Annual Report
2006

…securing a permanent, nurturing environment for every child

Support Center for Child Advocates
1900 Cherry Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103

215-925-1913
www.advokid.org
Message from the President of the Board of Directors and the Executive Director

We are pleased to report to our generous and faithful supporters on the vital work of the Support Center for Child Advocates in the fiscal year ending June 30, 2006. Completing the 29th year of service to our community’s most vulnerable children, the Staff, Board of Directors, Volunteer Attorneys and other supporters can be proud of our accomplishments.

The courts and community continued to look to Child Advocates to serve troubled children and difficult cases. Teaming our Child Advocates Social Worker and Staff Attorneys with Volunteer Attorneys from across the region, we represented more than 630 abused and neglected children. Our staff answered hundreds of additional inquiries from callers in our own area and from around the nation about children’s legal issues, litigation strategies and theories of law, treatment needs and educational opportunities, and concerns for children in need of care and protection. We remain the place for the community to call when it needs a lawyer for an abused child.

The year was rich in accomplishments, led by an extraordinary level of volunteerism. More than 300 attorneys and paralegals were active as volunteers during the year and we trained over 200 new volunteers. In our cases, volunteers are creating promising, productive relationships with young people who desperately need lawyers and friends. The Volunteer Enhancement Project, supported by grants from Abington Foundation, The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia and The George W. Rentschler Foundation streamlined intake and case assignment. Child Advocates continues to shape law and practice for children through our leadership work locally and nationally. Staff were active in the Philadelphia Court Improvement Project reform efforts and in initiatives of the Philadelphia and Pennsylvania Bar Associations focused on children. We also helped create the new Pennsylvania Dependency Court Procedural Rules and pressed intensive legislative work to resist bans on gay and lesbian parenting which would have reduced adoption opportunities for abused children. We provided training to programs from six states on using volunteers in immigration cases, part of our recent expansion to serve immigrant children who are involved with the child welfare system. Sharing personal stories of family abuse and system neglect, our Client Advisory Board, comprised of courageous young adults who are former clients, educated hundreds of community members, professionals, and legislators about the experiences of kids in the foster care system.

Outcomes measurement promises to shape Child Advocates for the future. We moved ahead impressively in our Outcomes Project, collecting data on more than 180 cases closed during the year. We are getting set to launch the web-based Legal Services Outcomes Database of the National Children’s Law Network, to inform our practice and guide others in improving representation and advocacy for court-involved youth.

Fiscal integrity, cost-effective use of volunteer professionals, and sound stewardship of our resources remained hallmarks of our management, even as we worked hard to relieve the financial pressures too common in non-profit service delivery. We held our first friend-making Fashion Show at Neiman Marcus and planned for our first Charity Golf Tournament. In all, we raised more than $1.7 million in cash and received over $3.1 million in contributed services — impressive! With most of our funding support coming from non-government sources, we continue to rely heavily on the charitable giving of individuals, law firms, corporations, and more than 50 foundations. In particular, we appreciate the support of our faithful funders in 2005-2006, which include Lincoln Financial, SEI Cares, Independence Foundation, the William Penn Foundation, Horace Goldsmith Foundation, Claneil Foundation and the Nelson Foundation. The Dolfinger-McMahon Foundation has graciously supported production of this Annual Report.

Thank you for being part of our essential work! Please remember Child Advocates in your generous charitable giving and volunteer activities, and even in your estate planning. Children need you, and through Child Advocates you can continue to help mend young lives in a most direct and caring way!

ALAN M. SANDALS
President, Board of Directors

FRANK P. CERVONE
Executive Director

COMING EVENTS 2007 — MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Our 30th Anniversary Celebration — Thursday April 26, 2007 — At the Union League
Cocktail Party, Silent and Live Auctions, Celebration of our Distinguished Advocates and Judge Lois Forer Award Recipient

All proceeds benefit Child Advocates exclusively

Child Advocates Second Annual Golf Classic — Columbus Day — October 8, 2007
Huntingdon Valley Country Club — Play golf and entertain your clients on this beautiful course
Support Center for Child Advocates
MISSION STATEMENT
To advocate for victims of child abuse and neglect in Philadelphia with the goal of securing a permanent, nurturing environment for every child.


Child Advocates provides free legal and social services to abused and neglected children in Philadelphia. In fiscal year 2006, we teamed more than 250 volunteer attorneys with staff social workers and lawyers to ensure the safety and well being of 633 children. Two-year old “Tammy” whose mother was far too young and troubled to care for her, and “Kyra” who was beaten so badly she had to be removed from her home, were among those we served. We help children testify, heal and thrive. The project reports that follow summarize Child Advocates activities and accomplishments within our five Core Programs: Child Protection, Medically Needy Children, Kinship Care, Adoption and Child Advocacy Leadership.

Child Protection

The father of “Donna,” “Donetta,” and “Daryl” was on trial for fatally shooting their mother when Child Advocates was appointed to their case. Volunteer Attorney Cheryl Jacobs of Kline & Specter and Social Worker Chandra Palmer stepped in to advocate for the children’s best interests. Both Donetta and Daryl were able to testify at trial, and their father was convicted of third degree murder. After trial, our attorney-social worker team worked to secure a stable, supportive family for the three children. Their efforts ensured that Donna, Donetta and Daryl continued to live with their maternal aunt who took them in after their mother was murdered. The children attend grief counseling and appear to be doing well.

Child Protection is the mainstay of our direct service capacity, with about 80% of our child-clients receiving services as victims and witnesses in criminal and civil child abuse proceedings.

• We advocate for the care and services necessary to meet each child’s needs. Working as a team, trained Volunteer Attorneys and experienced Child Advocate Social Workers participate in court hearings, Family Service Plan meetings, and conduct home visits with each child. Our teams establish and maintain relationships with each child assigned to their care.

• In criminal child abuse cases, we prepare children to testify. We initiate dependency actions and obtain orders to remove children from homes where they are not safe. We work to protect records of children. We represent the child in all trial proceedings.

• The statistical breakdown in the ages of our clients in the last fiscal year was 26% newborn to age 5, 34% ages 6 to 12, 31% ages 13 to 17 and 9% ages 18 to 21.

Medically Needy Children

Born into the child welfare system after a car hit his pregnant mother, “Shaneef” was diagnosed with severe asthma. Volunteer Attorney Russel Hartz of SAP America Inc. and Child Advocate Social Worker Tina Wright worked hard on Shaneef’s case, enabling him to enter the loving home of “Ms. Creighton,” who had actually been his biological mother’s foster parent for several years. Through her dedication and perseverance, Ms. Creighton was able to help Shaneef bring his asthma under control. She adopted the boy in April 2006—a happy and fortunate conclusion to a life begun in hardship and sadness, a new beginning made possible by Child Advocates’ efforts and the warm heart of a willing, devoted foster parent.

The Project for Medically Needy Children serves children whose health has been compromised by abuse and neglect or children who have been abandoned due to the severity of their medical needs. Our lawyer-social worker teams work to secure necessary medical treatment, special education, rehabilitative services, respite care and accessible transportation according to each child’s needs for health and safety.

• Fifty-three medically needy children were served in this fiscal year. The primary diagnoses of these children include HIV/AIDS, T-cell leukemia, chronic lung disease, fetal alcohol syndrome, encephalopathy, hemophilia, failure to thrive, cardiac abnormalities, swallowing difficulties, asthma, chronic skin conditions, lead poisoning, severe burns, apnea, seizure disorder, kidney disease, quadriplegia, paralysis from gunshot wound, cerebral palsy, blindness, deafness, traumatic brain injury, speech impairment, developmental delays and emotional or behavioral disorders.

• Many of the medically needy children served were witnesses to violent crimes or were victims of sexual or physical assault.

Kinship Care

“Marshan,” “Elise” and “Bree” were in the custody of their grandmother in California when she took them to visit her sister in Philadelphia and then disappeared, abandoning her grandchildren. The children’s great-aunt was left without birth certificates, social security numbers or paperwork of any kind for the three children. She was unable to enroll them in school or secure public assistance for the children. Volunteer Attorney Pamela Ende and Child Advocate Attorney Rebecca Baehr worked tirelessly to help the children’s great-aunt navigate the legal system so that she could care for her nephew and nieces. Within a few days, they were successful in enrolling the oldest child in a new school and obtaining the social security numbers of the children. Their grandmother has been located and has signed over custody of her grandchildren to their great-aunt.

Children are placed with relatives as caregivers for reasons such as parental abuse, addiction, neglect, abandonment, incarceration or HIV/AIDS. In Fiscal
Year 2006, Child Advocates served eighty children through the Kinship Care Program.

- Fifty children were residing within kinship care families that were formally involved with the child welfare system.
- Thirty children served were living in kinship families not formally involved with the child welfare system. Advocacy is needed in these cases to ensure that families attain legal custody of their children. Public benefits or other financial assistance are often needed to help caregivers raise a child in their home.
- Through the Kinship Care Program, Child Advocates continues its collaboration with area agencies, such as Grand Central, Philadelphia Society for Services to Children, Philadelphia Volunteers for the Indigent Program and Community Legal Services to advocate for policies and legislation that support kinship families on the local, state and national levels.

Adoption

“Kherrae,” “Aliza,” “Taylor” and “Kahdisha” were assigned to Volunteer Attorney David Levenberg and Child Advocates Social Worker Daryl Conner. Their parents were suspected of physical abuse after suspicious marks were found on Tanya’s arms and abdomen. The parents refused to comply with court-prescribed counseling, parenting classes and housing assistance. The attorney-social worker team advocated for all four children, eventually pursuing adoption because of continued parental non-compliance with court demands. Happily, Aliza and Kahdisha were adopted by the same family. Kherrae was adopted shortly thereafter. Our Volunteer Attorney and Child Advocate Social Worker visited the children’s new caretakers to make sure that they were in good homes. They are still working to secure adoption for Taylor.

Child Advocates represented nineteen children who were adopted this year. Permanency is the goal for all children represented by Child Advocates. With our new ability to track case outcomes we can show that almost 90% of the cases closed last fiscal year had positive permanency results.

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Child Advocates continues its leadership role by sharing its knowledge of best practices for representing children and youth in crisis with local attorneys, judges, social service providers and other local child advocates. This program includes policy and systemic reform advocacy and community education focused on youth transitions to adulthood, child advocacy/policy leadership, agency-wide outcomes, professional training and capacity building work. We have grown in our leadership in the Philadelphia Bar and the larger local and national communities. The agency presented a large array of seminars, training sessions and programs during this fiscal year, focused on improving public response to children involved with the courts and increasing the capacity of other public interest organizations to respond effectively to children in need of multiple services and supports.

Child Advocates continues its work with our national partners through the National Children’s Law Network (NCLN). Mr. Cervone presented our joint outcomes measurement model at the NACC 28th National Children’s Law Conference. Child Advocates convened and led meetings of the National Association of Counsel for Children in Los Angeles and Chicago. Our Legal Services Outcomes Database will be ready for web-based launch in Winter 2006. We presented the Database at national conferences in Los Angeles and FirstStar in Tallahassee.

Client Advisory Board Member Sara Curry told her story to the crowd at our Friend-Raiser Fashion Show at Neiman Marcus in March.
2006 Champions for Children Annual Benefit Reception raised $180,000.

27th Annual Philadelphia Bar Association Run/Walk raised a record $98,395.

Through the 2005 United Way Campaign, we received more than $115,000 in pledges—also a record high!

*Child Advocates* received the GlaxoSmithKline IMPACT Award for our Delivery of Healthcare Services Advocacy Project, rewarding “excellence in community healthcare.”

More than 250 attorneys attended three full-day Volunteers Training Workshops under the auspices of the Pennsylvania Bar Education Center and 40 current and prospective volunteers attended a session at 1900 Cherry Street.

Staff accompanied 92 new attorney volunteers on 18 Courtroom Observation sessions.

In a nationally recognized initiative, we continue to support Child Advocacy Practice Groups in eleven major Philadelphia law firms. This year saw the launch of our Solo Practitioner Group. These Groups offers a forum for Volunteer Attorneys to meet and assist each other with their pro bono cases and for *Child Advocates* to offer them support, training and updates on child advocacy law.

Staff Attorney and teen specialist Rashida West presented at The Minority Bar Committee of the Pennsylvania Bar Association 18th Annual Minority Conference – “Minority Lawyers Reaching Out to Minority Youth” and at the 14th Annual Pennsylvania Permanency Conference – “Making Successful Transitions: Youth Aging Out of Care.” Trainings were directed to legal and social work professionals and focused on how to improve outcomes for older youth in the child welfare system.

*Child Advocates* coordinated or directly responded to at least 180 referral walk-ins and phone calls from members of the community.

Executive director Frank Cervone worked closely with the Vera Institute for Justice Children’s Immigration Project and presented a full-day workshop to the eight participating immigration law offices in San Antonio, TX.

Staff and Client Advisory Board members presented a two-day workshop on “Working with Child Victims in the Criminal Justice System” as sponsored by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency in State College, PA.

Staff presented at two sessions of the Department of Human Services (DHS) training for their new workers.

*Child Advocates* led the successful development of a protocol for handling immigration cases, working closely with DHS administration, the City Law Department, and several public interest immigration law agencies. The Law Enforcement Child Abuse Project hosted training for workers from children and youth agencies in the five-county area on child welfare and immigration. Our policy work continues in this emerging practice area.

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**CHILD ADVOCATES’ ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN FISCAL YEAR 2005 - 2006**

**It was a smashing success!**

**Thank you to all our wonderful sponsors.**

**Plan to join us next October.**

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**THE 2006 INAUGURAL CHILD ADVOCATES GOLF CLASSIC**

**to benefit the Campaign for Medically Needy Children**

October 16th

Huntingdon Valley Country Club

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Save the Date – Our Inaugural Golf Classic was a big hit! –

Join the fun on Columbus Day, October 8, 2007.
REVENUES

- Individuals: 16%
- Foundations: 38%
- Corporations: 16%
- Government: 25%
- IOLTA: 4%
- Other: 1%

TOTAL $1,756,613
FISCAL YEAR ENDING 6/30/06

EXPENSES

- Salaries: 62%
- Personnel Benefits: 13%
- Property/Practice Insurance: 1%
- Depreciation: 4%
- Fundraising Expenses: 2%
- Mortgage Interest: 4%
- Joint Projects: 2%
- Operations Overhead: 12%

TOTAL $1,636,317
FISCAL YEAR ENDING 6/30/06
Event raised $180,000 for our children! We could not do it without you!

Brett Blyshak, Chair
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Champions for Children 2006 Benefit Reception Honorees

Wawa and its former CEO RICHARD D. WOOD, Jr. were honored as the ninth recipients of the Judge Lois Forer Child Advocacy Award, for their enduring individual and corporate philanthropy and commitment to children and families.

Distinguished Advocates
• Deborah Cohen, Esquire, Pepper Hamilton LLP
• Maida R. Milone, Esquire, The Center for Emerging Visual Artists
• Karen Pieslak Pohlmann, Esquire, Morgan Lewis and Bockius LLP
• Matthew J. Siegel, Esquire, Cozen O’Connor
• Eleanor D. Thompson, Esquire, Independence Blue Cross
• Michael Trudgeon, President, Reliable Copy Service
• Merrilee Weiss Bodzin, Esquire, Support Center for Child Advocates

Celebrate Child Advocates’ 30th Anniversary in 2007!
Check our website and join us for the festivities throughout the year!
www.advokid.org
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*Client Advisory Board Member, Eddie Lewis, presented his book, Warning Signs: The Story of Eddie, at our Friend-Raiser Cocktail Party at the home of Joseph and Sharon McGinley in November.*
Our heartfelt thanks to our exemplary Board Members who cycled off the Board this year: Pam Gagne, Michael LiPuma and Dennis Lynch.

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