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Connect with Carol

Domestic Violence Awareness Month

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Staff Spotlight: Mary Beth Jackson

Violence Against Women Act

let’s start the conversation.
Annual Fish Fry to Benefit The Carol House of Hope - 10/26

Join CFPA at the Moose Lodge at 2605 Broadway St, Pekin, IL 61554 on Friday, October 26 from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. for the annual Fish Fry to benefit The Carol House of Hope, CFPA’s emergency shelter in Pekin. The event features a 50/50 raffle, silent auction items, and a delicious meal of fried fish and fries, prepared by the Moose Lodge. Kids meal of a hot dog with fries is available. Purchase tickets at the door by cash or check, $8 for adults, $4 for kids.

Adopt Our Families

Spread holiday cheer by adopting a CFPA family during the holiday season. Each year, generous members of our community purchase gifts for families served by CFPA who are in need. A “family” might be a single person, a senior, a parent/guardian with children, or other. Donors can indicate the size of family for whom they would like to purchase gifts and help. Donations of gift bags, wrapping paper, tissue paper, and other wrapping items are greatly appreciated. If you would like to contribute this season or would like more information, please contact Celsy Martindale by Friday, November 9 at cmartindale@centerforpreventionofabuse.org or call 309-691-0551. Keep an eye on our website and social media for updates!

Holiday Parades

Each year, CFPA participates in holiday parades in the Greater Peoria Area. This year, CFPA plans to walk in Peoria’s Santa Claus Parade on Friday, November 23 and the Pekin Winter Wonderland Parade on Sunday, November 25. If you would like to volunteer to participate in the parade and walk on behalf of CFPA, please contact Kelly Ward at kward@centerforpreventionofabuse.org or call 309-691-0551.
Believe it when someone tells you about sexual assault

“This is your morning weather report as you ready yourself for the day. Put on your rain boots and grab your rain gear! The National Weather Service is reporting a 92 percent to 98 percent chance of rain.”

After hearing this report, you dress accordingly and take your umbrella with you as you head out the door because you believe rain is just about guaranteed.

Let’s place that same math on a far more sobering topic: reports of sexual assault.

Ninety-two percent to 98 percent of reports of sexual assault are founded, and have good and substantial reason to be believed. False reports are made in only 2 percent to 8 percent of the time, according to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center.

We see these studies, and we comprehend the numbers. Yet, why do so many men AND women still refuse to give survivors the benefit of the doubt when they come forward to share their truth about the crimes committed against them? Why do people look away, or refuse to believe?

Sexual violence is hard to talk about for just about everyone, so perhaps for many it is easier to deny that it happens. Yet, the simple and painful truth is that it affects hundreds of thousands of Americans each year. Every 98 seconds, another person experiences sexual assault.

It can have serious and long-lasting psychological, emotional, and physical effects on survivors. Reporting personal trauma can be debilitating in itself since reliving the pain can only exacerbate the issues being faced.

When a survivor comes forward, they deserve to be taken seriously. Sexual assault is a crime, and every allegation should be thoroughly investigated.

For anybody whose everyday life has been suddenly devastated by an act of sexual violence, the trauma and the trepidation stays with you. It is there when you are forced to share the same elevator, office building, classroom or stay in the same dorm with the person who raped you.

It’s there when people are disbelieving; suspicious of what you were wearing or why you were drinking or why you chose to go where you did, as if you’re the one at fault, instead of the person who assaulted you. It’s crushing when the very people entrusted with your well-being fail to care for you.

As we’ve seen recently in a very public format, victims often delay disclosing their trauma, if they ever do choose to come forward. Many victims report being afraid of retaliation or escalation, or they feel alone or they will not be believed. According to the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network, only one-third, or 310 of every 1,000 rapes, are reported to police, which often means that victims don’t always get the help they need.

And, without a report, law enforcement misses the chance to identify perpetrators in the community, repeat offenders go undetected, and more people are victimized.

Sexual assault is dark and vicious and real. It should never be about politics or political party.

The Center for Prevention of Abuse values freedom and equality and justice. We believe every person deserves to be liberated from abuse or violence. We condemn sexual assault. We do not look the other way when survivors come forward. We stand tall. We can help. When the weather reporter tells us there is a 98-percent chance of rain, we believe. We believe.

Carol Merna is executive director of the Center for Prevention of Abuse in Peoria. Its crisis hotline is (800) 559-7223.

In Peace,
Domestic Violence Awareness, Not Just One Month

By: Fran Reyes, Director of Domestic Violence and Family Centered Services

The strange silence of a quiet office is sometimes unsettling for those in other professions. However, here, at the Center for Prevention of Abuse, we welcome the silence as a sign of peace, regardless of its brevity. That silence is a rarity. Quiet is not a norm within our space and daily work routines. The ringing of our crisis hotline, counseling in session, doors opening and closing, the copy machine humming, the printer kicking out paperwork, kids running through our emergency shelter, and washing machines and dryers buzzing are all typical sounds we hear and give life to our department.

One particular morning a few months ago was no different. During the early morning hours of what started as a normal day with normal sounds, a distressing call came in to shelter. Our medical advocacy team had just responded to a victim of domestic violence at a local hospital who was in substantial pain due to the horrendous incident that took place at her home just hours before. This survivor, having sustained significant physical abuse that resulted in lacerations and bruising all over her body, needed a safe place to stay. We were able to provide just that.

While this is just one call, one survivor’s story, and one situation, CFPA receives nearly 6,600 hotline calls a year. That’s approximately 18 calls a day from within our local communities. Our two emergency shelters offer staff 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, to answer calls and provide immediate crisis intervention and support. Our trained and experienced domestic violence counselors are available to provide around the clock emotional support, active listening, and case management. Once safety has been established, work begins on rebuilding and reshaping the lives of those that have been affected by intimate partner violence.

The shelter has seen a huge overall uptick in such service requests in the last year. This last fiscal year alone, we provided an astounding 8,500 nights of safety, which is 3,000 more nights than last year. Both our shelters have been operating at 70%-100% capacity for months, and the conversation about acquiring more space or expanding has begun. The needs of our shelter and supportive services continue to grow at an exponential rate.

While October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, our staff and services are prepared to take action all year. If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence and need support and assistance, please call the Center for Prevention of Abuse at 309-691-0551 or the crisis hotline, which is available 24/7, at 1-800-559-SAFE (7233).

If you would like to donate to our emergency shelter, please go to page 10 to see our immediate needs.

Award of Excellence

CFPA is proud to receive the “Award of Excellence” Pinnacle Award from the Illinois Society for Healthcare Marketing and Public Relations for Website Design/Development. In March, CFPA launched the new and redesigned website in conjunction with the new branding. Pekin marketing agency, McDaniels Marketing, facilitated the design and development.

Pictured left to right: Camille Yameen, Director of Marketing and Communications; Carol Merna, Executive Director
In honor of Domestic Violence Awareness Month this October, CFPA is partnering with the Village of Peoria Heights to raise awareness and support survivors in our community. On October 1, CFPA was joined by Mayor Mike Phelan and Deputy Chief Chris Ahart from the Peoria Heights Police Department to color the fountain purple and raise a purple flag at Tower Park.

* Photo credit: Chris Chander, The HatHook
Bullying Prevention: Tools and Tips for Parents

By: Laura Kowalske, Director of Prevention Education

Madison was a popular cheerleader at her middle school. She had many friends and enjoyed participating in a number of school activities. Yet when Madison entered the PE locker room, her normally carefree spirit changed. The locker room was where Jody chose to make Madison feel awful. She constantly ridiculed Madison and took her personal items – things like hairbrushes and deodorant – and threatened to hurt her if she didn’t “lend” the items to her. Others in the locker room saw what was happening but no one intervened for fear of having Jody turn on them. After questioning yet another hairbrush purchase, Madison’s mom learned what was happening.

Imagine you are Madison’s parent. You notice behavior inconsistent with your child’s normal personality and decide to have a conversation with your child only to find out she is the target of bullying behavior.

As parents, we want to protect our children from harm. When the harm is caused by bullying -- behavior that is hurtful, one-sided, unfair, and repeated -- what are our options?

• Listen and be supportive. Telling an adult about bullying isn’t easy. If your child comes to you for help, take time to listen and provide encouragement and support.

• Teach your child to be assertive. Encourage your child to express their thoughts and feelings clearly and confidently, say no when they feel uncomfortable or pressured, and stand up for themselves without resorting to fighting.

Stand Out by Standing Up!
• Encourage your child to report bullying behavior. Reporting to an adult is the best way to handle bullying especially if the situation is or could turn dangerous.

• Collaborate with your school. Notify school personnel of bullying incidents and request assistance. Become aware of your school’s bullying prevention policies and the consequences for those who do not follow them.

If your child is exhibiting bullying behavior, the following should prove helpful:

• Talk about the situation. Help your child determine why they are behaving aggressively towards others.

• Provide meaningful consequences for the behavior. If social media is being used to harass, intimidate or bully another, take away privileges to use social media for a period of time.

• Work to develop empathy in your child. Teach your child to notice and try to understand how others are feeling. Talk about what it must feel like to be in another person’s “shoes.”

• Monitor the situation. Continually check in to see if the bullying behavior has truly stopped.

• Keep the lines of communication open. Make sure your child knows you are there to support them as they endeavor to behave respectfully.

• Model what you wish to see in your child. Parents are role models for their children. Is conflict in your home handled with respectful communication or harsh words? Do disagreements escalate quickly with name-calling, put downs and threats?

Parents and caregivers are such an important piece to the bullying prevention puzzle. The Prevention Education team at the Center for Prevention of Abuse is happy to provide additional information and resources to families and is available to provide programming as well. This year our theme for Bullying Prevention Month is **Stand Out by Standing Up** to bullying. That is what we need to teach our children. True strength is being brave enough to stand out by standing up for others.

For more information about our programming or to download our 2018 bullying prevention toolkit, visit our website at www.centerforpreventionofabuse.org.
At the Center for Prevention of Abuse, we are so thankful for the community support received through donations. We want you to know exactly where your money goes and how it impacts the lives of all who come to us seeking peace.

$5 could provide personal hygiene products for one person staying in our emergency shelter
$10 could provide fresh produce for a week’s worth of healthy meals for a family in our emergency shelter
$25 could provide a gas card to help outreach clients get to and from appointments with our counselors
$50 could help survivors afford their monthly medications
$100 could cover the cost of one hour-long classroom presentation on violence prevention education
$350 could cover the cost of our 24/7 crisis hotline operation for one day
$500 could provide funding for an Adult Protective Services caseworker to investigate possible abuse in the home of an elderly individual
$1,000 could provide six hours of language translation for a trafficking survivor whose native language is not English
$2,500 could provide one month in safe shelter for an individual fleeing a violent or abusive situation
$5,000 could provide two months of therapy for one sexual assault survivor
$10,000 could cover the cost of Safe From the Start for one month, a violence intervention program for children ages 0–5 who have witnessed or experienced an act of violence at home or in the community

Give the gift of peace today by making a monetary donation. Donations can be designated to specific services or as a general donation.

Honorariums and Memorials
Honorariums may be made to celebrate a special occasion and memorials may be given to acknowledge a lost friend or loved one.

Stock, Real Estate, and Insurance Policies
Donations can be made in the form of capital assets.

Donations that Leave a Legacy
Remembering CFPA in your estate plans can save and change lives for many years to come. A bequest can be designated to a certain program of CFPA or used at CFPA’s discretion. However, if a donor wishes, a bequest can be designated to one of two endowment funds. The Slane Endowment Fund supports the general operations of The Center and the McPheeters Endowment Fund supports the Prevention Education program.

For more information about monetary donations, honorariums, memorials, capital assets, and legacy donations, please call 309-691-0551.
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West Central Illinois Building Trades

Peoria Disposal Company - Vermeer

Thank you to our sponsors, volunteers, the City of East Peoria, EastSide Centre, the East Peoria Fire Department, and everyone who sponsored a duck to help support this year’s 30th Annual Duck Race! Thanks to our generous sponsors, 100% of the proceeds from duck sales go directly toward client services and help us build a safe and peaceful community. See you in 2019!

Thank you to our sponsors, volunteers, the City of East Peoria, EastSide Centre, the East Peoria Fire Department, and everyone who sponsored a duck to help support this year’s 30th Annual Duck Race! Thanks to our generous sponsors, 100% of the proceeds from duck sales go directly toward client services and help us build a safe and peaceful community. See you in 2019!

Executive Director Carol Merna with Duck Race three-prize winner David Smith. What a Lucky Duck!

30,000 ducks sold
$150,000 raised
30 prizes won
free and confidential therapy.

because we believe you.

and we don’t put a price on healing.

309-691-0551  1-800-559-SAFE (7233)

shelter needs

Fresh meat, eggs, milk, and fresh produce
Canned tuna and chicken
Coffee, cream, and sugar
Oatmeal
Microwavable rice, pasta, and other sides
Peanut butter and jelly
Bottled water and juice boxes
Cereals, granola bars, Pop-Tarts
Healthy snack items for children
Canned fruits and vegetables
Canned soups, stews, and pastas
Cleaning supplies: Clorox-type wipes, bleach-free

volunteer opportunities

Medical Advocates

When someone presents as a victim of domestic violence or sexual abuse/assault in local emergency departments, the hospital puts a call in for our medical advocates. Our medical advocates go to the hospital to assist with the individual’s immediate needs and provide information about their rights as a victim. CFPA is currently in need of second and third shift volunteers.
volunteer spotlight.

Kathleen Reising

Kathleen Reising began donating to the Center for Prevention of Abuse when it first started as a rape crisis hotline in 1975. Since 1991, she has been an active volunteer by answering the crisis hotline, upgrading early computer software systems, and leading external volunteer groups at CFPA’s main campus.

Though she’s facilitated and completed a variety of volunteer projects, the Duck Race is her favorite event because it’s a chance for anyone, regardless of income, to help support the programs and services provided by CFPA and possibly win a prize.

When asked what makes CFPA great, she said, “I remember when there was no women’s shelter. Unless family or friends were willing to help, you were on your own. And you most definitely were not safe. I feel a responsibility to make sure the Center for Prevention of Abuse doors stay open as long as needed."

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer for the Center for Prevention of Abuse, please contact Kelly Ward at 309-691-0551.

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donation spotlight.

Thank you so much to Peoria Township Supervisor Frank Abdour and his team for bringing in over $10,000 from Peoria Township for CFPA.

Congregation Anshai Emeth donated 56 bags of non-perishable along with a $465 monetary donation to CFPA. Anshai Emeth does a yearly food drive for CFPA to celebrate Yom Kippur.

Members of Bradley University’s Alpha Chi Omega made a wishing tree with hopeful and thoughtful notes on the leaves, which was placed in the living room area of the CFPA Peoria shelter.

Thank you to these Women of Influence from Zion Baptist Church for their large donation of paper products.

If your organization, business, club, or group is interested in doing a food or donation drive to benefit CFPA, please call Kelly at 309-691-0551 to find out about our immediate or mass donation needs.
Camille Yameen (CY): When did you start working at the Center for Prevention of Abuse?

Mary Beth Jackson (MBJ): August 23, 1993. I first began as Martha Herm’s Administrative Assistant. I didn’t even know CFPA existed (a well-kept secret), but during my interview, as I was given an overview of what CFPA does, I knew that it was the place for me. We had a budget of $750,000. To put that into perspective, our budget now is $5.2 mil and employee count 114. Martha was a good teacher and mentor, allowing me to learn all aspects of CFPA from the business side.

I became the Director of Operations in 1999 and soon after hired a Grants Manager. As CFPA continued to grow, it was very obvious that we had outgrown our current space. It was at this time in 2001/2002 that the Board and CFPA leadership team decided it was necessary to embark on a Capital Campaign to build a new facility that would get most staff back to one location – our current location here on Joan Court. My title has changed a few times because of need but my responsibilities remain the same – the overall financial management of the agency.

CY: What do you love about working at the Center for Prevention of Abuse?

MBJ: I continue to come to work every day because I am very passionate about what we do. Our programs have [a huge impact] on the survivors of violence who seek our services daily. I continue to be amazed each day at the professionalism and compassion of our staff. I could not do what they do!

CY: How does it feel to celebrate 25 years?

MBJ: Just saying “25 years” is like “Wow! Where did the years go?” So much has changed over these last 25 years and I am honored that I am able to be a part of it.

CY: Any milestones you are particularly proud of for yourself or for the agency?

MBJ: I would say that the one thing I am most proud of for myself is my work on the Capital Building project. I was able to work directly with the architects and contractors and see the apartments and current Admin building come to life. I am also overwhelmed at the generosity of this community. Because of their support, CFPA has been able to sustain “the hard times” (most recently the two-year State of Illinois budget impasse).

CY: What do you wish other people know about the work environment here?

MBJ: I think I would want other people to know that we are leaders in the work that we do and we do change people’s lives every day. It is a very safe place for all!
Dear Congresswoman Bustos:

I am writing in strong support of urgent action to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).

The Center for Prevention of Abuse (CFPA) is a pioneer human service agency in providing care for victims of interpersonal violence. The Center for Prevention of Abuse has grown from a single rape crisis hotline that started 43 years ago in 1975 to a highly respected statewide leader in working to end abuse and break the cycle of generational violence. CFPA is the only agency in the entire state sanctioned to provide its combined services of Domestic Violence, Sexual Abuse/Assault, Adult Protective Services, Prevention Education and Human Trafficking under one roof. CFPA operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, and all victim services are free and confidential.

Since its inception in 1994, CFPA clients have been helped significantly from the provisions within VAWA. For us, VAWA helps fund Domestic Violence/Order of Protection services; the Family Justice Center, and some of our Prevention Education Services. All are vital services in their own right. But, perhaps most importantly, VAWA has helped usher in the fundamental cultural changes we have seen in the way domestic violence and sexual assault are viewed, and responded to, in our country. The bill’s reauthorization is imperative.

The law was first set to expire on September 30, 2018, but the US House of Representatives granted themselves additional time to reach a bipartisan agreement. The extension gives them until December 7 to craft, introduce, debate and pass the bill. Not much time for something so important to so many.

Below you will find a copy of CFPA’s September 12, 2018 letter to Congresswoman Cheri Bustos (IL-17). Similar letters went to Illinois’ US Senators Durbin and Duckworth, Congressman Darin LaHood (IL-18), Congressman Rodney Davis (IL-13), Congressman John Shimkus (IL-15) and Congressman Mike Bost (IL-12), all of whom represent all or part of CFPA’s service area. We are awaiting replies from all of them.

If you would like join us and communicate with your elected officials about VAWA, you can locate your representatives by searching with your home zip code at https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials/.

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Since its inception in 1994, CFPA clients have been helped significantly from the provisions within VAWA. For us, VAWA helps fund Domestic Violence/Order of Protection services; the Family Justice Center, of which we are a member, and Prevention Education Services (specifically “Keeping My Body Safe,” child sex abuse prevention education). Annually, CFPA receives nearly one quarter of a million dollars in VAWA funding.

The basic components of the Violence Against Women Act are sound. It was, and remains, a landmark piece of legislation that has changed the landscape, improving criminal justice and community-based responses to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking.

On behalf of CFPA’s board of directors, supporters, staff and those we serve, we hope to have your robust commitment to ensuring that VAWA receives a timely reauthorization so that the essential programs it provides continue to benefit those who have suffered in silence for far too long. VAWA and advocacy for survivors of abuse has never been, and should never be, about politics or political party. It is about fundamental human rights.

If I can be of service to you with this, or other matters of mutual concern, I hope you will feel welcome to let me know. Further, I would be grateful to hear back from you on this matter so that I can share your reply with our leadership and our champions for the good of our cause.

In Peace,

[Signature]
CONTRIBUTORS
center for prevention of abuse

June 1, 2018 – August 31, 2018

Leaders Change Illinois awarded a grant to CFPA for strategic planning.

Pekin Rotary Club awarded CFPA a grant for flooring repairs at Carol House of Hope.

Eureka Area United Fund awarded CFPA a grant for Domestic Violence Services.

Verizon awarded CFPA a grant for Prevention Education.

CEFCU awarded CFPA a grant for Prevention Education.

Thank You!

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Kelly & Terry Tripp

Executive Director Carol Merna presents gifts to Sandy Andrews and Reverend Anna Saxon for their long-time dedication to serving on CFPA’s Board of Directors. Sandy and Reverend Saxon completed their service of eight years on the Board at the end of the fiscal year.

Pictured left to right: Sandy Andrews, Carol Merna, Reverend Anna Saxon.