



the children's  
advocacy  
center

GIVING  
CHILDREN A  
PLACE TO BE  
HEARD AND  
START  
HEALING

# 2025 ANNUAL REPORT





## A Message from Leadership

The CAC's mission is to provide children affected by violence and their families with services of support, forensic interviews, resources, and hope. The CAC was founded as a non-profit in 2004 to provide a coordinated, child-focused approach and comprehensive services to abused children and their families, ensuring that children are not retraumatized in the investigation of abuse and prosecution of offenders.

Every day, children like Genesis walk through our doors filled with fear and uncertainty, and leave with a renewed sense of hope, strength, and healing.

*Genesis was 7 years old when she was physically and sexually abused by her mother. When Genesis first arrived at the Children's Advocacy Center, she could sense that she was in a safe space, where she wouldn't be judged or dismissed. The forensic interview was another important step in Genesis's journey. During the interview, the child began to speak her truth; with each word, she became stronger and more confident. When the interview concluded, Genesis ran to the advocate waiting nearby, bursting with joy. "Guess what?! I said everything! I got it off my chest and I'm going to let it all go now!" That day, Genesis left our CAC not just with a sense of relief, but with an inner strength that would carry her forward in the journey of healing.*

None of this work could have been done without the leadership of the Board and the dedication and hard work of our staff. We are grateful to our multi-disciplinary team, generous donors, and community partners who help ensure child victims have a voice. We are only able to continue to do our important work because of your commitment to helping child victims of crime.

With sincere gratitude,

**Kathy Cady, J.D.**  
President of the Board

**Daniel Castaneda, M.A.**  
Executive Director



## How we help

The CAC (1) conducts forensic interviews and (2) provides advocacy services to the child and family to help them heal.

### What is a Forensic Interview?

A forensic interview is an information gathering process in which children who have been abused are questioned in a developmentally sensitive, legally sound, and non-suggestive manner about what has happened to them. Our forensic interviewers have been trained in nationally accepted, best practice ways to ask children questions. This interview is observed by our partners, instead of having each agency interview the child separately. Our partners include prosecutors, law enforcement and child protection social workers. Conducting one forensic interview observed by all partner agencies greatly reduces the chances of further trauma to children that could otherwise occur from excessive interviews and lack of communication and coordination among agencies.

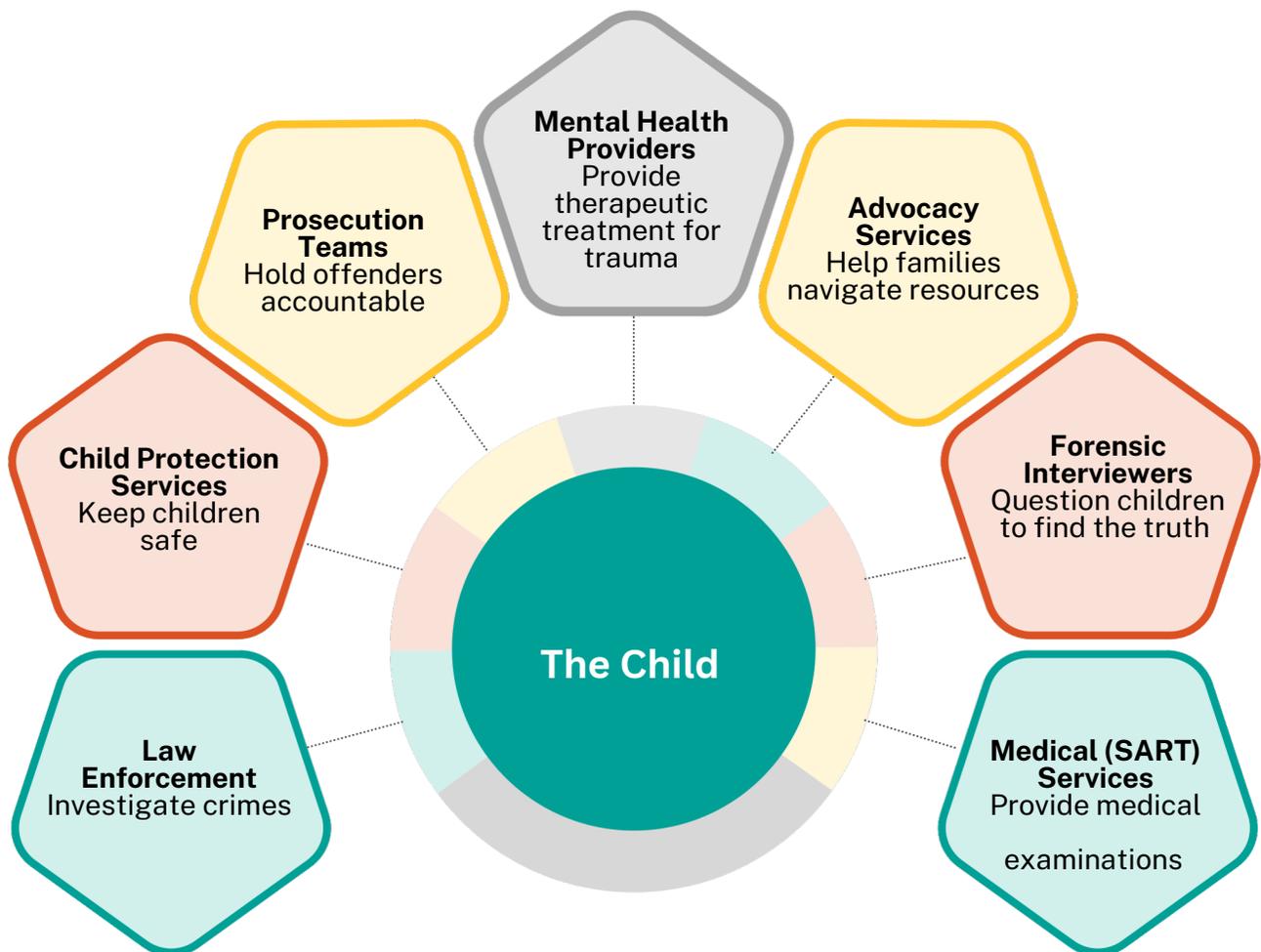
### How Our Advocates Help Children and Families

Our advocates give families specific referrals for mental health counseling, housing/relocation, financial aid, victims' rights, the criminal justice process, California victim compensation, and other services and resources.



## A Team Effort

Our approach puts the child at the center. Law enforcement, child protection agencies, prosecution teams, mental health professionals, forensic interviewers, victim advocates, and medical professionals collaborate to provide comprehensive support to children and their families and ensure effective investigation and prosecution of offenders.



## Children and Families Served

In 2024, we offered forensic interviews for 396 kids and provided over 1,782 hours of advocacy to child victims and their families. As of November 2025, we have offered forensic interviews for 393 children and provided over 1,700 hours of advocacy to child victims and their families.

### Calming Cove

This year we created the “Calming Cove” to be a serene sensory retreat designed to support the well-being of children and families. The Calming Cove is a dedicated sensory space designed for children with disabilities and sensory processing needs to offer comfort and calm during difficult moments. With soothing sensory tools to support emotional regulation and well-being, this space offers a gentle, healing atmosphere. With ocean-inspired textures, calming colors, and gentle sounds, the Calming Cove engages the senses in ways that promote grounding, regulation, and comfort. This space is thoughtfully designed to meet emotional and sensory needs with compassion and care.

At the heart of the Calming Cove is a simple truth: everyone deserves a safe, peaceful space to make a lasting difference in emotional resilience, healing, and overall well-being.





## Safe Space Therapy Mental Health Program

In addition to our collaborative partnership with the Masonic Center for Youth and Families, the CAC accepted a grant from Macy's to provide therapy to children and their families visiting our center for forensic interviews. Our therapist can conduct diagnostic assessments, risk assessments, and needs assessments with the children to determine what support and resources would aid the family's long-term healing. Our therapist also provides weekly treatment for children who experience issues such as depression, anxiety, aggression, post-traumatic stress disorder, problematic sexual behavior, suicidality, and more due to their trauma. Some options for therapy at our center include trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy (TF-CBT), play therapy, dialectical behavior therapy (DBT), psychodynamic therapy, or family systems therapy (FST). Early intervention with therapy can be an important and necessary tool to help children overcome the impacts of complex trauma by teaching them healthy coping skills, processing memories, improving self-esteem, developing safety plans, and exploring their goals for the future. This treatment program will allow children to begin their healing journey as early as a week after their forensic interview, which will minimize their risk of developing long-term trauma-related mental health issues.

So far this year, we have offered 123 free sessions of therapy services to children.

## Helping Hearts Internship Program

We have partnerships with the following institutions: Citrus College, La Verne University, The Chicago School of Professional Psychology, and California Baptist University. Interns learn from and gain the following from their experience:

- Learn the tools needed to become a Family Advocate or Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) Coordinator
- Receive training on how to manage interactions with families and child victims
- Get hands-on experience in communicating effectively with law enforcement, social workers, and Deputy District Attorneys (DDAs)
- Gain knowledge of the justice system process in relation to child abuse
- Learn professional and collaborative skills through teamwork with CAC staff and assist with the completion of center projects

# 2025





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## 2025 Be a Hero for Children Gala Recap

On October 15, the Children's Advocacy Center held its annual "Be a Hero for Children" Gala at the Glendora Country Club. In addition to honoring some amazing superheroes, guests were treated to a delicious dinner, the opportunity to buy wine at the Wine Wall, bid on auction items, and raise a paddle—all to raise money to help children who have been abused.

Thank you to Suzie Suh, co-anchor for CBSLA on KCAL9 NEWS, our Mistress of Ceremonies for the evening.

Several Superheroes were recognized for the work that they do every day to protect children and hold offenders accountable. Nipa Cook, Deputy District Attorney for the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office, was honored for her unwavering commitment to seeking justice for children. The Crime Survivors Resource Center and Patricia Wenskunas were honored for their unwavering dedication to empowering survivors in our community. Evie Bang, Children's Social Worker for the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services, was honored for her protection of children and families.

One of the children who came to the CAC painted the design to the right that was presented to each superhero honoree.

As honoree Nipa Cook so eloquently stated, "the CAC gives child victims a voice and with that voice an avenue to pursue justice. . . Our legal system was established a long time ago when cases were about land disputes, bank robberies, and stolen farm animals. Our system was not set up to vindicate the rights of children in court. Nothing about a courtroom is appealing to children, and the rules of court are better at returning cows to their rightful owners than getting justice for young victims. Our courts of law are tethered to the rules of evidence, and these rules were not written with broken and terrified children in mind. . . Court requires kids to do what they hate to do the most—talk to adults about painful subjects. Add to that the formal setting and horrific trauma, and it's an almost impossible mix. . . The CAC is the bridge between the world of children and the world of adult lawyers." Thank you to the CAC's staff who do this important work every day, giving children a place to find their voice.

We are grateful to our many generous Gala sponsors, including the Barthold Family Foundation, Forensic Nurse Specialists, Inc., Malinda and Bruce Wheeler, Gold Family Trust, Amwins, Association of Los Angeles Deputy Sheriffs, Kathy Cady & John Pomroy, Paul Mones, Los Angeles County Supervisor Kathryn Barger (5th District), Nelson & Fraenkel, LLP, Taylor & Ring, Angel Montoya, Masonic Homes of California, California Assemblywoman Blanca Rubio, 48th Assembly District, Dr. Edison Han, College Street Dental, Los Angeles County Professional Peace Officers Association, Michele Winterstein, and Mary Murray.

**SAVE THE DATE: October 29, 2026 Be a Hero for Children Annual Gala at the Glendora Country Club. You won't want to miss it!**





## Thank You to Our Generous Donors

- **Masonic Homes of California**
- **The Rose Hills Foundation**
- **In-N-Out Burger Foundation**
- **The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation**
- **Miller Foundation**
- **Macy's Gives**
- **Los Angeles Trial Lawyers Charities**
- **My Stuff Bags**
- **Project Linus**
- **California Office of Emergency Services**
- **Wayne Woodman Charitable Fund**

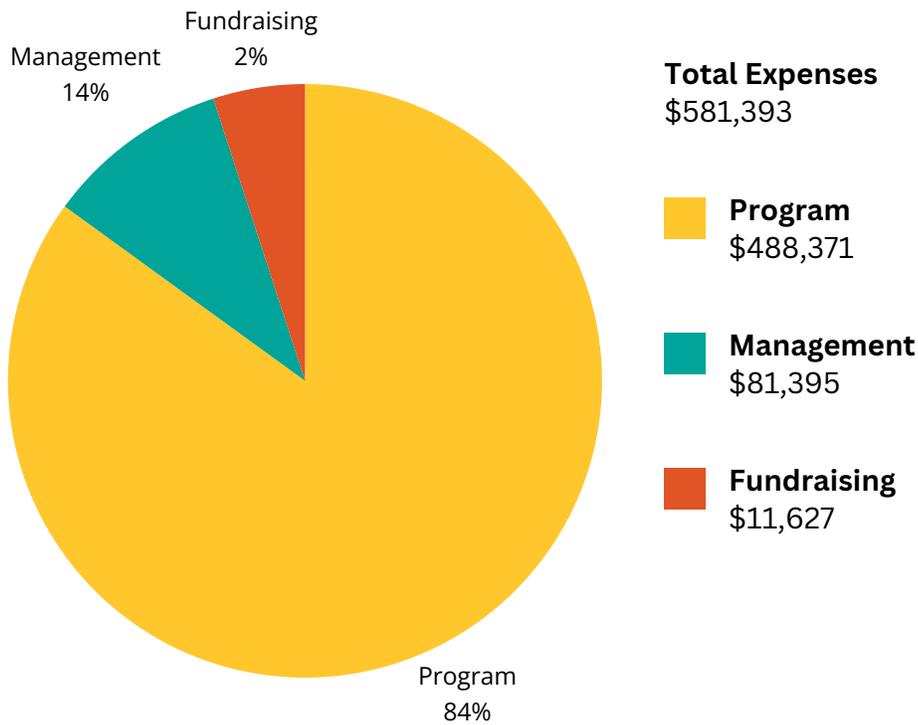
*Your generosity plays a critical role in ensuring the sustainability and effectiveness of the CAC, enabling us to continue providing comprehensive, coordinated, and compassionate services to child victims of abuse and their families.*



## Financial Responsibility

The CAC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Our Tax ID is 86-1051258.

The CAC is funded by private donations, foundations and government grants. This critical support allows the CAC to provide services for FREE to children and their families.



*\*Information is based on our 2024 IRS form 990.*



## Wonderful Staff

Doing this important work takes commitment from many people. Our amazing staff includes forensic interviewers, advocates, a multidisciplinary team coordinator, and many volunteers, including the Pet Prescription Team, who provide the handlers and therapy dogs for our children and families.

**Daniel Castaneda - Executive Director**

**Aracely Maturino - Forensic Interviewer/  
Lead Family Advocate**

**Johnny Vallejo - Program Manager**

**Carla Blass - Family Advocate/  
Volunteer and Intern Manager**

**Pattsi Goclowski - Forensic Interviewer/  
Trainer**

**Ashlee Alvarado - Forensic Interviewer/  
Family Advocate**

**Sydney Watts - Forensic Interviewer/  
Psychotherapist**

**Adriana Jaurigui - Family Advocate**

To learn more about, to volunteer or to donate contact [childrensadvocacyctr.org](http://childrensadvocacyctr.org)

## Congratulations To Our Recent Graduates

**Pattsi Goclowski**

Master of Science in Nursing, Wilkes University

**Sydney Watts**

Master of Arts in Forensic Psychology,  
Chicago School of Psychology

**Aracely Maturino**

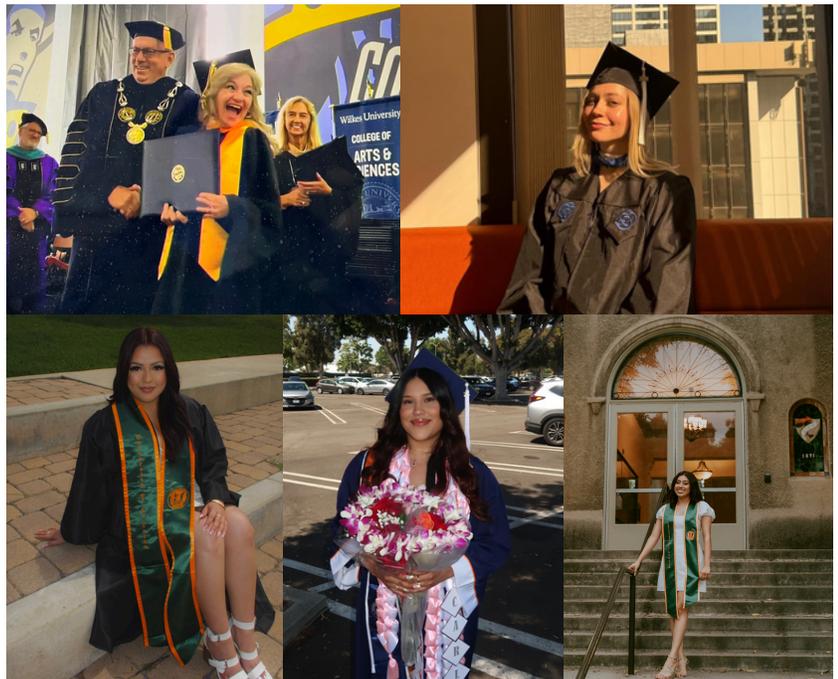
Bachelor of Science in Psychology &  
Criminology, University of La Verne

**Carla Blass**

Bachelor of Arts in Sociology,  
California State University Fullerton

**Ashlee Alvarado**

Bachelor of Science in Psychology,  
University of La Verne





## Board of Directors

### President

#### **Kathleen Cady, J.D.**

CAC Co-Founder  
Director, Bureau of Victim Services  
Los Angeles County  
District Attorney's Office

### Vice-President

#### **Frank Dunnick, J.D.**

Assistant Head Deputy  
Los Angeles County  
District Attorney's Office

### Treasurer

#### **Malinda Wheeler, R.N., M.N., F.N.P.**

CAC Co-Founder  
Director, Forensic Nurse Specialists, Inc.

### Secretary

#### **Jorge Garay, B.A.**

Regional Administrator  
Los Angeles County Department of Children  
and Family Services

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#### **Lizette Collier, M.Ed.**

Former Educator

#### **Lisa Goodwin, L.C.S.W.**

Senior Director  
Masonic Center for Youth and Families

#### **John A. Pomroy**

CAC Co-Founder Detective,  
Retired Pomona Police  
Department

#### **Richard Ruiz, M.P.A.**

Commander  
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

#### **Destine Teves Borrego, M.S.N., R.N.,**

**SANE-A, SANE-P**  
Registered Nurse

## Emeritus Directors

#### **Steven Secofsky, B.A.**

Asst. Lab Director, Retired  
California Department of Justice

#### **Ralph J Shapira, J.D.**

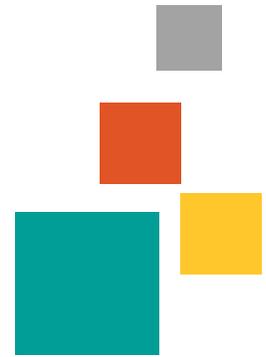
Attorney

*If you are interested in joining the Board of Directors, please contact Kathy Cady at [kathy.cady@childrensadvocacyctr.org](mailto:kathy.cady@childrensadvocacyctr.org)*



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**SAVE THE DATE**  
**OCTOBER 29, 2026**

Be a Hero for Children Gala  
Glendora Country Club

***You won't want to miss it!***  
***More details to come!***

