



First Light Child Advocacy Center Community Newsletter



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Advocacy Center**
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Fall 2009

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As another year seems to have come and nearly gone, it is nice to take some time to reflect back upon the 2009 and see our accomplishments and thank all of those who help First Light and the children of our communities. With the struggling economy, comes challenges for both First Light, our Multidisciplinary Team Agencies and the families and children that we all serve. With each of these struggles it seems to bring an increase in neglect of children. Statistics show that increase throughout the year, and sadly enough, that is the case for 2009.

We have many blessings with great volunteers, organizations and fundraisers and many people donating their time and talents in helping First Light to be a strong and supportive organization to hundreds of children and families. Our annual Motorcycle Ride this year brought more than 100 bikers to Grace Community Church to start the ride off with a Pancake Breakfast with the ride ending in Wabash at a concert and the 60th Birthday Bash for Brandt's Harley Davidson Dealership.



2009 Fundraisers



In March, all the Northwood Manor folks decided that together they would like to support First Light by hosting a Murder Mystery Dinner titled "Death In Them Thar Hills". The evening was so much fun and many friends participating to make this evening a real success!



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Money we donate to Caritas Food, where we'll take a trip back to 1963, as our hero, Charlie Jones discovers weird rules, and meets an unlikely foe.

Death in Them-Thar Hills

A Murder Mystery Dinner to benefit First Light Child Advocacy

SATURDAY, MARCH 7TH
6:30 PM COCKTAIL HOUR
7:30 PM DINNER AND INVESTIGATION
\$40 each or \$75 per couple

NORTHWOOD MANOR
1590 West Timbercreek Drive • Marion

Use your imagination, sit down in your comfort level, and enjoy the laughter and thrills of the old west to help us raise this delicious money!

Limited seating available. For tickets, call Melissa at 765-662-9700 or 765-617-2441.
Proceeds to benefit First Light Child Advocacy

NorthwoodManor
First Light Child Advocacy Center



Cont'd First Light News



It hardly seems that in a few short months, we will have been providing services to children for six years! In this time, First Light has accomplished several goals. We now provide services to Grant, Blackford, Wabash and Miami County children. Our Multidisciplinary Team has grown to over 33 trained professionals for Grant County. Training for all our forensic interviewers involves attending a course called ChildFirst Finding Words Indiana. This training provides our professionals with updated techniques on how to conduct a fact-finding, objective interview designed to reduce

possible trauma to the child while enabling them to talk about their experience.

First Light continues to use volunteers, interns, students and service groups and organizations to provide children with everything to meet their needs. Nearly 300 children have been interviewed in 2009 at our CAC. In 2004 when First Light began offering services to families and children, four CAC's (Child Advocacy Centers) were in operation in Indiana, as of this date, twenty one centers now operate in Indiana.

Child Advocacy Centers are 501 ©(3) non-for-profit

organizations operating primarily on fundraisers, donations and grants. The future of CAC's depends on generous donors like you.

It is our sincere hope that each and everyone of you have a wonderful and safe holiday season!

There are no seven wonders of the world in the eyes of a child. There are seven million.
~Walt Streightiff

Leaving a Legacy and Helping Children



We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give. -- Winston

Many times a month, First Light will be asked this question "What can I do to help?"

Non-profits, such as First Light, often struggle with the question, "what is our budget going to look like this year?" The reason for this question is that many factors depend on several things throughout the year. Here is a list of a few of those factors that play a major role in the survival of non-profits,

The Economy; The number of children being seen varies from year to year and can be very unpredictable; Funding sources, such as grant

availability plays a major role in funding; The support of donors; The types of donations being made, are they material donations or actual funds? The needs of the children can change drastically from year to year;

To list a few ideas to answer that question "What can I do to help?", here are some suggestions that could help you to not only leave that Legacy behind, but also to build a solid foundation for the future of First Light.

Consider making First Light the beneficiary on Stocks you've invested in, CD's or possibly the interest check

received on your CD's, IRA's, Life Insurance, Savings Accounts or making First Light the beneficiary of your Estate. Make First Light a part of your Will or Living Trust. Or consider donating your Tax Refund Check annually.

These decisions can be made as part of your planning today, giving hope to children and families for a more secure future for First Light tomorrow!

For more information, please don't hesitate to give us a call at 765-668-8082.

Tips on how to alleviate Stress during the Holidays

Perhaps the biggest problem we face as adults during the holidays' is the increase in stress. We are often overwhelmed by the amount of work we need to get done on the job and the amount of pressure we feel due to social obligations at this time of year. Add in the stress of gift buying (especially in divorced and blended families) and we feel a tremendous emotional fatigue-which means we have fewer emotional resources with which to manage our kids. An adult who is emotionally fatigued and anxious is less able to be there for their kids emotionally.

Parents have to keep in mind that their resources-both emotional and financial-are under a lot of stress at this time of year. Many emotional demands are placed upon you, and there's very little outlet to talk about your stress as a parent because everyone's acting so "happy." Parents can often confuse excitement with happiness. The holidays are an exciting time. But they're not happy times for many people. The truth is, the holidays are a lot of work—primarily done by parents. We tend to feel our economic deficits more critically at this time. When you feel like you can't afford to get your kid the next cool, hip thing, you feel like you are not taking care of your family. Here are some tips that may be able to help your family ease through the extra stress of the season:

- **Have Limits.** Keep in mind, when planning for the holidays, you should have limits or expectations of what will or will not happen. This includes all areas of holiday planning. If appropriate, set a budget for gifts. Let children know in advance what they can expect so there will not be any unrealistic requests
- **Don't spread yourself too thin.** It's ok for you or your child not to be actively involved in everything the season offers. If there are certain things you enjoy, individually or as a family, make a list and plans to these things. If you find your list getting too big or out of control, maybe alternate activities yearly. In addition, saying no to one or two activities a season does not make you a humbug.
- **Keep the end in sight.** You may feel like the holiday stress is going to bring your holiday happiness to an end or that it will drag on forever. Keep in mind that all too soon, the season will be behind you and life will return to "normal". Keep an eye on what's important now. Similarly, keep an eye on your child. If you feel that your child is becoming overwhelmed by activity or just needs a little break, go for it. The tears as a result of holiday breakdown, may just add more stress to an already hectic situation.
- **Find a shoulder to lean on.** Keeping in contact with family and friends may give you the extra support you need to make it through the season. You don't have to do it all on your own. Don't be afraid to delegate tasks or accept offers of assistance from those close to you
- **Remember you.** Most importantly this holiday season, don't forget about keeping track of you and your family. If you're feeling run down or irritable, find something to take your mind off of your stress. Take time for a relaxing bath, a cup of cocoa, or an hour on the treadmill. What ever you want, treat yourself to your own brand of stress relief.

Don't let your
mind bully your
body into believing
it must carry the
burden of its
worries.
~Astrid Alauda



Special Advice for Divorced Families: Holiday spending tips for you and your ex-spouse. Knowing when to let go on spending is particularly important for divorced families. You have two scenarios. The first is where the parents are still very antagonistic about each other. If your relationship is strained with the ex-spouse, don't compete with them by buying too much stuff, buy what you can afford. And the second is if you are able to communicate with your ex-spouse, agree on an amount that both of you will spend. It's all about putting the child first.

**Brought to you by:
PREVENT CHILD ABUSE, GRANT COUNTY**



Creative and Inexpensive Holiday Activities

With the holidays quickly approaching, you may feel overwhelmed with how to engage with your children and celebrate this time of year together. Here are a few activities that you can do with your child that are enjoyable and affordable:

- Go on an “adventure walk.” Take your child on a walk with a mission in mind. As you’re walking look for leaves on the ground that look like the perfect fall leaf (golden and crisp).
- Make cookies, and decorate them according to the holiday season
- Decorate for the season. It doesn’t need to cost a lot money to make some fun holiday decorations. Here are some easy craft ideas:

Thanksgiving: Make a Thanksgiving wreath with what your child is thankful for written on it. All you need is a paper plate, construction paper, glue, a marker, and ribbon or yarn. Cut leaves out of the colored paper and glue them on the paper plate (make sure to cut out the center of the plate first). Then write what you and your child are thankful for this year on each leaf. To finish, glue the ribbon or yarn on the back so that you can hang your new wreath.

- **Christmas:** It is really easy to make your own Christmas ornaments. All you need is 1 cup of applesauce, 1 cup of cinnamon, ribbon, cookie cutter, and a butter knife. Add the applesauce and cinnamon together and mix until it is like a dough like consistency. Roll the dough flat and cut out your shapes. If you don’t have cookie cutters, then you can use the butter knife to cut your shapes out. Poke a hole at the top of the ornament for the ribbon. Let the ornament sit and air dry for a day or two. These ornaments are perfect because they smell like cinnamon and keep their scent all season. They also can be gave as early Christmas presents!



MAKE THE SEASON ONE OF JOY AND CELEBRATION

The following recipe, provided by United Behavioral Health, can help you make this season a happier and healthier one:

- ~ Take a pinch of positive attitude.
- ~ Sift in your favorite activities.
- ~ Stir in heaping spoonfuls of daily relaxation.
- ~ Sprinkle in dashes of laughter.
- ~ Add a dollop of time management
- ~ Fold in sizable portion of rest and exercise.
- *This is a special ingredient for parents:
- ~ Pour in unstructured quality time to play with and just enjoy children and loved ones.



Mix thoroughly and blend daily into your life. Keep your activities simple, pare down demands you place on yourself, and measure your food and drink in moderation. This recipe can be spread well past the holiday season and is good throughout the year.

A successful holiday depends largely on your commitment to planning for your kids. Planning how to use their free time constructively so they stay out of trouble and do positive things with the family. Planning on how much money you’ll spend. Planning so that you have the emotional resources to give them. Set some limits with yourself this holiday and stick to them. The end result will be a holiday that everyone enjoys





New Face at First Light!

On August 10, Charlene Johnson joined us as the new Office Manager at First Light. Charlene graduated in July '09 from Harrison College with her degree in Criminal Justice. Originally from the Fairmount area, Charlene now lives in

Marion with her husband, Lee, and their 7 year old son, Tariq. We think you will find that no matter what day of the week or time of the day it is, Charlene will always greet you with a smile and a kind word!

FIRST LIGHT CAC

OUR MISSION STATEMENT.

- It is the mission of the Grant County Child Advocacy Center to provide a neutral and safe, child-oriented center. Our Center will offer immediate investigation and intervention to abused children and their families
- Our vision is clear...by combining our community's skills, resources and talents in a consistent and compassionate approach, we will improve our prevention and intervention efforts... "We shall have no higher priority than to protect our children."

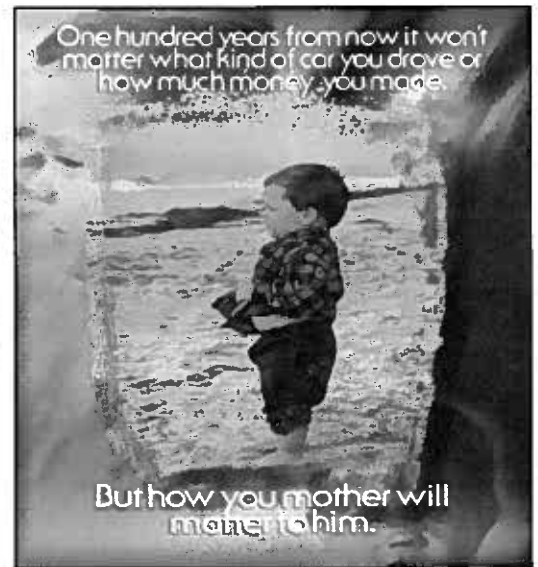


Big things sometimes come in small packages! This is something that we at First Light have come to realize over the past few years. On Labor Day weekend 2009 Bradley Belcher, age 11 and his sister Lauren, age 8, decided to have a Lemonade stand and sell Lemonade and cookies to raise funds for First Light. Then they decided they could raise more funds if some kind people would match the funds that they were raising, and that is exactly what happened! Bradley & Lauren raised \$500.00 for First Light!

Of course Bradley has been quite the philanthropist for several years now, raising thousands of dollars for non-profits here in Grant County. Bradley has raised funds for First Light before and used them to purchase supplies, a new toy box, a rug for the play area and numerous goodie bag items.

Now the children use their spare time, especially Lauren to make a craft item that is given to organizations that Prevent Child Abuse *Grant County* recognizes for their outstanding work and dedication in the area of child abuse prevention.

We would like to not only recognize Bradley & Lauren for a job well done, but also thank them for being so generous and setting an example for other children and adults that says no matter how big or small you are, love and kindness will always prevail! A BIG THANK YOU BRADLEY & LAUREN!



Prevent Child Abuse, *Grant County* is just one of the several statewide network chartered councils representing Prevent Child Abuse Indiana. PCA *Grant County* has several functions dedicated to the prevention of abuse and neglect of children. Newsletters are just part of that function, along with community education.

If you are interested in becoming a prevention partner of Prevent Child Abuse *Grant County*, please contact us for additional information.

765-662-9971 and ask for Connie Rose
Or
765-668-8082 and ask for Janet Bailey

