

Summer/Fall 2009



CA/N Opening News

ALPENA/PRESQUE ISLE CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT (CA/N) TEAM

CA/N Team Mission: "To assist and support programs that promote the prevention of child abuse and neglect."

Visit us online at www.alpenapicanteam.com!

CA/N Team Board

- **Tom Woizeschke**
President
- **Sienna Suszek**
Vice President
- **Deb Werner**
Treasurer
- **Celeste Phillips**
Baby Pantry Coordinator
- **Robin Benson-Clark**
CA/N Team Coordinator

Golf Outing Fundraiser a Success!



The CA/N Team sponsored golfing team tore up the greens! Nancy Kreis, Vickie Goodburne, Pam Gohlke and Denise Penn

The Hospice – Exchange Club – CA/N Team golf outing was played on June 13th, and it was a great success! Twenty-four teams turned out and everyone said it was a good time.

Thanks as well to the CA/N Team golfers: Pam Gohlke, Denise Penn, Nancy Kreis and Vickie Goodburne. They overcame seemingly insurmountable obstacles like excellent weather, forgiving fairways and perfectly-manicured greens

to record an astonishing 88, the lowest score for a ladies' team in the event. They won several individual honors and brought honor and distinction to our motley band of non-golfing prevention specialists.

Thanks to the Exchange Club for inviting the CA/N Team to be a part of this fundraiser. The event raised

over \$3,700 for the CA/N Team which will be used to aid in the operation of the Alpena Baby Pantry and other child abuse and neglect programming in the area. It was two years ago that Dick Kuchnicki proposed a collaboration between Exchange Club and the CA/N Team. It's been a wild and crazy – and pretty amazing – ride ever since.

- President Tom Woizeschke

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Baby Pantry News

The Alpena County Baby Pantry, located in the St. Bernard's Parish Center at 319 Lockwood St., is open to the public twice a month (second and fourth Thursdays) and serves on average 60-70 families each of those days. Within some suggested limits, families "shop" for most items and are given other items per their requests. There is no limit on the number of times a family can come to the baby pantry. All items are distributed free and all workers are volunteers.

Donations are always welcome. We accept diapers, baby wipes, formula, baby food, bath supplies, gently used or new clothing up to size 3T, strollers, cribs, potty chairs, toys, books, and any other equipment that could be used safely and appropriately by an infant or toddler up to about age 3 years.

Warm weather clothing is displayed currently at the baby pantry. Cold weather clothing



will be displayed starting October 8.

Donations of cash and money earned through fund-raisers are used to maintain an adequate supply of the five "basics" – i.e., diapers, wipes, formula, baby food, and bath supplies. All other items are available as they are donated.

Donations can be dropped off at the baby pantry on any open day. Special arrangements to drop off donations on other days can be made by phoning Celeste at 356-9516.

Volunteers work on a flexible schedule both on open baby pantry days and for work bees. Volunteers are always needed. For more information, phone Celeste at 356-9516.

Special thanks to Celeste Phillips, Baby Pantry Coordinator, for her commitment to the Alpena Baby Pantry!

Baby Pantry Numbers That Will Astound You!

From January through June alone in 2009, over 21,000 items were distributed through open days at the Alpena Baby Pantry! Some of the items distributed include:

- 11,445 diapers
- 1,991 Food items including formula, baby food, cereal, juices and more
- 434 feeding equipment items including bottles, cups and bibs
- 4,686 clothing items
- 497 bedding items
- 85 equipment items including quality used cribs, swings, high chairs, port-s-cribs and more

During this six-month period, 626 families were served, representing 888 children!

The Alpena Baby Pantry couldn't run at all if it weren't for the generous volunteers who give so much of their time. Over 500 volunteer hours and 285 Baby Pantry Coordinator volunteer hours went into the operation!

Look for the Alpena Baby Pantry on Facebook!

Knowledge of Parenting and of Child and Youth Development

In this newsletter, we will review one protective factor for child abuse prevention according to the *Child Welfare Information Gateway*—**Knowledge of Parenting and of Child and Youth Development**

Parents know their children best—their unique behaviors, interests, and abilities. But no parent can be an expert on all aspects of infant, child, and teenage development or the most effective ways to support a child at each stage. When parents are not aware of normal developmental milestones, interpret their child's behaviors in a negative way, or do not know how to respond to and effectively manage a child's behavior, they can become frustrated and may resort to harsh discipline or emotional withdrawal.

Knowledge of parenting and child development changes over time. Many parenting practices that were common only a generation ago—laying children to sleep on their stomachs, for example—are not recommended today. New research, social expectations, social structures, and even laws have combined to make parenting a different task than it was even 20 years ago. Parents need access to information that is grounded in the latest research.

All parents have questions about raising their children, and they need timely answers and support from someone they trust. One way to describe this is simply to acknowledge, "Parenting is part natural and part learned."

Parents may feel more comfortable voicing concerns and exploring solutions when providers:

- Focus on the parents' own hopes and goals for their children.
 - Help parents identify and build on their strengths in parenting.
- Model nurturing behavior by acknowledging frustrations and recognizing the parents' efforts.

In order to explore . . .	Ask the parent . . .
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parent's view of their child's strengths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does your child do best? • What do you like about your child?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the parent views his/her own role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you like about being a parent of an infant (or preschooler, or teenager)? • What are some of the things that you find challenging as a parent?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the parent observes and interprets the child's behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kinds of things make your child happy? • What kinds of things make your child frustrated, sad, or angry? • What does your child do when happy? Frustrated? Sad? Angry? • Why do you think your child (cries, eats slowly, says "no," breaks rules)?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ways the parent is currently responding to the child's needs and behaviors • How the parent encourages positive behavior through praise and modeling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What works best for your child when he/she is sad, angry, or frustrated? • How have you let your child know what you expect? • What happens when she/he does what you asked?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the parent can identify alternative solutions for addressing behaviors • Community, cultural, and ethnic expectations and practices about parenting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have you seen other parents handle this? What would your parents have done in this situation? • What teaching (discipline) methods work best for you? • How does your child respond?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the parent understands the child's development • Any parental concern that the child's behavior appears to be outside the normal range 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you think your child compares to other children his/her age? • Are there things that worry you about your child? • Have others expressed concern about your child's behavior?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the parent encourages healthy development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you respond to your baby's attempts to communicate? • How do you encourage your child to explore his/her surroundings, try new things, and do things on his/her own? • What works in encouraging your child to be more independent and competent?

The Economy and Child Abuse and Neglect

If you are lying awake at night wondering how the recession is going to affect your family – if it hasn't already – you're not alone. Michigan's unemployment rate is now over 15, over a 8% change since last year. Overall, that is more than 1 in 10 people unemployed and half of those have occurred since this time last year. In the past year, there are over 271,000 less payroll jobs in Michigan (reported by State of Michigan Labor Market). And as parents lose their jobs, more and more families are falling into poverty situations. Parents, especially single parents without support systems, are finding it hard to meet their children's basic needs. As a family's number of risk factors increase (and there are 36 risk factors identified by experts in the child abuse and neglect field), the potential for abuse and neglect rises. It is happening in Michigan. This is not to say that just because a family is poor they will neglect or abuse their children. There are wonderful parents on any point of the financial spectrum. But when families are struggling to make ends meet, are about to lose their home, or are trying to work reduced hours and pay the same number of bills, they can become depressed and begin to neglect their children. Families who once used child care are leaving their children at home due to not being able to pay for child care. More family members are living under one roof and tensions can escalate. Just the stress of having to accept state assistance to meet basic needs can put a parent into a sense of hopelessness and shame. When parents are stressed, less time is spent reading, talking

and nurturing. And in some situations, children won't have their basic needs met, and some end up the victims of their parents' angry outlets.

As a community, however, there are things we can do to work together to get through these tough times to help ensure that no child has to live without their basic needs being met, and that no child is abused due to a frustrated, depressed or angry parent. We need to come together during difficult times. Look around you – who can you help? Here are some tips to help ourselves and others avoid a moment of anger that might possibly lead to something worse:

1. Talk about frustrations.

Sometimes just the act of being heard can go a long way to easing tensions. If you know someone who is struggling, reach out to them. If you are struggling, find an acquaintance or professional who can sit and listen.

2. Let others help you and help others!

Even though I know certain parents can pull it off, it's hard to fathom one parent doing it alone, so let others help, and be a help to others. Offer to be the before- and/or after-school babysitter in exchange for the kids helping with yard work or just because you can for a while. If you can, help someone who has lost their job update their resume, pass on information of potential jobs. Drop an extra bag of groceries by to leave on a doorstep. And if you need help, by all means, ask for it. Most of us

were raised to be independent and "do it ourselves," but there are times we all need to accept help. Pass it on when things get better for your family to someone else.

3. Walk away. When things get particularly difficult and you begin to feel your blood boiling, just take a brief moment and walk away. Step outside or go into another room and take a breather. The physical separation from your spouse or children will do you a world of good. If you know someone who is under a lot of stress, offer a fun evening away as a treat. Give a gift certificate to pay for a nice meal out for parents and entertain the kids while they are out.

4. Get enough sleep. One of the biggest challenges of parenthood is functioning while exhausted, and as everyone knows, lack of sleep can make our lives miserable. And when a parent is finding it hard to sleep due to worries about bills, housing and just making ends meet, getting enough sleep isn't always easy. So try to get enough of it, and [sneak in a nap](#) when you can.

5. Create a support network.

Nobody can relate to your pain and suffering more than other parents, and nobody would love to talk about it more. So take advantage of your mutual experiences, and if you have ever struggled through a rough time, share it with a parent who is struggling now. Let them know they are not alone, and that this too, shall pass.

While we may not be able to save anyone completely from feeling the effects of the recession we are in, including ourselves, even a small gesture of support or kindness may

The Effects of Domestic Abuse on Children

Ok, so your child isn't being abused, but your spouse or significant other is abusing you. Your child is safe, right? Wrong! Read the information below from A Safe Place, www.asafeplaceforhelp.org.

Domestic violence is believed to be the most underreported crime in the United States. It is estimated that more than 3 million children a year witness the violence in their homes.

- The rate of child abuse or serious neglect is 1500% higher than the national average in homes where woman battering occurs.
- More than 50% of the children in homes where the mother is abused are physically abused also.
- Children may indirectly be harmed when household items are thrown or weapons are used in the homes.
- Older children are sometimes injured when they try to intervene to protect their mothers.
- Threats against the children are often used to control the behavior of their mothers.

Children suffer emotional and psychological trauma from living in homes where their one parent abuses the other, even if they don't suffer physical abuse.

- Children almost always know of the violence, even if they don't directly witness it.
- Children's eating and sleeping patterns are often disrupted by battering incidents and thus may suffer from inadequate rest and nutrition.
- Bed-wetting, nail-biting and thumb-sucking are some behaviors that result from witnessing violence in the home. Stress-related physical problems such as headaches, rashes and even ulcers can also occur.
- The child witnesses of domestic violence experience depression, anxiety, fear and guilt. While living in fear of harm to their mothers and themselves, children experience guilt for not being able to prevent the violence and even from loving the abuser.
- Children blame themselves for causing the violence in their homes but are helpless to stop it.

Domestic violence is intergenerational. Unless there is intervention, the cycle of violence passes from generation to generation.

- Children raised in abusive homes learn that violence can be used to resolve conflicts and problems.
- Boys witnessing mother-abuse are more likely to batter their female partners as adults than those raised in homes without violence.

The harmful effects of domestic violence on children can be felt throughout the community.

- Children who come from violent homes have greater risks of alcohol and drug use as well as juvenile delinquency.
- Domestic violence is a contributing factor to teen runaways and homelessness.
- The majority of violent prison inmates were raised in abusive homes.

A woman who is abused may finally gather the courage to leave when she realizes the effects the abuse is having on her children, or when the abuse turns to them as well.

If you are being abused in your home, you can contact:

[Shelter Inc.](#)

P.O. Box 797

Alpena, MI 49707

Crisis Line Toll Free: (800) 396-9129

Crisis Line Alt: (989) 356-9650

You may also call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233.) Call toll free, 24 hours a day, anywhere in the U.S. Trained counselors provide confidential crisis intervention, support, information and referrals to local programs to victims of domestic violence, their families and friends.

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Cost Benefit of Child Abuse Prevention Programs

Why support a child abuse prevention program? Child abuse prevention program benefits may include:

- Reduced health and mental health care costs
- Reduced costs of out-of-home care services
- Reduced costs of child welfare services
- Reduced law enforcement and judicial system costs for intervention in cases of child abuse and neglect
- Increased earnings of the child's family members

Other benefits to a family:

- Reduced personal and family stress
- Fewer incidents of child abuse
- Improved social functioning of the children
- Improved physical health
- Improved mental health
- Improved educational achievement

Whether it comes from monetary donations, volunteering or baby item donations, your support makes a difference!

Hotcake Dinners for the Alpena Baby Pantry!

Come to the Chisholm Street McDonalds on any Wednesday in September between 5-7 p.m., and you can get a hotcake dinner for only \$3 to benefit the Alpena Baby Pantry! Bring the whole family and tell your friends. Have all you can eat hotcakes, and the first order includes one sausage!!