

# ANNUAL REPORT 2020





# WHAT IS A CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER?



A child advocacy center, or CAC, functions as part of a team to work with agencies, such as law enforcement and DSS, to make decisions about the investigation and treatment of child abuse cases. Thanks to collaborative efforts between local agencies and CACs, children are able to reduce the number of times their story has to be retold.

CARE House offers multiple services to support victims and families while reducing retraumatization. Child and family advocacy helps children and their families become educated, feel supported, and navigate the court process. Scientifically-backed counseling services provide healing, and forensic medical services ensure a child's body is healthy. The CARE House of the Pee Dee provides hope, help and healing for abused children and their families from the moment abuse is alleged until services are no longer needed.

In 2020, Jon Weiss, Jr. came forward with his story of childhood sexual abuse. Jon, now 28, was sexually abused when he was 10 to 14 years old. His abuser? His bible study leader and youth basketball coach. "I didn't have the CARE House growing up, but if I did, it wouldn't have taken me 14 years to come forward with my story. If I would have had the CARE House, it would have helped me emotionally and with my relationships. I would have definitely come forward sooner. Now I am strong and I am open to telling my story and being a voice for others who are going through sexual abuse. The CARE House is essential to this community," said Jon.



641

Pee Dee children received  
investigative services in 2020

1127

counseling sessions moved  
children toward healing in 2020

# HERE WE GROW AGAIN



CARE House opened in 2005 located in a house on Patton Drive with a very small staff.



In 2017, a partnership with HopeHealth allowed CARE House to move to a brand new building on Irby Street. This move also allowed CARE House to conduct forensic medical exams on site. The space was beautiful and created just for CARE House, but by moving day, our staff had grown to fill every inch.



In 2020, as HopeHealth's pediatric office grew, 1920 Second Loop Road was fully renovated. HopeHealth Pediatrics moved to the first floor and CARE House moved to a much larger space on the second floor. The new space allows more victims and families to be served.



# A LOOK BACK AT 2020



Dr. Michael Foxworth, CARE House's Director of Forensic Medical Services, presented to local dentists on recognizing signs of abuse in dentistry

FEBRUARY



Child Abuse Prevention Month  
707 Pinwheels were placed in front of CARE House to represent the 707 children who received forensic interviews in 2019

APRIL

JUNE

JANUARY

MARCH

MAY

JUL

COVID-19 forced adaptation. CARE House's doors remained open with safety precautions in place and the addition of Telehealth Counseling





CAPES for Kids Race goes virtual complete with virtual costume contests



CARE House holds multi-disciplinary training Crime Scene to Trial, allowing law enforcement and DSS to work with CARE House to solve a mock child abuse case.



Toss 'N' Taste Cornhole Tournament Fundraiser happens with safety measures in place.

## AUGUST

## SEPTEMBER

United Way of Florence County holds their annual Day of Caring allowing volunteers to help CARE House with projects



## OCTOBER

## NOVEMBER

CARE House moves into a new, larger space.



# Survivor's Story

When Carletheia found out that her daughter was sexually abused by her step-father at the young age of 11, her whole life changed. Initially Carletheia was worried and scared about what to expect, but after meeting CARE House staff, she knew she was in the right place and everything was going to be okay. After a year of counseling for her daughter and herself, Carletheia felt herself get stronger and watched her daughter thrive. Carletheia said, "Her strength became my strength. When I look at my daughter and see that she is happy, I know that my warrior princess is taken care of." Carletheia's daughter stated "Y'all got me through that hard time and I am thankful for that. Without y'all (CARE House Staff), I wouldn't be the girl I am today."



## Why I Volunteer



Megan has been a volunteer at CARE House for a little over a year. After graduating from UNC Chapel Hill, she wanted a chance to volunteer and give back to her community. Megan said, "volunteering at the CARE House has been such a fulfilling and impactful experience. In a world with so much darkness, it is incredible to see the light that this organization brings into the lives of so many children & their families. It is so important that children experiencing trauma have the tools and resources necessary to move forward and begin the healing process, and the CARE House ensures these needs are met. The CARE House staff displays unwavering support and empathy for victims and do everything in their power to make a difference. My time volunteering has inspired me to embark on a career in social work and I am so grateful for the opportunity to be a part of such a meaningful organization."



# A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The CARE House of the Pee Dee could lose hundreds of thousands of dollars, in the next year, due to a potential cut in victims of crime funding. The Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) was signed into federal law in 1984 to establish the Crime Victims' Fund, where criminal fines and fees are paid and the money is distributed to victim's service providers across the nation. VOCA funds have been vital in our ability to provide services and support throughout the Pee Dee for child victims.

VOCA has typically been a bi-partisan issue, unifying both sides, currently Congress is proposing a 40% funding cut this for upcoming grant year. If the VOCA 40% cut were to occur CARE House's VOCA funding will have reduced by 74% over the course of the last three years. This cut would likely result in loss of jobs and therefore a reduction our capacity to serve child abuse victims of the Pee Dee.



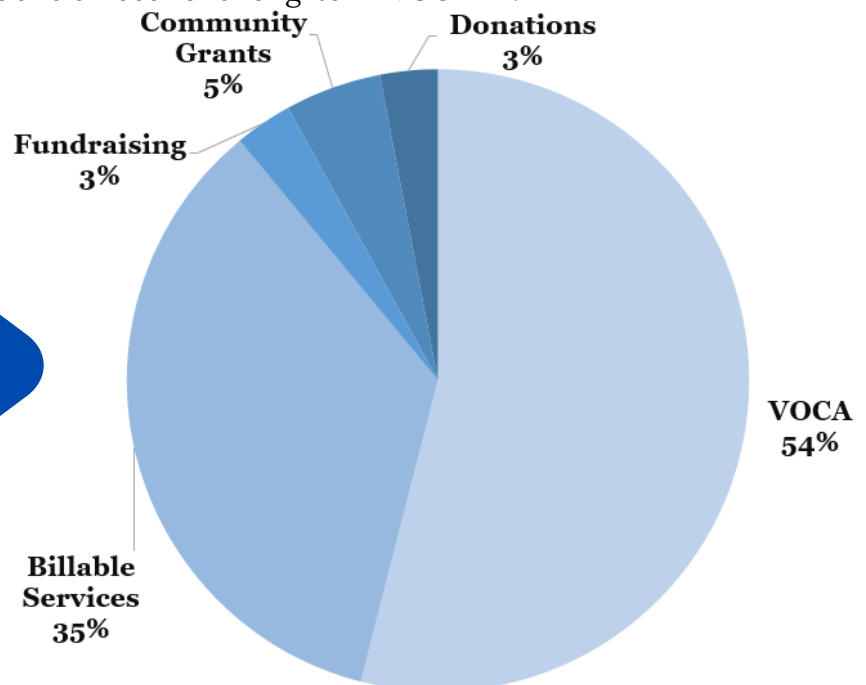
**Meg Temple**

VOCA is our largest funding source, pays salaries for staff who provide direct services to children and families. In 2019, we saw over 700 Pee Dee children due to allegations or maltreatment, reduced staff would greatly reduce the number of Pee Dee children able to receive services. We know the need is not decreasing, but likely growing throughout the pandemic as stress and tension increase in the home.

The loss of these federal funds is due to a reduction of federal convictions in conjunction with an increase in non-conviction agreements where fees and fines are going to the general fund instead of the VOCA fund. Services funded by VOCA benefit victims and the general public since services provided by non-profit victim's service providers are services that would otherwise be provided by tax-based entities like law enforcement agencies, the Department of Social Services, and the Department of Mental Health.

CARE House needs you, our community, to stand with us as we fight against child abuse. I ask you to contact Congress sharing the importance of victim's services and a need for a long-term VOCA fix.

## Funding Breakdown



# How Can I Help



- IN-KIND - Donations of individually wrapped snacks and juice boxes are distributed to the children after each appointment
- AMAZON SMILE - When you shop on Amazon Smile, Amazon's charitable arm, and choose CARE House as your charity, a percentage of your purchase comes to CARE House
- DONATE - Financial contributions are always welcome and can help us run CARE House on a day-to-day level

- SUPPORT children and families so they can recover from trauma
- ENSURE child abuse victims receive help, hope, and healing
- PROVIDE a safer community for our children



## Why Support CARE House

TheCareHouse.com  
843-629-0236  
1920 Second Loop Road  
Florence, SC 29501