



“THE VOICE”

Community Advocates for Family & Youth

Educating and Preparing Youth Witnesses: YCEP (Youth Court Education Program)

A recent letter to CAFY from the State’s Attorney for Prince George’s County Office shares their support of CAFY’s innovative non-evidentiary court program:

Dear Prince George’s County Residents:

I would like to express my support for this invaluable program that is instructive and exciting.

We at the Prince George’s County State’s Attorney’s Office are pleased to participate in the Youth Court Education Program (YCEP) developed and facilitated by the Victim Advocate Volunteers of Community Advocates for Family & Youth (CAFY). Our office embraces the concept of providing an environment where children who are involved in the criminal justice system can feel comfortable and safe as they go through the court process. To make this experience a bearable one, our focus must be to deal directly with children — not

only for the success of the case, but also for the well-being of each child. YCEP will play a crucial role in the process.

It is through community services, like CAFY, that allows us to help put the County’s children more at ease in a system that is overwhelming and often intimidating. The number of child witnesses and victims, particularly involving violent crimes, is increasing. It is therefore incumbent upon community-based organizations to support these children. And with the continued assistance of programs, such as Youth Court Education Program, our goal of providing a comfortable environment for child victim/witnesses involved in these proceedings undoubtedly comes to fruition.

We support and applaud the efforts of the Community Advocates for Family

& Youth, as it is their commitment to children that has left an impact on the lives of those children we work with daily. It is our hope that YCEP serves as yet another means to educate, empower, and embrace the youngest and most vulnerable participants in the court process — our children.

Sincerely,

J. Patricia Wilson Smoot
Deputy State’s Attorney

*2004-2005 Prince George’s County’s
Youth Court Education Program Staff:*

Arleen Joell—Executive Director

YCEP depends on a dedicated cadre of specialists and community volunteers. They include judges, prosecutors, and trained victim advocates and other caring survivors of the community.

Judge Melanie Shaw-Geter
State’s Attorney Office Assistant State’s Attorneys

Bridget Alexander	Kristen Killiam
TaQuilla Hall	Elizabeth Kugler
TaTanisha Henderson	Brandon McIntosh
Cynthia Herring	Maria McIntosh
Kelly Hightower	Linda Radebe
Edith Iwanow	Quasey Riley
Noelle Jones	Alina Smith
Laura Joell	Theresa Torres

Community Advocates for
Family & Youth

Wish List for Child Victim Witnesses:

- School Supplies
- Flip Chart Paper
- Stuffed Animals
- Journals for Teens
- Coloring Books
- Board/Travel Games
- Pocket Folders
- Blank Stationary
- Stickers
- Beads
- Markers
- Tablets
- Pens
- Snacks
- Juice Packs
- Water
- Teen Books

Items for Parents

- Health Brochures
- Picture Frames
- Gift Cards
- Organizers

****CAFY**** is expanding and we need more space. If you have space to donate, please contact us. *If you can help us with any of these materials or have other items to donate, please contact us.:*

- Storage space
- Computer equipment
- Recording Equipment/VHS Tapes
- Photocopier
- Cash Donations

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CAFY Sponsors!

Community Advocates for Family & Youth! would not exist without the generous support of our sponsors. These agencies, business, foundations have generously contributed to our organization so that we can continue to reach the thousands of troubled children and youth who need help. We appreciate their donations very much and hope that you’ll take the time to explore the various ways that each of our sponsors has enabled CAFY to maintain and expand our programs.

- *Crayola Company
- *Club One – Baltimore
- *Coalition of 100 Black Women

- *Family Crisis Center, Prince George’s County
- *NAI, The Michael Companies, Inc.
- *Metro Teens

“Use this newsletter as a helpful tool to initiate discussion with children. Included are resources and suggestion to help ensure a safe Internet experience.”



“Children, especially teenagers, are continually exposed to unwanted sexual solicitations”



Some Internet Safety Contacts:

- www.cybertiponline.com
- www.getnetwise.org
- www.cyberangels.org
- www.safekids.com
- www.netfamilynews.org

Child Pornography Tipline:
1-800-THE-LOST
www.missingkids.org

ONLINE VICTIMIZATION OF YOUTH

What you should know

Congress has worked to protect children through legislation, including the *Child Online Privacy Act*. Internet safety information is available from a number of websites. However, based on a survey conducted in 2000, *Online Victimization: A Report on the Nation's Youth**, we must do more. As demonstrated in this report, children, especially teenagers, are continually exposed to unwanted sexual solicitations and approaches, unwanted sexual material and threatening and offensive behavior directed at them. The following highlights of this report are based on interviews with a nationally representative sample of 1,501 youth ages 10 to 17 years who use the Internet regularly.

- Approximately one in five received a sexual solicitation or approach over the Internet *in the last year*.
- One in thirty-three received an *aggressive* sexual solicitation – a solicitor who asked to meet them somewhere; called them on the telephone; sent them regular mail, money or gifts.

- One in four had an unwanted exposure to pictures of naked people or people having sex *in the last year*.
- One in seventeen was threatened or harassed.
- Approximately one quarter of the youth who reported these incidents were distressed by them.
- Less than 10% of sexual solicitations, and only 3% of unwanted exposure episodes, were reported to authorities such as a law enforcement agency, an Internet service provider or a hotline.
- About one quarter of the youth who encountered a sexual solicitation or approach told a parent. Almost 40% of those reporting an unwanted exposure to sexual material told a parent.
- Only 17% of youth and approximately 10% of parents could name a specific authority (such as the FBI, CyberTipline, or an Internet service provider) to which they could make a report, although more said they had heard of such places.
- In households with Internet access, one third of

parents said they had filtering or blocking software on their computer at the time they were interviewed.

© Excerpt from *Study Documents* Extent of Online Victimization of Youth, by D. Doane & K. Todd; published in Kids Court Newsletter, Fall 2003 Vol. 9 Issue 1.

What is ‘Online Victimization’?

Although people can be victimized in a variety of ways, the Youth Internet Safety Survey identifies four themes:

- Sexual solicitations and approaches
- Aggressive sexual solicitations—involves any offline contact or requests/attempts at offline contact.
- Unwanted exposure to sexual material
- Harassment

© Finkelhor, D., Mitchell, K., & Wolak, J. Online Victimization: A Report to the Nation's Youth, *Crimes Against Children Research Center*, June 2000

INTERNET SAFETY TIPS FOR CHILDREN & TEENS

- Set up rules for going online.** Talk with your parents about their expectations and ground rules.
- Keep your identity private.** Avoid giving out your full name, password, mailing address, phone number, school information, names of clubs or teams, parent's employer or anything that could help someone determine your identity.
- Keep private information private.** Never post anything on the Internet that you wouldn't want known to the public at large.
- Don't accept a gift, enter a contest or join a club.**

- Never accept a gift or money from someone you meet online. Never register for a contest or join a club without your parent's permission. It could be a trick or a way to obtain your personal information.
- Don't agree to meet or call.** Never agree to get together with someone you meet online unless you've discussed it with your parents. Never go to a meeting by yourself. Meet in a public place. You never know for sure if the person is really

- who they say they are.
- Don't respond to uncomfortable information.** Never respond to e-mail, chat comments or newsgroup messages that are hostile, belligerent, inappropriate, or in any way make you feel uncomfortable. Show it to a parent or trusted adult to see if there is any way to make it stop.
- Don't send anyone your picture.** Never send anyone your picture or anything else without checking with your parents first.

WHAT DEFINES AN "AT-RISK" YOUTH?

Our Youth at CAFY and What to Look For

Our Youth are Labeled "At-Risk" - WHY?

We believe families are harmed (victimized) when their child becomes at-risk or detained. Our goal is to restore the family ties.

- Mediation is used to reunite and reestablish family bonds and trust. It can reopen communication between family members, help negotiate daily living agreements and resolve differences. The process is geared towards at-risk youth, or released youth and their parents.
- Conducted by certified mediators and follow-up support provided by trained volunteer Mentors.

What defines an "At-Risk" youth?

Many social critics argue that today's youth face more serious and critical risks than any previous generation. Parents are convinced that their children face a major crisis. Most experts will agree that violence in schools, deteriorating family structure, substance abuse, alarming media images, and gang activity put teens at risk. Teenagers who have trouble coping with the stresses of life are more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol,

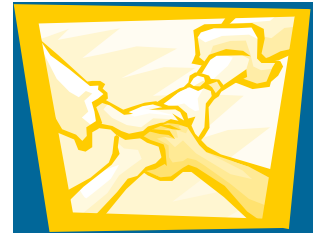
engage in criminal activity, are sexually promiscuous, and attempt suicide. If a teen is experiencing more than four of the following warning signs, they could be at risk:

1. Has the teen ever been suspended, expelled, been truant, or had their grades drop?
2. Is the teen verbally abusive?
3. Does the teen struggle with basic family rules and expectations?
4. Does the parent have difficulty getting the teen to do basic household chores and homework?
5. Has the teen had problems with the law?
6. Does the parent have to pick their words carefully when speaking to the teen, so as not to elicit a verbal attack or even rage from them?
7. Is the teen in danger of dropping out of high school?
8. Does the teen associate with a suspect peer group?
9. Has the teen lost interest in former productive activities, sports, hobbies, or childhood friends?
10. Has the teen ever displayed any evidence of suicide?
11. Does the teen seem

depressed / withdrawn?

12. Does the teen ever display violent behavior?
13. Is the teen sexually promiscuous?
14. Has the teen's appearance or personal hygiene changed?
15. Is the teen deceitful and manipulative?
16. Has the teen been caught stealing money or personal items from their family?
17. Is the teen severely lacking in motivation?
18. Does the teen sometimes lie regarding their activities?
19. Does the teen display outbursts of temper?
20. Does the teen lack self-worth and self-esteem?
21. Does the teen defy established rules regardless of the consequences?
22. When trying to deal with the teen, do the parents feel powerless?
23. Does the teen have a problem with authority?
24. Do the parents suspect the teen is experimenting with drugs or alcohol?

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"Mediation can reopen communication between family members"

"Volunteering as a victim advocate is another way to make a difference in the lives of the youth and families that CAFY helps."



COMMUNITY ADVOCATES FOR FAMILY & YOUTH—HOW TO HELP

CAFY! is able to impact children's lives through education, empowerment and embraces. We are a non-profit association. All donations to CAFY are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

The organization is run entirely by volunteers, including our administrative staff. Therefore, 100% of every dollar is dedicated to CAFY programs. We stretch our funding and make it work for the youth and families we serve.

Please help *Community Advocates for Family & Youth* to reach the thousands of

youth victims, witnesses and high-risk and at-risk youth who need our support by contributing today. Ways to help - see our wish list for our Youth Court Education Program. Or what about space to hold our Youth Rap and Family Mediation Sessions or to perform our growing intake list of youth and parents.

Volunteering as a victim advocate, mentor, or if you are a trained mediator is another way to make a difference in the lives of the youth and families that CAFY helps. You can

obtain information about our services, explore volunteer opportunities, or ways to help us grow by contacting us for more information at CommunityAdvocates@comcast.net or 301-390-4092.

CAFY also needs volunteers to develop the organization. If you're interested in raising funds for CAFY, possibly joining one of our committees or the Board of Directors, assisting with promotion and helping the organization to grow, please contact us.

Community Advocates for Family & Youth

P.O. Box 4419

Capitol Heights, MD 20791



*People taking time to change the world by
making extraordinary
contributions*

Contact Us:

Phone: 301.390.4092

E-mail: CommunityAdvocates@comcast.net

Community Advocates for Family & Youth

A non-profit organization dedicated to assisting victims of crime regain control of their lives after the trauma of crime. Our mission is to improve the outcome for victims by helping them prevail over crime and victimization through advocacy, education, and on-going support.

Our Core Services

Victim Services: Case management, court companionship, court witness preparation, and assistance with victim impact statements and resource referrals

Restoration Session: We offer Victim Offender Mediation and Family reunification sessions for families with at-risk or returning home youth from victimization or detention.

Outreach Education: Family Support; we provide Community Education, Knowing Your Rights education, Court Education programs, and Health Awareness Resources.

- *Court Education Programs*—Youth Court Awareness, Parent Court Awareness, and Adult Preparation Sessions
- *Health Awareness*—Unequal Partnership, HIV/AIDS, and physical and/or sexual abuse education
- *Seasoned Adult Information and Safety Training*—working with senior centers and county association sharing safety and identity theft tips for our seasoned citizens.

CAFY Events:

Youth Court Education Program— Educating youth, ages of 5-18 on what it means to be a witness in the judiciary system. Dates - 8/27, 10/22, and 11/19.

Adult Witness Protocol— discussion for adult witnesses on courtroom protocol. 9/17

Domestic Violence Ministry — CAFY will conduct Victim Service Volunteer training for First Baptist Church of Glenarden's Domestic Violence Ministry, 9/24—301-773-3600

CAFY Advocate Training— Interested in becoming a Victim Advocate for CAFY, call 301-390-4092 or email CAFY at CommunityAdvocates@comcast.net. Begins October, 2005

CAFY will lend their support to the Family Crisis Center's —**Walk Against Domestic Violence**. Want to join us in our efforts—be a *CAFY Walker*. 10/8/2005—Call 301-390-4092

Annual Fundraiser - "Educate, Empower & Embrace Youth Victim and Witnesses—October 20, 2005

Identity Theft for Seniors - Free Workshop. Contact your local community senior center for dates and time.