

Children's Justice



NEWS



Children's Justice Bureau (CJB)
Montana Dept. of Justice
Division of Criminal Investigation

Dana Toole, Bureau Chief / Children's Justice Bureau



The CJB staff sends a warm holiday wish to all of you. We are thankful for the work you do and the interest you take in Montana's children. These shorter darker winter days make our warm homes particularly important yet we know that some of Montana's children cannot be at home. In the state fiscal year 2014 there are over 2,000 Montana children in out-of-home placement as a result of over 7,000 child protection investigations and about 1,500 court cases

brought on behalf of an abused child or children. In this CJB news, we bring some points of light and hope to balance our concern. First, in Montana we have foster families and other providers for children who commit to daily safety and health for children who can not be home. Second, Montana families adopted 204 children in federal fiscal year 2014 and 50 of those young people are children over the age of 9. We call these folks heroes!

Montana also has the Children's Alliance of Montana, working to improve professional response to children and families (see the story on page 2-3). There is a very special couple – Joy and Calhoun, also working to support and help children in Montana – so be sure to read about them too. From our hearts, have a safe and happy holiday season.

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Inside this issue:

Children's Bureau	2
Joy Lucero and Calhoun	2-3
Children's Alliance of MT	3
Law Enforcement Role...	3
Tribute to Veteran's	3
DOJ - DCI (Narcotics)...	4

Traci Shinabarger, Ombudsman DOJOMBUDSMAN@mt.gov

The 2013 Montana Legislature created the Office of the Child and Family Ombudsman and placed the Office in the Department of Justice. The Ombudsman is appointed by the Attorney General. The bill became Montana Code Annotated 41-3-1201-1207 and defined the key duty of the Ombudsman as investigating concerns about the safety, well-being, and permanency of children receiving child protection services or in need of child protection services. Concerns are brought to the Ombudsman by the public or any person concerned about a child in Montana.

The Office of the Child and Family Ombudsman is administered by Division

of Criminal Investigation as a program of the Children's Justice Bureau.

Attorney General Fox appointed the first Child and Family Ombudsman, Traci Shinabarger, in December of 2013. Procedures for accepting requests for assistance from citizens and for communications with stakeholders were developed and on April 1, 2014, the Office of the Child and Family Ombudsman opened to the public.

There are a dozen other states with similar Ombudsman Offices, although Montana is the only state with an Office of the Child and Family Ombudsman in the state Department of Justice. To date,

the Office of the Child and Family Ombudsman has received 73 contacts. The Ombudsman reviews requests and intervenes based on the needs of the children and families involved. The Ombudsman refers individuals to others if the issue is outside of the Office's jurisdiction and can decline to intervene as well. If the request meets the criteria for an investigation a written report with recommendations is sent to the Director of the Department of Health and Human Services. Thus far, four requests met the criteria for investigations. Two are complete and two will be completed by the end of the year.

The Office of the Child and Family Ombudsman is required to provide an annual report to the Attorney General and the first report will be issued in December of 2014.



Children's Bureau

An Office of the Administration for Children & Families

“November is National Adoption Month“

AdoptUSKids provides free tools and technical assistance to States, territories, and Tribes to support their efforts to recruit and retain foster and adoptive families and to connect them with children in foster care. AdoptUSKids works closely with the Children's Bureau and the Ad Council on national campaigns to raise public awareness about the need for foster and adoptive families.

AdoptUSKids is a project of the U.S. Children's Bureau operated through a cooperative agreement with the Adoption Exchange Association. The project launched in 2002 raised public awareness about the need for foster and adoptive families and to support States, Territories, and Tribes in their efforts to find families for children in foster care, particularly the most challenging to place including older youth, those who are part of a sibling groups that need to be placed together, and children and youth of color, and to assist with placements across county and state boundaries.

AdoptUSKids offers a variety of resources, welfare professionals.

A core service of AdoptUSKids is providing technical assistance and resources to States, Territories, and Tribes through the National Resource Center for Diligent Recruitment at AdoptUSKids (NRCDDR) to help child welfare systems develop and implement comprehensive Diligent Recruitment (DR) plans in order to achieve improved outcomes, including permanency and placement stability for children in foster care. AdoptUSKids also supports activities that focus on increasing the capacity of States, Territories, and Tribes to provide child and youth-focused foster and adoptive family engagement, development, and support services.

Through the national multimedia public awareness outreach campaign, AdoptUSKids helps raise public awareness about the need for foster and adoptive families. The campaign, developed through a partnership of the U.S.

Children's Bureau, AdoptUSKids, and the Ad Council, features the theme, “You Don't Have to Be Perfect to Be a Perfect Parent,” illustrating to prospective parents that children and youth don't need perfection; they need the commitment and love an adoptive family can provide.

AdoptUSKids also maintains a national photo listing that provides States with more opportunities to connect waiting children and youth with adoptive families.

www.childwelfare.gov/adoption/nam/



Joy Lucero and Calhoun



By Joy Lucero, Forensic Interview Specialist

So what is his job? (Calhoun, a trained facility dog)

I have been asked that question countless times over the last three years. My answer a short one, he makes kids who have experienced bad things feel better. Calhoun, a trained facility dog, came from Canine Companions for Independence (CCI). He works with children who have been victims of crime or abuse.

Calhoun is a 5 year old yellow Lab/Golden cross. I told CCI that I needed a dog that would just lay quietly during a child forensic interview and not be a distraction. That is exactly what Calhoun does he is very calm and knows that when we enter that interview

room his job is to lay quietly and provide comfort to that child.

Joy Lucero and Calhoun live in Philipsburg, Montana now and are a great resource for Montanan professionals. Contact the Children's Justice Bureau for contact information.

How does Calhoun do his job?

First, I introduce myself and Calhoun to the child and allow a little interaction prior to the interview. Then, I allow the child to walk Calhoun to the room and depending on the set up he lays on the floor, a couch, or bean bags with the child. Calhoun lays quietly, but the child is allowed as much or as little contact as they feel comfortable. I have had children lay on Calhoun, have

Calhoun lay on them, or just pet him. I often notice that during the actual disclosure they begin petting Calhoun more or sometimes stop talking, interact with Calhoun, and then return to speaking about the incident.

In three years, Calhoun has helped with hundreds of child interviews. The impact Calhoun has made continues to amaze me. Calhoun has broken barriers with some children that I would not have been able to, he has provided comfort to children in their darkest hour, he has provided comfort to parents in their darkest hour, he has provided strength to a child to testify in court, he has done numerous fundraisers, and public events raising child abuse awareness, and he has provided hundreds of children the strength to talk about terrible things that have happened to them.

(Continue next page)



Joy and Calhoun cont.



Calhoun seems to just know when children or adults are upset and need a big yellow dog to comfort them. A father who was racked with grief over his son being molested by his grandfather was sobbing in a room with the door partially shut. Calhoun pushed the door open went to the upset father and laid his head in his lap. The man buried his head in Calhoun and found comfort that at that moment no human could provide.



Joy Lucero and Calhoun

One of my first interviews with Calhoun was in December of 2011, I was called by the Phoenix Homicide unit to interview an 8 year old boy who had witnessed his dad shoot and kill his mother.

During the interview Calhoun was there and the boy would stop often and pet him while speaking of the tragic event he witnessed. Yet it was after the interview that a moment so special between a little boy on the worst night of his life and a dog named Calhoun he had just met.

As the little boy lay down in the playroom waiting for social services to come, Calhoun broke away from me went and laid down next to the boy and put his head on his chest. The little boy looked down and smiled and they laid that way neither moving for an hour. As I stood there and watched a little boy who had lost so much, find a little bit of comfort and peace from Calhoun, I said to myself “that’s your job!”

Rising to the Challenge: Children’s Alliance of Montana- (CAM)



By Brenda George,
Executive Director (CAM)

Six Montana Children’s
Advocacy Centers
Participate in National
Outcomes Study:

The six NCA (National Children’s Alliance) Accredited Children’s Advocacy Centers (CAC) in Montana are participating in a national Outcome Measurement System called OMS. The study is designed to answer these questions: Does your program make a difference for child victims of crime and abuse? How does your program make a difference? Is your program effective? How do you monitor the effectiveness of your program? For the CACs in Montana – the answer is yes – we make a difference! And the results validate the promotion of the multi-disciplinary approach and the development and expansion of the Children’s Advocacy Centers.

The OMS project surveys caregivers at the time they are at the CAC for their child’s forensic interview and through a follow up survey a few weeks

later. Through the OMS project, Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) professionals are also surveyed about how effective the team process is and value of the CAC program in coordinating the team, providing a child friendly environment for forensic interviews and assisting victims.

OMS Outcomes in Montana

91% - Caregivers felt their child felt safe at the center.

94% - Caregivers felt the process for the interview of their child at the center was explained to them.

88% - Caregivers felt that since their visit to the CAC, the staff has been available to answer any questions.

90% - Overall the services they received from the CAC have been helpful to them and to their child.

Montana children served by a CAC receive the counseling they need to

heal, their non-offending caregivers receive counseling and additional services to help them support the child. Investigators and CPS workers share information and collaborate to strengthen cases. Trained forensic interviewers are skilled at talking to children and eliciting disclosures. Prosecutors end up with stronger cases and victims end up on the road to recovery and healing is proving success for our centers and teams!



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Law Enforcement Role and DEC

- Identifying and rescuing the children-**(RESCUE)**,
- Law enforcement is providing early intervention-**(DEFEND)**,
- Refer to appropriate services to lessens the possibility of repeat victimization-**(SHELTER)**,
- Decreases the likelihood of the children committing violent crime(s) in the future-**(SUPPORT)**



LAW ENFORCEMENT

**RESCUE,
DEFEND,
SHELTER,
SUPPORT**





November 11th, 2014

“When someone you love becomes a memory... the memory becomes a treasure.”

Narcotics Bureau / Drug Climate



MONTANA DEPT. OF JUSTICE – (DCI)

The Illegal Drugs Involved in 2013 – DCI Investigations:

- 151 = Meth
- 74 = Marijuana
- 15 = Cocaine
- 10 = Heroin
- 2 = Spice
- 1 = Mushrooms

Meth – Smoked, Snorted, Injected



Marijuana Grow -/ MJ




During 2013, the Narcotics Bureau opened 463 investigations in the state. Of those investigations almost 98% were felony violations. This means an average of about 38 new investigations each month. In addition to the new cases, agents continued to work on approximately 500 other ongoing investigations, including Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) cases.

About 90% of those investigations were initiated and investigated primarily by DCI agents; about 10% were in response to various other law enforcement agency requests in the state. DCI Narcotics opened investigations in 40 of Montana's 56 counties.

Of the 463 cases, 127 (27%) of them involved prescription drugs (top three Hydrocodone, Oxycodone, and Morphine — all are opiates/narcotics used for pain relief) diversion investigations primarily involving illegal distribution, fraudulently obtaining, prescription fraud, “doctor shopping”, theft, and burglary. Drug related offenses is Montana's most serious public health and safety issue.

**24 Hour
Addiction
Treatment
Helpline**

877-340-0184





**Division of Criminal Investigation
Source: DCI Annual 2013 Report**