

# REFLECTING & CONNECTING

## 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

### A few highlights

Our **Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)** program celebrated 4 guardianships, 23 adoptions, 15 reunifications and 1 successful transition to independent living – each representing a significant victory for children in the court system due to abuse or neglect. With each child finding their forever home, this success story underscores our unwavering commitment to providing stable, permanent, loving homes for every child in need.

We strengthened our **partnership with CMU Health** by offering our Safe Baby prevention presentations to CMU CenteringPregnancy® patients, representing the first structured utilization of the program for adult populations. This collaboration builds upon the partnership established with our Children's Advocacy Centers (CAC), where CMU staff have enhanced our medical room IT systems, enabling pediatric residents to observe our forensic medical exams. Further, pediatric residents from CMU are actively engaged in observing forensic interviews at the CAC, deepening their understanding of child abuse trauma and investigations.

Our **Darkness to Light Stewards of Children®** workshop has been approved by the Michigan Department of Education as continuing education (CE) for school professionals statewide, thanks to a partnership between our Child Abuse Prevention Education program and Bay-Arenac ISD. The workshop offers vital skills for preventing, recognizing and responsibly reacting to child sexual abuse. The receipt of CE credit for completing Darkness to Light's **Stewards of Children®** is a significant victory for youth protection, empowering educators who serve as crucial frontline defenders of children.

We (literally) rolled out **a new program – the Rolling Family Resource Center** – that is the first of its kind in Michigan. It is a mobile unit that brings vital support and resources directly to families in our communities. This initiative mobilizes established programs and services to overcome access barriers for families and engage them right where they live. Through robust collaborations with community partners, we aim to empower families across the region and keep children safe from harm. The vehicle is set to start visiting neighborhoods in Huron and Saginaw counties in 2024.

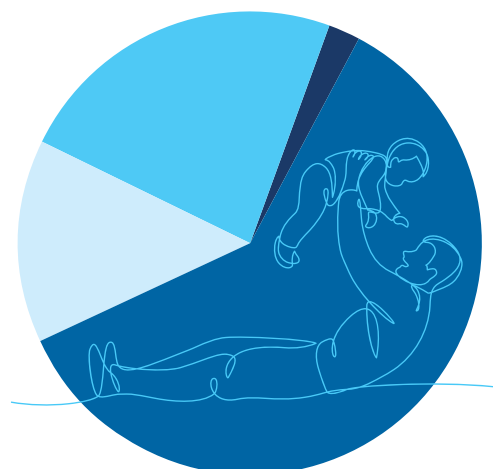
2023 marked our first full year **extending our Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program to juvenile delinquency cases in Bay County**. Since the 2022 launch of this initiative, we've observed significant crossover with abuse/neglect cases. Our CASA volunteers have successfully advocated for additional academic support, a range of services and interventions such as removing children from unsafe home environments. We are proud to fulfill this expanded role, ensuring that the children in our communities receive the essential services they need to thrive in a safe environment.

CenteringPregnancy is a registered trademark of Centering Healthcare Institute, Inc. Stewards of Children is a registered trademark of Darkness to Light.

### Financial review

#### REVENUES

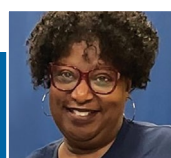
Grants	\$1,475,608
Contributions	\$347,505
Special events	\$566,801
Investment income & miscellaneous	\$50,089



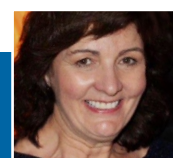
### Awards & honors



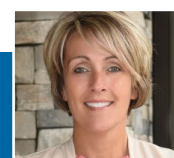
Anne Flegenheimer



Arwanda Conner



Anne de Bari



Heather Drabek

In 2023, we were proud to honor four of our exceptional, dedicated volunteers for their service to the CAN Council and our children and families.

**Anne Flegenheimer** was honored as our **Suzanne Greenberg Child Advocate of the Year**, recognizing her three decades of dedicated service to the Great Lakes Bay Region. Her genuine compassion and servant leadership are reflected in her commitment to improving the lives of our community's children, mirroring the care she extends to her own. Through her volunteerism and philanthropic efforts, Anne's impact continues to positively influence countless lives in our region. *The Suzanne Greenberg Child Advocate of the Year award was established in the early 2000s and then renamed in 2020 in honor of the former longtime CAN Council President/CEO.*

**Arwanda Conner** earned the **CANbassador of the Year** award for her outstanding dedication, both as a Court Appointed Special Advocate and through her outreach efforts.

**Anne de Bari** was recognized as our **Irene Bruske CASA Volunteer of the Year** for her exceptional advocacy work with 13 children, dedicating more than 830 hours of service. *Established in 2006, our CASA of the Year award is named in honor of Irene Bruske, a beloved member of the CAN Council's first trained class of CASA volunteers.*

**Heather Drabek** was honored as the **Impact Volunteer of the Year** for her pivotal role in establishing our Children's Advocacy Center in Huron County, as well as for her ongoing commitment to our expansion efforts as a CAN Council Board of Directors member.



### Our volunteers

In **2023**,  
**256** volunteers committed  
**7,983** hours to the CAN Council,  
 adding an estimated  
**\$253,859.40** in monetary value  
 to our mission\*  
*... and we appreciate each and every one of you!*

\*According to Independent Sector's 2023 calculated volunteer value of \$31.80 per hour.

## Program spotlight

# CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION EDUCATION

Through our Child Abuse Prevention Education program, collaborative community partnerships and a unique variety of programming meet the needs of the communities we serve as we work to prevent child abuse through education.

In **2023**, **4,804** people attended **213** presentations, classes and events across our region, totaling **1,030** hours of prevention education programming.

### Bay County

50 events  
1,390 people

### Huron County

40 events  
762 people

### Saginaw County

123 events  
2,652 people



### 2023 programming:

- Darkness to Light's Stewards of Children®
- Diaper Distribution Program\*
- Kids' Academy
- Make Parenting A Pleasure Parenting Program
- Mandated Reporter Workshop
- MBF Child Safety Matters®
- MBF Teen Safety Matters®
- Safe Baby
- Parenting in a Digital World (NEW in 2023!)

\*Not included in 2023 Child Abuse Prevention Education programming totals.

Stewards of Children is a registered trademark of Darkness to Light.

MBF Child Safety Matters and MBF Teen Safety Matters are registered trademarks of the Monique Burr Foundation for Children, Inc.

Learn more: [cancouncil.org/cape](https://cancouncil.org/cape)

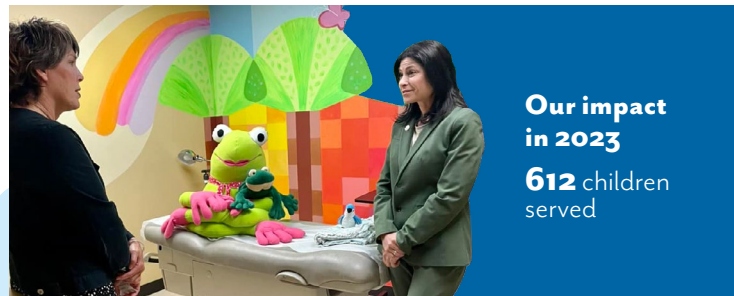
## Program spotlight

# CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTERS (CACs)

Our Children's Advocacy Centers provide a safe, supportive environment in which children who have been physically or sexually abused or have witnessed a violent act can be interviewed and examined. Our CACs have served **12,219** children between 1999 and 2023.

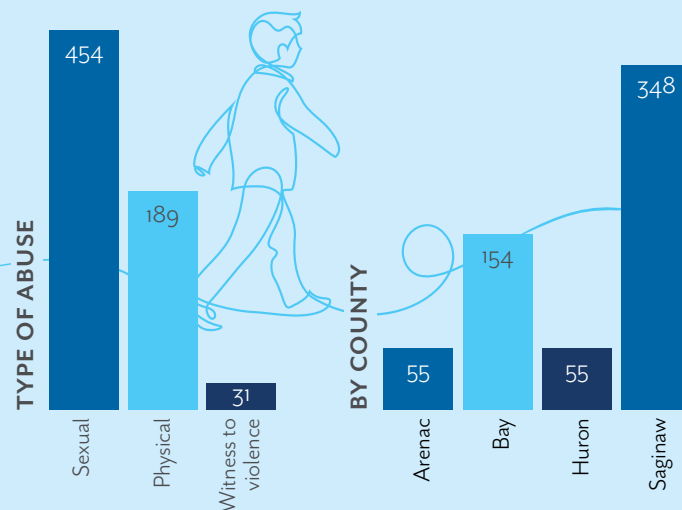


Backed by  
National Children's Alliance®  
Accredited Member



### Our impact in 2023

**612** children served



Learn more: [cancouncil.org/cac](https://cancouncil.org/cac)

## Program spotlight

# COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES (CASA)

A Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteer is appointed by a family court judge and serves as the voice of children in the court system who have experienced abuse and neglect, as well as children in the juvenile justice system.



CASA  
Court Appointed Special Advocates  
FOR CHILDREN  
A CAN COUNCIL PROGRAM

### CASA children in 2023

**104** total children assigned to CASA

Bay County:

**19** children

Huron County:

**21** children

Saginaw County:

**64** children

**42** total new children served

Bay County:

**10** children

Huron County:

**15** children

Saginaw County:

**17** children



### CASA volunteers in 2023

**54** active CASA advocates taking cases

**16** new CASA advocates sworn in



Learn more: [cancouncil.org/casa](https://cancouncil.org/casa)



Together we CAN  
stop child abuse  
and neglect.

### Bay County also serving Arenac County

708 Center Avenue • Bay City, MI 48708  
(989) 671-1345 • Fax: (989) 671-2365

### Huron County

219 E. Huron Avenue • Bad Axe, MI 48413  
(989) 623-0257 • Fax: (989) 623-0910

### Saginaw County

1311 N. Michigan Avenue • Saginaw, MI 48602  
(989) 752-7226 • Fax: (989) 752-2777