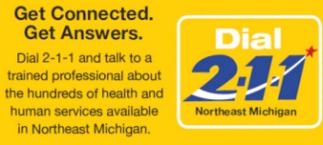


**Listening Ear Crisis Center**  
 107 E Illinois, P.O. Box 800  
 Mt. Pleasant, Michigan  
 48804-0800  
 PH: (989) 772-2918  
 FAX: (989) 772-5339  
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The mission of Listening Ear is to provide citizens of Michigan with human services and affordable housing that satisfy, support, and promote the dignity and well-being of those in need.

December 2016  
 Volume XIX, Issue 2

# Listening EAR

## Healing after trauma

abuse, abandonment, military combat and other forms of violence." Of the hundreds of people who seek services from Listening Ear's different programs --the Crisis Center, the Child Sexual Abuse Treatment Program, homeless youth programs or our residential programs--many have been affected by traumatic events.

"Tears filled my eyes as I read a case file describing horrific abuse that has so painfully impacted a child's life," said Donald Schuster, Executive Director at Listening Ear. "Listening Ear staff frequently hear stories of trauma such as sexual abuse, physical

Studies have shown that over half of all people have been affected by at least one traumatic event. Up 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.

Such 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 preventive. 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.

### Agency Updates

Listening Ear is pleased to welcome new personnel and congratulate those who have made advancements —

#### Welcome:

- Phuong Tran, CMU MSA to the Business Team.
- Megan O'Brien: Mental Health Technician/2-1-1 Call Specialist in the Crisis Center.
- Keisha Todd, B.S., Case Manager for Transitional Living Program
- Caitlin Hughes, Runaway and Homeless Youth Program Intern, BSW, CMU
- Megan Bartenslager, Child Foster Care Intern, BSW, CMU
- Nicole Hengesbach, Child Foster Care Intern, BSW, CMU
- Lauren King-Bates, Transitional Living Program Intern, BSW, CMU
- Jillian Dawson, Transitional Living Program Intern, BAA, CMU
- Amanda William, Transitional Living Program Intern, BAA, CMU

### Congratulations:

- Jaclyn Dean and Shirley Crenshaw—received certification through American Heart Association for Heartsaver Instructor.
- John Lyons, Crisis Center Assistant Director, received his credentials as an A.I.R.S. Certified Information and Referral Specialist.
- Kellene Gregor, who was promoted to an Assistant Program Director, for Residential Services – Central, Adams Street.
- Ashley Walters, who was promoted to an Assistant Program Director, for Residential Services – Central, Mt Pleasant.
- Courtney Nelson, who was promoted to an Assistant Program Director, for Residential Services – Central, Shepherd.
- Debra Smith, who was promoted to an Assistant Program Director, for Residential Services –Central, Broadway.
- Courtney Nelson, who was promoted to an Assistant Program Director, for Residential Services – Central, Shepherd.
- The Runaway and Homeless Youth Program and Transitional Living Program successfully passed a three day federal site visit.
- Child Foster Care successfully passed five Community Mental Health site reviews

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Chairperson:** Dr. Kristin Sheridan  
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**Executive Director:** Donald Schuster

If you wish to have your name removed from the newsletter mailing list, please write: **Executive Director, Listening Ear P.O. Box 800 Mt Pleasant, MI 48804-0800** or, email dschuster@listeningear.com. If you want more information about us, please visit our website at [www.listeningear.com](http://www.listeningear.com) or see [www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org).

# INCREDIBLE COMMUNITY

## 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 him heal. 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 who wants to make sure abuse doesn't happen to other children. She is my hero and hopefully an inspiration to others.

Please help hundreds of children and adults find a hopeful path out of darkness with your financial support by using the enclosed envelope. With your support and our healing staff, together we can offer an "opportunity to heal" and make sure that Listening Ear is "Always There" to help.

Sincerely,  
Donald Schuster, LMSW  
Executive Director

## Ways to Stay Safe

### 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 is it 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.

### 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 they 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.



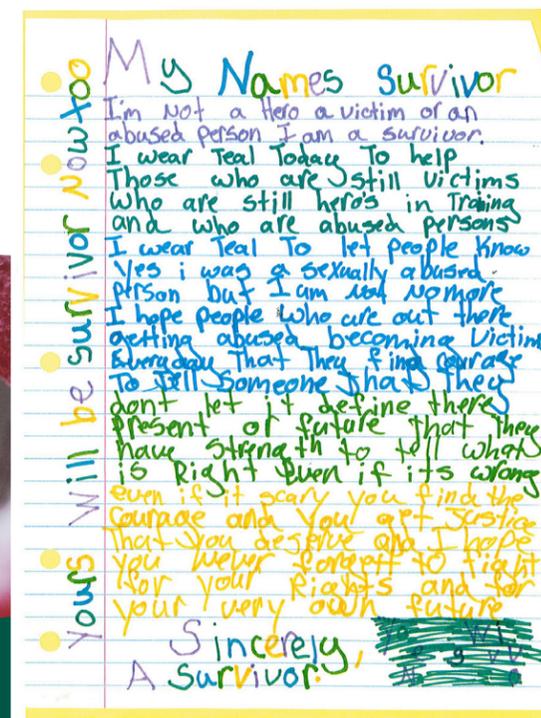
### A Child Survivor Story

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



## We are thankful for these supporters!

(Gifts made since the last newsletter)...

### LISTENING EAR CRISIS CENTER FUND

- Elizabeth Cooper-Kowalczyk,  
Mt Pleasant Community Counseling

### CONSUMERS NEEDS AND DREAMS FUND

- Bonnie Hayward

### CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE TREATMENT FUND

- Donald Schuster
- Pamela Burke

### GENERAL DONORS & GRANTMAKERS – THANK YOU TO:

- The Alden and Vada Dow Family Foundations toward monthly recreational activities for youth and adults.
- Isabella Bank in support of homeless youth services.
- John and Cleo Leppien of the Leppien Foundation for a generous gift to the 24 hour Crisis Program and for homeless youth services.
- The W.E. Martin Foundation who contributed to the Child Sexual Abuse Treatment program and for homeless youth services.
- Mears Corporation in support of the Crisis Center program.
- Meaghan Yetso

### WEEKEND RECREATION DONORS:

- Harley Day – Battle & Sons Construction
- Harley Day – Louis Derocco
- Ellen Fuller
- Roby Scott
- Faith Weavers Endowment
- Rich & Michele Young

## Building a Community that is "Always There"

Helped 39,192 Crisis Line & 2-1-1 Callers

Provided support and housing to 144 people with developmental disabilities

Provided Affordable Housing for over 340 People

Helped 144 Homeless Youth

Helped 39 Sexually Abused Children the Opportunity to Heal

Provided a Loving Foster Home for 41 Foster Care Children