaluable resources!

## INTERESTED IN THE TREATMENT OF SEX OFFENDERS?

Join the Sexual Abuse Committee as they assist in developing protocols for the treatment of sexual abusers and sexual abuse issues. Meetings occur the first Thursday of every month at Lutheran Family Services (120 South 24th Street, Suite 100) at noon.

For more information contact RoxAnne Koenig at 978-5616 or [rkoenig@lfsneb.org](mailto:rkoenig@lfsneb.org)

**What is the Metropolitan Child Advocacy Coalition?**

The Metropolitan Child Advocacy Coalition was formed in 1990 as a result of a merger between three groups of similar purposes: The Child Abuse Council of Omaha, The Child Sexual Abuse Network of Omaha, and the Sarpy County Child Abuse and Neglect Council.

Area professionals, understanding the importance of networking, created MCAC as a form for examining ways in which child abuse and neglect are dealt with across the metropolitan area, AND when necessary, organizing for change. In addition, MCAC has evolved into a vehicle for providing accessible professional education, promoting new programs, and publicizing current thinking and system changes.

**2006 M.C.A.C. Membership Application**

Annual Membership dues extend from January –December

Organization/Individual: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency Members: Up to 10 names on the mailing list:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

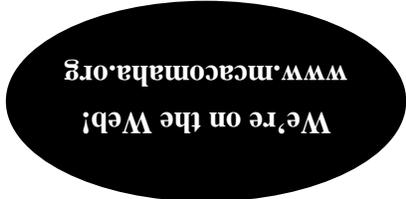
4. \_\_\_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_\_\_ 6. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_ 8. \_\_\_\_\_ 9. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_ Fee Enclosed: Individual \$10 \_\_\_\_\_ Agency \$75 \_\_\_\_\_

Checks payable to : Metropolitan Child Advocacy Coalition Mail to: M.C.A.C., PO Box 6646, Omaha, NE 68106

Questions or concerns? Please call Jackie Simmons, Membership Chair at (402) 595-1351



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

