

Friends Connection

The Children's Assessment Center Newsletter

July 2008



Stop the Hurt . . . Begin the Healing

Tuesday, April 22, was one of the first warm days of 2008 and one of the final days of the butterfly exhibit at the Frederik Meijer Gardens. Both things worked together to ensure that the Gardens were overflowing with mothers, fathers, and grandparents with their children and grandchildren; teachers with their classes in tow . . . and adults attending the Children's Assessment Center's first annual Stop the Hurt . . . Begin the Healing fund-raising luncheon.



Some of the nearly 500 guests were familiar with the Center. They expected to have their passion for the Center's mission renewed. Some were new to the Center. They were not sure what to expect. Both groups were moved by testimonies from Rosalynn Bliss, CAC Board Member, who presented the "State of the Center"; Kent County Sheriff Larry Stelma, also a CAC Board Member, who highlighted the importance of dealing with child sexual assault at the time it occurs

rather than waiting until its victims become part of the adult justice system; and Mary, a mom whose son was a client of the Center.

All guests were moved by the stories that children share at the Center and inspired by the hope that children find at the Center.



When given the opportunity to partner financially with the Center, guests did so with enthusiasm, giving more than \$180,000 in cash and pledges. Eighteen guests became charter members of Ending the Silence—A Circle of Care, the Center's multiyear giving society (see page 11). Those members collectively made five-year pledges totaling \$103,000 to support the services the Center provides for children who may have been sexually abused!

See page 3 for special thank yous.

CPS Investigators Holly Bathrick, Holly Westhouse, Stacey Alexander, and Stacy Piasecki; CAC Medical Coordinator Cristina Buentello (center)



CAC Staff take a break from preparations: Kirstin VanderMolen, Katie Porath, Tanya Muehlbauer, Lori VanHarmelen, and Kitty Waltermire

Kent County Sheriff and CAC Board Member Larry Stelma with KCSD Detectives Bill Heffron and Ed Kolakowski, both stationed at the CAC



Maria Morin, CAC Board President Joe Soper, and CAC Board Member Mercedes Toohey take a break to enjoy a laugh at the luncheon.



One of the littlest CAC volunteers presents a thank you gift to one of the luncheon guests.