



— \$8.2 MILLION RAISED —
FOR THE CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER OF SEDGWICK COUNTY

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

CAMPAIGN

SWANSON  HOUSE
SIGNATURE FUNDRAISING SERIES



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\$8.2 MILLION RAISED FOR THE CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER OF SEDGWICK COUNTY

PURPOSE

Fidelity to mission. Compassion with purpose. Commitment to justice. Courage for clients.



For the Child Advocacy Center of Sedgwick County, mission, purpose, commitment and courage served as cornerstones for its successful campaign. More than \$8.2 million in capital and annual fund gifts were secured for its comprehensive campaign.

AN UNFORTUNATE NEED

Physical abuse. Sexual exploitation. Harmful neglect.

Each year more than 2,500 Sedgwick County, Kansas children suffer behind closed doors, most often at the hands of family members.

The Child Advocacy Center of Sedgwick County (CACSC) was formed to change the way services were provided to the area's most vulnerable children. CACSC brought dedicated professionals together to enhance services within the county, and to house partner agencies

under one roof, creating a consistent multidisciplinary response to child abuse and neglect.

These professionals, working in areas of child protective services, medicine, mental health therapy, law enforcement, prosecution, and advocacy, needed a facility developmentally and culturally sensitive to each child's needs. They also needed a space to facilitate collaboration between the Center and its partner agencies as they worked to give hope and healing to children and families.

But CACSC didn't need just any space. The criteria for the facility was specific: an abode where those seeking services would feel safe and secure from abusers, and where they could work toward healing. The location also had to maximize staff and resources to provide effective and efficient investigations and support services.

Dianna Schunn, executive director of the CACSC, knew when she was hired that she would lead a multimillion-dollar fundraising campaign. "I said, 'yes'," recalls Schunn when asked about taking

on a campaign, "but really, I didn't know what I was getting into." Schunn's passion for the mission, her eager spirit, and the devotion of the campaign committee members allowed the organization to raise \$8.2 million.

Early in the planning stages for the new facility, CACSC staff, supporters and architects visited child advocacy centers around the country to learn their best practices. "We came home energized, with a deeper understanding of the benefits of an integrated child advocacy center," explains Schunn.

"We created and distributed an RFP, and interviewed fundraising consulting firms," says Schunn. "We wanted one with experience and a track record of success. We wanted a firm that had helped other nonprofits with first-time campaigns. We also wanted counsel serious about their profession."

Swanson House, Inc., was selected as CACSC's fundraising counsel. A pre-campaign assessment study was completed. Findings were evaluated by Swanson House and a comprehensive campaign was recommended.



"They had a clear vision. And the need had been documented," recalls Robert Swanson, President and CEO of Swanson House, Inc. "While they may not have had hands-on, major gift experience, there is no replacement for passionate and dedicated leadership. CACSC's leadership was less than four years old, but they were absolutely committed to helping abused children."

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MESSAGING & SHARING THE NEED

The "Behind Closed Doors" campaign raised more than \$2 million before CACSC leaders had even determined the location, design or final costs of their building project.

"Sometimes organizations create paralysis by getting too deep in the details too early," shares Katherine Melhorn, M.D., Campaign Co-Chair. "We knew why a facility was needed

and the positive impact it would have on the community. We and our partners knew what was needed in the facility from a service and program standpoint. Being able to articulate the overall goal and our vision allowed us to ask for gifts prior to having a building to renovate."

"They had clarity of thought and purpose," says Swanson. "They understood they

were not raising money for a building; they were raising money to save children from abusive situations. The messaging was almost intuitive for them. Yes, ultimately, they were securing and renovating a space in which to provide those services, but the building was only a means to an end. Saving children was the ultimate goal."

The organization eventually identified and secured a former elementary school building to house the center.

The fundraising effort was launched as, "Behind Closed Doors: A Campaign to End Childhood Abuse, Neglect & Sex Trafficking." The name effectively communicated the need and situation in advance of cultivation and solicitation meetings.

"We had statistics and research for those who wanted data," explains Melhorn. "Donors responded once they learned about our mission. We also shared client stories and testimonials from victims and families. Swanson House encouraged us to put a realistic face to the harsh abuse and neglect suffered by the children who come to the CACSC for help. Those stories were powerful in helping supporters understand the need."

FRAMEWORK, PROCESS & STRATEGY

"Some of us were surprised to learn that not all the donors had to be identified before starting the process of asking for funds; nor did we need to have gift amounts detailed for each of those donors," explains Schunn.

► *continued on back*



CAMPAIGN GIFTS RECEIVED

GIFT RANGES	# OF GIFTS
\$1 Million & Above	2
\$500,000 to \$999,999	3
\$250,000 to \$499,999	3
\$100,000 to \$249,000	7
\$50,000 to \$99,999	18
\$25,000 to \$49,999	21
\$10,000 to \$24,999	29
\$3,000 to \$9,999	77
\$100 to \$2,999	138

SWANSON HOUSE FUNDRAISING PROFESSIONALS

Swanson House, a full-service fundraising consulting company, has partnered with nonprofits across America to build stronger, more dynamic and effective organizations. Those working with Swanson House consultants have raised more than one billion dollars. Thoughtful, creative and bold strategies are delivered by professional counsel dedicated to helping the nonprofit community better serve its clients.



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► *Behind Closed Doors...continued*

"We learned the campaign was an ongoing process of donor identification, cultivation, and then ultimately—solicitation."

Prioritizing and sequencing donors was part of the comprehensive campaign strategy. Achieving 100 percent board participation in the campaign was followed by securing campaign leadership committee members and their gifts and pledges. A threshold of local support was then required before out-of-county and out-of-state funders could be effectively secured.

CACSC did not wait until the end of the campaign to start working on its annual fund program. Early in the quiet phase of the campaign, CACSC added a year-end "Season for Heroes" appeal and an annual "Heroes Gala" to its comprehensive development program to generate additional annual fund revenues. The new funding and branding strategies—along with an annual golf tournament—raised more than \$650,000 during the life of the campaign. Those funds went to support annual operations.

"Beyond the needs of our children, we learned it was imperative that donors understand why we were asking them for their gifts and pledges," explains Melhorn. "At times, because the child advocacy center concept is relatively new, they did not initially understand our unique role in the community, but they appreciated learning why we were asking for such significant stretch gifts and the importance of the timing of those gifts."

"We learned not to force the process—to not rush it," shares Schunn. "Different funders had different requirements—ranging from when we were qualified to make application to what had to be done once we had qualified. We learned that some donors were motivated by understanding the challenge of those dynamics."

"The concept of the quiet phase and the public phase of a campaign also serves a strategic purpose," explains Schunn. "Until you undertake a campaign, the importance and application of such strategies is not well understood."

"As we helped develop their campaign—the framework and tactics—they were thoughtful and dutiful," says Swanson. "They accepted instruction, asked good questions and collaborated in developing strategy. Diana and campaign members also exhibited a competitive spirit that served the CACSC well. Such an attitude drives campaigns, particularly during rough stretches."

"In 2016, our annual budget was just \$600,000 and yet we managed to raise \$8.2 million in a comprehensive campaign," reflects Schunn. "My suggestion to other nonprofits: find seasoned and knowledgeable fundraising counsel, recruit passionate volunteers, share your client's needs candidly, and follow the four steps of fundraising: Identification, Cultivation, Solicitation and Appreciation. It is hard work, but your organization's courage will make a profound difference for those it serves."



CAMPAIGN LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

HONORARY CHAIRS: Jan & Ken Shannon

CO-CHAIRS: Kathy & Mark Melhorn
Tim & Susan Norton | Ron & Suzanne Vaupel

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Mark Bennett
Steve Edgar | Janet Pape
Peggy Schwendeman | Diana Schunn

BUILDING COMMITTEE: Kathy Melhorn
Peggy Schwendeman | Deb Cook
Scott Bixler | Michael Ramsey