



# Ogle County Mental Health Board

## AGENCY REPORTS FOR FOURTH QUARTER 2022



Shining Star Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) is a 501c3 not for profit organization founded in 2002 with the purpose to provide a child-friendly and safe environment for children to be interviewed and share their story regarding allegations of abuse to the child. Shining Star CAC utilizes a multidisciplinary team approach and works with Law Enforcement, Department of Child and Family Services, Prosecution, Medical Providers, Advocates, and Mental Health professionals on investigations involving allegations of severe physical abuse, sexual abuse, and witnesses to violent crimes to children and disabled adults.



Shining Star CAC works with 13 Law Enforcement agencies in Lee and Ogle Counties, as well as the FBI and Homeland Security when requested. We also work with two DCFS offices, and two State's Attorney Offices.

Shining Star CAC consists of four employees; Executive Director, Family

Advocate, Forensic Interviewer, and Counselor. Each employee

meets educational requirements set forth by National Children's Alliance Accreditation Standards, and also meets training requirements for each position set forth by accreditation standards.

Shining Star CAC serves children and families in Ogle and Lee counties. Shining Star CAC has an office in Dixon and a counseling office in Oregon. The mission of Shining Star CAC is to transform victims of child abuse into survivors. This mission is upheld by providing services to children ages 3 to 18 years and disabled adults. Services provided by Shining Star CAC are child forensic interviews, mental health services, specialized medical exams, advocacy, community education, and professional development for multidisciplinary team members. All services provided to clients are at no cost to the clients. Services are funded by state and local grants, fundraisers, and generous donations from the community.

In 2022 we were able to engage in various client activities such as our teen girls summer camp, and client holiday party, that had been on pause due to the pandemic. In June 2022 Shining Star CAC hosted its teen girls summer camp at the Blackhawk Baptist Camp in Oregon. 10 girls participated in camp and participated in therapeutic activities, meeting new friends, and many fun activities at the camp. In December 2022 Shining Star CAC hosted a holiday party



for 50 clients at the White Pines Skating Rink and provided family fun through skating, dinner, Santa, and gifts. Throughout 2022 Shining Star CAC provided other

client services such as forensic interviews, advocacy, counseling and specialized medical exams, to over 300 children from Ogle and Lee Counties. Each year the number of children served by Shining Star CAC continues to grow as child abuse is being identified and reported more frequently by the community.

The vision of Shining Star CAC is to reduce the trauma of child abuse through identification, offender accountability, advocacy, counseling, and education on the path to eliminating child abuse. Shining Star CAC embraces the core values of teamwork, confidentiality, compassion, dignity, empowerment, and hope. Additional information on Shining Star Children's Advocacy Center can be found on our website at [www.shiningstarac.org](http://www.shiningstarac.org), on our Facebook Page (Shining Star Children's Advocacy Center), or by calling our office at 815-284-1891. We welcome tours of our agency upon appointment. To schedule a tour contact Jessica Cash at 815-284-1891.



While caught in the depths of grief, things that once brought immense joy, love, and connection, can transform into a reminder of unbearable loss. The Serenity Shed, our innovative community bereavement center, is always looking for ways to support people step-by-step on their challenging journeys towards peace and healing. We have two new programs that specifically focus on assisting people when things that once brought comfort and happiness may begin eliciting challenging emotions like loneliness, hopelessness, and anguish.

We held our Blue Christmas Event at Oregon United Methodist Church. We alternated readings and reflections with a candle lighting ceremony. Our Bereavement Coordinator, Cathy Warren, and Palliative Care Nurse, Whitney Mulrooney, read passages. As the candles flickered in the darkness, two of our own

talented staff, Education and Compliance Manager, Kaylene Park, and Community RN, Beth Paul, led everyone in singing silent night. Unlike a traditional Christmas service, our Blue Christmas was about holding space for suffering and sadness, with Dana Cox and Pastor Megan Smick offering words of empathy, encouragement, and hope. The Holidays are usually a joyous time for family gatherings and celebrating, but for those who are grieving it is a reminder of what they have lost. For some, this is always a very difficult time of year. Attendees expressed how moving and comforting the ceremony was and requested one every year.

Cathy will be facilitating a new, four-week program called "Cooking for One." This unique class is designed around the challenges of preparing food while facing loss and goes over things like issues you might have navigating the grocery store, changing routines, practicing mindful eating, etc. Cathy will hand out resources during each class, such as recipes and

cooking tips. Participants will enjoy tasting the recipes together. Food can trigger emotions, conjuring up memories that can be difficult in the wake of loss. This class will bring comfort, helping participants to enjoy food and companionship while they move towards healing.

While it is human nature to want to bring joy to those who are suffering from loss, The Serenity Shed is built on the foundational principal that the most important thing you can do for someone who is grieving is to simply be with them in their pain, recognizing and validating just how difficult their experience is. This is especially important when they are trying to find a new normal and to reawaken happiness around things that they once enjoyed, like the holiday season or preparing a favorite family recipe. Nothing we do at The Shed can make this easy, but we do our best to lighten the load by fostering connections so that people do not have to suffer alone.



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### Shining Star:

**Contact: Jessica Cash 815-284-1891**

### Serenity Hospice & Home:

**Contact: Lynn Knodle 815.732.2499**

### Rockford Sexual Assault Counseling:

**Contact: Erica Engler 815.636.9811**

Rockford Sexual Assault Counseling (RSAC) has continued to provide essential services to Ogle County. We have expanded our reach to some Rochelle schools for school-based counseling and have provided professional education presentations to the OCEC and Sinnissippi Center. Collaborating with other organizations is an essential part of serving survivors as we continue to educate community members about our services in Ogle County. If you are unfamiliar with our Ogle County services, or would like a refresh, please contact us! We always appreciate the opportunity to come visit other agencies as well as having other agencies visit and educate us on their services.

RSAC has an online raffle coming up in April on Facebook! Please search Raising Hope With RSAC and join us! We appreciate those individuals and agencies who come alongside of us as volunteers and donors to support survivors. In Ogle County, we have great support from agencies like the Ogle County 708 Board, Ogle County United Way, and recently, we were the recipient of a donation from the VFW in Rochelle's Queen of Hearts fundraiser. We are so thankful for the community support.

Please contact us for more information by phone (815) 732-0000, Facebook page or website at [www.rockfordsexualassaultcounseling.org](http://www.rockfordsexualassaultcounseling.org).

### Village of Progress:

**Contact: Brion Brooks 815.732.2126**

Every day, we strive to create a place where all are welcome and respected, regardless of ability or disability.

We greet those who arrive by name, provide them with a safe place, productive work opportunities, a meaningful day and a caring community. The same things we all long for.

The holidays are such a special time for all of us who work at and attend the Village. The sounds of the piano and singing in the room next door. The smell of the turkey and stuffing being prepared for a holiday feast. The men and women dressed in holiday sweaters, and lighted necklaces. Games are played and "Home Alone" is watched on the big screen TV. There is nothing quite like the joy of community and friendship. Simple joys that are long remembered.

Thank you for helping to make this all possible, for caring about the men and women we serve, and for partnering with us.

### LSSI:

**Contact: Chris Mills 815.284.7796**

Lutheran Social Services of Illinois is engaging with an increasing number of youth throughout Ogle County to provide a variety of services. Prevention programs Project LEAD and Youth WORKS both continue to collaborate with partnering junior high schools to provide the *Too Good for Drugs* and *Too Good for Violence* curriculums. Project LEAD is also excited to begin working with Centennial Elementary School in Polo to serve its 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students. Youth Committee meetings have been held at Oregon Jr. High and Sr. High School to capture student perspectives. This quarter the youth committee members posted flyers and hung posters about safe social media use. The Hidden in Plain Sight (HIPS) exhibit was also displayed at Oregon High School, Forreston Jr/Sr High and at an Ogle County Education Co-Op Meeting; the HIPS exhibit consists of a mock teenager's bedroom that incorporates youth trends in order to educate parents, teachers, and other adults in the community.

Comprehensive Community Based Youth Services (CCBYS) has been focused on increasing community awareness about the services they provide to prevent runaway or lock out situations among youth. Their efforts have yielded an increase in referrals for discretionary counseling and two Ogle County youth have been opened for CCBYS services this quarter.

### Sinnissippi Centers:

**Contact: Patrick Phelan 815.284.6611**

During this quarter, Sinnissippi Centers staff started to see students in the middle school for Meridian District, Stillman Valley and we worked to later expand to the elementary and high school during the remainder of the current academic year.

Gloria Martin attended and provided information at a health fair for Meridian school staff in December and shared lots of information about SCI programs with about 25-30 of their staff.

Healthy Families Illinois continues to be active in Ogle County and works closely with the Ogle County Health Department. Kim Crump coordinates a monthly call for Ogle County providers to share updates and information.

### HOPE of Ogle County:

**Contact: Ruth Carter 815.562.4323**

HOPE of Ogle County provided domestic abuse services to 163 adults and 48 children in the past quarter. Emergency shelter services, adult/teen and child counseling services, court advocacy services, outreach counseling services in Polo, Oregon and Rochelle, economic empowerment services, 24/7 crisis services and safety planning were provided by our supportive employees.

Saturday, February 4, 2023 is the annual From the Heart Gala, held at the Flight Deck Bar and Grill in Rochelle. This event supports HOPE of Ogle County and seven other social service agencies. Dinner, hors d'oeuvres, silent and live auction, games, raffles and more. Tickets can be purchased on-line at [www.fromtheheartrochelle.org](http://www.fromtheheartrochelle.org) Questions about the event? Feel free to contact Ruth Carter at HOPE or any member of the From the Heart Committee.

### Easterseals-Family Support Services

**Contact: Christi Starr 815.965.5069**

Easterseals Family Support Services co-hosted a Sibling Workshop with Florissa Services, and Starnet on October 15 at the Lowell Park Nature Center. A Sibling Workshop is where siblings of a child with a disability can go to find support and meet other siblings who are experiencing similar situations. During this workshop, the siblings worked on unique leaf art and took a nature hike.

On November 19th Easterseals once again co-hosted with Florissa, Starnet and Oregon Park District to do a Mom's Morning Out Event at the Nash Center. Mom's Morning Out was a morning event for Moms of a child with a disability to get together and have a few hours to let their stresses go and enjoy themselves. Kara Schabacker did an hour yoga session to help the Moms relax. The Mom's then got a chance to make and take home their own essential oil bottles as well as salt bath bags.

On November 26th Easterseals co-hosted with the Oregon Public Library to do a Sensory Santa for children with Autism and their family. Each family is given 15-20 mins with Santa. It was beautiful to see kids sit on Santa's lap that normally wouldn't interact with Santa in other settings. Each child that visited Santa that day got to pick their own present to take home as well as a soft stuffed teddy bear from Santa's big toy bag.

Here is an excerpt from a letter we received in Ogle County:

*We've attended several events and each time we leave so refreshed, seen, and just accepted. It's helped our family connect with others who have similar needs and experiences like ours. Our son is able to enjoy activities such as seeing Santa but with modifications that helped him adapt and feel safe without overwhelming him.*