



THE EXCHANGE CLUB PARENTING SKILLS CENTER

141 Franklin Street, Stamford CT 203-327-9419

Spring 2011

Spring 2011 Edition

A Note From The Executive Director

Our mission is to stop the cycle of child abuse by providing remedial and preventative intervention to abused, neglected and/or "at risk" children and their families.

Founded in 1989, The Exchange Club Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse of Southern CT, Inc. (dba The Parenting Skills Center) provides the following Agency Services:

- ◆ Family Enrichment Services
- ◆ Crisis Parent Aide and Hispanic Crisis Programs
- ◆ Kid's First Supervised Visitation
- ◆ Teen Mentoring Program / Teen Parent Project
- ◆ Nurturing Parent Education, and Support Groups
- ◆ Substance Abuse Intervention/Parenting Support Group
- ◆ Co-operative Parenting through Divorce

**All services available in Spanish and Creole as well.*

The Exchange Club Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse of Southern CT, INC. (or DBA... the Parenting Skills Center) is one of the communities best kept secrets. Every day a team of committed human service workers begins and ends their day in the service of children and their families in Fairfield County. The mission we are all dedicated to is the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect.

As a nation, we have all become experts at desensitizing ourselves to violence. Many of us turn off the TV, avoid the news and try to create an environment of love and care in our own circles. That can be healthy for us and well meaning, however if you were to take the time to look into the eyes of a hurt, confused, frightened child, it would pierce your heart. The team of human service workers at the Center knows all too well the look of a child who has been hurt, or left alone, is filthy or homeless or without food or weather appropriate clothing. They are impossible for us to ignore and I ask you to take a

moment and look around in a store, a school, or anywhere in your community, you too would begin to see them. Then the opportunities to help become endless!

Think back if you will to your own pleasant memories as a child: how did your parents show you that they loved and cared for you? They may have taken you to a ball game, or given you a birthday party, or surprised you with your favorite cookies when you got home from school! There are many ways to show love to our children, quality time, a kind word, a well placed compliment, a heartfelt gift, a hug... and for some of us the list goes on and on. However, some of us are not as fortunate. That is where the partnership between you and the Center's team comes in. Our workers teach the value of non violent communication, ways to affirm that one "matters" in their family, and how to show love and care in the place of constant verbal and physical abuse by providing the services outlined in our programs

and the results are tremendous! Over 80% of the families we serve learn the skills needed to stop the cycle of abuse and neglect! Therefore the quality of life is improved for everyone concerned.

Mother Teresa said " we do not have to do great things, just small things with great love"... This is our motto at the Center, it applies to the human condition of any culture or religion. Scientists have now proved that in general we all need love and we all need to give of ourselves in order to attain a sense of our own happiness. You may not be able to dedicate the time to volunteer to work with a family your self, (although we do provide that opportunity): you *can* get involved in many other ways at the Center! The opportunity to donate or partner with us financially will make a huge difference in our ability to reach these children and their families.

If we all do our part, we can make sure all children have the opportunity to feel safe, esteemed, special, talented, important... we can make sure the nightmares stop and they can attain some of the happiness we all strive for! Let's put safety in all homes and smiles on the faces of all the children we can!

Donna L. Miller M.S

Center Staff:

Donna L. Miller M.S, Exec. Director
Olympia Arnold M.S, Coordinator

Parent Aides:

Lilia Angarita B.A
Valerie Mondesir B.S.W
Marcia Campoverde B.A
Kelly Conner B.A
Rebecca Campos M.S.W

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Kristin Matté, Finance & Development
Suzanne Brunner, Makeda Horlman & Maria Robinson, Supervised Visitation workers

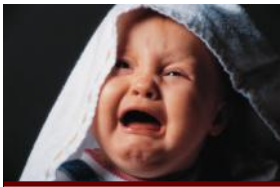
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Increase in Child Abuse & Neglect due to Financial downturn

Kristin Matté, Financial Manager

Child abuse and neglect has increased as a side effect of the recession.

The Children need more help than ever, here are a few ways you can help:

- ◆ Make a contribution to help support the services we provide
- ◆ Donate new clothing, diapers, baby formula, baby blankets, etc.
- ◆ Organize a collection at your church or synagogue, work place, school, club or other community organizations
- ◆ Volunteers are always needed Contact The Center's Coordinator Olympia Arnold at 203-327-9419.

Child abuse is expected to increase according to an article by Alice Park ¹ with staggering research found by Dr. Robert Sage

the director of child protective team at Boston Medical Center

Since the economic downturn in 2008, Boston Medical center recorded a **30% increase** in child maltreatment cases, most of which involved neglect, and since 2009, the hospital has already recorded a 2% to 3% increase.

For the study, Dr. Sege's group compared state-level unemployment statistics from the Bureau of Labor Statistics with data on child abuse in all 50 states since 1990. The scientists aggregated the varied definitions of maltreatment, which included instances of physical violence against youngsters by their parents as well as cases of neglect such as children not receiving appropriate medical treatment if they needed it, or not getting the proper supervision and care

because their parents were abusing drugs or alcohol. For every 1% increase in unemployment, they found an increase in child abuse reports of at least 1 per 2000 children.

What's more, while certain government services such as Medicaid and unemployment benefits are boosted during an economic downturn to lessen the burden on the unemployed, child protective services are often cut during difficult times.

The findings highlight the need to maintain services that protect children and help families during economic loss. There are long term consequences of childhood abuse and neglect, we need your help now to stop the cycle. All donations are welcome and can be mailed or dropped off at the Center.

141 Franklin Street, Stamford



Marcia Campoverde, Parent Aide

Parenting Groups

The main goals of the Parenting groups are to strengthen Families in order to prevent child abuse, and for

parents to develop a lifelong love of learning, to be happy and confident in their role as parents. Many differ-

ent groups are offered at the Center, in Spanish, Creole and English both days and evenings. They are well attended!

A Client's Story!

My name is Juan I am a senior at Westhill High School in Stamford. I came with my parents and a brother in 2007 from Colombia. A month after we arrived to this country my father physically abused me, my aunt reported him to the police and he was arrested, and went to jail the case was referred to DCF and they referred us to the Exchange Club Parenting Skills Center.

Our social worker was Lilia she connected our family with

different agencies to help us with all of our problems. My father came out of jail after three months and we have been in therapy and have worked very hard as a family with Miss Lilia our family has very good relationships now. Lily helped me learn English, got me to play sports in school, and helped me understand how im-



portant school was to my future, my grades are now very good and I am the leader of a club in school for Spanish speaking new-comers! I help them to get involved in activities in school. I work and help my family financially. I am a good role model for my younger brother. These are the reasons why I am very grateful to the Exchange Club Center. Thank you.



Internship Program

Olympia Arnold M.S., Center Coordinator

The quality of internships for the human service students and for employers is highly influenced on how well an agency is prepared for the student. I have been coordinating and supervising bachelors and masters level interns from all the local universities for the past seven years. The goals of our intern-

ship program include:

- ◆ to develop professional skills while gaining hands on experience in the field,
- ◆ to apply academic course work to real life work situations,
- ◆ to learn how organizations de-

velop and operate

- ◆ most of all I am dedicated to helping the student develop their own personal sense of vocation.
- ◆ Interns provide many volunteer hours to help families and to co-facilitate parenting groups



The Parent Project

Kelly Conner, Parent Project® Facilitator

The Parent Project® launched its first session on April 4, 2011 with parents of strong-willed or out-of-control adolescent children. The curriculum teaches concrete identification, prevention and intervention strategies for the most destructive adolescent behaviors. The parents attend a 3 hour class and follow along with an activity based workbook, “A Parent’s Guide to Changing Destruc-

tive Adolescent Behavior.”

Over 150,000 families have attended Parent Project® classes nationwide. A proven track record, the Parent Project® reduced juvenile crime by 1/3, while significantly increasing both school attendance and performance. The Parent Project® was recognized by the American Bar Association as the strongest parent-involvement program for adjudicated youth in the nation.

The classes have been a huge success in conjunction with the Youth Service Bureau at the Stamford Government Center.

We started with an informational session that was so well received that a class started two weeks later! The Youth Service Bureau collaborates with us by providing the families with delicious food, drinks, and desserts and a raffle each session. Each parent has come with an open mind and is ready to learn new concrete techniques that they can administer at home immediately. One parent stated “I’m so glad that this new class is being offered, I’ve learned a lot already and I look forward to coming back every week!”

Teen Mentoring ~ Today’s Youth, Tomorrow’s Leaders

Kelly Conner , Teen Mentor

Kelly Conner, teen mentor has years of experience working in various capacities with teenagers. The teen mentoring program is aimed at teenagers at risk. The goal is to help youth academically by providing tutoring and to assist them in building their character by providing social/emotional communications skills and anger management skills. The program also focuses on creating a personal vision for college or career goals.



youth to new experiences as well as cultural diversity. It teaches youth how to make decisions that will prepare them for college and the work force. The positive interactions allow the youth to make constructive connections in school, work, and the community.

As an example last year, a teenage boy has been enrolled in our Mentoring program. Initially he was unsta-

ble in school and he was in with the wrong crowd. He was confrontational

and disrespectful with adults. He was going down the wrong path in life.

Now, he has graduated from high school and is attending a trade school. He now has his own apartment and is able to financially support himself. He has a better attitude about life and a positive mind set. His judgment and ability to relate to others in a positive way has become better within his family, at school and within the community. He is exited about learning a trade and his focus is now on succeeding in life and making a difference one day in someone else’s life.

The program is designed to expose the

A Strategic Partner ~ Fairfield County Food Bank

Lilia Angarita, Parent Aide

We have saved many children and families from malnutrition because of our Strategic partners!

The Center’s partnership with the Fairfield County Food Bank helps feed the working poor and those living in impoverished conditions through a collaborative effort. Programs such as Neighbor-to-Neighbor, Person-to-Person, and salvation army as well as local churches also help the Center to provide nutritious food to those in need.

The mission of the Food Bank is to provide nutritious food to non-profit organizations that feed the hungry in Stamford, Norwalk, Greenwich, and New Canaan while seeking to raise awareness to promote action to combat hunger in these communities.

The Fairfield County Food Bank’s doors are always open to us—providing much needed food for the children and families we serve—and allowing us to help ensure that their most basic human needs are being met.



Kids First Supervised Visitation

Rebecca Campos, Supervised Visitation Coordinator/Parent Aide



The Exchange Club Parenting Skills Center's "Kids First" Supervised Visitation Program is one of Connecticut most Professional and most affordable Supervised Visitation Programs. The goal of the program is to insure the safety

of the child during the visit, take custody of the child from the custodial parent, return the child to the custodial parent and pay close attention to the interactions between the parent and child. This is accomplished by trained social workers who monitor the interactions be-

tween the child and the visiting parent. The Supervised Visitation Program works with families that may be referred by the Department of Children and Families, the courts, attorneys or self-referrals. We operated statewide and are very flexible with our availability.

Parents language barrier

Valerie Mondesir , Parent Aide

As a bilingual social worker working with non-English speaking parents, the challenges lay in helping the parents to let go of the fear or embarrassment that they are feeling because of the language barrier. Parents learn that there are resources available to them and they can always ask for

an interpreter. Another challenge arises when the children speak English and the parents don't know the language, then the children are forced to take on grown-up responsibilities when the parents need to interact with the outside world. The family dynamic changes because of the reverse roles, which in turn can hinder a parent's ability to properly parent the children. Networking is also an important aspect of my work. I am aware of all of

the different agencies within the community because my clients have different levels of problems to deal with. Parenting is a special problem when the clients don't know the American culture. They need to become aware the American system doesn't tolerate corporal punishment.



*"Child abuse casts a shadow the length of a lifetime."
~ Herbert Ward*

Thank You for Your Support in 2010-2011

Kristin Matté, Financial Manager

- ◆ Andor Capital
- ◆ Bridgeport Child Guidance
- ◆ CT Department of Children and Families
- ◆ Eric Gleacher Foundation
- ◆ Exchange Club of Durham-Middlefield
- ◆ Exchange Club of Easton
- ◆ Exchange Club of Madison
- ◆ Exchange Club of New Canaan
- ◆ Exchange Club of North Stamford
- ◆ Exchange Club of Norwalk
- ◆ Exchange Club of Stamford
- ◆ Exchange Club of Stratford
- ◆ Fairfield County Community Foundation
- ◆ First County Bank
- ◆ Hedge Funds Cares Inc.
- ◆ Klein Family Foundation
- ◆ New Canaan Community Foundation
- ◆ Perrin Family Foundation
- ◆ Second Congregational Church
- ◆ SERC
- ◆ Stamford Board of Education
- ◆ Stamford Exchange Club Golf Tournament
- ◆ United Way of Western CT Employees
- ◆ United Way Volunteer Center
- ◆ Support Group Guidance
- ◆ A Special thank you to our Board Members who give so generously to our Center.
- ◆ And last but not least a special thank you goes out to all individual who contributed in 2010.

Our great success could not have been possible without all your help!!
On behalf of all the children, client families and Center staff our heartfelt Thanks to you!!



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