

2020



smalltalk
CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER



ANNUAL REPORT



“BEING A VICTIM MEANS

**YOU ARE STUCK
IN SOMETHING.
BEING A SURVIVOR
MEANS YOU
ARE FREE.”**

--an 8 year old girl in counseling

CONTENTS

From the Executive Director	2
Mission, Vision, and People	3
CAC Model and Our Partners	4
Agency Highlights	5
Program Updates	6
Client Feedback and Survey Results	7
Program Data	8-9
Financial Summary	10
Seventh Annual Auction for Advocacy	11
Thank You	12

Funding Acknowledgement:

This project was supported by Federal Award 2018-V2-GX-0067 from the Department of Justice, administered by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Victim Services.

The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice or the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Victim Services.

“SMALL TALK IS THE REASON WE WILL

**HAVE WHOLE
CHILDREN,
EVEN AFTER
A TRAUMATIC
EVENT”**

--Tabitha Mpamira, Supporter



ALEX BRACE, MA LPC

DEAR SUPPORTERS,

I remember the day I heard the announcement that everything would be shutting down. Instead of the day I had planned, leading teambuilding and self-care with staff, I found myself working frantically with everyone to try and figure out how to turn the children's advocacy center (CAC) into a fully remote operation. So many questions were going through our heads, but one thing remained at the top of our minds: We had to continue our services for children and families impacted by abuse, no matter what. As we left that day and walked into an unprecedented reality, we could never have imagined that we would spend the next year working remotely.

We did not spend 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic simply waiting for the storm to pass. In fact, this crisis has brought great changes at our organization and, as a result, we have responded to an increased demand for services through offering new programs, hiring staff, and growing our space. We received national attention for creating a tele-forensic interview process that is being replicated across the state and the country.

I have never been more proud to be a part of this organization. To see what we have accomplished this year is truly remarkable, but it is not surprising. The children we serve offer us lessons in bravery and resilience every day. We are guided and so inspired by our clients, and without their courageous pursuit of hope, healing, and justice, Small Talk would not have been here to make it through 2020.

Thank you for being with us, and for supporting Small Talk and the children we serve.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alex Brace MA LPC". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Alex Brace, MA LPC
Executive Director

VISION, MISSION, AND PEOPLE

VISION

A state of the art center leading the community in addressing child abuse and empowering children to have the courage to heal.

MISSION

To provide a comfortable, child-friendly atmosphere where children receive coordinated services during the child abuse investigative process.

"I CAN'T SAY ENOUGH GREAT THINGS

ABOUT THE CENTER AND THE WONDERFUL STAFF THAT WORK HERE. WE KNOW WE WILL ALL BE OK NOW BECAUSE OF THEM."

--Caregiver for a child in counseling at Small Talk

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Annie Harrison- Board President
Ingham County Sheriff's Office

Mark Koerner- Vice President
Foster Swift Collins & Smith

John Lazet- Secretary
Vevay Township Supervisor

Dr. Christopher Gray- Treasurer
Veterinary Medical Partners

Lisa Nguyen- *Delta Dental*

Jessica Curry- *Laingsburg Public Schools*

Dr. Karen Holt- *Michigan State University*

Patricia Ceresa- *Michigan Department of Attorney General*

Pankaj Vij- *Jackson*

Megan Curtis- *MSUFCU*

STAFF

Alex Brace- Executive Director/Therapist

Aubree Vance- Lead Forensic Interviewer and Prevention Specialist

Chelsea Roberts- Development Director

Danielle Congleton- Business Manager

Lindsey Power- Clinical Director

Loki- Canine Advocate

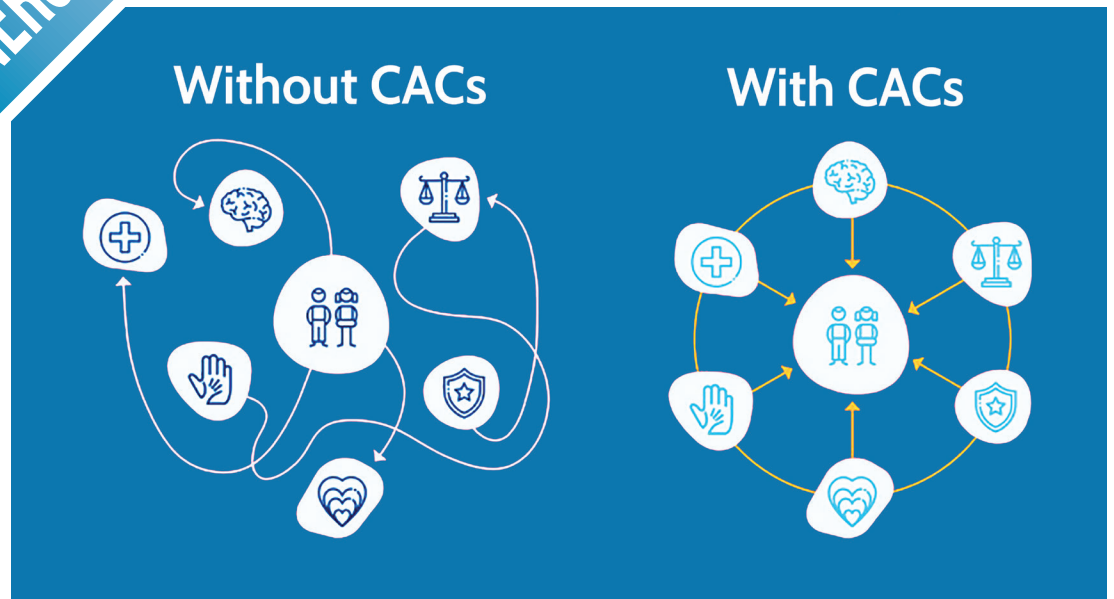
Megan Bryant- Family Advocate and Canine Handler

Mollie Delzeith- Therapist

Sara Helmer- Therapist

Tess Nurenberg- Therapist

Thomas Grieb- Forensic Interviewer and Intake Coordinator

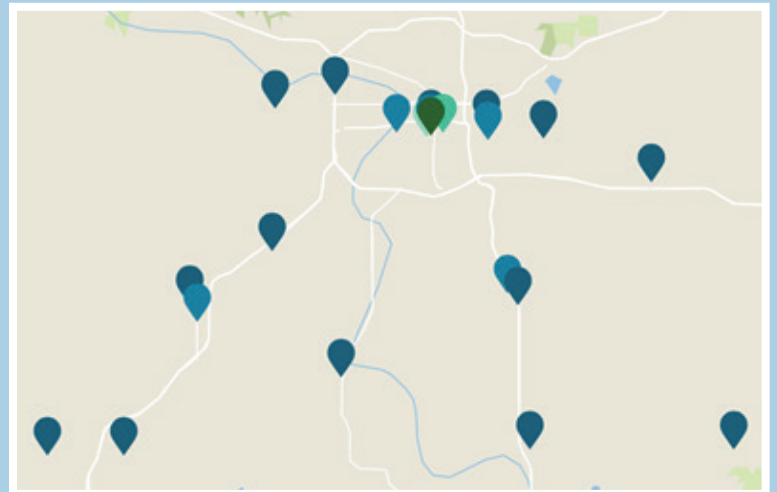


THIS IMAGE IS FROM THE NATIONAL CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE

Before CACs, children and their caregivers struggled to find resources for counseling, courts, medical treatment and more without a consistent advocate. The CAC model ensures that child abuse investigations are coordinated by the agency mandated to advocate for children.

OUR PARTNER AGENCIES

Sparrow Hospital
 EVE Inc
 Children's Protective Services
 Ingham County Sheriff's Office
 Eaton County Sheriff's Office
 Ingham County Prosecutor's Office
 Eaton County Prosecutor's Office
 Bellevue Police Department
 Charlotte Police Department
 East Lansing Police Department
 Eaton Rapids Police Department
 Grand Ledge Police Department
 Lansing Community College Police
 Lansing Police Department
 Lansing Township Police Department
 Leslie Police Department
 Mason Police Department
 Meridian Township Police Department
 Michigan State Police – Lansing Post



MAP OF OUR PARTNER AGENCIES ACROSS INGHAM AND EATON COUNTIES

Michigan State University Police Department
 Olivet Police Department
 Pottsville Police Department
 Stockbridge Police Department
 Williamston Police Department

NATIONAL RECOGNITION

The National Children's Alliance (NCA) profiled Small Talk's forensic interviewing team for the way our agency and multi-disciplinary team (MDT) adapted to virtual interviewing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Modifying one of our core services was a significant challenge, and one we did not take lightly. Our new process ensures that interviews are admissible and defensible in court, and our entire team collaborated to establish a new forensic interviewing procedure.



LEFT TO RIGHT: MEGAN BRYANTT, LOKI, THOMAS GRIEB, AUBREE VANCE PHOTO CREDIT: LUCA GIUPPONI



LEFT TO RIGHT: AUBREE VANCE, THOMAS GRIEB, MEGAN BRYANT, ANNIE HARRISON, ALEX BRACE PHOTO CREDIT: LUCA GIUPPONI

"I'M READY TO STAND UP

AND FACE MY FEARS.
WHAT HAPPENED TO ME
IS NOT MY FAULT, AND I'M
GOING TO BE STRONGER
FOR ALL OF THIS."

--17-year-old girl finishing
counseling

BUILDING EXPANSION

With a generous donation from Grewal Law for construction and Jackson for the furnishings, we expanded our physical space at Small Talk. Adding this 2,500-square-foot suite to our organization will allow us to host trainings and community outreach events. Additionally, we added four new offices in our existing suite so we can grow, with the goal of serving every child that needs us.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ALEX BRACE IN OUR NEW SPACE

"WE ARE NOT VICTIMS,

WE ARE VICTORIOUS."

--Mother speaking about the
healing of her family

EXPANDED COUNSELING

We now offer counseling to non-offending caregivers and siblings in the same household as our clients. Abuse impacts the entire family and expanding counseling will allow families to heal from the trauma of abuse together.

OUR FIRST OPEN-REFERRAL PROGRAM

This year Small Talk received funding from the Ingham County Board of Commissioners and the Juvenile Justice Millage for a new program serving children, titled "Healthy Boundaries." Clinical Director Lindsey Power designed this program and will lead and oversee it. She will provide assessment and counseling for children ages 3-12 who have problematic sexual behaviors. This program is open to the community (referrals are not needed). We know that 30 percent of child sexual abuse is a result of child-on-child abuse. The program teaches children appropriate boundaries and helps families to heal together while addressing their child's behavior.



LEFT TO RIGHT: LOKI, JUDGE LISA MCCORMICK, MEGAN BRYANT, ALEX BRACE
PHOTO CREDIT: CHELSEA ROBERTS

CANINE ADVOCACY

The newest member of our team was officially sworn in on October 7 by Judge Lisa McCormick. Loki offers unconditional love and support to children during forensic interviews. As the courts open back up, Loki will provide children with compassionate and healing support.

CLIENT FEEDBACK AND SURVEY RESULTS

POST-COUNSELING SURVEYS

90 PERCENT OF CLIENTS agree or strongly agree that they can use healthy coping skills

81 PERCENT OF CLIENTS agreed or strongly agreed that they can deal with negative emotions related to the abuse

89 PERCENT OF CAREGIVERS agreed that their child had a strong ability to use healthy coping skills

78 PERCENT OF CAREGIVERS reported that they had increased knowledge of common behaviors in children who have been abused

CLIENT FEEDBACK

"EVERYONE HERE BELIEVED ME AND STOOD UP FOR ME
... THERE'S NO MONSTER HIDING IN THE SHADOWS
ANYMORE. I FEEL LIKE A REGULAR PERSON FINALLY"

--17-year-old girl preparing her victim impact statement

"I'M A HERO. IF I DIDN'T TALK ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED
TO ME, OTHER KIDS COULD'VE BEEN HURT BY HIM."

--14-year-old boy in counseling responding to
what makes him brave

"I WOULD JUST LIKE TO THANK SMALL TALK FOR
EVERYTHING THEY DID IN HELPING ME ON MY
JOURNEY. BECAUSE OF YOU I WAS ABLE TO FACE MY
BIGGEST FEARS AND NOW I AM STRONG, AND I CAN
DO ANYTHING."

--Teen girl's feedback on her last day of counseling



THIS IMAGE IS FROM THE NATIONAL CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE

"... THANK YOU! I CAN SEE THE IMPROVEMENTS IN MY CHILD
SINCE BEING HERE. SO, THANKS FOR HAVING US AND
TAKING TIME TO HELP MY CHILD."

--Parent of a child at Small Talk

"BEING A VICTIM MEANS YOU ARE STUCK IN SOMETHING.
BEING A SURVIVOR MEANS YOU'RE FREE."

--8-year-old girl in counseling

PROGRAM DATA

AGE of OFFENDER

Age Range	Offenders
0-13	21
13-17	27
18+	111

CLIENTS

Age Range	Clients
0-6	23
7-12	59
13-17	75
18+	2

Locally, referrals to our program decreased 30 percent during the COVID-19 pandemic, even while the pandemic continues to create an environment where abuse can thrive. As we recover from these unprecedented changes in daily life, Small Talk is preparing for an increase in reported cases of abuse. Because disclosure is often delayed, that could happen next year or many years from now.

One third of our cases involve child-on-child abuse. We have begun our new, open-referral program for children with sexual behavior concerns in response to this complicated issue.

For more information, you can visit SmallTalkCAC.org/Healthy-Boundaries.

OFFENDER RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD

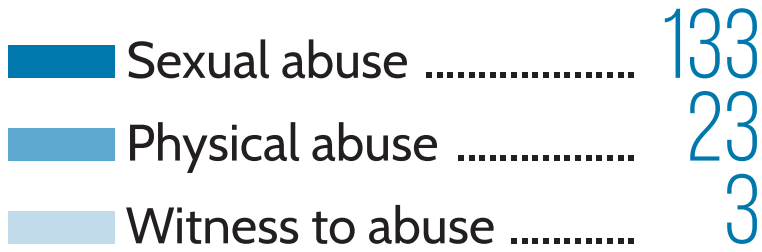
Other Known Person: 60
Parent: 30
Other Family Member: 20
Sibling: 15
Step Parent: 15
Unknown Person: 11
Parent's Significant Other: 8

INCREASED COUNSELING ATTENDANCE

Counseling Clients:	2019	2020
113	6 IN 10 CHILDREN	7 IN 10 CHILDREN
Counseling Hours:	in our program engaged in counseling	in our program engaged in counseling
1,388		

FORENSIC INTERVIEW DATA

Total Forensic Interviews 159



DISCLOSURES

Yes: 132

Partial: 15

No: 10

Did not want to participate: 1

CLIENT RACE

White: 65

Undisclosed: 62

African-American: 13

Multiracial: 10

Hispanic/Latino: 7

Asian: 1

Native American: 1

REFERRAL SOURCE

Lansing Police Department: 64

Michigan State Police: 26

Charlotte Police Department: 12

Eaton Rapids Police Department: 8

Meridian Township Police: 7

Lansing Township Police Department: 9

Eaton County Sherriff's Office: 8

Ingham County Sherriff's Office: 5

Mason Police Department: 6

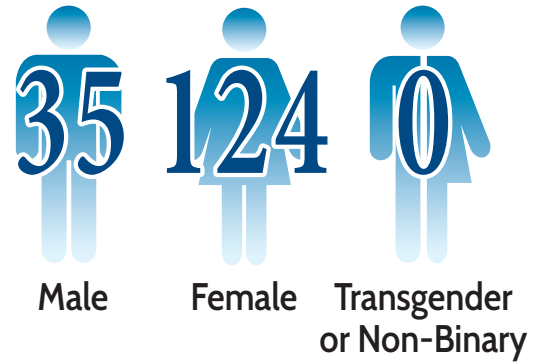
East Lansing Police Department: 3

Grand Ledge Police Department: 2

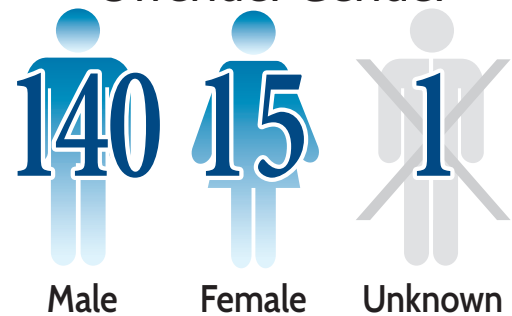
Pottsville Police Department: 2

Courtesy Referrals: 7

Client Gender



Offender Gender



"THEY DO A LOT OF GREAT WORK

**THAT GOES UNNOTICED
BEHIND THE SCENES, AND
WE THE POLICE WOULD
NOT BE ABLE TO DO OUR
JOBS WITHOUT THE HELP
OF SMALL TALK."**

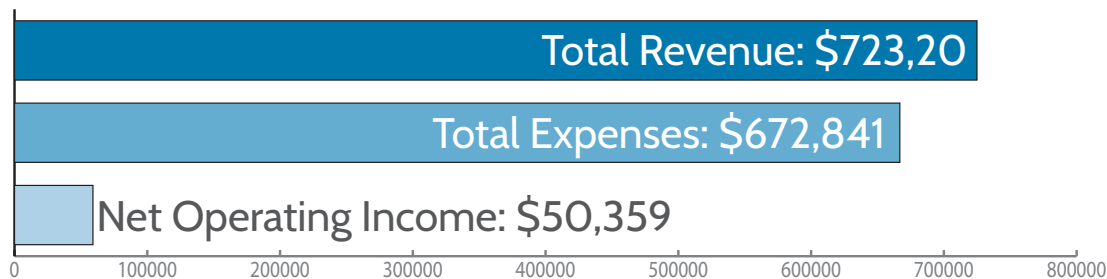
--Sergeant Aaron Lightner,
Lansing Township Police

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

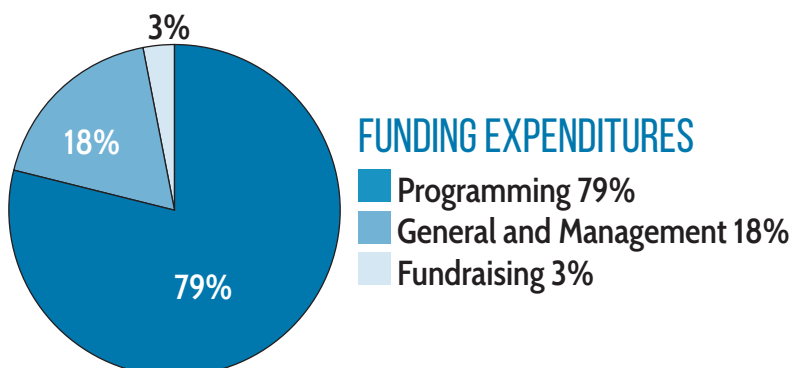
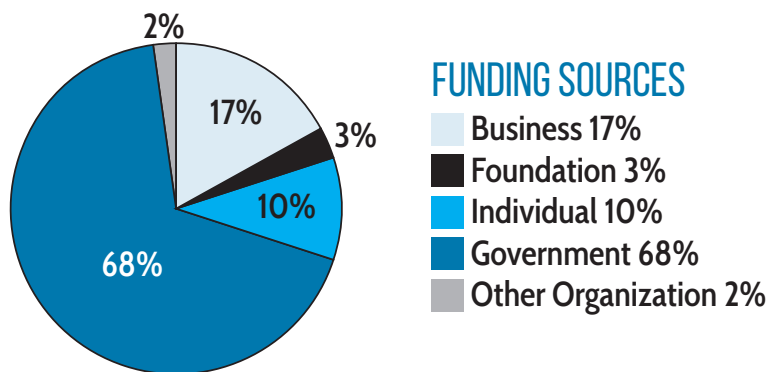
Thank you to our amazing donors, your strong support through a difficult year allowed us to continue to provide critical services to children and families. Due to unwavering financial commitments to our work at the local, state, and federal levels, our operating budget increased by 10 percent and our net operating income increased by 18 percent. While COVID-19 caused an incredible economic strain for so many across the country, we were moved to accept increased generosity from many individual supporters and corporations. We are truly inspired by how many in our community stepped up their giving to meet the needs of children and families during this prolonged crisis.

FISCAL YEAR

OCTOBER 1, 2019 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2020



OUR FUNDING MIX AND WHERE THE FUNDS GO



"I SUPPORT SMALL TALK

**BECAUSE THEY
LISTEN TO CHILDREN."**

--Cheyenne Benyi, Grewal Law PLLC

"I'M A TWO-TIME OLYMPIAN

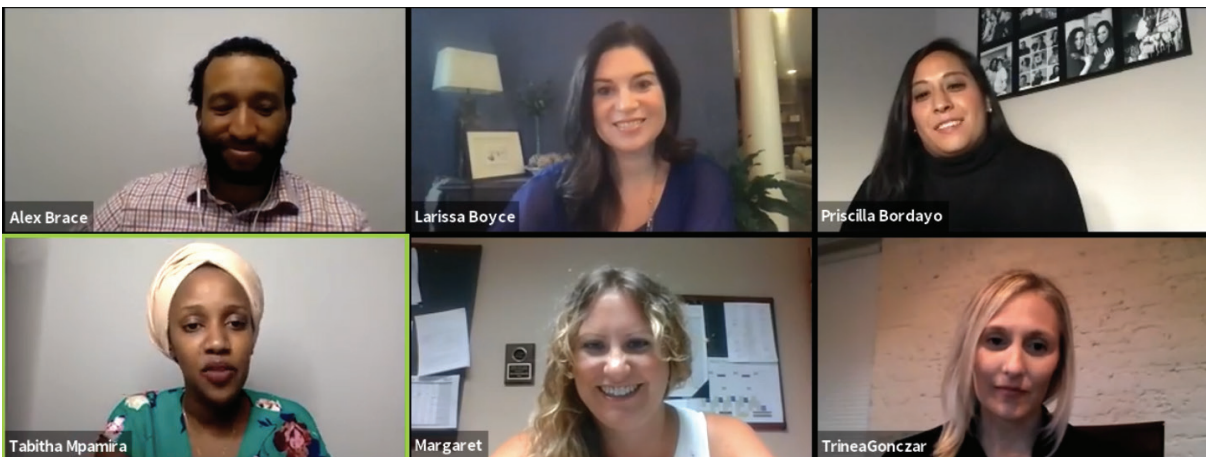
**BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY,
I'M A SURVIVOR OF
CHILDHOOD SEXUAL ABUSE.
PLACES LIKE SMALL TALK
HELP VICTIMS, LIKE ME,
BECOME SURVIVORS."**

--Margaret Hoelzer, Olympic Swimmer

FROM OUR AUCTION CHAIR,

We held our first ever online Auction for Advocacy! The 14-day event featured an incredible array of items for bid and a series of amazing online events. The experiences shared inspired hope and resiliency in all of us. Thank you to the sponsors and donors whose generosity made this event possible. A special thanks to the hard-working committee for their tireless efforts. You and our supporters helped to make our auction successful. Your support sends a strong message that children are a priority in our community. Every child matters, and I am incredibly grateful to each of you for making the transition with us and supporting this online event.

With thanks,
Annie Harrison
Board President of Small Talk CAC



SURVIVOR'S PANEL FEATURING HIGH-PROFILE SURVIVORS AND ADVOCATES.

THANK YOU TO THE MANY ORGANIZATIONS, VOLUNTEERS, INTERNS, AND INDIVIDUALS WHO SUPPORT OUR WORK.

CORPORATE PHILANTHROPY AND BUSINESS SUPPORT

A Purpose & Passion Coaching
Adna Technologies
ASK
BAD Brewing Company
Capital Arbor #772 Gleaner Life Insurance Society
Capitol Services
CASE Credit Union
Caudill Thornquist Group
Cherry Creek Mortgage
Delta Dental of Michigan
Doggy Daycare and Spa
Foster, Swift, Collins & Smith, P.C.
Grand Traverse Pie Company
Grewal Law Firm
Hayhoe Asphalt Paving
InVerve Marketing
Jackson
Kroger
Maner Costerisan
Meijer
Sam's Club
Scrapfest, LLC
Simplified Tax and Accounting Services
Sparrow
TC Paintball
The Rathbun Agency, Inc

ORGANIZATIONS

Children's Advocacy Center of the Bluegrass
Christ Lutheran Church Dorcas Guild
GM Lansing Regional Professional Managers
Holt Public Schools
Ingham County 30th Judicial Circuit Court
Ingham County Sheriff's Office
Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP)
Children's Advocacy Center of the Bluegrass
Christ Lutheran Church Dorcas Guild

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Crime Victim Services VOCA
Underserved VOCA
Children's Advocacy Center Fund
Juvenile Justice Millage

FOUNDATION SUPPORT

Brianne Randall-Gay and Robert Gay Charitable Fund
Joe D. Pentecost Foundation
MSU Federal Credit Union Desk Drawer Fund
Nord Family Foundation
Roy G. Michell Charitable Foundation and Trust Janz & Knight
Spartan Chassis Foundation
The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee
Capital Region Community Foundation



Small Talk Children's Advocacy Center

3400 Pine Tree Road, Suite 106

Lansing, MI 48911

phone: 517-253-0728

info@smalltalkcac.org

Small Talk, a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization

“THE MISSION OF SMALL TALK

**CAN'T BE OVERSTATED.
THE DOLLARS THAT ARE
DONATED STAY HERE,
WORK HERE AND MAKE
A CHANGE IN THE
GREATER LANSING
AREA.”**

--Nikali Luke, Simplified Tax
and Accounting