

R E P O R T

Your United Way of Broome County investment at work

July 2003

Crime Victims Assistance Center strengthens kids

Second grader “Amelia” had a dark secret she felt she couldn’t tell anybody: she was being sexually abused by her mother’s boyfriend, who was living with them. But a visit by representatives from **Crime Victims Assistance Center** to her school one day taught her to be strong and speak out about the abuse in order to get the help she needed.

The representatives are a part of the center’s **Child Assault Prevention Program**, which sends four program assistants into the community to do presentations and role-playing activities at Broome County elementary schools about how to deal with bullying, strangers, and abuse. The program teaches kids that they have three rights: to be safe, strong, and free.

As a result of participating in the program, Amelia got the courage to tell somebody about the abuse she had been enduring at home. She asked one of the program assistants for advice about who kids could talk to if they were being abused. The assistant told her that kids could always talk to their school’s principal if they needed to, which Amelia then did. After hearing her story, the principal called the New York State Child Abuse Hotline, who referred her case to Child Protective Services, who then launched an investigation.

Crime Victims Assistance Center provides safe haven for children

Amelia was then taken to a safe place to tell her story: the **Child Advocacy Center** at Crime Victims Assistance Center. The Child Advocacy Center gives young victims of abuse a chance to tell their story one-on-one in a comfortable setting to a Child Protective Services worker or a law enforcement official. This allows children to tell their difficult story once, and only once—instead of multiple times to multiple people, which is the case under the old

system. The interview sessions can be video-taped if requested by the police. During the sessions, other people involved in the case can watch from a closed-circuit television set in a separate room. Parents of the child sit with an advocate during the interview sessions.

“When a child is alone, a child is more honest and open when talking about the situation,” said Raini Baudendistel, Education Coordinator at Crime Victims Assistance Center. “Children are often embarrassed about speaking about the abuse in front of a parent, especially if the abuser is a relative or the parent’s significant other.”

Though it was difficult at first, Amelia was able to tell the interviewer in the inter-

view room about the abuse, which her mother was not aware of before her daughter spoke out. Amelia was finally able to

have her voice heard and get the help she needed. Since then, the perpetrator has been removed from their home and both mother and daughter are receiving free counseling through Crime Victims Assistance Center. Amelia is now on a positive road to recovery, and has learned to be a strong and courageous individual. Now she knows how to defend herself and speak out about an abusive situation.

Your United Way donations help kids be strong and escape abuse

Crime Victims Assistance Center empowers young children to fight against abuse they may be experiencing. Children are often fearful to speak out about abusive situations, but Crime Victims Assistance Center gives them a safe place to tell their story and let their voices be heard.

Your contributions to United Way helps kids like Amelia find the strength and courage to get the help they need to live safe and happy lives. Your donations fund education programs like the Child Assault Prevention Program, which are helping kids cope with abusive situations. Your donation makes Broome County a safe place to live for kids and adults alike.

To learn more about Crime Victims Assistance Center or to learn about

how to become a volunteer for their role-playing program, call 723-3200 or visit www.crimevictimsassistance.com.



Crime Victims Assistance Center strengthens kids through their Child Assault Prevention Program, which teaches kids in grades kindergarten through sixth grade in Broome County how to stand up for themselves and get the help they need if they are in abusive situations.

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