April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. The theme of this year’s community-wide Blue Ribbon Campaign is “Have a Heart: Do Your Part.” This is a BIG year for the Child Advocacy Center as we mark 20 years of providing services to child victims of abuse in the Wiregrass area. The CAC continues to educate the community about the serious issues children experience when they are abused, as we seek volunteer and financial support. For 20 years, our community has responded tremendously when a need has been presented and we are grateful!

During the upcoming campaign, there are many events where people can be involved. Some of these events include: (1) “Blue Ribbon Friday for Kids” t-shirts; (2) the “Brian Brackin Memorial Motorcycle Ride”; (3) “Day of the Child” in area churches; and (4) “Koins for Kids”. This is a great way for everyone to get involved by taking a stand to help prevent child abuse. For more information and to learn how to “Have a Heart: Do YOUR Part” this April, contact the CAC. The CAC has helped heal children’s hearts that have been broken by the vicious cycle of abuse for 20 years; help us continue the healing!

1999: Faithful volunteers tied blue door ribbons for years to use as an awareness tool and a fundraiser. Today, Blue Ribbon Yard Signs are available for purchase to show your support for the CAC and make a statement against child abuse. Order yours today!

2002: Students with their blue lapel ribbons. Over 12,000 ribbons will be distributed to elementary schools during the 20th Campaign.

2008: DA Douglas A. Valeska and DA Kirke Adams have been long time supporters of the CAC. We are thankful they have joined us again for the 20th Campaign!
On January 29, 2013, the unthinkable happened when Dale County School bus driver, Charles Poland, was shot and killed and a 5 year old boy was taken hostage. There were 20 students who witnessed this horrific murder. Some of them were afraid to ride a bus, some have had nightmares, some have survivor’s guilt and the list goes on. From the beginning, the CAC has provided therapy and support services to the students to enable them to process their feelings.

Recently, they were asked to write a statement about their feelings and what they had learned. One student wrote, “After the bus shooting I felt scared and worried, that it would happen again. But since I started therapy, I learned not to be afraid and just hope it doesn’t happen to me or anyone else. Having someone die for you is the most amazing thing.” Wow!

Although no one can imagine the long-term effect of such an event, we are glad we have been able to work with these students as they begin their life-long healing process. One year later, progress is being made and the future is looking brighter.
Lunch n’ Learn: Boy in the Bunker

During November, Mason Bynum, Dale County Sheriff’s Office, presented a training to team members about how all local law enforcement agencies up to the FBI helped with the Midland City Hostage situation that occurred last January. Capt. Bynum was one of the first responding agents on the scene and shared valuable insight with team members about dealing with the children on the scene. Also on hand to present information was the Dothan PD Bomb squad, responsible for helping the FBI with locating bombs placed by Jimmy Dykes around his homemade bunker. Thank you to all of our law enforcement who worked together to make this traumatic event end in a positive light by rescuing Ethan. The bus driver, Charles Poland, will always be remembered as a man of valor and courage.

Community Counts: Downtown Christmas

During December, the CAC staff, along with Sparkle and BBQ Pageant volunteer Jessica Wilbur, worked at Dothan’s Downtown Christmas by providing children an opportunity to write “Letters to Santa.” What seems most special about this day is not the fact that children get to send a letter to the infamous North Pole, but that parents and adults spend quality time with their children helping them write their special notes to Santa. Take time out of your busy schedule to encourage a child in your life today.

Annual CAC Cookie Bake Thanks

What’s Christmas without a cookie? The CAC staff worked hard to prepare a special treat for the agencies that work with us everyday. Homemade cookies and candies were put together in special Christmas packages and sent to each local law enforcement, DHR, and District Attorney office. Thank you to all who serve our community and help protect our children.

FLOW—Christmas at the CAC

The Ridgecrest Christian School, Future Leaders of the Wiregrass, decorated the CAC for the Christmas holidays! The group volunteers each semester to complete tasks that staff members need assistance with such as creating files, cleaning, assisting with the Blue Ribbon Campaign, and organizing the donations and stuffed animals. Many thanks to this special group for all of your hard work throughout the year!
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Annual Goree Family Boston Butt Sale
To Benefit the CAC Sarah Elizabeth Memorial Gift to Children

Special people shine in our lives. For the CAC, the Goree family has truly been an encouragement through the Sarah Elizabeth Memorial Gift to Children. Each year, this family joins forces with several local sponsors to raise funds to support the CAC by coordinating a Boston Butt Sale. Over the past ten years, the memorial fund has raised more than $73,000 to benefit local child abuse victims. Thank you, Goree Family, for choosing to support the CAC and sharing the legacy of your beloved daughter, Sarah Elizabeth, with so many other children; she will continue to be a shining light at the CAC & in our community.

2014 SALE: NOV. 20-22

Boston Butt Sale Sponsors: Amerisource Bergen; Elizabeth Wheelock; Branham Hanchey; Carolyn White; Olga Norton; Dixie Wholesale Fence; Shute Pecan Company; Eugene McGriff; PaulK’s Service Company; Dothan Awning Company; Sunset Memorial Park; Register Realty Co.; Kathy Bower; The Cochran Firm; Agnes and Greg Yance; Servis First Bank; Camping World