In This Issue:
- The mission of Listening Ear is to provide citizens of Michigan with human services and affordable housing that satisfy, support, and promote the dignity and well-being of those in need.

Agency Updates
Listening Ear is pleased to welcome new personnel and congratulate those who have made advancements:

Welcome:
- Phuong Tran, CHU M.A. to the Business Team
- Megan Ottone, Mental Health Technician 2-1-1 Call Specialist in the Crisis Center
- Keiara Todd, B.S., Case Manager for Transitional Living Program
- Carla Hughes, Runaway and Homeless Youth Program Intern, BSW, CMU
- Megan Bartelsdagger, Child Foster Care Intern, BSW, CMU
- Nicole Hengesbach, Child Foster Care Intern, BSW, CMU
- Lauren King-Baker, Transitional Living Program Intern, BSW, CMU
- Jillian Dawson, Transitional Living Program Intern, BAA, CMU
- Kaitlin Williams, Transitional Living Program Intern, BAA, CMU

Congratulations:
- Debra Smith, who was promoted to an Assistant Program Director for Residential Services – Central, Adams Street.
- Ashley White, who was promoted to an Assistant Program Director for Residential Services – Central, Mt. Pleasant.
- Keisha Todd, B.S., Case Manager for Transitional Living Program
- Keisha Tomas, who was promoted to an Assistant Program Director for Residential Services – Central, Shepherd.
- Courtney Nelson, who was promoted to an Assistant Program Director for Residential Services – Central, Broadway.
- Amanda White, who was promoted to an Assistant Program Director for Residential Services – Central, Shepherd.
- Ashley Walters, who was promoted to an Assistant Program Director for Residential Services – Central, Adams Street.
- Kellene Gregor, who was promoted to an Assistant Program Director for Residential Services – Central, Shepherd.

Stay Safe
Ways to prevent and respond to trauma:

- Studies have shown that over half of all people have been affected by at least one traumatic event. Up to 20% have experienced three or more traumatic events, and some have been subjected to chronic trauma such as family violence. Trauma can lead to intense, harmful physical and psychological stress reactions, and we often see children and adults who are in significant distress.

- Trauma can change a life forever, but there is a path to healing and living a full life. Listening Ear staff are trained in both Trauma Informed Care and Gentle Teaching in order to help traumatized clients heal from their past. The Trauma Informed Care method is both rehabilitative and preventative. The process begins with a compassionate, strengths-based approach in a safe environment. Oftentimes education is provided, along with relaxation techniques, trauma sharing and learning new coping skills.

- As one parent whose daughter was treated in the child sexual abuse program said, “After treatment with the Listening Ear therapist, my child is smiling again. Thank God for Listening Ear; I have my daughter back.” If you or a loved one is experiencing post-traumatic stress and need more information, contact our 24 crisis helpline at (989)-772-2918.
Dear Readers,

Hope, support and healing are the cornerstones of Listening Ear. As we offer hope and support to children and adults who have experienced horrendous trauma, I am reminded of what Desmond Tutu said: “Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness.” It is our honor to partner with the victims to work through the darkness on their path to healing.

A recent telephone call from a male childhood friend brought home the terrible impact of child sexual abuse. He shared that as a child he was sexually abused by a neighbor who threatened him with his life if he told anyone. He felt helpless. His early life was marred by substance abuse, challenges at work and a disastrous first marriage. Finally, counseling helped heal him. He has now been happily married for the last 20 years, has many friends and a successful business. Today, to help others, he is telling his story and speaking out about Child Sexual Abuse all across his state.

Trauma, such as child sexual abuse, can change a life forever, but as was noted by my childhood friend, there is a path to living a full life. As you will read in the handwritten letter by a 12 year old girl on the next page, taking that first step takes courage. This young girl has strength, resiliency and is a survivor – taking that first step is. Abusers may select children who are the most vulnerable – those in need of more attention or love.

Teach your children about personal safety.

Teach them that all people, no matter their age, deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. Teach the body’s private parts and boundaries. Teach your child that if they are in a situation, even with someone they trust, and feel uncomfortable, hurt or mixed-up – to tell a safe adult. Offenders are less likely to victimize a child if they think the child will tell. They may ask the child to keep their secret and may make threats about keeping that secret. Teach that child sexual abuse is never the child’s fault.

Teach Our Children – Prevent Child Sexual Abuse.

We teach our children to look both ways before crossing the road but less often do we teach how to be safe from those who prey on vulnerable children. The child sexual abuse predator. All too often, the predator is someone known to the family. 90% of the time it is a relative, coach, neighbor, babysitter or mom’s boyfriend. Rarely it is a stranger. He or she is someone who the child trusts, or, is ‘groomed’ to trust. The abuser may groom a child by gradually building trust with a child by assuming a caring role, offering treats or special gifts, telling the child that they care more about them than other adults in their life, while pushing boundaries and telling the child how important their “secret” or time together is. Abusers may select children who are the most vulnerable – those in need of more attention or love.

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A Child Survivor Story

Last year, Listening Ear helped 39 sexually abused children become courageous survivors. Sally, a 10 year old girl, was one of those survivors when her mother first called for treatment. Sally’s mother stated that her daughter was having a hard time sleeping, was crying frequently and not doing well in school.

One of the first things the Listening Ear counselor did was support the parent and child through the treatment process. Sally learned about appropriate and inappropriate touching, privacy, boundaries and personal safety skills. In addition, the mother learned about how to respond to Sally at home when there were struggles or tears.

Sixteen weeks later, Sally was able to share with her mother the story of her abuse and talk about what she had learned about herself and the abuse. Sally is now doing well in school, is sleeping through the night and smiling again. Listening Ear’s Child Sexual Abuse Treatment program is there to help children ages 3 to 17 like Sally. With your financial support we will be able to help those children in the future. Please use the enclosed donor envelope to make a difference.

See below -

A letter from a Child Sexual Abuse Survivor

Ways to Stay Safe

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