

From the Director

" Turning Lives Forward"

As I reflect about 1994, I am prone to thank the children. Children provided inspiration to us in addition to concrete help and information throughout the year.

In April, a six year old child we interviewed called us after her interview. She left a message on our answering machine saying "***I just wanted to hear your voice and to tell you that you turned my life forward.***" We are touched by her courage and that inspired us to listen to the children in different ways.

Later, In the fall, we talked with students at Northeast Middle School about child abuse and what makes it safe for children to tell what happened to them. They wrote a song called "Tell Somebody". That song became a hinge pin of a video about CornerHouse that explains what we do.

After the children, I want to thank the board members and other volunteers. 1994 was a year that every one went the extra mile to think about the future of the children who report sexual abuse and CornerHouse. The expansion project was defined and the capital campaign was launched. Board members worked very hard to see that the future of children was safer. We are on the road to having a facility that has enough space to meet the needs generated by the mission. Thanks to the many hours board members are putting in that will make this a reality.

Many volunteers provided behind the scenes support to CornerHouse. One volunteer organized our resource library and another conducted research about the needs of non offending parents. A host of other volunteers worked very hard as they looked forward in to 1995 to make the First Annual SweetHearts for Kids event a success.

The superb staff members of CornerHouse deserve a big thank you from everyone. They continued to demonstrate exemplary competence in interviewing children and facilitating interagency team coordination. Our interviewers withstood increasingly severe challenges in cases that went to court. Our protocol was reviewed by national experts and the integrity of our work continues to be upheld. The doctors continued to provide child friendly and highly skilled medical examinations of the children. Everyone stayed very focused on reducing trauma to the children. The Training and Resource Center staff worked very hard to develop new materials and trainings and involved all of the staff in conducting the trainings.

As 1994, ends and we begin 1995, we look forward focusing on the many ways that trauma to children and their families can be reduced. The children who report sexual abuse have put up with a lot before they get to us. I am grateful for the opportunity to do what I can to reduce their trauma.

## Training and Resource Center

During 1994, CornerHouse continued providing the 5-day multidisciplinary forensic interviewing training. Training was provided to a total of 87 social workers, police officers and county attorneys.

The staff totally redesigned and updated the training manual, and revised and updated the course content as well. The course continues to receive extremely high ratings from participants, including this feedback:

*It's so wonderful to have the time to learn a new process as wonderful as this and to have every educator as experienced, motivated, and dedicated to teaching and doing the most objective sex abuse interview . . . (Child Protection Worker)*

*I was not looking forward to this training because I didn't come here by choice. I must tell you, though, this has been very rewarding and enjoyable. I was able to take the fear out of interviewing a child . . . Our instructors were great . . . (Law Enforcement Investigator)*

*Before we can educate judges and juries, we have to understand the information ourselves. Very helpful to have an interview protocol. It really helps to have all the information put together in one place and then have the practice so we'll use it. (County Attorney)*

Objectives for 1994 included moving the TRC to a new facility, offering regular orientation sessions for Hennepin County referents, and developing several new offerings for 1995. Each of these objectives has been met. The new offerings include:

- Advanced Interview Training,
- On-site Interview Training,
- Preassessment Training, and
- Videotaped Interview Assessment (VIA) services.

In May, The TRC moved to a new facility, located a block away from CornerHouse in the 910 Medical Building, has proved very functional for training, and helps alleviate crowding at the CornerHouse facility by providing meeting space.

All of the new offerings have been scheduled for 1995; initial response from potential customers has been positive. For example, the first Preassessment Training, designed for mandated reporters, was completely booked by a local school district in late 1994, even though it will not be offered until the end of April, 1995.

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