



Signals

Summer 2013

CVEC provides safe visitation and exchange location

Editor's note: This is the second in a series of articles featuring our SOS programs. This series provides you with information to better understand the services we offer our clients.

Picture this

You and your spouse married at a young age and now have two children. After several years of marriage, the relationship has become physically and verbally abusive to you and the children.

You divorce and receive custody of the children. You and your former spouse have been referred by the court to the Child Visitation and Exchange Center (CVEC). You are to use the CVEC so the non-custodial parent may visit with the children in a supervised setting, thus maintaining an ever important healthy



relationship with the child. The court ordered visits at the CVEC as they fear a risk of child abduction or worse.

Supervised visitation is a tool that can help families as they go through difficult and/or transitional times. It provides your children a safe, family-friendly environment to have visits with your "ex."

Prior to the children's first visit, you and the other parent both complete an intake interview. At this meeting you learn:

- the visits will be supervised by trained staff who document interactions with the children and parents.
- the drop-off/pick-up times are staggered between you and your "ex" to eliminate contact.
- security will be present during services to eliminate the threat of unwanted contact, outside influences or abduction by providing a safe, controlled environment.
- visitation fees are based on annual income ranging.

After your initial visit at the CVEC, a meeting is sched-

uled for your children to meet the director and tour the center. You're sure this action will help them feel more comfort-

"The CVEC made it possible for my son and his father to continue visitations, while ensuring my son and my safety during that time. I am so grateful for these services. I appreciate having the center, it sure helps our family. Not sure there would be consistent schedule for visitation otherwise. Thank you!"
— Anonymous client

able and be better prepared for their first visit.

The first CVEC visit comes and you are nervous. Soon you are at ease when you see the clean and comfortable rooms filled with toys and books for the children and a security guard and staff to ensure everyone's safety. You leave the CVEC feeling relieved the children get to visit their other parent in a safe and monitored environment. You also imagine the children's visiting parent appreciates not fearing any new possible accusations because there is someone present during the visit who has documented factual information during their time together in a neutral and objective manner.

The reality

This scenario is common for those who come to the

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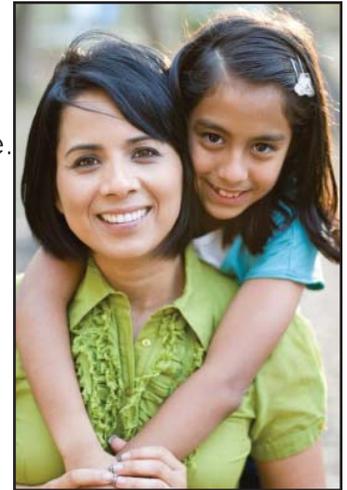
CVEC. However, not everyone who uses the CVEC is referred by the courts. Clients can be referred by the Department of Children and Families (DCF), mental health professionals and other community service or they may self-refer.

Here's a different instance in which the CVEC was needed:

Before my attorney recommended I contact the CVEC,

the director explained the rules to me and showed my daughter around to make her feel more at home. I was glad trained supervisors and security would be there during her visits. My daughter feels comfortable seeing him there. The CVEC helped her re-establish a relationship with her father. Someday she will be ready to take the next step, but until then, we feel safe using SOS.

without conflict or violence. This service encourages staggered arrival/pick-up times



*"There is no other reasonable alternative available for visitation and exchange services in our community."
— Anonymous client*

The CVEC is open seven-days-a-week, including most holidays.

In 2012, the CVEC provided 1,645 visits and

to eliminate contact. CVEC monitored exchanges.

"The CVEC permits children to have consistent contact with their parent in a positive environment," said Deb Schneider, CVEC director. "It gives children permission to be a child, void of any adult issues or drama."

my daughter and her father hadn't seen each other in a year. My "ex" wanted to become part of his daughter's life. I set-up an intake where

exchanges.

Exchange services

Monitored exchange involves the transfer of children from one parent to another

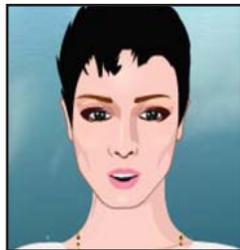
New SOS website features virtual survivors

We are unveiling a new website, www.soskansas.com.

Featured on the site are interactive avatars. An avatar is a graphical image that represents a person. The SOS avatars tell our client's real-life accounts, highlighting their experience with SOS services. The stories are slightly changed to protect confidential client details.

"Our website is the first victim services site we've seen to include a way for visitors to interact with clients virtually," said Connie Cahoone, SOS executive director. "People relate to and better understand abuse if they hear personal stories. There are many people who have experienced abuse, but don't realize it because

abuse is not always physical. We are here to help people increase their safety and work through the issues abuse may have created."



Avatar "Odell" describes her experience at the Child Visitation and Exchange Center on the new website.

Currently there are six avatars on the website, including "Bailey" who talks about healthy relationships for teens – tying to SOS' work to prevent and educate about healthy relationships.

Other avatar topics include: a letter from a foster child to his Court Appointed Special Advocate, sexual assault survivor, a family's experience using the Child Visitation and Exchange Center

and a dating violence victim. The website includes information about our four programs: CASA of the Flint Hills, Child Advocacy Center, Child Visitation and Exchange and Crisis Services. The programs focus on support, safety and advocacy and provide support for families in crisis.

Other features include:

- Help pages for victims (friends/family)
- Events calendar
- Speakers bureau
- E-newsletter sign-up
- Videos and current issues
- Host an SOS party planner

"We encourage everyone to use our new website," Connie said. "It is a great tool to educate the people in our six counties about what we offer and how they can get involved."

From the Executive Director:

When you think of SOS, do you think of a non-profit agency serving children? I didn't, until I started working here.



Connie Cahoone

Did you know SOS serves more children in one way or another than we do adults. Here's how, Crisis Services provides:

- a safe shelter for families. Most often, women with their children.
- prevention education. Last year, we visited 21 schools providing presentations with Happy Bear, discussions on safe touch and boundaries, healthy relationships, being safe online, sexting, teen dating violence, being a bystander and respect. (Just to name a few.)
- facilitation of children's support groups.

CASA is the voice for children in the court system providing information to enable the court to make decisions that are in the child's best interest. CASA volunteers provide advocacy and support outside the courts for these kiddos and often long-lasting and stable relationships, which a large number of these children wouldn't ordinarily receive at home.

The Child Visitation and Exchange Center provides a place where children can spend time with their families in a safe, neutral environment. We also provide the location and supervision for exchanges between parents, which keeps children safe and conflict free.

The Child Advocacy Center provides a safe place to interview children who are suspected to have been abused or neglected. We provide support for these children to receive services such as mental health and ensure they don't fall through the cracks. We provide hospital exam support for children who have been sexual abused.

"How are you doing financially?" is a question I continually get asked. As you may know, state and federal grants continue to be cut. Our economy and community's families continue to struggle. On an ever-shrinking budget, SOS does our best to trim costs while continuing to provide safety and advocacy for our clients, and educate clients and the public about the issues facing our society. How do you put a price tag on these? We offer these top-notch services, with 37 years of expertise, while searching for ways to garner community support.

In the community I have also heard unfounded assumptions regarding those we serve. Here are a few I want to dispel:

- Our clients are not all low income families
- Strangers are not the ones who hurt our clients, most often it is someone they know such as a family member.
- Our clients are not believed.
- SOS just asks for money and they get all they need.

I have enjoyed watching my team of staff and volunteers at work. They give their all. They care about the clients we serve. They continue to look for ways to improve and expand our services. They are why I can continue to fight the fight of grants, budget cuts, reports, policy revisions and strategic planning. They are in the trenches with their sleeves rolled up and determination on their faces. I cannot let them or the clients we serve down!

Connie Cahoone

Get to know the SOS staff

Grants administrator's talents benefit SOS

Non-profit organizations have always been a passion for Liz Kennedy, she enjoys being able to help others, but also enjoys that non-profits allow people to creatively use their skills.

Her enthusiasm began when she volunteered for Americorps and Habitat for Humanity and continues as she helps expand SOS programs.

Before coming to Kansas, Liz worked in the music industry, specifically music marketing in Chicago. Liz plays the



Liz Kennedy

string bass, electric bass and sings.

Liz's hidden talents have the potential to benefit SOS. Prior to her employment at SOS and beginning a family, Liz and her husband performed throughout

the Midwest. Their band, L&J, recorded a CD, "Holding the Lights On" in 2002. A follow-up CD has been recorded and awaiting release in 2014.

Liz came to SOS in 2009 as the administrative assistant. In April 2010, she became the SOS grants administrator.

Since beginning at SOS, she has participated in Leadership Emporia, however more importantly Liz says she loves that she has been able to grow from administration to working hands-on and seeing projects unfold.

Liz is working on a master's in Instructional Design and Technology, to continue developing her potential.

From June through September Liz and her husband will donate 50 percent of their CD proceeds to SOS. You can preview and purchase the folk-rock CD online <http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/landj> as either a hard copy or mp3 file. The CD is also available at the SOS administrative office, 618 Mechanic.

SOS volunteer spotlight...Jasmine Pegues-Brockelman

Jasmine Pegues-Brockelman, or Jazz, is a driven young woman who has the maturity of a woman twice her age.

In 2010, Jazz was introduced to the child welfare system when she became the placement for a child in custody. Soon after, she took in a second child and is in the process of adopting them both.

Jazz is a young, devoted and very actively involved mother. In 2011, the children placed in her home were given a CASA volunteer.

Jazz watched the CASA investigate and get to know the kids, developing a spe-

cial relationship with them and advocating for their best interests, even when the CASA's opinions differed from the other people involved in the case.

Taken back by the CASA's powerful advocacy and child focus, Jazz decided she wanted to get involved and make a difference in the lives of

children also. She contacted CASA and was accepted

into the training program. Jazz completed the required 30 hours of training and became a certified CASA volunteer in March. She recently received her first case assignment and is excited to make a difference.

SOS CASA thanks all of our amazing CASA volunteers who each bring a unique perspective to their advocacy.



Jasmine Pegues - Brockelman

Shelter children reap benefits from true friendship

Often times, the children in our Shelter flee their homes, leaving behind important childhood items that make them feel safe. Melvern resident June Harred decided to do something to help these children better cope with the loss of most of their possessions. June bought small stuffed animals and created handmade quilts to swaddle the animals. The little surprise bundles are placed on the children's beds at the Shelter, so when a child checks in, they have a new friend waiting for them.



Marie Burnett

At a quilt camp last year, June and her good friend, Marie Burnett, enjoyed visiting and worked on the quilts. Not long after camp, June's health began to fail. June passed away in January and Marie was sure June hadn't been able to work on the quilts

since camp. So Marie finished the small quilts and delivered them to SOS.

"June was a caring woman who was great with children," Marie said. Not only did Marie choose to finish the existing quilts, she decided to continue this project as a tribute to June and the good things she did for others.

To help honor June and Marie's mission, you can bring clean small stuffed animals and fabric remnants to SOS, 618 Mechanic.

Many of us have friends, but how many of us have friends willing to carry on our legacy? Marie, you are a true friend and we thank you for continuing June's great work!

*Included with the stuffed animal and quilt is a note which reads:
"I give you this blanket and toy and I've called it the "Gift of Hope."
Just knowing that someone cares at this time in your life as you try to cope.
So pass it on to your little one and let their imaginations roam.
Knowing that people care, God loves you and that you are never ever really alone."*

Judge receives award for service to crime victims

Osage County Magistrate Judge Taylor Wine was recognized for his service to crime victims during the 16th Annual Crime Victims' Rights Conference in Wichita.

Judge Wine was presented the Criminal Justice Award by Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt during an awards ceremony at the two-day conference. Wine was nominated for the award by SOS.

"Judge Wine has been very responsive to the needs of victims in the 4th district court," said Missy Bane-Shelton, Crisis Service director, in

the nomination. "SOS has had the opportunity to collaborate effectively with Judge Wine, discussing trends and issues, lethality concerns and reducing trauma."

The Kansas Crime Victims' Rights Conference was hosted by Attorney General Schmidt and Gov. Sam Brownback. The con-



Judge Taylor Wine

ference featured speakers and trainers focused on raising awareness of emerging crimes and offering new approaches to respond to enduring crimes, such as child abuse, domestic violence and human trafficking.

Judge Wine serves as 4th Judicial District magistrate judge for Osage and Coffey counties.



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SOS newsletter to go green

Yearly, this quarterly newsletter costs \$10,000 to be printed and distributed.

In an effort to reduce costs and paper, beginning January 2014, SOS is switching from a printed/mailed newsletter to an e-mailed newsletter.

To sign up to receive your SOS e-newsletter, go to www.soskansas.com or call 620-343-8799.

Shelter wish list

- Passes - movie/skating/
bowling/swimming
- Ice cream/snow cone
certificates
- Slip 'N Slide
- Fireproof lock boxes
- Women's bras/under-
wear (new)
- Book shelves
- Coffee pot
- Hangers
- Can openers
- Hair brushes
- Nail clipper
- Hair ties
- Nail polish/remover
- Toilet paper
- Paper towels
- Liquid laundry deter-
gent
- Dryer sheets
- Clorox wipes
- Dish cloths



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