THE advocate

FALL 2026

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A Letter from the Chief Executive Officer



This truly is the most wonderful time of the year for us here at Kay Phillips Child Advocacy Center! With the new school year well underway and the holiday season upon us, we have so much to be thankful for.

Over the summer, we held our Kids Closet School Supply Drive. This annual endeavor would not be possible without the support of our community, and we are so thankful to each and every person who helped ensure that the children we serve had the tools they needed to start the 2026-2027 school year off right!

On August 29th we held our 23rd Annual Pinwheel Gala at the Lowcountry Conference Center. With the support of our event sponsors, auction donors, and attendees, we are thrilled to announce that we raised net proceeds of more than $163,000 in support of our evidence-based, trauma-focused mental health services that we provide at no cost to children and their families! We are especially grateful to our Title Sponsor, The Bastion Group, for their continued investment in our Center and the children and families we serve.

On October 21st, we welcomed more than 140 Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) professionals from Berkeley and Dorchester Counties for our 10th Annual MDT Conference. This yearly event provides specialized training opportunities for our valued partners, and this year's conference focused on domestic violence and its impact on survivors and their children. We are grateful to our presenters and agency partners for helping make this event a valuable learning opportunity.

Just two days later, on October 23rd, we held our 2nd Annual KPCAC Bass Fishing Classic at Berkeley County Riverfront Park. Thanks to our generous sponsors and participating anglers, the event raised more than $28,400 in net proceeds in support of the Berkeley Center. We look forward to seeing this event continue to grow in the coming years.

Our year-end campaign kicked off on November 1st with a goal of raising $150,000. We are excited to announce that Dr. Robert Blackard, founder of Trident Anesthesia Group, has once again pledged a generous $50,000 matching gift when we meet our goal by December 31st! We hope you will consider making a gift to help get us over the finish line.

In addition, our board room will soon turn into Santa's Workshop as our Operation ELF Program moves into full gear. If you'd like to get involved and help fulfill the wishes of the children we serve this holiday season, you can find all of the details on page 3 of this newsletter.

As always, we cannot say thank you enough for the immense support you have shown us throughout 2026. We are truly thankful for you and all that you do to ensure that children have the opportunity to grow up safe, healthy, and strong.

Wishing you and your loved ones a joyful and healthy holiday season.

Sincerely,

Kay W. Phillips, PhD, LISW-CP
Chief Executive Officer

Thank You Grantors

Grants Approved July 2026 – October 2026

Berkeley County Government through the SC Opioid Recovery Fund:
$61,863.57 for Prevention Programming in Schools and the Community

Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation
$5,000 for Prevention Programming in Dorchester District 2 Schools

Exchange Club of Charleston SC (Coastal Carolina Fair)
$5,000 for Safe Babies Court Training



Henry and Sylvia Yaschik Foundation
$20,000 for our Clinical Services Program

InterTech Group Foundation
$5,000 for Supplies and Equipment for the Berkeley Center Expansion Project

Navy Federal Credit Union
$1,000 for our Clinical Services Program

Patrick Family Foundation
$2,500 for our Clinical Services Program at our Berkeley Center

**SC Attorney General's Office,
Department of Crime Victim's Assistance**

Victims of Crime Act (VOCA):
$255,912 for Personnel Support

Violence Against Women Act (VAWA):
$49,816 for Personnel Support



SC Network of Children's Advocacy Centers
$37,275 for being a Statewide Test Site for Accreditation

The Leon Levine Foundation
$25,000 (Year 3 of a $75,000 Multi-Year Grant)
for General Operating Support

$200,000 for the Berkeley Center Expansion Project

Spinks Family Foundation
$10,000 for our Clinical Services Program at our Berkeley Center

The Mark Elliott Motley Foundation, Inc.
$1,000 for our Clinical Services Program

Town of Summerville Accommodations Tax
$8,000 for Pinwheel Gala Tourism

A Positive Impact Story

Written by Kali Sebastian, Lead Forensic Interviewer and Therapist

The Kay Phillips Child Advocacy Center recently celebrated the completion of its first Girls Circle cohort at the Berkeley Center location. Over the course of the nine-week 'Being a Girl' curriculum, participants explored topics including being a girl, body image, role models, creativity, healthy and unhealthy relationships, internet safety, personal growth, and self-care.

Each week provided opportunities for the girls to reflect on who they are, recognize their strengths, and build meaningful connections with one another. Through activities such as journaling, writing letters to role models, designing t-shirts, creating mirrors with positive affirmations, and identifying positive qualities in themselves and each other, participants were able to engage with the group in creative and meaningful ways.

One of the greatest successes of the group was seeing the girls grow in confidence and discover their own ways of participating. Some members quickly felt comfortable speaking and volunteering, while others initially preferred to quietly listen or express themselves through journaling. As the weeks progressed, quieter members increasingly found their voices and began sharing more, while other participants emerged as leaders and volunteered to help and encourage their peers.

When reflecting on what they learned, participants shared lessons such as "to believe in myself", "to love and care about myself", and "that I am a leader". They also described learning about safety and happiness, body image and not judging their bodies solely by how they look, self-love, and the differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships.

Just as meaningful were the relationships the girls created along the way. When asked about their favorite parts of Girls Circle, participants described "everything", "meeting new people and the laughs we shared", and "having people to talk to, making new friends, and having fun".

Over nine weeks, the girls created a supportive environment where they could feel heard and accepted, recognize strengths in themselves and others, and form new connections. By the final session, participants left with new knowledge and skills, increased confidence in expressing themselves, new friendships, and tangible reminders of the positive qualities they possess.

The success of this first cohort at our Berkeley Center location was shaped by the girls themselves as they showed up, supported one another, found their voices, and learned to recognize their own strengths and worth.

Victim Advocacy and Operation Elf

Staff Member Spotlight: Alexa Roberts



Alexa Roberts joined Kay Phillips Child Advocacy Center in 2019 and currently serves as the Director of Victim Advocacy. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education and Master of Education in Teaching, Learning, and Advocacy from the College of Charleston.

With a background in education and early intervention, Alexa brings valuable experience and a family-centered approach to her work. In her role, Alexa and her team support children and their caregivers by helping them navigate the services available at the center, providing information about victims' rights and the child advocacy process, and connecting families with community resources to meet their individual needs. During her time at KPCAC, Alexa has served more than 800 families.

In 2023, Alexa founded Advocate Together, a quarterly gathering for victim advocates from Dorchester and Berkeley counties. The group provides an opportunity to share experiences, discuss the challenges and strengths of victim advocacy, explore resources, and participate in trainings led by fellow advocates and community organizations.

In 2024, Alexa was nominated and selected to participate in the South Carolina Victim Service Provider Leadership Development Program through the South Carolina Attorney General's Office, building on her passion for working alongside others to better support victims and families in the community.

Each holiday season, Alexa leads Operation ELF, our annual toy drive benefiting children who have received services from our center in the past three years. For more information and to get involved, scan the QR code below or email Alexa at aroberts@kayphillipscac.org.



School Supply Drive

Each summer Kay Phillips Child Advocacy Center obtains school supply lists from all of the local schools and provides each child who receives services from us with everything that they need to start their school year off right.

We would like to recognize and thank everyone who donated items in support of this year's School Supply Drive, ensuring it was a success!

THANK YOU to our donors:

- Denise Brantley
- Charleston Motor Carriers Alliance and Customs Brokers & Freight Forwarders Association of Charleston
- Randall Charpia
- Dorchester County Library - Ashley River Branch
- First Southern Methodist Church
- Grace Lutheran Church
- Suz Greenhause
- Chrissa Kentopp
- Ladies of the Webb Nexton
- Landmark Construction Company, Inc.
- Ellie Brook Masterson
- Jim McDaniel
- Nexton Residential Association
- Servis 1st Bank
- St. Paul's Summerville
- Stallsville United Methodist Church Women's Group
- Steinberg Law Firm, LLP
- The Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd
- Mark and Gray Thomas
- Tribble and Bodhi Phillips
- Jeanne C. Turner
- Bonnie Walker
- WebsterRogers, LLP
- Kathleen Whitfield











**Please note that this list only represents those who took a photo or filled out a donation receipt at drop-off. We had many other individuals and groups donate and we truly appreciate the generosity of everyone in our community!*

Pinwheel Gala



On August 29th we hosted our 23rd Annual Pinwheel Gala at the Lowcountry Conference Center. Thanks to the incredible support of our event sponsors, auction donors, and attendees, we are thrilled to announce that the Gala raised more than $163,000 in net proceeds in support of our evidence-based, trauma-focused mental health services that we provide free of charge to child abuse victims!

We are grateful to our Title Sponsor, The Bastion Group, for their continued investment in our Center and the children and families we serve.

Thank you to everyone who helped make this year's Gala possible, and for your ongoing commitment to ensuring that children have the opportunity to grow up safe, healthy, and strong! We truly appreciate all you do!

THANK YOU to all of our Sponsors:

Title Sponsor:
The Bastion Group

Pinwheel Sponsor:
Scout Boats

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Tony Pope State Farm

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Summerville Elite Homes / Carolina Chillers

Registration Sponsor:
St. Paul's Anglican Summerville

Auction Sponsor:
Southern First Bank

Venue Sponsor:
Lowcountry Hotels

Bar Sponsors:
First Capital Bank
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Guardian Sponsors Continued:
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Todd and Donna Friddle
Tommy and Judy Ervin
Vicky and Mike Budreau

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Bertie's Blooms
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Ross Printing
Snyder Events
Yvonne L. Rousseau

Auction Donors:
Amanda and Joey Leviner
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Charleston County Parks
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Coastal Coffee Roasters
Croghan's Jewel Box
Dan Vuomo

Auction Donors Continued:
Dorchester County Parks & Recreation
Eudora Farms Wildlife Safari Park
Fleet Feet
Frankie Staropoli
Hall's Chophouse
KPCAC Board Members
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Louise of Summerville
Magnolia Plantation
Nico Romo Hospitality Group
Nuvo Portrait
Riverbanks Zoo
Santee Cooper
Sarah Camille Art
SC State Parks
Signori Mani Spa
Summerville Fire & Rescue
Texas Roadhouse
Bastion Group
The Cooper
Titan Fiberglass - Rick Free
Tony Pope
Winchester Spa



Community Partnerships

We would like to recognize and say thank you to the employees at the local Chase Bank branches who, for the third year in a row, held a Hygiene Supply Drive throughout the month of June to benefit our Kids Care Closet!

We say it often because it's true... we are incredibly thankful to have such amazing community partners. Thank you to Chase Bank and your wonderful employees for your generosity, support, and commitment to helping the children and families we serve!



Bert Cicenia Award

The Bert Cicenia Award was established in honor of Dr. Ebert (Bert) F. Cicenia, who was instrumental in seeing the need for a Children's Advocacy Center in Dorchester County. This award is presented annually to someone who has helped to improve the lives of abused and neglected children in the Lowcountry.

This year, we are proud to honor Dr. and Mrs. Robert Blackard as the recipient of the Bert Cicenia Award!

Dr. and Mrs. Blackard are dedicated community advocates who, through their philanthropy, volunteer service, and commitment to family and community, have worked to improve the lives of countless children and their families. They have generously supported the mission of the Kay Phillips Child Advocacy Center, as well as numerous other child serving organizations throughout Dorchester County.

Because of generous individuals like Dr. and Mrs. Blackard, we are able to provide critical services to children and families at no cost. For the past 6 years, this philanthropic couple has generously offered a sizeable matching gift to our year-end giving campaign and those matching gifts have helped us raise more than $850,000 in support of our programs and services!

We are deeply grateful to Dr. and Mrs. Blackard for their generosity, compassion, and unwavering support. Their investment in our mission, and in the children and families we serve, continues to make a lasting impact!

Prevention Spotlight

Healthy Relationships

Respect • Trust • Communication • Boundaries • Consent • Kindness • Safety

We talk a lot about protecting children from unhealthy or unsafe situations, but prevention also means teaching them what healthy and safe looks like; especially when it comes to relationships.

And those conversations don't have to start with dating. We can teach children about healthy relationships through friendships, family, school, sports, and everyday interactions.

Talk with children and teens about how people should treat one another. Help them understand that caring about someone doesn't mean controlling them, pressuring them, frightening them, or making them feel uncomfortable.

The earlier we have these conversations, the more tools we give children as they grow. And sometimes, these conversations are easier to start than we think. You can begin with a simple question:

- What do you think makes someone a good friend?
- What does respect look like to you?
- Has anyone ever made you feel uncomfortable or pressured?
- Who would you talk to if something didn't feel right?

Then listen to what they have to say. The goal isn't to have all the answers. It's to make sure children know they can come to us when they need to.

Every conversation about boundaries, respect, safety, and healthy relationships gives a child one more tool they can carry with them. So, take the time to listen, stay connected, and be the safe adult they know they can turn to.

If you're interested in learning more, visit our website at kayphillipscac.org or contact our Prevention and Outreach Team at 843.875.1551 or via email at community@kayphillipscac.org.

Staff Attend Training



Five of our incredible team members recently attended CE-CERT Training, hosted by Project BEST at Wannamaker County Park.

CE-CERT (Components for Enhancing Clinician Engagement and Reducing Trauma) equips helping professionals with practical, evidence-informed skills to manage stress, reduce the risk of burnout and compassion fatigue, and find continued fulfillment in their work.

At KPCAC, supporting our staff is essential to the work we do. By building these skills, our team can care for themselves while continuing to provide the highest quality of care to the children and families we serve.

Multidisciplinary Team Conference



Kay Phillips Child Advocacy Center (KPCAC) coordinates a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) of professionals who come together and work collaboratively to effectively investigate, prosecute, and treat child abuse.

Each year, the center hosts a free conference on child abuse and neglect to provide specialized training for MDT members. On October 21st, more than 140 MDT professionals from Berkeley and Dorchester Counties attended the 10th Annual MDT Conference at the Lowcountry Conference Center.

Attendees heard informative presentations concerning domestic violence and its impact on survivors and their children. Speakers included Associate Director, Shannon Nix, and Director of Training and Prevention, Tricia Phaup, from the South Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (SCCADVASA); Clinical Director, Mackenzie Soniak, from Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health; Division Chief, Dr. Deana Lashley, and Advanced Practice Provider, Erin Hart, DNP, FNP-BC from MUSC Child Abuse Pediatrics; and KPCAC staff member, Millicent Fowler, LPC/S, Director of Clinical and Forensic Services – Dorchester.

Thank you to all of our presenters and agency partners who were in attendance, making this a successful event!

Fishing Classic

Casting Lines, Changing Lives

HOPE • HEAL • EMPOWER

On Friday, October 23rd, we held our 2nd Annual KPCAC Bass Fishing Classic at the new Atkins Landing at Berkeley County Riverfront Park! It was a beautiful day for some fishing (other than being a tad bit windy).

A huge thank you to our sponsors and all the anglers who joined us for a day of fishing and some friendly competition. Your dedication and support helped us raise more than $28,400 in net proceeds in support of the Berkeley Center. We couldn't have done it without you!



CONGRATULATIONS to the Winners:

First Place, with a total weight of 19.30lbs, taking home $2,500: **Bennett Lawshe**

Second Place, with a total weight of 16.99lbs, taking home $1,500: **Allan Stack**

Third Place, with a total weight of 15.18lbs, taking home $500: **Wade Grooms**

THANK YOU to all of our Sponsors:

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REV Federal Credit Union

Shirt Sponsor:
Landmark Construction

Dock Sponsor:
Santee Cooper

Captain's Meeting Sponsor:
Z-Man Fishing Products

Safety Check Sponsor:
Melcer Tile

Lunch Sponsor:
Tupco, Inc.

Raffle Sponsor:
Villager Construction

Angler Sponsor:
Nucor Berkeley

Breakfast Sponsor:
Advyon

Weigh-In Sponsor:
Creekside Bassmasters

Registration Sponsors:
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Johnny and Michelle Leviner
Kay and Ralph Phillips
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Payne Law Firm
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Banner Sponsors:
Chris Garcia – Pratt & Co
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Design-Build Construction
Farmers & Merchants Bank
First Capital Bank
First Citizens Bank
General and Mrs. Hank Taylor
Kahler Family

Special Thanks:
Berkeley Electric Cooperative
Charleston Riverdogs
Eye Strike Fishing
KPCAC Board of Directors
Stingrays Hockey
Texas Roadhouse
Z-Man Fishing Products

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A Wonderful Surprise

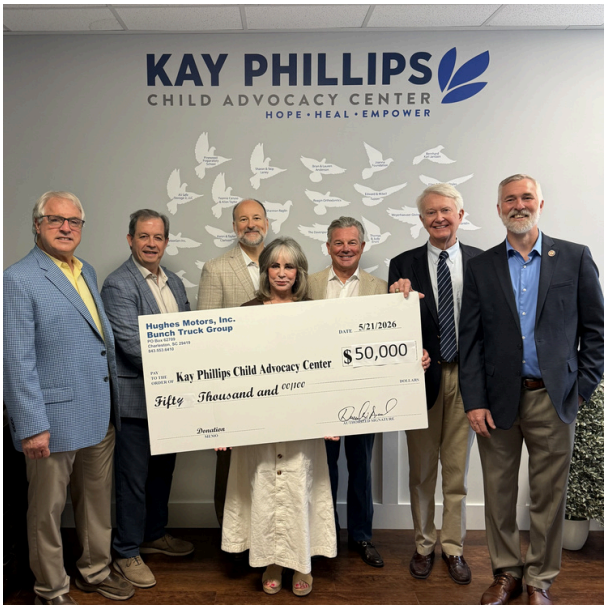
We are incredibly grateful to the South Carolina Automobile Dealers Association (SCADA) and David Bunch for their extraordinary generosity and support of our center!

Earlier this year, David Bunch, Owner of Bunch Truck Group and Hughes Motors, submitted a request to SCADA recommending Kay Phillips Child Advocacy Center as the recipient of a donation, and was approved for a $15,000 gift.

On July 8th, we were honored to welcome Mr. Bunch, SCADA Executive Vice President E. Sims Floyd, Jr., South Carolina State Senator Sean Bennett, and State Representatives Robby Robbins and Greg Ford for a special check presentation and tour of our Dorchester Center.

Following the tour, Mr. Floyd surprised everyone by announcing that SCADA would be increasing its gift from $15,000 to $50,000!

We would like to thank SCADA, David Bunch, and our community leaders for their generosity and commitment to the children and families we serve!



WILL YOU HELP US REACH OUR YEAR-END GIVING CAMPAIGN GOAL?

We are elated to announce that Dr. Robert Blackard, founder of Trident Anesthesia Group, has once again pledged a generous $50,000 matching gift if we can raise $150,000 by year-end!



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Scan the QR Code or visit kayphillipscac.org/donate for more information and to make a donation today!