

FEBRUARY 11, 2022

# CAC NEWS

From Franklin County and the North Quabbin



Photo by Joanne Leonard

## HELLO AND HAPPY WINTER!

I know as I sit here at my dining room table after an exposure to COVID, waiting to test, and wondering whether I'll get the virus or not, that "winter" and "happy" aren't necessarily synonymous. Many of us have been in these exact shoes more than once in the past 2 years, and this virus has a way of dragging us into the land of "what-ifs". As we gear up to enter our third year of COVID, many of us are probably feeling the weight of things outside of our control, trying to keep ourselves, our families, and our workmates not only healthy, but to also shed some degree of hope and luminescence on those around us. Trying to keep the home and work fires burning with a degree of passion and sustainability is always a challenge, then add a seemingly never-ending pandemic. However, here at our beloved Children's Advocacy Center, we are doing just that, and hope to share some of our recent and upcoming victories with you in hopes of shining some of our light your way. Our work has always been to carry the torch for those in dark places, and we will continue to keep our motivation a beacon for those in our community. - Abby Bliss, Case Manager

## Newsletter Highlights

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Greetings!

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Looking Behind and Looking Ahead

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Help Wanted

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Staff Highlight - Joanne Leonard

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How Can YOU Help?

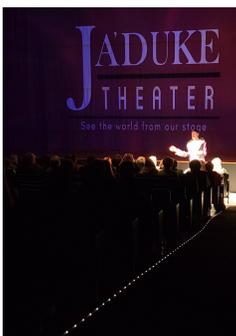
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What We're Grateful For



## Gratitude Corner!

As we finished off 2021, we realized we had a lot to be grateful for! This year, our team collaborated on our biggest #GivingTuesday fundraiser to date! With help from our multidisciplinary team ambassadors, CAC friends and staff, and a match from Gagne Wealth Management, we raised \$6152.14! Our ambassadors, friends, and staff made videos encouraging our community to donate, and the response was incredible! In addition, Ja'Duke Center for Performing Arts did a huge fundraiser for us in November and raised \$18,000! Not only did they fundraise for us, they enlisted the help of their entire staff and many performers to stage a hilarious and poignant show. We are so blown away by the generosity and support of our local community!



# WE'RE HIRING!

In partnership with the Opioid Task Force, the Children's Advocacy Center is seeking a clinician to blend evidence-based models with a holistic, creative approach to support children who have experienced or witnessed a crisis, such as a fatal or non-fatal related overdose, or who have experienced abuse. The clinician will work as a part of CONNECT to provide short-term stabilization services for children, and consultation with families. Some nights and weekends are required. This is a 30 hour/week position. Compensation is \$30/hour. For a job description or to submit a resume, please email [info@cacfranklinnq.org](mailto:info@cacfranklinnq.org)



In partnership with the Children's Advocacy Center of Hampshire County, we are also searching for a nurse to work part time in both centers to conduct exams related to child sexual abuse.



If you or anyone you know might be interested in one of these positions, please contact the Children's Advocacy Center at [info@cacfranklinnq.org](mailto:info@cacfranklinnq.org)

## HOW CAN YOU HELP?



click [HERE](#) to donate!!



## LOOKING BEHIND

In 2021, the Children's Advocacy Center served 110 children and their families by providing a child-friendly environment for 75 forensic interviews related to reports or disclosures of commercial sexual exploitation of children, child sexual abuse, or severe physical abuse.

Case Managers at the center provided psychoeducation, referrals to mental health and medical services, and case coordination in Franklin County and the North Quabbin. In addition, we were able to provide 2 families with winter clothing, and several families with gift cards for holiday shopping.

Despite the pandemic, we have continued to offer in-person interviews.

With safety protocols in place, and a hybrid team model, almost all of our interviews have been held at our center. We will continue to keep our doors open to support survivors on their journey to healing.

We welcomed new board member Amanda Mankowsky. Raised in the North Quabbin, she is happy to be raising her young family there. Some of her favorite hobbies include hiking, swimming, boating, and snowmobiling with her husband and two daughters. She is currently employed as the Youth and Family Engagement Coordinator and Drug Free Communities Program Director with the North Quabbin Community Coalition. Because of her previous positions as a trainer and facilitator in various educational roles, her knowledge of the issues that arise because of child sexual abuse is vast. We are so excited to have her on our team!



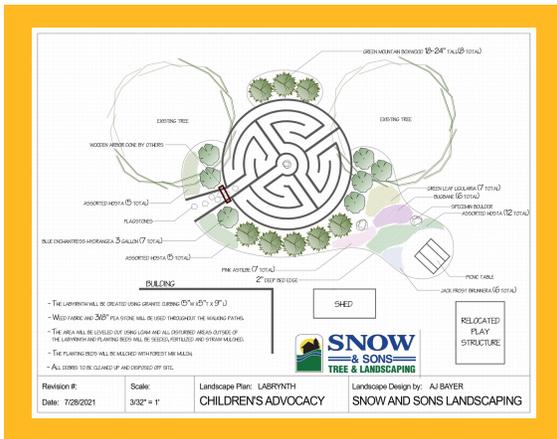
# Welcome Amanda!

## LOOKING AHEAD

We have a couple of irons in the fire for the year ahead - things that not only excite us, but give us hope for a connected, community-driven, and peaceful 2022!

Executive Director Irene Woods along with Clinical Director Sam Staelens having been grinding away working on a grant that would allow us to bring a mental health counselor on board! Previously, we have referred all mental health services to practitioners in our community, to whom we're very grateful. However, finding therapists with openings is difficult at best. Having an on-site, trauma-informed mental health counselor would provide many of our families with the peace of mind they need while they navigate the difficulties associated with supporting their children. Cross your fingers for us!

We plan to complete phase 2 of our Mark Ledwell Labyrinth Garden, which we dedicated to him and his family last September. We are super excited to watch the progression as our backyard transforms!



We have chosen dates for our upcoming events! The "Chipping Away at Child Abuse" Golf Tournament which is being sponsored by Merrill Gange of Gange Wealth Management is being held on Friday, June 10th at the Brattleboro Country Club.

The "Race to End Child Abuse" is scheduled for Sunday, September 18th, with a rain date of September 25th.

Please keep these dates in mind, we'd be so happy to see your shining faces at these events!



**Joanne Leonard**  
Commercial Sexual Exploitation of  
Children Coordinator

## Staff Highlight!

Meet Joanne Leonard, our coordinator for all cases of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children. Joanne has worked for the Children's Advocacy Center for almost 2 and a half years and comes from an eclectic background - most recently as a counselor for domestic violence survivors. Her work history includes being a firefighter-paramedic! Joanne (or Jo as we call her) is also an avid animal lover, an artist, and is passionate about helping people. In fact, part of what draws her to this profession are those incredible moments when she has been able to be a voice for her families. Jo is currently celebrating changing the course of an entire investigation by reaching out to the Department of Homeland Security to reevaluate evidence in a human trafficking case. She also designed the billboard pictured above, slated to hit two locations in Greenfield for our Child Abuse Prevention Campaign in April. Go Jo!

**4TH ANNUAL  
"CHIPPING AWAY  
AT CHILD ABUSE"**  
*Golf Tournament*

**FRIDAY JUNE 10TH, 2022**  
Brattleboro Country Club  
58 Senator Gannett Drive  
Brattleboro, Vermont

ALL TEAMS MUST PICK A TEE TIME BETWEEN  
8AM-2PM FIRST COME FIRST SERVE

PLAYERS WILL RECEIVE A \$25 VOUCHER THAT CAN BE USED  
FOR THE BEVERAGE CART, PRO SHOP, OR RESTAURANT

FOR COURSE INFORMATION AND DIRECTIONS:  
WWW.BRATTLEBOROCOUNTRYCLUB.COM

SPONSORED BY  
**Gagne Wealth  
Management Group**

To register, please visit  
[Children's Advocacy Center](http://Children's Advocacy Center (cacfranklin.org))  
([cacfranklin.org](http://cacfranklin.org))

Keep an Eye Out!  
for our billboard, coming out in April  
2022 in Greenfield

