

# Voice

the advocate's

CAPstone



Child Advocacy Center

The quarterly newsletter for the Child Advocacy Center

April 2009

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## Shelly Thomas, Medical Social Worker/Case Manager

Shelley is the Board President of CAPstone. Shelley worked as a Child Protection Worker and Supervisor in Gering and Lincoln, Nebraska for 15 years. Served as a Supervisor in Bridgeport, Sidney and Kimball. She also worked as a police officer in Gering and Lincoln. She began working at RWMC in April of 2001 in discharge planning and case management. She has also worked with trauma patients in the ER and ICU specifically. In March she will start working 3-11 p.m. about which she is excited. Shelley was involved with Lynn Ayers from Lincoln in starting child advocacy centers in Nebraska. Shelly and Vicky Moreno started in Scottsbluff in 1996 and she has been involved since then hoping for more change.

Shelley is excited about pulling in Board Members through teleconferencing and by phone and feels that the board has had good growth and has made lots of progress. Although there are many interviewers that are on the working board, Shelley still thinks they have the same goals in mind as far as providing the services to kids. Shelley looks forward to CAPstone's growing interface with other organizations and is looking forward to meeting the goal of our free standing facility.

Shelley's free time is spent caring for her mother, chasing her dog and riding her Harley Davidson.

## Sharon Walker, Elementary Social Worker and Counselor

Sharon is the Vice President of CAPstone. She represents Scottsbluff Public Schools on the board.

Sharon works for Scottsbluff Schools as an Elementary Social Worker and Counselor. Working in the school setting provides her with a unique opportunity to work with children and their parents in finding early solutions to problems.

She works with children individually, in small groups, and in the classroom. The classroom work involves skills training which she hopes will help prepare children to better cope with life's many challenges.

They teach children problem solving skills in areas such as cooling down when they are angry and learning to stand up for themselves in an assertive manner. The small group and individual counseling is specifically tailored to the individual needs of the child, whether it is helping make friends or coping with the loss of a loved one. The overall goal of the program is to help make school a successful experience for the child. Each year the school provides sexual abuse prevention training to kindergarten, first, third, and fifth grade classrooms. They teach children that they are in control of their bodies, how to differentiate between good and bad touches and recognizing good and bad secrets. Unfortunately every school year there are children who have been abused or neglected by people they know and trust. Some of the children have been sexually abused. She is glad that our community has a program such as CAPstone that serves as an advocate for these vulnerable children.

## Cutting

Cutting is injuring yourself on purpose by making scratches or cuts on your body with a sharp object—enough to break the skin and make it bleed—is called cutting. Cutting is a type of self-injury, or SI. Most people who cut are girls, but guys self-injure, too. People who cut usually start cutting in their young teens. Some continue to cut into adulthood.

People may cut themselves on their wrists, arms, legs, or bellies. Some people self-injure by burning their skin with the end of a cigarette or lighted match.

It can be hard to understand why people cut themselves on purpose. Cutting is a way some people try to cope with the pain of strong emotions, intense pressure, or upsetting relationship problems. They may be dealing with feelings that seem too difficult to bear, or bad situations they think can't change.

Some people cut because they feel desperate for relief from bad feelings. People who cut may not know better ways to get relief from emotional pain or pressure. Some people cut to express strong feeling of rage, sorrow, rejection, desperation, longing, or emptiness.

The dangers of cutting are obvious, such as the risk of losing too much blood or getting an infection. But there are hidden emotional dangers to cutting, too. It can become enough of a habit that some people feel they are "addicted" to cutting

People who cut or self-injure sometimes have other mental health problems that contribute to their emotional tension. Cutting is sometimes associated with depression, bipolar disorder, eating disorders, obsessive thinking, or compulsive behaviors. It can also be a sign of mental health problems that cause people to have trouble controlling their impulses or to take unnecessary risks. Some people who cut themselves have problems with drug or alcohol abuse.

Some people who cut may have had a traumatic experience, such as living through abuse, violence, or a disaster. Self-injury may feel like a way of "waking up" from a sense of numbness after a traumatic experience. Or it may be a way of re-inflicting the pain they went through, expressing anger over it, or trying to get control of it.

Cutting can be habit forming. It can become a compulsive behavior—meaning that the more a person does it, the more he or she feels the need to do it. The brain starts to connect the false sense of relief from bad feelings to the act of cutting, and it craves this relief the next time tension builds. When cutting becomes a compulsive behavior, it can seem impossible to stop. So cutting can seem almost like an addiction, where the urge to cut can seem too hard to resist. A behavior that starts as an attempt to feel more in control can end up controlling you

There are better ways to deal with troubles than cutting - healthier, long-lasting ways that don't leave a person with emotional and physical scars. The first step is to get help with the troubles that lead to the cutting in the first place.

Tell someone. People who have stopped cutting often say the first step is the hardest—admitting to or talking about cutting. But they also say that after they open up about it, they often feel a great sense of relief. Choose someone you trust to talk to at first. If it's too difficult to bring up the topic in person, write a note.

Identify the trouble that's triggering the cutting. Cutting is a way of reacting to emotional tension or pain. Try to figure out what feelings or situations are causing you to cut. Is it anger? Pressure to be perfect? Relationship trouble? A painful loss or trauma you're having, then tell someone about it. Many people have trouble figuring this part out on their own. This is where a mental health professional can be helpful.

Ask for Help. Tell someone that you want help dealing with your troubles and the cutting. If the person you ask doesn't help you get the assistance you need, ask someone else. Sometimes adults try to downplay the problems teens have or think they're just a phase. If you get the feeling this is happening to you, find another adult who can make your case for you.

Work on it. Most people with deep emotional pain or distress need to work with a counselor or mental health professional to sort through strong feelings, heal past hurts, and to learn better ways to cope with life's stresses. One way to find a therapist or counselor is to ask at your doctor's office, at school, or at a mental health clinic in your community.

Teens Health: September 2007

Chadron  
Satellite Office  
NOW OPEN!!

Interviewers in Chadron:

- Tim Lordino
- Joni Behrends
- Keith Drinkwalter
- Mary Jo Kvistad
- Monica Bartling



If you would like to schedule an interview or for any questions about our wish list, please call CAPstone.

(308) 632-7274



# National Child Abuse Prevention Month



April is Child Abuse Month and we now have pinwheels for sale.

\$1 each

If you would like to purchase pinwheels

Call CAPstone at (308) 632-7274



On April 1st the City of Scottsbluff Mayor and Gering Mayor each signed a proclamation making April Child Abuse Prevention Month.



## Upcoming Trainings

April 2, 2009

Drug Endangered Children, South Plaza Conference Room 1202 RWMC  
Especially for Investigative Team Members, Treatment Team Members

April 11, 2009, 10 – 12 noon at Harm's Center

April 20, 2009, 7 pm to 9 pm at Harm's Center

Darkness to Light: Stewards of Children

Dr. Sally Sexton

April 22 - 25, 2009

Child Passenger Safety Technician Training New Hope Ministry Center, Ogallala  
CEU's for nurses, especially for parents, teachers, nurses, childcare providers, LE, Head start.

April 23 – 24, 2009

Working With Victims of Crime, Omaha, NE Lodging Scholarships Available  
Contact Nebraska Coalition for Crime Victims Rights at 402-228-5270

April 25 - 28, 2009

Taking Advocacy to a Higher Level, National CASA Conference  
Sheraton Denver Hotel, Denver, Colorado

June 2-3, 2009

Unspoken Crimes: A Community Response to Domestic Violence in the NE.  
Scottsbluff, place yet to be determined.

Improving Community Response to Domestic Violence In the NE. Panhandle

June 27, 2009 - 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Community room, Alliance Learning Center/Library

No cost, continental breakfast, lunch on your own.

Attn: LE, Probation, Prosecutors, all Advocates, CPS, HHS Medical, 911, Campus security,  
Judges.