



Program Report 2014-15



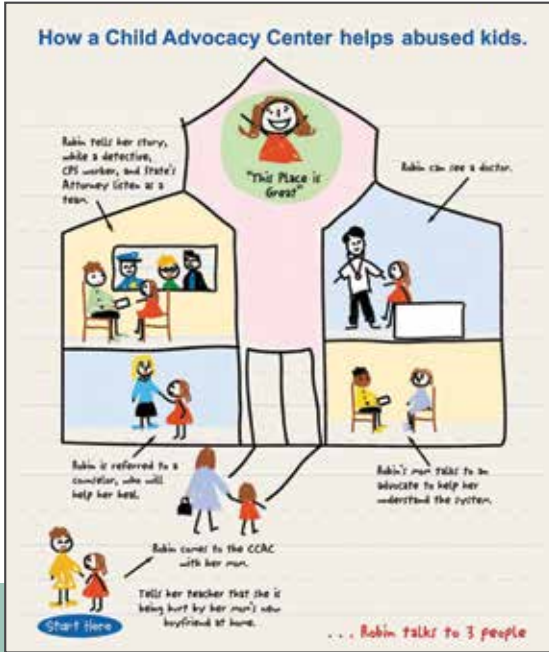
Willow Tree

Cornerstone Child Advocacy Center



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Willow Tree Cornerstone Child Advocacy Center opened its doors in January 2011, working with local law enforcement, Brown County Child Protective Services and other community professionals to assist victims of child abuse. The center provides a refuge for abused children and their families to seek help and heal throughout the investigation and prosecution of their case.

All components involved in child abuse cases, including the medical exam, forensic interview, victim advocacy, and ongoing therapy, are located within this one centralized facility to increase ease and comfort for the child.

A community partnership to protect, heal and care for abused children.

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Jennifer Yates, Nurse Practitioner

Willow Tree Services

Child Forensic Interview

Last year, Willow Tree completed a **Child Forensic Interview for 384 children**. This means the child tells their story only once and it is recorded for use throughout the investigation and prosecution of the case. This is significantly less traumatic for the child and often has a better outcome if the case goes to court.

Supportive Services Under One Roof

"Katie", a middle school aged girl, was referred to Willow Tree after she was overheard telling a friend that her father had been sexually assaulting her. An Advocate met with the girl and her mother and she was brought in for a medical exam. The Advocate provided support for Katie and explained what would happen next.

During the forensic interview, it became apparent the mother was not supportive of her daughter and didn't believe the allegations she had made. Katie recounted years of abuse by her father and was relieved to finally tell someone. Shortly after the interview, her father was arrested and taken to jail. The mother remained unsupportive and refused to allow Katie to participate in therapy at Willow Tree.

During her father's trial, Katie's mother and other family members continued to blame her and refused to sit with her through the hearing. The Advocate from Willow Tree was the only support she had. Katie held the Advocate's hand as five guilty verdicts were given against her father. Her mother left the state shortly after, leaving Katie behind. Arrangements were made for her to stay with a supportive relative.

Without the extensive support and encouragement from Willow Tree, Child Protective Services and other service providers, the outcome for Katie would have been very different. She knows she did the right thing and is happy to leave her traumatic past behind her.



"I have been an investigator for the Brown County Sheriff's Office for 14 years and have been conducting primarily juvenile investigations for the past five years. The Willow Tree Cornerstone Child Advocacy Center has been a valuable resource in conducting these investigations. Their Forensic Interviewer does a tremendous job conducting interviews in a child-friendly environment, helping us obtain reports, paperwork, and expert testimony for the case."

Randy Lind, Investigator, Brown County Sheriff's Office

Willow Tree Services

Medical Care

A comprehensive medical exam was provided for **160 children** last year at the Child Advocacy Center, looking for signs of abuse or neglect and making referrals for additional care, if needed.

Victim Advocacy

Advocacy services were provided to **346 primary clients** and **738 secondary clients**, providing support and helping families navigate their way through the process of reporting, the legal system, and recovery.

A Partnership to Keep Children Safe

A two-year old boy came to Willow Tree with his father and a Social Worker due to concerns of physical abuse. He has shared placement between his mother and father, and returned from a recent visit to his mom's with bruising to his face and ear. When questioned, mom simply stated, "Kids Fall," with no further explanation for the injuries.

An appointment was made with the Nurse Practitioner at Willow Tree to talk with the boy and do a complete medical exam. The nurse found his medical and family history unremarkable. There was no history of nose bleeds, easy bruising or a bleeding disorder. He appeared to be a normal, active toddler. During the physical exam, however, our nurse discovered

linear patterned bruises to the left side of his face and in and around his left ear. There was also bruising on his head behind the ear.

Her assessment was that the injuries were not consistent with a fall. It was more likely that the linear patterned injuries to the face and bruising to the ear were caused by blunt force trauma, suspicious for a hand slap and indicative of physical abuse. After the exam, the nurse explained this assessment to the child's father and social worker. Law Enforcement was notified, photographs were provided to Law Enforcement and Social Services as evidence, and a protective plan was put in place immediately to keep the boy safe from any further harm.

"Willow Tree has been a tremendous asset to Brown County, bringing an outstanding level of professionalism to all aspects of working with child victims and witnesses. Willow Tree fosters a multi-disciplinary approach to handling child abuse cases, bringing professionals together to provide exceptional advocacy and counseling, enhancing the ability of law enforcement to investigate, and assisting in the prosecution of these difficult and sensitive cases."



David Lasee, District Attorney, Brown County

Counseling

A licensed therapist at Willow Tree provided comprehensive counseling services to **78 victims and family members** in 2014, and made referrals for mental health services to another 126, helping victims heal from their abuse.

The Road to Recovery

A nine-year-old boy was referred to Willow Tree by law enforcement after disclosing to his grandmother that he had been sexually assaulted by a friend. An Advocate at Willow Tree first met with the family to explain next steps and the services available to them. He then completed a recorded child forensic interview to tell the details of his story which would aid in the investigation of his case.

Though therapy services were originally declined, the parents came back to Willow Tree several months later when the boy began acting out at home and at school. They were finding that certain events would trigger his acting-out behaviors and were concerned for his well-being.

Prevention

Last year Willow Tree partnered with schools and other community organizations to reach **6,742 students**, from pre-school age to high school, with messages of how to protect themselves and where to go if they need help.

He is now in therapy and making great strides toward recovery. He's learning to cope with his feelings and knows where to seek help when he needs it. The school he attends also recently scheduled prevention presentations for their students through Willow Tree.

Our Advocate continues to follow up with the family to ensure that they have access to any needed services and that the boy is on the road to recovery.



“Because of our collaboration with Willow Tree, we are able to meet the needs of families and children by utilizing a skilled interviewer and medical examiner in a professional and child friendly facility. It is through this process, and the multi-disciplinary approach Willow Tree fosters, that we are able to collect the best information to inform our decision making on behalf of children while ensuring the needs of each agency are also met.”

Lauren Krukowski, Child Protective Services Intake Supervisor, Brown County Human Services

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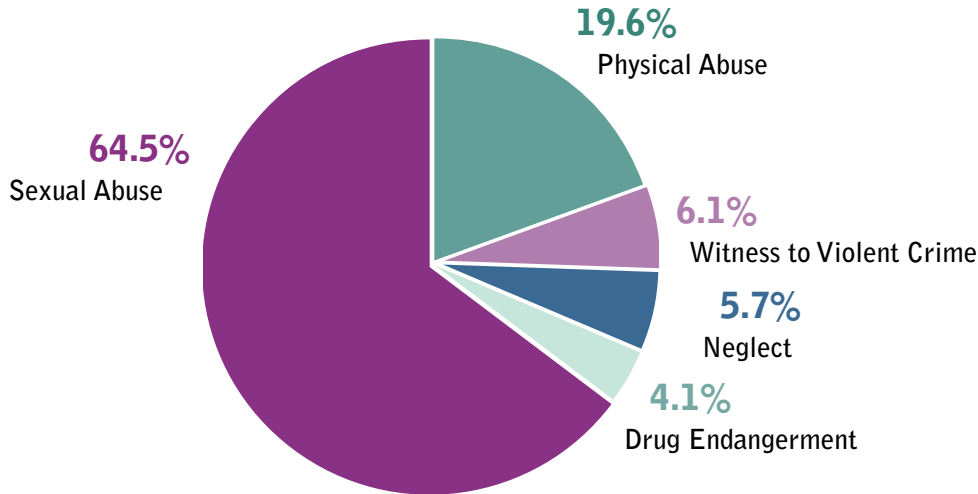
The Children We Help

In 2014, Willow Tree Child Advocacy Center served **608 children**, an increase of 18% over the prior year. Of those, 391 (64%) were girls and 217 (36%) were boys. The average age of a child served at Willow Tree is 8, with the vast majority (84%) under the age of 13.

Ages/Gender:



Types of Abuse:



Community Partners

- ▶ Ashwaubeneon Public Safety
- ▶ Brown County Corporation Counsel
- ▶ Brown County District Attorney's Office
- ▶ Brown County Human Services
- ▶ Brown County Sheriff's Department
- ▶ Children's Hospital of Wisconsin
- ▶ De Pere Police Department
- ▶ Family Services of Northeast Wisconsin
- ▶ Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
- ▶ Golden House
- ▶ Green Bay Police Department
- ▶ Oneida Police Department
- ▶ SANE (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners)
- ▶ St. Vincent Hospital
- ▶ Wrightstown Police Department





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