

Making a *Difference*

“ It was frightening to start all over, but this building...should make anyone feel safe.”

- Resident of Mary's Place

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The Impact of A Girls Support Group

On November 14th, the attendees of our Children's Breakfast heard from a courageous young woman and participant in the support groups LCRC provides in area schools. What you will read below is her story. It is her journey in her own words depicting the tragic childhood she experienced and how the Girls Group impacted and changed her life. The names have been changed.

My name is Amy and I am here to share my story and my experience in Girls Support Group at my high school. My parents split up when I was really little. I remember seeing my Dad one day and then the next he wasn't around. I lived with my Mom at the time and we were always moving. My Mom didn't like to stay long in one place and had plenty of boyfriends. She would be with one guy for a while

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In The *Know*

Children Learn What They Live

Regular stress is ok and normal. However, the stress induced when a child is exposed to alcohol/drug abuse, domestic violence, physical and sexual abuse, emotional and physical neglect can overwhelm the body's stress response system and traumatize the child.

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A Word From *LCRC*

Holiday Greetings from Executive Director Jan Logan

With the Holiday Season upon us, we take time to reflect on how fortunate we are to have our family, friends, home and resources. It is truly a time to give thanks and remember those who may not be as fortunate as we are.

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Making a *Difference* *Continued...*

and then she would be with some other guy and we would have once again moved somewhere else. She eventually met this one guy that she had found online and she went off and married him. Soon after we all moved in with him and from what I could tell he was a really good guy. I enjoyed being around him. He treated me like a princess. My Mom started to be gone more often and we spent more time with him; I saw him as my Dad. He always sent me and my brothers outside to play. He would be the one to tell us when we could come back in. I was 6 years old and didn't realize that my youngest brother was rarely outside with us and when we would go to bed he would be the last one to be sent to bed.

One day, I waited for my Mom to come pick me up after school but she never showed up. Instead, a foster couple came and picked me and my 5 year old brother up. I was confused and didn't know what was going on or where my youngest brother was. We stayed in a foster home for a while with a really nice family. I remember sitting on the floor playing with my 5 year old brother when my foster mom sat down by us. She watched us play for a while before she said, "your little brother Jay has gone to a better place." she started crying and that's when I realized that my brother wasn't here anymore. I instantly burst into tears and didn't know what to think. My brother Tim just sat there in a state of confusion. You could tell he didn't understand, but after the foster mom explained it more he began to cry. My grandparents came to get us and brought us to my Dad's and we went to Jay's funeral. It was the hardest thing to see him that way. In 2003, my brother Jay died as a result of child abuse. He was only 4 years old. My Mom and her husband went to jail for what had happened to my brother.

After the funeral, Tim and I came to live with my Dad. Our lives began to somewhat go back to normal like other kids. Then, my Dad got divorced from my step mom who we lived with for over 10 years. We all adjusted, but in July I found out I was pregnant. Telling my Dad was really hard and he was not happy. It made it hard for my family and stress began to take over everybody. I had my appointment where they had done an ultrasound and I got to hear my baby's heartbeat which made it very real. Then, in August I had a car accident and totaled my car. After my accident, my Dad took me in to get checked and the Dr. told me everything looked fine and my baby was ok. Then, the Wednesday before school started I woke up and was bleeding, so I called my dad. We went to the hospital and I ended up losing the baby.

If it weren't for Girls Group, I don't know how I would have been able to deal with all of these issues. When I started in group, I didn't talk much and had a hard time opening up to people. Now, I can talk about my experiences and all of the things I've gone through. It's helped me be able to cope and given me tools to make better choices for my future. I am very thankful for the Lakes Crisis & Resource Center and the Groups that they provide for teens like me.

In The *Know* *Continued...*

Not all children or adults for that matter are traumatized by traumatic events. Children are likely to be traumatized: 1) when they perceive the event as scary and life threatening to themselves or someone close to them; and 2) they don't have the coping skills to deal with it. So they are overwhelmed, feel powerless and may experience out of control physiological arousal. (Wilson 3/2013).

The reason exposure to drug use, domestic violence and abuse/neglect are so traumatizing is that frequently the parent or caregiver for the child is unavailable to help the child during and after the stressful event. When children don't have a caregiver to help them calm down or when a child lives in constant crisis, a child's body, mind and spirit becomes altered. The alarm system never seems to get shut off and heart rate, blood pressure, blood sugars and stress hormones stay elevated which has long term consequences. Stress literally becomes toxic. (Shonkoff, 2012)

Dr. Latterell reported that, "Almost all the children I see at LCRC are experiencing at least 1 or 2 adverse childhood experiences and many have 3 – 4. They're coping with toxic stress."

When children experience abuse, neglect, and family chaos, it affects their ability to relate to others and learn. To cope with intense feelings they may cut themselves, use alcohol, drugs and food to avoid and numb themselves which leads to chronic health problems and mental health problems. Children who live in abuse learn abusive behaviors.

When you see a child or adolescent misbehaving or acting disrespectfully, consider the possibility that the child/youth is coping with adversity beyond their control. So, what can you do to stop the cycle of abuse?

Be curious. Let go of judgment. It only breeds discontent anyway. Instead be curious when you see a parent or child struggling. Assume that the person is facing hurdles that seem insurmountable and they need help. Ask questions, offer to help. Smile and give them a kind word. Maybe it will snap them out of the despair they are feeling and remind them that they are not alone.

Listen. Make space for people in your life to talk about their challenges. Acknowledge the feelings they have. Listening makes a child feel important and we all need that.

Finally, if you suspect something is wrong, ask. **Ask a child directly, is someone hurting you?** You don't have to solve the problem alone. You can always call someone you trust to help you help that child. You can call the police, the crisis line, or our office.

Kids grow up and the cycle repeats itself unless we intervene. Children and adults can benefit from treatment, and the earlier we intervene the better the outcomes. Remember, children learn what they live. They can't do better unless we take the time to show them how.

A Word From *LCRC* *Continued...*



I'd like to share with you some of the highlights of the past year made possible through your generosity and support.

Programs: The addition of a critically needed program called **Kinship** has been brought back to the Lakes Crisis & Resource Center. The goal of Kinship is to improve children's lives by establishing quality relationships between children and caring volunteers for the purpose of promoting stability support, friendship and community. Please contact us at 847-8572 if you are interested in becoming a mentor or if you know a child who needs a mentor.

Services: Every day I am reminded how important the services of LCRC are to those in need. In 2013, over 2,000 men, women and children walked through our doors in need of safety, support and healing through our advocacy services for domestic violence, sexual assault or general crime. Others came to LCRC to access mental health services or to utilize our parenting time center. Regardless of what brought them to us, when they left they felt supported, safer and better equipped with more knowledge and resources for the next steps in their lives.

As you reflect on your past year, we hope your reflections are filled with happy, healthy and safe memories. We thank you for your past support and respectfully ask that you to continue to be a part of the life-saving work of LCRC. Through attending and supporting our events, a onetime donation, or by becoming a member of our new **Circle of Angels** program, your generous donations of time and resources truly make our work possible. The Holiday Season can be particularly stressful for families, and a time when LCRC's services are needed more than ever. Please know how sincerely we appreciate any financial support you may be able to offer to those in need.

Happy Holidays,

Jan Logan



Circle of *Angels*



The **Circle of Angels** is a special group of individuals who come together in support of local women, men and children by providing a planned, consistent, monthly gift. **Thank You and Welcome** to the newest members of The Lakes Crisis & Resource Center's **Circle of Angels**!

Snow Angels

- Leslie & Pam Anderson
- Arlo & Sandy Brasel
- Judi Herk
- Pamela Holland
- Edward Pachel—LLC
- Gretchen Thilmony
- Jean Waldera

Arch Angels

- Scott & Susan Busker

WISH LIST

- Dish cloths/towels
- Baby wipes
- Newborn & sizes 4, 5, & 6 diapers
- 5 x 7 area rugs
- Bath towels & wash cloths
- Duffle bags & suitcases

We would like to thank all of our generous donors who keep us flush with supplies for the clients we serve. In addition, thank you to the community and businesses for their sponsorship and attendance at our recent Children's Breakfast. Last, we would like to again communicate how humbled and appreciative we are for the record breaking philanthropy shown to us on Give to the Max Day.

**With gratitude,
LCRC Staff**

