

Grant Update

A Summary of Grant Activity

Governor's Crime Commission

NC Criminal Justice Analysis Center

Crossroads: Sexual Assault Response and Resource Center

Children are the most vulnerable victims of abuse and maltreatment. Child maltreatment covers a broad range of abuse, including neglect, severe physical abuse, drug endangerment, sexual abuse, and witnesses to homicide. According to data collected by the National Children's Alliance, in 2011, 6,463 children were served at accredited child advocacy centers (CACs) in North Carolina. Of those children, 2,599 were aged 6 and under, 2,303 were aged 7 to 12, and 1,558 were aged 13 to 18 (the ages of three victims were undisclosed). These children were the victims of abuse or maltreatment at the hands of parents, stepparents, intimate partners of a parent, other relatives, or other persons known to the child.¹

One of the greatest challenges is addressing the needs of child victims while also protecting them from further traumatization during the process of collecting evidence necessary to prosecute the crimes committed against them. CACs address this challenge by bringing together a broad spectrum of services to meet the unique needs of child victims. While other agencies have procedures to investigate and prosecute crimes, CACs are specifically established to protect child victims and to ensure that the process of investigation does not cause additional trauma. CACs provide a child-oriented environment to ensure that children feel secure and protected. The team approach to working with children ensures their safety and security. It also provides the full range of services needed to help both the child and the non-offending family members recover from the trauma of abuse.

The Problem

CrossRoads: Sexual Assault Response and Resource Center, based in Burlington, provides services to adult and child victims of sexual assault in both Alamance and Caswell counties. According to Program Manager Deana Joy, over the 2010-2011 fiscal year the center provided services to 336 child victims. In the current fiscal year, they have seen a 46 percent increase in the number of child maltreatment cases in their service area. The project is aimed at providing collaborative services to reduce the systemic trauma of child maltreatment for both children and their non-offending family members. On-site services include forensic interviews, advocacy, crisis intervention, evidence-based therapy, evidence-based child medical examinations, a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) review, court preparation, referrals to supporting services, and accompanying victims in court appearances at both the state and federal level. The object is to provide a full range of wrap-around services to child victims and non-offending family members.



Above, the entrance to CrossRoads: Sexual Assault and Response Center in Burlington. The Caswell County facility, located in Yanceyville, is shown below.



"I didn't know the extent of the problem of domestic violence and child sexual assault until Deana Joy informed us. I don't know what we would do without CrossRoads in this county."

¹ National Children's Alliance (2012). *State Statistics: North Carolina*. Retrieved October 2, 2012 from www.nationalchildrensalliance.org/SemiannualStatisticalData.

— Terry Johnson
Alamance County Sheriff



Above, Dr. Adrea Theodore, one of the doctors working with CrossRoads, sits in the medical examination room for children. Below, Sophie, a registered therapy animal, serves as a greeter for children at the Burlington center.



“CrossRoads has been a vital part of my daughter’s and my life the last six months. . . . Since beginning counseling, I have seen a tremendous difference in ‘Mary.’ Her anxiety, fear and anger have been curbed by the weekly sessions she gets at CrossRoads, where she is encouraged to share her feelings with not only the counselor, but also with me. . . . CrossRoads is a wonderful resource for our community. I truly do not know where ‘Mary’ and I would be now without their education and support.”

— From the mother of a child helped by CrossRoads

The Grant

The CAC uses a collaborative model for all forensic interviews conducted by law enforcement officers, the Department of Social Services, and child medical examiners. The MDT approach used by the center includes representatives from all eight local law enforcement agencies in both Alamance and Caswell counties, as well as district attorney’s offices, social service agencies, juvenile justice agencies, the guardian ad litem office, mental health agencies, personnel from local colleges and universities, and local school systems. Team meetings are held weekly in order to update members on activity. These meetings provide an opportunity for team members to make recommendations to best support the needs of each child. The agencies involved work together to coordinate training to ensure that staff and MDT members are fully educated. This ensures that the best care and support are provided to child victims. CrossRoads provides their services to anyone in need, including victims of federal crimes.

CrossRoads is accredited by the National Children’s Alliance (NCA), the national accreditation agency for child advocacy centers nationwide. The agency has met the 10 program components mandated by the organization. The NCA promotes the collaboration of agencies to provide a full range of services to child victims of maltreatment. This collective effort eliminates the duplication of services and reduces the trauma experienced by victims. As an accredited member of NCA, the agency has access to *NCA/trak*, a national data collection system developed specifically for CACs. *NCA/trak* is a state of the art, custom designed data collection and reporting system used to build a national data archive providing opportunities for research on model efficacy and consumer outcomes for CACs nationwide.

Goals and Objectives

CrossRoads has specific objectives to meet over the grant cycle. These goals include insuring that all child maltreatment cases brought to the CAC will receive an appropriate multi-disciplinary review with recommendations. Sixty percent of the families will follow through with recommendations made by CrossRoads staff and the MDT. Information on program activities and recommendations, including the number of MDT meetings and clients staffed, are maintained in *NCA/trak*. CAC staff will follow-up with families and other team members to determine if recommendations are followed. Information concerning the progress and the completion or incompleteness of recommendations will also be entered into *NCA/trak* and monitored to obtain an accurate count of families who follow through with recommendations made.

The agency also has set an objective of reducing the crisis level for 85 percent of the families referred to the CAC. A Trauma Symptom Checklist, administered to all children between intake and closure, will be used to monitor the change in stress levels between intake and case closure. Additional statistics will be maintained in *NCA/trak* to determine the number of children who showed a reduction in crisis score levels.

CrossRoads will provide coordinated services, including evidence-based care, to 200 children over the grant cycle. After five months, they are more than halfway towards meeting that goal. The number of child maltreatment victims who received coordinated services through the CAC will be tracked in *NCA/trak*, including the number of clients and the services provided to them.

Community Involvement

CrossRoads receives wide support from the community. While the organization sponsors local activities and campaign drives to raise additional funds for the organization, local individuals have also stepped in to contribute. A local girl asked friends attending her 10th birthday party to contribute money to go to CrossRoads instead of purchasing gifts for her. As a result, friends and family together contributed \$325 to the center. The agency works with local churches and corporations to raise additional revenue for the center. Fund raising activities include an annual wine tasting — ‘Corks for CrossRoads.’ A silent auction held during the wine tasting helped to bring in additional funds. The center has also sponsored concerts, motorcycle rallies, and annual golf tournaments that have drawn wide participation and support from the local community. A smaller fund raiser held each year is ‘Make a Sundae, Make a Difference.’ Individuals buy tickets and receive a handmade pottery bowl to make their own sundae. The bowls are handmade and donated by Elon University students and the ice cream is donated by a local vendor.

Each year at Christmas, CrossRoads hosts a party for children who have been served by the center. The party includes food, crafts, and gifts for all the children. Gifts are donated by local agencies and churches. Santa is on hand to talk to each child and hand out the gifts.

Program Evaluation

CrossRoads has signed protocols with each of their collaborating agencies. Children also are evaluated on a trauma-symptom checklist by the center’s in-house therapist. The change in scores between the initial contact and end of services are evaluated to determine the change in the level of post-traumatic stress in each victim. Training sessions and presentations are also assessed. Evaluation forms are completed to determine the effectiveness of the presentation and the change in the awareness level of the individuals attending the session.

Accomplishments

During the first five months of the grant cycle, the staff of CrossRoads has worked to provide support to the children and families. As of October 31, the center has served 176 new clients (130 children and 46 adults) and 420 continued clients (343 children and 77 adults). Of the new clients, 17 percent reside in Caswell County. Fifty-four children are receiving therapy and 56 children received medical examinations.

CrossRoads actively promotes local awareness of child maltreatment and abuse. By the end of October, 14 professional training sessions with 133 people in attendance were conducted. Instruction in forensic interviewing was held in five separate sessions with 150 trainees attending. Staff members have also conducted 13 training sessions for civic groups and churches with 1,954 individuals participating. Separate training sessions have been held for schools to both educate staff and to assist them in helping to identify victims. A total of 57 presentations have been held for 1,073 individuals. Currently 26 support groups at the center provide assistance to 85 participants.



Above, a billboard promotes ‘Corks for CrossRoads,’ one of the center’s major annual fundraisers. Below, participants appear to enjoy the party at ‘Corks for CrossRoads.’



One of the groups that completed the forensic interview training class offered by Crossroads.

“We are honoring CrossRoads for its focus on advocacy through education, its success in planning ahead for financial sustainability and its thoroughness in ensuring quality and ethics.”

— Jane Kendall
N.C. Center for Nonprofits



Children meet Santa and celebrate the holidays at the annual Christmas party for CrossRoads children.

Summary

CrossRoads has been a part of the Alamance County Community since 1976 when it opened its doors as the Rape Crisis Alliance. Since that time, it has grown beyond the initial all-volunteer staff manning a 24 hour, 7 days a week crisis line and developed into a full service sexual assault and response agency that includes a nationally accredited child advocacy center serving child victims of maltreatment and abuse. During its growth, the center has expanded its service area to include Caswell County, a largely rural area with few resources available to meet the needs of abused children. In 2009, the North Carolina Center for Nonprofits recognized the organization for the ‘exemplary stewardship’ of the resources given to the center.

Child advocacy centers such as CrossRoads provide a valuable service to child victims of abuse and maltreatment. By obtaining accreditation, they guarantee that best practices are used in protecting children and ensuring that the process of investigation and prosecution of offense do not result in additional traumatization to the child. CrossRoads provides a full range of wrap-around services to guide children through the recovery process and gives the needed support to recover from the abuse.

“All of these positive responses are due to the continued unconditional love, skills, and knowledge of those caring CrossRoads agents. They have wonderfully guided us through this uncharted course of renewing a needy child. In addition to support for ‘Jane’, they have faithfully provided us as much support and palliative care for our personal challenges in this endeavor.”

— A temporary (soon to be permanent) child custodian

CrossRoads: Sexual Assault Response and Resource Center

GRANT SUMMARY

Area Served: Alamance and Caswell Counties

Implementing Agency: CrossRoads Child Advocacy Center

Project Director: Deana Joy

Funding: Total: \$178,520 (Federal Funds: \$142,816, Matching Funds: \$35,704)

Grant Timeframe: July 1, 2012 - June 30, 2013

Overview: CrossRoads Sexual Assault and Response Center provides services to victims of sexual assault in both Alamance and Caswell counties. The goal of the grant is to provide collaborative services to reduce the systemic trauma for child victims of maltreatment and abuse, as well as their non-offending family members.