

ANNUAL REPORT
July 2008-June 2009

TEAM for West Virginia Children, Inc.

Many thanks to our grant funders:

Victims of Crime Act Fund

West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources

Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation

West Virginia Children's Trust Fund

Interest on Lawyers Trust Accounts (IOLTA)

Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation

Boone County Community Foundation

Santa Jeff Foundation

United Way of Central West Virginia

And many other contributors!

The Mission of the TEAM for West Virginia Children is to prevent child abuse.

The TEAM continues to sponsor several initiatives to carry out its mission:

Child Assault Prevention (CAP) Project:

With the use of trained volunteers, the TEAM has been providing self-protection training in area elementary schools since 1986 to help children learn to identify and deal with potentially dangerous situations relating to child abuse. The CAP Project offers a workshop for teachers and parents prior to the workshop with the children. These workshops seek to empower children by providing information, teaching assertiveness, reducing isolation and encouraging children to seek help. Two hundred children were provided information on reducing their vulnerability to assault with over 100 adults receiving information on CAP and child abuse prevention. A training class for new volunteers was held last fall and our pool of CAP volunteers became more diverse.

Western Regional CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate):

The TEAM initiated the state's first CASA Project in 1991. Each year in West Virginia, victims of child abuse are thrust into court through no fault of their own. These children become victims of a complex legal network of judges, lawyers, and social workers who frequently do not have time to give detailed attention to each child. The judges often find that no one has truly presented specialized, independent and well-researched information or has made recommendations that are in the best interests of the child. Sometimes these children fall through the cracks of the system that was designed to help them. In 1977, the concept of the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) was created by Judge David Soukup in Seattle, Washington to insure that the best interests of abused children were being presented in court. The CASA is a trained community volunteer, appointed by a judge, who provides the court with full knowledge of the child's circumstances and makes certain that the child is moved through the child welfare and court systems in a sensitive and expedient manner.

The TEAM's CASA Project, Western Regional CASA, provides a trained community volunteer (CASA) to advocate for an abused child in Cabell, Wayne, Lincoln, Putnam and Boone County Circuit Courts. The CASA volunteer fully researches the situation and makes recommendations to the judge on permanent placement for the child and for services needed. During FY09, 58 CASA volunteers advocated for 219 abused and neglected children from the five-county area covered by Western Regional CASA. Three citizens were trained to become new CASA volunteers during this year. CASA volunteers donated over 2,700 hours of advocacy to their CASA children, valued at \$50,700. CASA volunteers drove over 16,000 miles advocating for their CASA children.

Public Awareness Activities:

The TEAM actively works in a variety of ways to raise awareness about child abuse and its prevention. We continue to share our materials on preventing Shaken Baby Syndrome. We continued to distribute our three updated booklets on identifying and reporting child abuse - one for school personnel, one for early childhood providers, and one on children with disabilities. All of our products are available to be ordered on line. TEAM staff conducted training on child abuse and its prevention.

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to Eliminate child abuse, and to Ensure permanent families for all children.*

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Cabell-Wayne Healthy Families America:

Healthy Families America is a national initiative by Prevent Child Abuse America to establish a universal, voluntary home visitor system for all new parents to help their children get off to a good start in life. Research over the last two decades has consistently confirmed that providing education and support services to parents around the time of a baby's birth – and continuing for months or years afterward – significantly contributes to positive, healthy child-rearing practices, thereby reducing the risk of child abuse and neglect. The goals of the model are (1) to systematically assess families for strengths/needs and provide information and referral; (2) to promote positive parent-child interaction; (3) to promote healthy childhood growth and development; and (4) to enhance family functioning by building trusting, nurturing relationships; teaching problem-solving skills; and improving the family's support system.

The TEAM entered into its thirteenth year of providing support to first-time parents who face many challenges and offering them voluntary intensive home visitation services through Cabell-Wayne Healthy Families America, an accredited program. In FY09 our home visitors served 69 families, facilitating 1,083 home visits. Five group activities were held to provide an opportunity for participants to meet one another for support. The *Brain Under Construction Zone* continued at Cabell-Huntington Hospital, providing 911 new parents with information about the importance of early brain development. *Brain Under Construction Zone* information was also made available in 19 childcare centers, reaching approximately 1,000 families.

New STEPS Initiative:

New STEPS, the universal screening, assessment and referral system for expectant women in Cabell and Wayne Counties, is the gateway for families into Healthy Families America and other community resources. Medical providers and social service agencies provided New STEPS information and invited families to participate. In FY09, 234 families in the two-county area completed a screen and received *Parenting Step-by-Step: A Guide to Resources in our Community*. Family Resource Specialists visited 88 families in their homes. During these visits, the Family Resource Specialists engaged the families in conversations about their parenting backgrounds, hopes and concerns related to parenting, and plans for the future of their families. Based on this information, the families were linked with various community resources.

Partners in Community Outreach:

The TEAM continued to provide leadership for the coalition of community-based In-Home Family Education programs in West Virginia. Due to the generous support of the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, *Partners* was able to contract with a Coordinator to oversee this initiative. *Partners* adapted and published *Safety Guidelines for the Home Visitor* and hosted a training event for staff from many programs. The *Healthy Lifestyles Campaign* was launched to give programs additional resources to address the troubling statistics of obesity and low birthweight babies. In-Home Family Education staff attended training to receive the supplemental materials and instructions on the evaluation tools. Some of the programs also participated in *Planning for a Healthy Pregnancy and Baby* as a result of a partnership with WV Family Planning, Right from the Start, and the WV Perinatal Partnership. Families received information on the importance of birth spacing. The *Partners* Coordinator is representing In-Home Family Education on a number of statewide groups: Advisory Committee on Unplanned and Teen Pregnancy, WV STARS Council, and the PIECES Council.

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Prevent Child Abuse West Virginia (PCA-WV):

As a chartered chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America, PCA-WV worked to improve public engagement, community programs and public policies aimed at ending child abuse and neglect. *Partners in Prevention*, a program of workshops, networking and mini-grants supported 33 local community teams working on local child abuse prevention projects. Together, these teams provided face-to-face services and training to over 39,800 children, parents, staff, volunteers and citizens across West Virginia. The community teams generated hundreds of media spots and distributed more than 49,000 pieces of educational materials to the public throughout the state.

In addition with funding support from the WV Children's Trust Fund, Benedum Foundation and WV DHHR, PCA-WV funded Innovation Grant projects in five WV communities. These communities each received \$25,000 grants to implement creative approaches to child abuse prevention that have a strong potential for expansion and replication. Grantees are working with families with newborns, communities of faith, after school programs, early care and education programs, and community-based arts programs, serving 927 families and 844 individuals. Thus far the projects have yielded promising results and each is built upon evidenced-based approaches to strengthen families and prevent abuse and neglect.

For national Child Abuse Prevention Month in April, PCA-WV once again provided materials and resources to local partners across the state including parenting tips and information about how communities can better support families and children. Through Prevent Child Abuse America's successful *Pinwheels for Prevention* campaign, over 8,600 blue pinwheels were distributed statewide.

PCA-WV sponsored a Public Policy Forum attended by 137 people and hosted Children's Day at the Legislature with over 300 participants on March 19. The highlight of both days was the second *YouTube Youth Forum* featuring a distinguished panel of legislators answering questions from youth in the audience as well as video questions submitted online through YouTube.com.

Our online Legislative Action Center for Children and Families generated 1,704 messages to legislators on pending legislation. PCA-WV provided leadership for community-based programs around the state, who are doing In-Home Family Education. Meetings were conducted with legislators and policy makers educating them about the benefits of In-Home Family Education, which resulted in a \$300,000 supplemental appropriation to support In-Home Family Education programs across the state. The recent increased appropriations have resulted in additional 1,000 families receiving services through these effective programs, and In-Home Family Education programs are now serving families in 22 WV counties. The benefits of these programs in helping families get off to a good start with their children continues to become more widely known and is now recognized as an integral part of a comprehensive early child development system for the state.

PCA-WV continued to promote the West Virginia Children's Trust Fund, which supports local child abuse prevention projects. Contributions to the Children's Trust Fund increased by over 27% from last year. Annual contributions have increased by 57% since the development campaign began in 2005. In addition, \$300,000 was appropriated to the Children's Trust Fund to support community projects for the third year in a row. Marketing efforts for the new Heritage Birth Certificates were expanded this year.

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**TEAM for West Virginia Children
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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Sean Wilson, Army Corps of Engineers

Each Board member is elected to serve a three-year term. Each officer is elected to serve a one-year term.

During this year, the Board of Directors held meetings on July 22, 2008; September 16, 2008; November 18, 2008; February 10, 2009; March 17, 2009; and May 19, 2009.

All Board meetings were held at 4:30pm at the TEAM's offices, 625 Fourth Avenue, Huntington, WV.

The TEAM's Annual Meeting was held on October 21, 2008 at 7:00pm at Marshall Café in Huntington, WV.

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL

Laurie McKeown, Executive Director
Florence Tabor, Office Manager
Connie Leinen, Administrative Assistant
Michelle Rollyson, Event Planner
Kim Runyon Wilds, Coordinator, *CASA* and *CAP*
Jim McKay, Coordinator, *Prevent Child Abuse West Virginia*
Michelle Proctor, *Healthy Families America/New STEPS* Coordinator
Angie Whitley, Coordinator, *Partners in Community Outreach*