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let’s start the conversation.
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NOW SELLING 35,000 DUCKS!
35th Annual Duck Race | August 26

The Duck Race is turning 35! The Duck Race has been an important part of the agency’s budget for 35 years and is CFPA’s signature fundraiser. To celebrate this milestone year, we are upping the amount of ducks from 30,000 to 35,000! Ducks go on sale June 1. Celebrate with us by getting your ducks in the race and help us build a safe and peaceful community. On August 26, all 35,000 rubber ducks race down a giant water slide at EastSide Centre in East Peoria. The first 15 ducks to cross the finish line win fantastic prizes for their owner. If you or your company are interested in sponsoring the event or forming a team to sell ducks, please reach out to Josh Cox, Director of Development, at 309-691-0551.

NEW TIME! FUN STARTS AT 11:00AM DUCKS RACE AT 1:00PM

Ducks Go On Sale | June 1
On June 1, head to duckracepeoria.com to get your ducks in the race. Ducks will be “buy one get one free” while supplies last. Once you buy your ducks, you’ll be entered to win 1 of 15 fantastic prizes, including the $10,000 grand prize!

mark your calendar.

34th Annual Duck Race | 2022

mark your calendar.

35TH ANNUAL DUCK RACE

mark your calendar.

the secret sauce.
The Center for Prevention of Abuse’s (CFPA) leadership and team of employees work hard to foster a supportive, client-centered, caring work environment. Our agency’s therapists, counselors, advocates, caseworkers, educators, communications team and administrative department work from their hearts to ensure all those who come to CFPA for care feel safe, welcome, protected and at home.

Even though CFPA creates a beautiful and hopeful work environment, the last few years have been pretty tough on organizations who recruit employees. The pandemic directly resulted in some historic changes for talent pools that have not reverted to pre-pandemic expectations. The changes that we’ve noticed include a fondness for remote work, dramatic pay increases, innovative benefit transformations, and increased competition from other organizations, businesses and government agencies. Competition and comparisons are tough! The U.S. Chamber of Commerce reported last month that the latest data shows that in the United States there are more than 10 million job openings but only 3.7 million unemployed workers. The struggle to recruit an exceptional workforce that add value to an organization like CFPA is significant. Yet, the work we do is crucial and consistent. CFPA is needed. We are here to serve, and serve we do, all day, every day, all year, every year.

We are finding unique ways and means to increase our talent pool. You know how you sometimes get that delicious sandwich or burger and there is just something about it that makes it extra special? It’s usually the secret sauce! CFPA has secret sauce to the way we recruit. CFPA is using “experience strategies” to attract high quality candidates to fill open positions.

An “experience strategy” is future-focused and simply creates meaningful experiences, building trust and value. We want potential staff members to not only support the work we do, but really understand why they would want to spend each day with CFPA’s remarkable team. What’s in our secret sauce? CFPA is credible, consistent, transparent and offers a positive and strong company culture. We encourage compassion, empathy and live our mission, our vision and the agency’s brand.

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The first 15 ducks to cross the finish line win

“i'm dripping sauce.”

- Future

You gotta catch the sauce. Move with me...

In Peace,
Carol Merna
Chief Executive Officer

CFPA exists to help all people live free from violence and abuse, constantly working toward a safe and more peaceful community. Our culture strengthens CFPA’s unique organizational identity, working to inspire employees to live out the agency’s values every day and deliver our brand’s promise to those we care for. Who, deep down, would not want to work for peace?

CFPA is seeking passionate, compassionate, solution-forward people to join our team! All open positions play a significant role in advancing CFPA and our peaceful mission. All team members at CFPA are valued and they belong. We are looking for people who want to be engaged in their work, who are inspired by their successes, and thrive in a workplace that celebrates teamwork and maximizes distinct skills and competencies.

CFPA welcomes and encourages persons of color and LGBTQ+ persons to apply for open positions within our organization. CFPA is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate based on race, age, sex, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability in its policies or procedures.

At CFPA, we believe everyone deserves peace – every day, everywhere, any time – at home, in the workplace, at school and in the community. Do you know someone who would be interested in the recipe for our secret sauce; someone who would appreciate an opportunity to join us?

For more information about the Center for Prevention of Abuse and the currently available positions, please visit centerforpreventionofabuse.org under “Careers,” or use this QR code.

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They filled me with compliments.” “I felt special.” “I believed they cared about me.” These sentiments are shared by nearly every child and teenager who has been groomed online and sexually exploited through devices or social media. These online exchanges and interactions can take place with anyone: family members, friends, acquaintances and strangers. In most cases of sexual exploitation or financial sexual exploitation, the child believes they are communicating with someone their own age.

“I felt terrorized.” “I felt ashamed and confused.” “I was scared.” Compliments are typically followed quickly by two responses: 1) demands to send sexually explicit images of themselves or 2) threats that the criminal already has revealing images that will be shared if the victim does not send more images. This is a form of online blackmail using nude images. Once the criminals have the images, they threaten to share the images to get the victim to produce more images or demand money. This is “financial sexploitation,” a cybercrime in which victims are coerced into sending explicit images online and then extorted for money. Make no mistake about it, this is child sexual abuse. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in December 2022 warned of a “staggering increase” of online financial sexual exploitation of children and teenagers. This increasing threat has resulted in an alarming number of deaths by suicide.

The dramatic evolution of technology and the COVID-19 pandemic has led to skyrocketing amounts of online child sexual abuse material and child sexual exploitation. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, through its CyberTipline, received over 32 million reports of online child abuse material in 2022, up more than 35% from 2020. The CyberTipline averages 80,000 reports of online child abuse material daily. Online sexual exploitation is happening in our community to our children every day. CFPA regularly hears accounts of sexual exploitation and the enduring impacts. Our agency’s therapists are highly trained, experienced and dedicated in their mission to walk with survivors through their healing journey. The nonjudgmental services provided to survivors at CFPA are 100% free of charge and 100% confidential.

As the young people in our lives embrace more digital platforms, it is CFPA’s hope that parents, guardians and caregivers will have thoughtful and specific conversations, even on difficult topics like the internet, about “stranger danger,” about consent and how to keep themselves safe. Let’s start the conversation. If you, or you know someone who needs help, please call 309.691.0551 or visit centerforpreventionofabuse.org.

Preventing Child Abuse
By: Laura Kowalske, Director of Prevention Education

Many of us have had that awkward moment . . . we’re in a public place and we hear a child crying. We peek over and see an out of control adult mistreating a child. And we think, “What should I do?” Prevent Child Abuse America recommends the following:

Start a conversation with the adult to direct attention away from the child. For example:
- “My child sometimes gets upset like that, too.”
- “Children can really wear you out sometimes. Is there anything I can do to help?”

Divert the child’s attention (if misbehaving) by talking to the child. For example:
- “That’s a great baseball cap. Are you a Cardinals fan?”
- “I like your t-shirt. Did you get that on vacation?”

Look for an opportunity to praise the parent or child. For example:
- “He has the most beautiful eyes.”
- “That’s a very pretty shirt on your little girl. Where did you get it?”

If the child is in danger, offer assistance. For example:
- If the child is left unattended in a grocery cart, stand near the child until the parent returns.
- If the child is in immediate danger, call the police!

Avoid negative remarks or looks.
- Negative reactions are likely to increase the parent’s stress or anger, and could make matters worse for the child.

If you suspect a child is being abused or neglected in Illinois, call 1-800-25ABUSE (1-800-252-2873).

Adapted from Prevent Child Abuse America www.preventchildabuseillinois.org

Bathroom Remodel

Our shelter kitchen is updated, now it’s time for our shelter bathrooms. The bathrooms re-open to clients soon, but first we want to add a few final touches. Take a look at our Amazon wish list by scanning the QR code and consider donating an item to help us make these bathrooms feel like home.
On Saturday, April 8, CFPA hosted its 6th annual “I Run with Survivors” 5K run/1 mile walk in honor of Sexual Assault Awareness Month! Thank you to all of our supporters who joined us. It was a beautiful morning of raising awareness about sexual violence and supporting survivors in our community. Thank you to our incredible sponsors, Ron & Cheryl Budzinski, Alpha Chi Omega at Bradley University, Mid-Illini Auto Center & Pekin Auto Loan, Certa Pro Painters, Bob Lindsay Honda and Acura, Oasis Hair Salon, Remmert Funeral Home, and Tiger Plumbing. Their generosity ensures 100% of the proceeds benefit free and confidential services for survivors of sexual assault. A special thanks to ShaZam Racing and the City of East Peoria for helping us create a safe, well-organized event. We can’t wait to run with you again in 2024!

**219 participants nearly $18,000 raised**

Chief Executive Officer Carol Merna with male & female overall winners Joe Ehrhart & Karissa Heffernan. Congratulations Joe & Karissa on a fantastic race and your incredible times of 16:17 & 19:53!

**Thank you to our sponsors**

★ Ron & Cheryl Budzinski ★

**Top finishers in each category**

**Female 18 & Under**
1. Maci Cave – 22:24
2. Brynn Dean – 24:37
3. Elizabeth Chain – 39:12

**Male 18 & Under**
1. Joe Ehrhart – 16:17
2. Trey Socha – 16:20
3. Andrew Edward – 16:28

**Female 19–29**
1. Karissa Heffernan – 19:53
2. Jaycie Hangartner – 24:35
3. Chloe Anderson – 24:59

**Male 19–29**
1. Evan O’Connor – 21:00
2. Dawson Hillman – 23:44
3. Curtis Wolfe – 29:17

**Female 30–39**
1. Jessica Davis – 22:28
2. Nicole Hangartner – 24:14
3. Jovne Davis – 24:38

**Male 30–39**
1. Nathan Young – 19:19
3. Josh Yetter – 24:00

**Female 40–49**
1. Kristy Hook – 25:12
2. Stephanie Stone – 27:49
3. Michelle Mortland – 33:11

**Male 40–49**
1. Randy Carton – 21:55
2. Aaron Heffernan – 23:20
3. Caleb Conley – 30:17

**Female 50 & Over**
1. Brenda Shawgo – 24:00
2. Ashleigh Anderson – 24:59
3. Kate Socha – 27:33

**Male 50 & Over**
1. Mark Episcopo – 20:24
2. Jeffrey Horve – 23:46
3. Tad Yetter – 25:59

*photo credit: CFPA*
what’s in a donation.

At the Center for Prevention of Abuse, we are so thankful for the community support received through donations. We want you to know exactly where your money goes and how it impacts the lives of all who come to us seeking peace.

$5 could provide a hot meal for a survivor of abuse
$10 could provide a new pair of shoes for a child staying in our emergency shelter
$20 could provide a week’s worth of bus passes for a recent survivor of sexual assault
$25 could provide fresh produce for a week’s worth of healthy meals for a family in our emergency shelter
$50 could provide a gas card to help outreach clients get to and from appointments with our counselors or to their place of employment
$100 could provide care for a survivor of abuse living with a disability
$350 could help cover the cost of our 24/7 crisis hotline operation for one day
$500 could provide funding for an Adult Protective Services caseworker to investigate possible abuse in the home of an elderly individual
$1,000 could provide six hours of language translation for a human trafficking survivor whose native language is not English
$2,500 could cover all expenses for one month in safe shelter for an individual fleeing a violent or abusive situation
$5,000 could provide three months of therapy for one sexual assault survivor
$10,000 could cover the cost of running the Safe from the Start program for one month, a violence intervention program for children ages 0-5 who have witnessed or been the victim of an act of violence at home or in the community.

Give the gift of peace today by making a monetary donation. Donations can be designated to specific services or as a general donation.

Honorariums and Memorials
Honorariums may be made to celebrate a special occasion and memorials may be given to acknowledge a lost friend or loved one.

Stock, Real Estate and Insurance Policies
Donations can be made in the form of capital assets.

Donations that Leave a Legacy
Remembering CFPA in your estate plans can save and change lives for many years to come. A bequest can be designated to a certain program of CFPA or if a donor wishes, a bequest can be designated to one of two endowment funds. The Slane Endowment Fund supports the general operations of CFPA and the McPheeters Endowment Fund supports the Prevention Education program.

For more information about monetary donations, honorariums, memorials, capital assets and legacy donations, please call 309-691-0551.
CFPA leadership and staff members had a wonderful time at the United Way of Pekin Annual Luncheon in February! We are honored to be a partner agency and we’re proud to work alongside other incredible United Way partners doing critical, community-building work in Pekin! Pictured left to right: Celsy Young, Carol Menna, Grace Fritz, Fran Reyes, Holly Cox, Josh Cox, Julie Boland, Kevin Nowlan.

Pantry Restock: at your next grocery run, please consider picking up a few extra items for our pantry.

- Fresh meat, eggs, milk and fresh produce
- Canned tuna and chicken
- Coffee, cream and sugar
- Oatmeal
- Microwavable rice, pasta and other sides
- Peanut butter and jelly
- Bottled water and juice boxes
- Cereals, granola bars, Pop-Tarts
- Healthy snack items for children
- Canned fruits and vegetables
- Canned soups, stews and pastas
- Cleaning supplies: Anti-bacterial wipes, bleach-free cleaner, sponges
- Pajamas for a variety of ages and genders
- Packaged socks and underwear (new)
- Deodorant
- Shaving cream – women’s and men’s
- Full-sized toiletries
- Disposable razors
- Toothbrushes, toothpaste, floss
- Diapers and baby wipes
- Baby formula
- Laundry detergent and dryer sheets
- Paper towels and toilet paper
- Dish and hand soap
- Assorted sizes of Ziploc bags
- Full-size hand sanitizer
- Cling wrap, wax paper and aluminum foil
- Cotton swabs
- Large garbage bags
- New or gently used umbrellas

**Gift cards or monetary donations to provide any of these items are also accepted.**

On March 29, we had the honor of celebrating the retirement of CFPA’s Chief Operating Officer, Mary Beth Jackson! She has been an integral part of our organization for nearly 30 years, always leading the agency with a client-centered focus. We are so grateful for her hard work, her expertise and her presence among our staff! She will be greatly missed.

Mary Beth, we wish you all the best in your retirement and hope you enjoy every moment!
Staff Spotlight.

John Worsham

Regional Ombudsman

Meet John Worsham, the new supervisor of CFPA’s Long Term Care Ombudsman Program. Design and Communications Coordinator, Clayton Frankel, interviewed John to get a glimpse into his work here at CFPA.

Clayton Frankel (CF): How long have you worked at CFPA, and what led you to working here?

John Worsham (JW): I started work at CFPA in November of 2019, right before the pandemic began. I am a pastor of a church in Manito, IL. I was a bivocational pastor until my parents came to live with me because of the onset of dementia. After my mother’s death in early 2019, my dad had to go to a nursing home. When I started looking for another job, I determined that I wanted to go somewhere to be able to make a difference in people’s lives. When I opened Indeed, the position for a Community Ombudsman was the first job that I saw. I immediately applied and I received a call the next day from former Regional Ombudsman J.R. Friederich. I came in for an interview and was hired. The rest is history!

CF: What are your favorite things about working at CFPA?

JW: I love working with everyone at CFPA! Every day is a new adventure and no two days are alike. I love working for a place that makes such a difference in the lives of so many people. This is the best job that I’ve ever had -- I wish that I had found this place 30 years ago! I LOVE the Center for Prevention of Abuse!

CF: Any milestones you are particularly proud of, for yourself or the agency?

JW: I’m thankful that we were all able to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic together. We came up with different ways to advocate for our clients. I’ll never forget as an Ombudsman standing outside those nursing home windows, visiting with residents via telephone in the middle of snow, sleet, rain and blazing sun! We did our jobs, clients were helped and everyone in LTCO and CFPA made a difference!

CF: Working with so many survivors of suspected abuse in long-term care facilities sounds like it can be difficult at times. Do you have a personal philosophy, self-care or meditation techniques to help guide you through your work?

JW: On my first day of work in 2019, J.R. set me down in his office and said, “You will never be able to help ‘everybody’ that needs help in a long-term care facility. However, you can help ‘somebody.’ If you help as many ‘somebodies’ as possible, you will make a real difference in your career at CFPA.” I have adopted his thoughts as my goal in my work here at CFPA.

CF: Outside of work, what do you like to do when you have some free time?

JW: Free Time? What is that? Seriously, I love spending time with my family. My wife and I will have been married for 42 years this coming November! We have two children and seven grandchildren, aged 17 down to 5. We LOVE being grandparents and we stay busy with them. I play the piano, and when I need a stress reliever, that’s where I head!

Thank you to all of our wonderful volunteers!

Volunteer Appreciation Week is April 16–22, 2023

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer for the Center for Prevention of Abuse, please contact Kelly Ward at 309-691-0551.
Thank you to all of our donors and supporters who contribute to the Center for Prevention of Abuse through the TJX Foundation for a Community Service Grant to help support shelter operations.

Thank you!