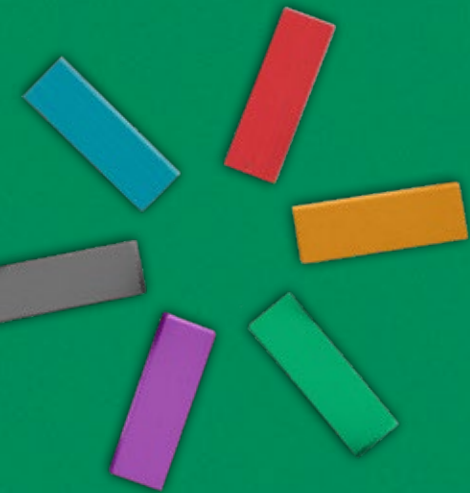




Children's
Advocacy Project

BUILDING **brighter** FUTURES

2023 ANNUAL REPORT





OUR **mission**

The Children's Advocacy Project is a team of committed agencies and individuals who work together to provide coordinated forensic and comprehensive services for alleged victims of child abuse and neglect in order to minimize trauma to children, break the cycle of abuse, and foster a more effective and efficient community response to child maltreatment.



A LETTER FROM OUR **executive director**

Dear Friends,

Every day, many of us are working and striving to build our resume, build a house, build our retirement, and build our savings, all so we can have amazing things to look forward to in the weeks or years to come. Imagine being in a situation where you are unable to envision the goals many of us strive for.

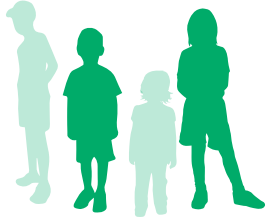
Nearly every day, a child enters the Children's Advocacy Project and finds the courage to talk about their experience of abuse through the forensic interview process. Every week, children and their families enter the Children's Advocacy Project to work with advocates and therapists to find ways to meet the challenges of surviving their abusive experience. Media often reports on arrests and sentences handed down to perpetrators. What the general public does not often witness is the incredible courage these children demonstrate as they talk about their abuse during forensic interviews or testify in court. The general public is not aware of the progress these children make as they work in therapy and begin seeing hope beyond the abuse and start building a foundation for a future life full of positive experiences.

We are honored to be a small part of helping these children begin to look forward and imagine a brighter future. On behalf of the Board of Directors, staff, and children we serve, thank you for investing your time and supporting our mission.



Stacy M. Nelson, Executive Director

NATIONAL numbers



600K+

Children are abused in the U.S. every year

77%

Of child abuse victims are victimized by their parents

\$592

Billion is the estimated cost of the total lifetime burden of child abuse in the U.S.



1 in 7

Children experienced abuse or neglect in the last year in the U.S.



15%

Of all victims are in the first year of their life

3.6

Million cases of child abuse are reported in the U.S. every year

cap BY THE numbers

273

Forensic Interviews
conducted in 2023

441

Individual counseling
sessions conducted in 2023

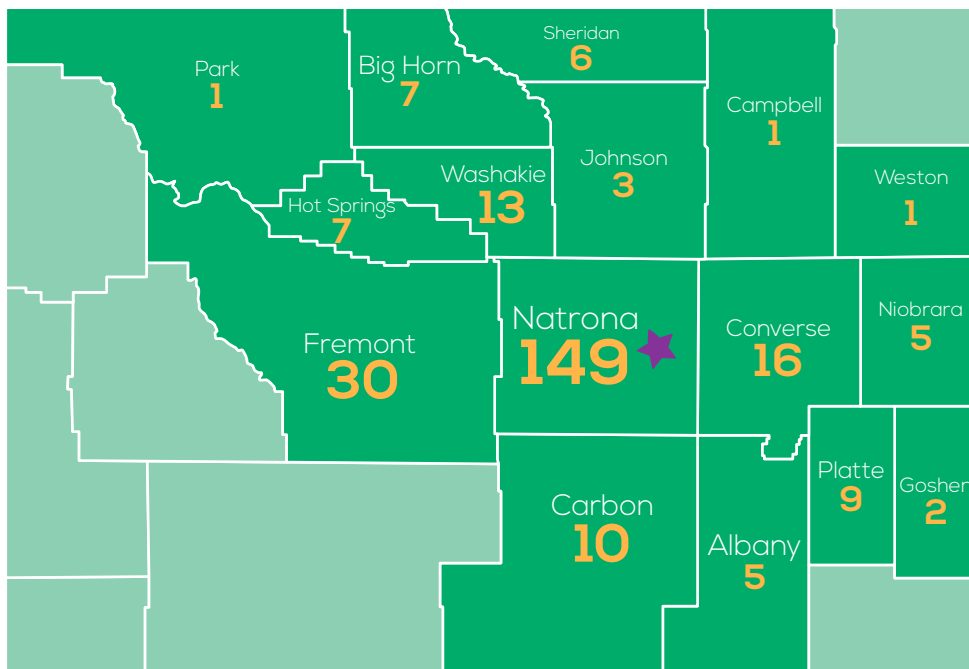
165

Community Members
Attending Trainings/
Presentations in 2023

125

Attendees of Professional
Trainings for Investigative
Teams in 2023

FORENSIC INTERVIEWS BY COUNTY



Other Courtesy Interviews:
Missouri **3**, Montana **1**, Nebraska **1**, South Dakota **2**

OUR team

The Children's Advocacy Project team is made up of full-time staff, contractors, and partner agencies working together to ensure the highest quality of services are available to child victims in and around our community.

Child Advocate: Works closely with families, orienting them into the program, providing education on the forensic interview and investigation process, and helping them navigate through the often unknown world of legal and prosecutorial process.

Forensic Interviewer: Highly trained to conduct forensic interviews with children, conducts an unbiased interview that is a fact finding mission, formulating open-ended questions that allow the child to tell their story in a developmentally appropriate manner.

Executive Director: Ensures that partner agencies have strong working relationships with one another, adequate funding is available to meet the program goals and that the public is educated on the prevalence of child abuse and sexual abuse.

Counselor: Licensed mental health professionals who have received additional training on counseling child victims of crime, provide trauma-based therapy at the Children's Advocacy Project.

Office Manager: Maintains services by organizing office operations and procedures, assists in office efficiency and client scheduling.

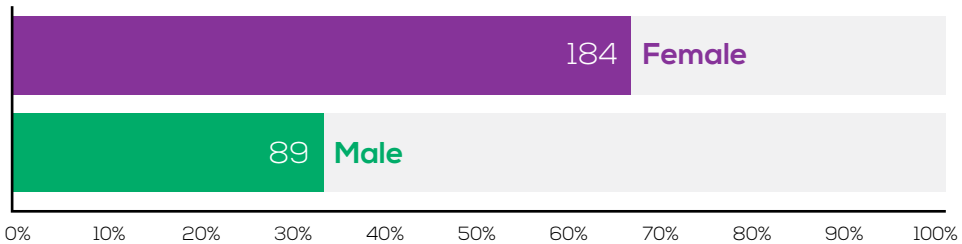
Partner Agencies: Natrona County Sheriff's Office, Casper Police Department, Mills Police Department, Evansville Police Department, District Attorney's Office, Department of Family Services, Banner Wyoming Medical Center.



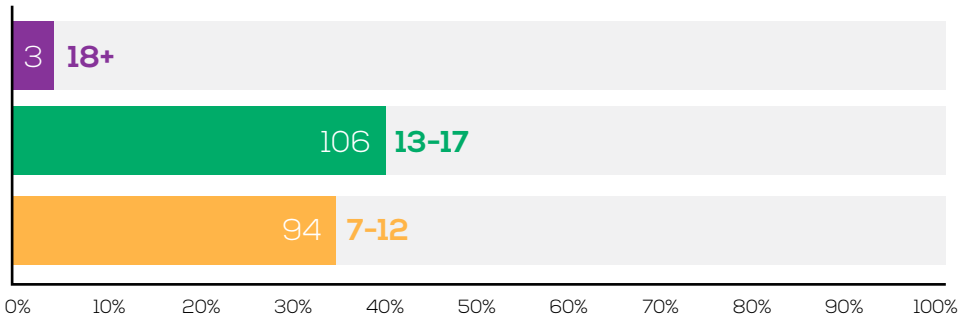
BUILDING **new** **beginnings**

Of the 273 forensic interviews conducted at the Children's Advocacy Project in 2023, we saw:

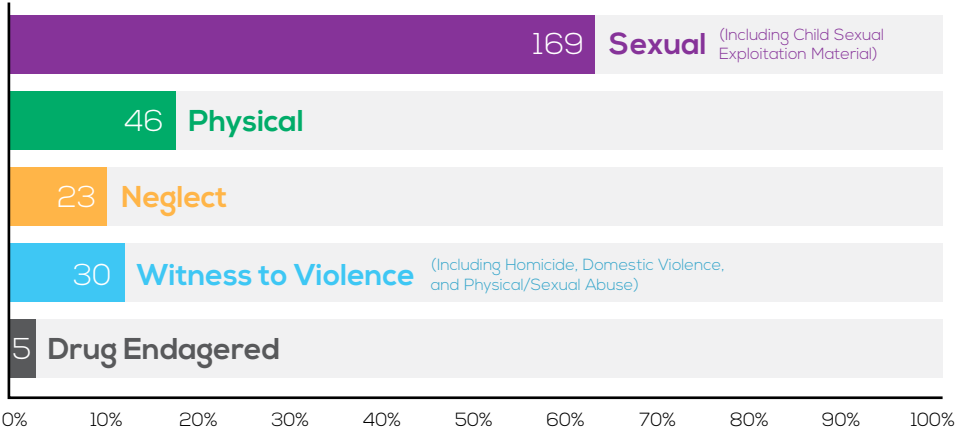
GENDER OF VICTIMS



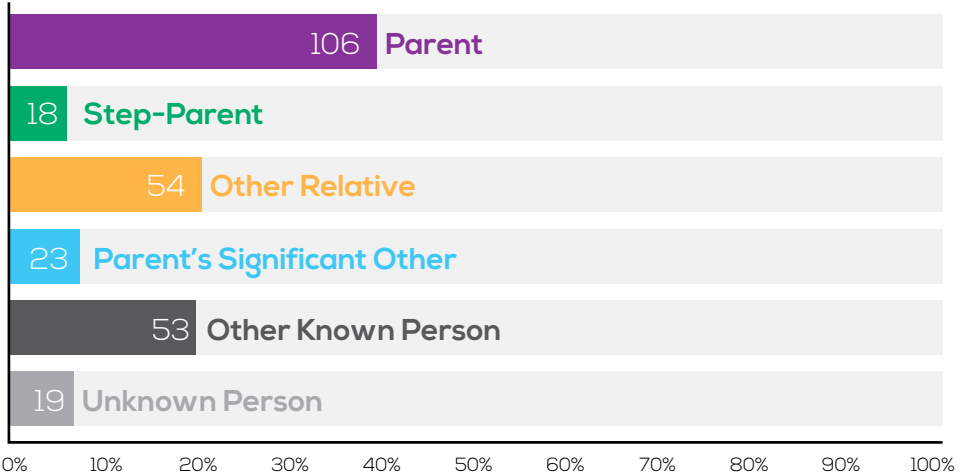
AGE OF VICTIMS



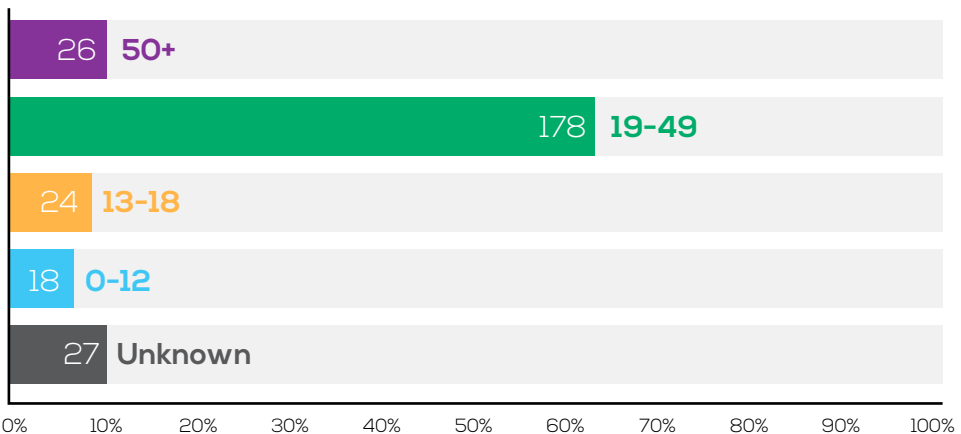
TYPES OF ABUSE



RELATION OF SUSPECT



AGE OF SUSPECT



WHATEVER **good things** WE BUILD END UP **building us**

Zoe's dad worked for a rancher in the state. When she was thirteen, he decided to leave the ranch and took a job in Casper, Zoe and her brothers were "glad/sad". It was exciting to think they would make friends who would live closer. On the other hand, it would be hard to leave the livestock and, especially the horses. But then again, the new house was big enough for everyone to have their own room! They were each filled with lots of different thoughts about the move.

After the move, all three children seemed to settle in nicely. They made friends quickly. "Their friends were the kind of kids every parent wants their children to have," explained Zoe's mom. "We had been worried the transition would be difficult, but it really seemed to be working out well." Zach, the oldest boy, signed up for football. Zane, the middle child, who had never been interested in sports, quickly got involved in chess club. Zoe, the youngest, struggled a little to

find her place in a bigger school. She eventually got involved in theater with her new best friend.

It was Zane who first realized something was different about Zoe. She and Zane had always been close and suddenly she was spending less time with him and more time isolating in her room. "We figured it was just teenage stuff. After all, Zoe's grades were excellent, and we knew all the friends she brought home with her. If anything, she seemed to be thriving. Then we got the visit."

An NCSO deputy contacted Zoe's parents informing them that during an unrelated investigation photos and videos of a child thought to be Zoe had been seized. "We didn't understand something as harmless as kid's pictures and videos would be a concern." The deputy did his best to gently describe the content. "He was really kind and patient...it took us a while to understand."

Zoe had been taking nude pictures

of herself and sending them, along with sexualized behavior on video, to a boyfriend she had met online. The “boyfriend” was a 57-year-old man posing as a 14-year-old. “We were horrified, angry, embarrassed, and scared.” The deputy explained the next steps in the investigation, beginning with a CAP interview.

The forensic interview was conducted at CAP by an interviewer specially trained to introduce evidence in an interview. Zoe was cooperative and forthcoming about her online boyfriend and the images. Sanitized images of Zoe, provided by the deputy, were used during the interview to gain clarification and assisted Zoe in providing concrete details. In addition, Zoe identified two friends she had introduced to him online. From the evidence and Zoe’s interview, investigators were able to not only prosecute the perpetrator based on Zoe’s disclosure, but also with evidence found relating to one of the two friends.

Zoe began counseling within a week of her forensic interview. Meanwhile, the

investigators catalogued materials seized while conducting search warrants at the man’s Casper home. Equipped with evidence and the disclosures, the suspect was arrested and, during questioning confessed to soliciting and distributing child pornography obtained from more than ten under aged victims. Prosecutors working with NCSO and CAP continue to successfully prosecute crimes against children based on evidence collected thanks in part to the interviewer’s work with Zoe.

Zoe continues to participate in counseling for the foreseeable future, bravely confronting her feelings of shame and guilt. Her parents are also attending counseling to address their own issues of anger and self-blame. “I mean, we’re her parents. We should have known. It’s our job to protect her.” No crime happens in a vacuum. Child victims, their families, and even friends can be greatly impacted. Thanks to non-profits like the Children’s Advocacy Project, services are available to those impacted.



2023 IN review

February

Casper man and convicted sex offender, Timothy Adams, pleads guilty to three counts of immoral, immodest or indecent liberties with a minor. Adams admitted to allowing the girls to shower at his residence and afterwards he kissed and rubbed their legs. Adams has previous convictions dating back to 1986.

February

Natrona County man, John Buck, charged with felony child abuse after he struck a child repeatedly with a snow brush. Following a confrontation in Hot Springs County with the mother of the alleged victim, Buck took custody of the children and made his way back to Casper. Sources say he pulled the car over, pulled the victim out, struck him fifteen times with the brush until it broke, and then five with another. Discipline methods consisted of bamboo paddles, wooden spoons, or leather belts to spank the victim.

March

Travis Gonsalves, of Casper, was found guilty of one count of sexual abuse of a minor in the second and third degree as well as possession of child pornography. The investigation began after the victim disclosed Gonsalves had touched her inappropriately in a hotel bed and that he “touched and raped her for as long as she could remember.” Images of child pornography were found on a hard drive belonging to Gonsalves.

April

Casper man, James Warren Martin, 44, pleads not guilty to fifteen felony counts of sexual abuse of a minor; five in the first degree. The investigation charges Martin with beginning a romantic relationship with a 12-year-old girl which escalated to sexual intercourse. Martin was allowed basic access to the victim, which he “converted into inappropriate action.”

May

Mills resident, Jimmy Harvard, sentenced to 13-15 years on three counts of sexual abuse of a minor in the third degree. The investigation revealed “disturbing and terrible behavior.” At sentencing, Harvard advocated for the maximum possible penalty. Harvard had a previous conviction of a sex crime in South Dakota.

June

John Eric Baugher, of Mills, sentenced to 3-5 years on three counts; two of indecent liberties with a minor. Investigations began following forensic interviews with the two victims. One 11-year-old victim who frequently went to Baugher’s residence reported he would touch her above clothing on intimate parts of her body and that it was painful. Inappropriate touching and kissing were also reported by an 11-year-old and 17-year old girl.

July

A former Casper resident, Richard McVay, pleads no contest to three counts of immodest, immoral, or indecent liberties with a minor from incidents occurring between 2011 and 2019. Two victims reported the abuse occurred on more occasions than they could estimate.

August

Former youth club employee, Daniel Uptain, charged with two counts of sexual abuse of a minor in the second degree and three counts of sexual abuse of a minor in the third degree. Investigations revealed Uptain had intercourse with a 15-year-old girl at least 3 times. Forensic interview showed the victim knew Uptain from the youth club where he worked and they made contact on a dating app.

October

Elijah Dobbins, 23, was found guilty of immodest, immoral, or indecent liberties with a 16-year old girl, strangulation of a household member, unlawful contact and permitting a house party where minors consumed alcohol at his home in Mills. The victim reported she had not known Dobbins before that night.

November

Johnathan O'Donnell, of Casper, will spend the next 29-35 years in prison for carrying on a sexual relationship with a 14-year-old girl. The investigation began when deputies found O'Donnell and the victim together in a car in Bar Nunn. O'Donnell pled guilty to two counts of sexual abuse of a minor in the first degree, and one count of enticing her to produce sexually explicit images. He was a manager at her place of employment when they met.

December

James Brite, 39, charged with almost two dozen counts of sexual abuse of a minor. The charges involve five separate victims and date back to 2008. A 10-year old victim reported Brite was her babysitter when the instances happened and referred to her as "his little girlfriend." In 2020, an anonymous tip revealed Brite had intercourse with a 15-year-old girl while camping at a state event and many witnesses stated they "acted like a couple." Additional victims came forward in 2022 and 2023.





annual BUDGET

FUNDING SOURCES	
VOCA Federal Funding	\$140,000.00
Natrona Collective Health Trust	\$80,000.00
Natrona and City of Casper	\$77,000.00
Other City and County Funds	\$37,750.00
Program Income	\$25,000.00
Fundraising	\$43,000.00
Wyoming Community Foundation	\$35,000.00
McMurry Foundation	\$30,000.00
United Way of Natrona County	\$20,000.00
Donations	\$10,000.00
Other Grant/Foundation Funds	\$34,360.00
	\$532,110.00

EXPENSES	
Salaries & Benefits	72%
Contract Services	5%
Training & Travel	4%
Building (Utilities, Phone, Internet, Insurance, General Maintenance, Housekeeping)	3%
Fundraising	3%
Equipment & Supplies Accounting	3%
Accounting	3%
Advertising, Website, Community Education	3%
Meetings, Memberships, Dues	2%
Legal Services	1%
Printing & Postage	1%
	100%



thank you!

Your contributions are the building blocks to a brighter future.

If your name is not included in the list of donors please know we sincerely appreciate your support and apologize for the omission.



2nd Street Liquor & Wine	Hilltop National Bank	QDoba
Alcova Resort	Indian Ice	Racca's Pizzeria Napoletana
Alicia Crispell Photography	Jacqueline N Ellis	Ramkota Hotel and Convention Center
Amanda Shipton & Josh Wilson	Janet Wolfe	Rialto Soda Fountain
Anchor Designs	Jennifer Schieck	Rib and Chop House Casper
Artisan Alley	Jeremy & Fleur Tremel	Rib and Chop House Sheridan
ATLAS CPAS & Advisors PLLC	John Harlin	Ridley's Outfitter Liquor
Backwards Distillery	Johnson Restaurant Group	Rocky Mountain Discount Sports
Banner Health/Wyoming Medical Center	Jonah Bank of Wyoming	Rosemary Bartle & Tara Faribanks
Black Sunday Tattoo/ Andy Westman	Joshy Josherson/ Lure Co. Lures	Roxy Skogen
The Bon Agency Insurance	Kathy Sedmak	Ryan McIntyre
Bosco's	Kelcee & Bryan Anderson	Shannon Moore/University of Wyoming Football
Bucktrout Outfitters	Kevin Taheri	Silver Fox Steakhouse
C85 Galles Liquor	Kim & Luke Blaida	Stacy Nelson
Casidy Mittelstadt	Kimberly Beevers-Mulanax	Stellar Programming
Casper Police Department FOP Lodge #6	Let'Er Buck Car Wash	Studio City
Chad & Cheri Frimml	Lifetime Health & Fitness Center	Sutherlands
Chad Steinert	Liquor Shed	Sweet Zoey's
Chatham Ranch	Luminous Skin Care by Brittany	The Bon Agency Insurance
Cheyenne Frontier Days	Maci Zier	The Powder Horn
Christ United Methodist Church	Mary Lynne Shickich	Three Crowns Golf Club
Chris Hadlock	Mike Steinberg	Town Square Media
Cottage Bakery	Mike Thompson	Toy Town
CY Discount Liquor	Modern Electric	Trout On Inn
Dairy Queen	Moonlight Liquors	Uncorked
Dave Kinghorn	Natrona County Parks and Rec	Vaquero Energy
Daylight Donuts	No Name Bar/Tyler Bennet	Venessa Yoosook
DeAnna & Eddy Reish	No Woodstock Ten Sleep Music Festival	Wagners Outdoor Outfitters
Deb's Fudge	NStyle Nails and Spa	White's Mountain Motors
Diana Roby	Old Town Family Fun	Wind City Sweets and Treats
Douglas Golf Club	Paradise Valley Country Club	Wyld Gear
El Marko Lanes	Paul & Leslie Fritzler	Wyo Movies
Frosted Tops	Pepsi Bottling Company	Wyoming Behavioral Institute
Gaslight Social	Perkins Restaurant and Bakery	Wyoming Discount Liquor
Graze and Gather	Platte River FOP Lodge # 11	Wyo Shirt & Gift
Gruner Brothers	Platte Valley Bank	Zest Real Estate
Haven Therapeutics	Poplar Wine & Spirits	



2023 **board**

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Chris Hadlock, Vice Chair

Fleur Tremel, Secretary

Leah Schieck, Treasurer

Paul Fritzler

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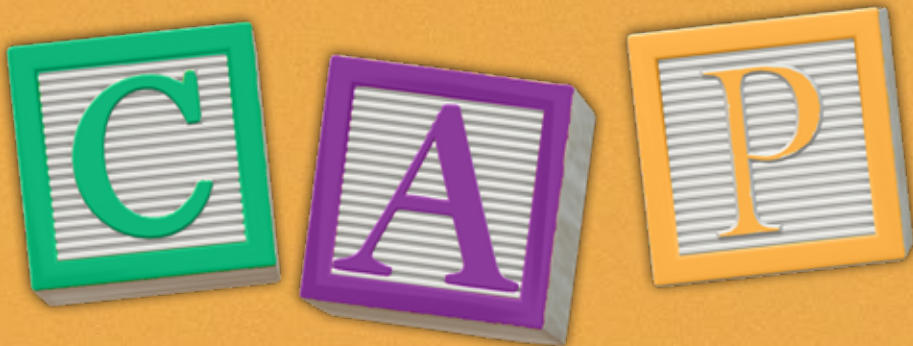
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If you would like to make a donation or if you have any questions about our services, please contact us:

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