

Johnson County Attorney

454 Broadway, PO Box 263
Tecumseh, Nebraska 68450
(402) 335-2051
Fax: (402) 335-2135

Julie Smith Hogancamp, County Attorney
Richard R. Smith, Deputy County Attorney

juliehogancamp@yahoo.com
ricksmith@email.com

January 29, 2010

Senator Ben Nelsen
720 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Grant for the Child Advocacy Center

Dear Senator Nelsen,

I am writing this letter to express my support for the Child Advocacy Center. I cannot express how valuable the CAC is in regards to cases with children who are the victims of crime. We refer almost every case with a child victim to the Child Advocacy Center for the following reasons:

There is no case more important, and there is no case more difficult to prosecute that a case in which a child is a material witness. It takes a large amount of training and talent to interview children in a way that is not suggestive and in a way that makes the child comfortable enough to answer questions which would make even an adult squeamish. In rural areas in Nebraska, there is not enough funding to get each and every law enforcement officer properly trained in this area. In addition, even with the training, not everyone has what it takes to conduct these interviews.

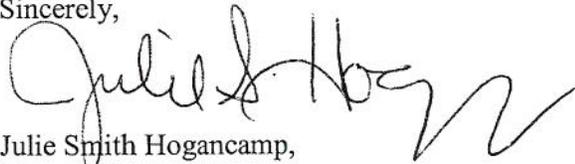
The staff at the Child Advocacy Center has what it takes. That's why we take nearly every child victim to Lincoln to be interviewed at the Child Advocacy Center. By doing that, the child is interviewed in a child-friendly atmosphere (as opposed to our local jail). The interview is video recorded and conducted by the well-trained staff. Because the interviews are thorough, the child only needs to be interviewed once (other than court proceedings). That is so much better for children. I cannot imagine having to conduct these types of investigations without the help of the CAC.

I would also briefly like to mention another service that the Child Advocacy Center provides which is very valuable—court school. As I mentioned before, these cases are difficult to prosecute, and one concern is having a child testify in court. Testifying can be nerve-

wracking, even for adult witnesses, particularly when they are being cross-examined by defense attorneys. During court school, a trained employee of the Child Advocacy Center will meet with the child in the empty courtroom days before the child has to testify. They help explain to the child what court is like (who everyone will be, what everyone does, where everyone sits, what it means to be under oath to tell the truth, etc.) This is a great service which I have used in the past for child witnesses, and I certainly intend to use it in the future.

Again, being a child witness is tough, particularly given the subject matter of most of these cases. The Child Advocacy Center is wonderful. I truly believe that the CAC helps the justice system in Nebraska and makes a scary situation a bit easier for the children involved. I would urge you to please help the Child Advocacy Center receive any funding available so it may continue to assist Nebraska's children. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julie Smith Hogancamp". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping tail.

Julie Smith Hogancamp,
Johnson County Attorney