

Justice 4 Children

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How clay pigeons can help end child abuse

For all the happy-go-lucky children running carefree on a playground, there are also those who are afraid to go home, afraid to admit that they're being abused, afraid to get help. But when abuse comes to light, law enforcement and Child Protective Services often seek assistance from the Williamson County Children's Advocacy Center (WCCAC).

"We work on behalf of victims of child abuse and their families," explains Barbara Garland, board president of the WCCAC. "In 2017, 661 kids—the average population of one elementary school—came through our doors. Fifty-eight percent of cases involved sexual abuse. We performed 71 medical exams last year, and this year, our numbers are quadruple those of 2017."

The WCCAC aims to provide as many forensic medical examinations on site as possible. This practice prevents victims from having to visit an emergency room and from receiving an unnecessary bill for the service. "If they come here during operating hours, they receive a free medical exam," Barbara says. "All the services we provide here are free, which is why we are always fundraising to cover all costs."



Most of the funding to provide direct services to victims—forensic interviews, specialized Sexual Assault Nurse Exams (SANE), and therapy counseling—comes from federal and state grants and from the seven law enforcement agencies the WCCAC works with. Specific grants are used to provide direct services to victims and their non-offending families, while other activities are excluded, such as administrative costs like management overhead and grant reporting salaries.

To cover the expenses specialized grants won't cover, such as facility rent and utilities, the WCACC must raise unrestricted funds, or monies obtained through private donations and events. "Unrestricted funds account for approximately one-third of our annual budget," Barbara

says. "We need donations to maximize federal grant dollars because we have an opportunity to leverage one dollar into five dollars of state and federal funding."

To meet its matching funds requirements, the WCACC holds many fundraising events annually. One such event is the Justice 4 Children Sporting Clays Event, debuted in 2015. Strategic partnerships with local businesses, including Reunion Ranch where the event is held, help promote the event and make it successful. The owner of Reunion Ranch, Jay Pearce, has been a great supporter of the WCCAC, connecting staff and supporters with people who share its mission and want to support its cause. WCCAC is also extremely excited that SportClips has come on board again this year as a presenting sponsor. Other major sponsors to date include Cook-Walden Davis Funeral Home, Al Clawson Disposal, and Atmos Energy. The event continues to grow each year as shooters share their fun experiences with each other.



The next Justice 4 Children event is set for September 21, 2018. Reunion Ranch supplies the ammunition, and participants supply their own rifle or shotgun. During the event, participants visit ten stations and shoot six clay pigeons at each stop. Trophies are awarded for best individual score, top three teams score, and a salute to the last place team.

Participants receive door prize tickets and can buy raffle tickets for the various prizes, such as gun safes, propane grills, and other items from local businesses. They can also participate in games of rabbit poker and flurry.

The Justice 4 Children fundraiser is the WCCAC's signature fundraising event. Its success ensures that the WCCAC can continue to help victims of child abuse. "One day, we hope we run out of child victims," Barbara says. "But until that day, we will be here to take care of them."

To participate in the WCCAC's Justice 4 Children event, register at www.eventbrite.com/wccac-justice-4-children. For information regarding registration or sponsorship, email hopewilcocac@gmail.com.

To learn more about the WCCAC, read the *View's* article "[Williamson County Children's Advocay Center: A Place and a Process.](#)"