



# Newsletter



## March 2019



### The Shelter in the Storm That Children Need



This year, March has indeed roared in like a lion. In just the last few weeks, we learned that thousands of migrant children—as many as four thousand over the last four years—who crossed the southern border into the U.S. have reported they were sexually assaulted while in government custody, according to Department of

Health and Human Services documents released by (Fla.) Rep. Ted Deutch's office. And in other news of shocking magnitude, the Vatican held its first-ever meeting on the protection of minors in the church—commonly known as the summit to prevent sexual abuse by clergy. Both set off a media firestorm and, hopefully, a firestorm in our collective conscience.

Both the vulnerability of migrant children kept in detention and the heart-rending survivor accounts of clergy abuse should galvanize us to even more action. These events, as well as the suffering we bear witness to in Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) every day, provide momentum that, I believe, we should be building on as we look to April, National Child Abuse Prevention Month.

These events are a stark reminder that children need protection in every month of the year, that child abuse prevention is a conversation we need to be having not just in April, but throughout the year—because a conversation in one month won't protect children in the other 11. Sister Veronica Openibo, a Nigerian-born nun and one of only three women to address the Vatican summit, admonished the attendees: "Too often we want to keep silent until the storm has passed! This storm will not pass by." By raising awareness, by providing services, by teaching our communities how to talk about child abuse and how to listen and hear when children talk about it, too, we can be the proverbial shelter in the storm that our children need.

I urge you to bear this in mind as you prepare for April, and throughout the year. And as always, I commend you for the outstanding work you do and the services you provide to the children and families we serve.



## New research project aims to increase family engagement

Last month, NCA asked CAC executive directors and victim advocates to complete a survey about how they currently encourage children and families to take advantage of mental health services. Although our member data show that CACs have been consistent about referring children to mental health treatment from year to year, the rates of children using those services has been declining. In 2018, more than 81 percent of caregivers indicated they received information about services available for children. However, the percentage of children who actually used those services has gone from over 69 percent in 2014 to less than 57 percent in 2018—a 12.6 percent drop over five years.

We know that abuse can have long-term physical and mental health impacts, and evidence-based mental health treatments can help children and caregivers deal with the trauma. So it's a major concern to see a decline in mental health service usage rates. We often think that families do not attend due to concrete or external barriers such as lack of transportation or childcare, but our own survey data show it is more likely to be internal or perceptual barriers—caregivers don't think the services are needed or they don't think it will help.



We're determined to find out for sure and to reverse the trend. That's why we're partnering with the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center (with Jane Silovsky, pictured at left, and Erin Taylor) on a three-year study funded by the National Institute of Mental Health to train victim advocates to engage children and families in mental health care. Phase 1 was gathering data—examining information we already have in the NCAtrak case management system, our 2018 NCA Census, and the Outcome

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Measurement System. Then the survey; by the March 1 deadline, about 400 CAC directors and 720 victim advocates had responded to our questions about their current practices. Next up is developing a training curriculum; we plan to start recruiting CACs to participate in training this fall. The final step in the three-year project will be to examine the results of the training and see whether participating CACs were able to engage more families in mental health services.

We know evidence-based treatments help kids and their caregivers heal. Now let's boost the number of families who take advantage of the services we have to offer.

[Learn How We Measure Outcomes](#)



## **2019 Leadership Conference registration opens soon**

NCA's annual Leadership Conference brings CAC leaders from around the country together to learn, network, and discuss innovative programs and ideas to help kids heal. Whether you've been a part of the CAC world for a minute or for a lifetime, you won't want to miss out on this year's exciting roster of speakers and opportunities. Keep an eye on your inbox for our message announcing when the conference registration form goes live. The hotel fills up fast, so don't delay—register as soon as that message shows up!

[Learn More About the Conference](#)

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## **Time is running out! Submit your nominations for NCA Recognition Awards today.**

NCA is once again recognizing outstanding individuals and groups who have demonstrated their commitment and dedication to children and families through the promotion of the CAC model and mission. Now, it's your turn to tell us who exemplifies the CAC movement's commitment to children and deserves the recognition of our entire field.

Nominate someone whose work you admire at a partner organization, another CAC, or your own CAC—even yourself. Accredited member agencies, Associate/Developing members, Satellite members, Affiliate members, State Chapters, and current and former NCA board members may nominate one candidate for each of the six award categories below.

**The deadline for nominations is 11:59 p.m. EDT on Thursday, March 21.**

[Nominate Someone Now!](#)

The six award categories are:

- Volunteer Leadership Award
  - Philanthropy Award
  - Horowitz-Barker Lifetime Achievement Award
  - Outstanding Chapter Leader Award
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- Bud Cramer Advocacy Award
- Innovative Program/Practice Award

You can find more information and nominate an award recipient [on the Leadership Conference website](#).

[Nominate Someone Now!](#)

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## **Introducing donor-advised funds—another way to make a difference**

There are many ways to make a difference as a donor at NCA. In addition to one-time, monthly, and flexible recurring gift plans, NCA also has the ability to partner with donors like you who have donor-advised funds (DAF).

A DAF is a single account that makes for an easy and centralized method for donors to support nonprofit organizations. DAFs take the hassle out of giving, as tax receipts and fund distribution are commonly all handled by the DAF. Donors can make irrevocable gifts or grants to charities through these funds, which are structured by long-term assets and other possibly tax-deductible assets at the direction of the donor. A DAF is also a great way for families to make charitable giving decisions together across generations.

Organizations that commonly organize the creation of DAF funds include financial institutions such as USAA, Fidelity Charitable, Schwab Charitable, or BNY Mellon.

**How to make a gift to NCA via a DAF:**

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You can use our donor-advised fund widget. If you have Fidelity Charitable, Schwab Charitable, or BNY Mellon, your gift can easily be processed through our [DAF Direct widget](#) on our website. You can find the widget about halfway down the webpage, or [contact us](#) to set up your donation.

**By mail:**

NCA's tax identification number is 63-1044781.

Checks can be mailed to:

516 C St. NE

Washington, DC 20002

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to our Senior Director of Development, Bryan E. Boeskin, at [bboeskin@nca-online.org](mailto:bboeskin@nca-online.org) or via phone: 202-548-0090, ext. 120.

[Set Up a DAF](#)

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## Member Spotlight



**In Montana, long distances don't stop the team from helping kids**

The Kiowa novelist N. Scott Momaday once wrote, "The landscape of the

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American West has to be seen to be believed and has to be believed to be seen.” Nowhere is the majesty, breadth, and beauty to which Momaday refers more evident than in Montana. But for the residents of the Crow and Northern Cheyenne Reservations and for the CACs that serve them, the landscape also presents tremendous challenges. Residents of both reservations are isolated from basic services, and some lack transportation. For investigators, asking a family to travel great distances to come to a CAC for a forensic interview may be asking the impossible.



But rather than accept the situation as inevitable, Brenda George, executive director of the Children’s Alliance of Montana, worked with her partners in the FBI to come up with a solution. Brenda particularly credits the FBI with whom she works, particularly Victim Specialists Michele Stewart and Erin Harris and Special Agent Steve Lowe, for identifying a solution to reach children and families who could not reach them.

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Together, they worked with NCA to purchase and deploy high-definition and WiFi-capable camcorders, electronic tablets, electronic storage media, and associated equipment that allow for remote viewing, wireless monitoring, and live-streaming forensic interviews. This new capability empowered investigators and interviewers to conduct effective interviews of children in less than ideal settings, with little preparation and using minimal resources—a common challenge in Indian Country. While acknowledging that this is not the ideal way to conduct an interview, Brenda notes that “it is in keeping with the spirit and the mission of NCA to bring the services to the child and to meet children where they are in order to ensure that they have the opportunity to make their voices heard—and to get the services they need to heal and recover.”

Although conducting offsite interviews may not be the ideal situation contemplated under the NCA Standards for Accredited Members, the interviews themselves adhere to the Standards in every other sense. They are conducted by highly trained professionals, acting in a multidisciplinary team capacity, with victim

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specialists who have received recognition from the Office for Victims of Crime and the Attorney General's Office for their outstanding work. But most importantly, the services meet the needs of the children and their families and do so with the creativity and thoughtfulness that has become the hallmark of the work of CACs. We at NCA salute the work of these professionals and their service to their community.

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## Research & Innovation Corner



### News You Can Use

As you prepare for National Child Abuse Prevention Month (NAPCM), coming in April, here are some resources that can be particularly useful in assisting you:

#### **The 2019 National Child Abuse Prevention Month website is now live: “Strong & Thriving Families”**

This year, National Child Abuse Prevention Month focuses on supporting professionals and communities in their work to promote strong and thriving families and reduce child maltreatment. Visit the [NCAPM 2019 website](#) to see the important resources and tools for this year's campaign:

- **Share** strengths-based [tip sheets](#) for parents and three [activity calendars](#) for prevention programs, parents, and community partners to promote well-being using protective factors—all available in English and Spanish.
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- **Use [outreach materials](#)**, such as social media posts and email signatures, to promote NCAPM and support prevention professionals.
- **Download** the [2019 Prevention Resource Guide](#) and help strengthen families through strategies and best practice insights.

For more information on National Child Abuse Prevention Month, contact Child Welfare Information Gateway at 800-394-3366 or [info@childwelfare.gov](mailto:info@childwelfare.gov).

[Visit the 2019 NCAPM Website](#)

## Toolkit for NCA members helps survivors SHINE



### SUPPORT SURVIVORS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

The SHINE Campaign is almost here! This public awareness initiative, building a visible network of support for survivors and supporters, launches in April. NCA members can visit our website to download a toolkit full of resources and ideas to get you started. There's one version for [NCA member CACs](#) and another for [Chapter members](#). The campaign assets are exclusive to NCA members, but anyone can participate online or through their local CAC. The message: We are not alone when we have each other.

[CACs: Get the Toolkit](#)

[Chapters: Get the Toolkit](#)

If you're not a member of NCA, you can still participate on social media! View [SHINE on Facebook](#) and [@whyweshine on Instagram](#).

[Visit SHINE on Facebook](#)

[SHINE with Us on Instagram](#)

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## Policy Update



### Washington Update



## Fiscal Year 2019 budgets passed, funding CACs

Last month, Congress finalized and passed the remaining Fiscal Year 2019 (FY19) budgets, with the president signing the agreement into law on February 15. This budget package includes funding for the FY19 Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) Appropriations, which spells out funding for all Department of Justice programs, including two federal funding streams important to CACs:

- **Victims of Crime Act (VOCA/Crime Victims Fund) at \$3.353 billion.** For the coming year, the final FY19 budget releases \$3.353 billion in funding for VOCA programs, which includes set asides of \$497.5 million to be used for the Violence Against Women Act, \$10 million for Office of Inspector General activities related to VOCA spending, and 5 percent (or \$167.7 million) to the Office for Victims of Crimes for grants to Indian tribes to improve services for victims of crime. While this level is less than last year, it still closely mirrors the levels that VOCA has been funded at for the past five years. Additionally, states have likely prepared for this slight dip so that they can keep VOCA funding steady.
  - **The Victims of Child Abuse Act is funded at \$22.5 million,** which is a \$1.5 million increase over last year's level. We want to thank our House and Senate CAC champions, specifically Senators Blunt (Mo.) and Coons (Del.), and Reps. Costa (Calif.), Barr (Ky.), and Evans (Pa.) for their support. We also want to thank Senators Shelby (Ala.) and Shaheen (N.H.), and the House CJS appropriators for support of CACs within the CJS Committee itself, as well as all of our CAC partners and champions. With such tough budget climates, this is great news and is the new starting place as we keep working to double our funding!
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Now that the FY19 budget is finalized, Congress will turn its attention to drafting the FY20 budget. And once again, our House and Senate champions will be leading the effort for fully funding the Victims of Child Abuse Act, so stay tuned for ways you can help advocate. We will also keep you updated as legislative and public policy updates unfold, especially CAC funding related measures. If you have any questions, please email Denise Edwards at [dedwards@nca-online.org](mailto:dedwards@nca-online.org) or Will Laird at [wlaird@nca-online.org](mailto:wlaird@nca-online.org).

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