



Monongalia County Child Advocacy Center

20th Anniversary

CELEBRATION



Hope and
Healing



Dr. Capage reflects on
20 years of MCCAC



The power of community
support at MCCAC



Build the Bounce



How to make a difference
in your community



MCCAC's journey



Hope and healing
at MCCAC



MCCAC

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Two Decades of Healing: **Dr. Capage Reflects on 20 Years of MCCAC**



Dr. Laura Capage

In 2005, Monongalia County Child Advocacy Center (MCCAC) opened its doors with a simple yet powerful mission: to support children who had experienced abuse by providing a safe space for healing, justice, and hope. Two decades later, that mission remains unchanged—but its reach

and impact have grown in ways that its founding Executive Director and Licensed Psychologist, Dr. Laura Capage, could have only imagined.

“When we started, we were figuring it out as we went,” Dr. Capage recalls. “We had passion, but no funding. Interns acted as staff. And there were so many people—community members, early board members, interns—who helped lay the groundwork. We wouldn’t be here today without them. MCCAC is a special place and even after 20 years, it is still my dream job.”

A Changing Landscape

Over the years, the field of child advocacy and trauma-informed care has evolved significantly. “Twenty years ago, we did one interview per child,” Dr. Capage explains. “Now, for some children, we do extended interviews based on their individual needs. We’ve become more aware of the impact of trauma and how important it is to respond to it with care and evidence-based treatment.”

Research and best practices have deepened not only the organization’s understanding of trauma, but everywhere - and that evolution has led to a broader, more collaborative approach. “We talk now about trauma-informed systems of care—something that wasn’t even on the radar back then.”

Growth Rooted in Mission

While the landscape has changed, MCCAC’s mission has remained a steady guide. “Our mission hasn’t changed,” Dr. Capage says. “But the way we fulfill it has expanded.” Over the years, MCCAC has added new programs like the Drug Endangered Children (DEC) Program and the Preventative Care (PC) Program, broadening its ability to serve more families in need.



Looking forward, Dr. Capage has ambitious goals: “Ultimately, I want MCCAC to be a place where we have the capacity to serve every child in Monongalia County who could benefit from our services. We’re in the process of hiring an additional therapist, and we’re working on reducing barriers like transportation and access to psychiatric care. We want to collaborate more with other agencies so kids and families get the comprehensive support they need.”



Moments That Matter

Dr. Capage's journey hasn't been without its challenges. "Finances have always been a concern," she admits. "And the team model we use—where we collaborate with multiple partners—requires constant relationship-building. It can be hard, especially when teams shift."

But through it all, she's found strength in the resilience of the children she serves. "That's how you avoid burnout," she says. "You focus on what you can change—the kids, their healing, their hope. You don't dwell on the tough dynamics. You walk with these kids on their journey."

Some memories are etched forever in her heart: receiving MCCAC's first accreditation plaque late at night, tears welling up as she remembered the struggle of chasing that milestone while undergoing breast cancer treatment and caring for a young son. "It meant everything. It meant I had made it—I was still alive, and we were officially accredited."

Another powerful moment came when she received West Virginia Child Advocacy Center Network's "One with Courage" Award in 2014. "It was the first time they gave it, and I was so touched to be the first Director to receive the award."

And then, there are the unforgettable stories—like going into labor while working with MCCAC's treasurer, wrapping up tasks in a towel before rushing to the hospital, and training the Center's first staff member from her hospital bed the next day.

"It was chaos and excitement and purpose all at once," she laughs. "We were changing the system."

Community at the Core

Throughout MCCAC's 20-year history, the community's support has been a driving force. "We couldn't have done this without people who believed in us," Dr. Capage emphasizes. "The Benedum Foundation's

startup grant was a turning point—not just for us, but for Child Advocacy Centers across West Virginia. And the early collaboration among directors in our state helped us grow fast."

As MCCAC celebrates two decades of service, Dr. Capage is filled with gratitude—for her staff, her community, and the families who place their trust in the center. "We didn't get here alone. Every person along the way—whether they're still with us or not—played a part in what MCCAC has become."

From those first small office spaces to the beams of the Center's permanent home, Dr. Capage has shepherded MCCAC through its early growing pains, into a flourishing organization built on compassion, innovation, and unwavering purpose.

"We've come a long way," she says, "and I'm proud of how many more kids we're able to help now. But I still miss those first days sometimes—the newness, the excitement. The feeling that we were building something truly needed. The truth is—we still are."

**Congratulations on your
20th Anniversary**

**Monongalia County
Child Advocacy Center!**

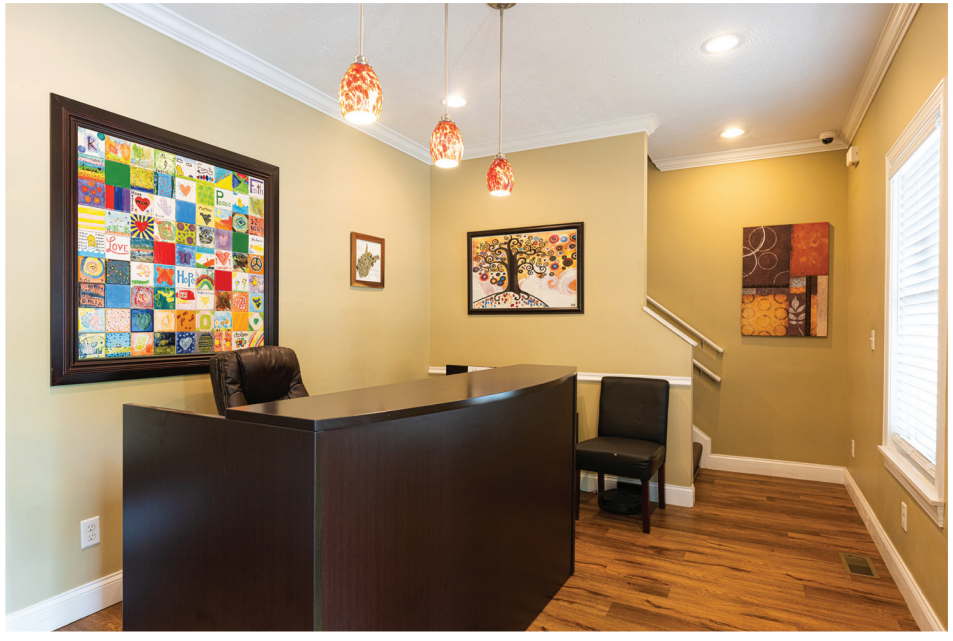


Monongalia County
Child Advocacy Center



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Healing Starts Here:

The Power of Community Support at Monongalia County Child Advocacy Center

In the heart of Morgantown, the Monongalia County Child Advocacy Center (MCCAC) stands as a beacon of hope and healing for children who have experienced abuse, neglect, or trauma. Every child who walks through its doors is met with compassion, care, and a safe environment designed to help them tell their stories—and begin the process of healing. MCCAC does not charge families out of pocket for the care they receive, making community support consequential - without generous donations from people like you, this work cannot happen.

When you donate to the MCCAC, you're not just giving money—you're giving a child a chance to reclaim their voice, to feel safe again, to heal. Every dollar goes toward providing trauma-informed therapy, forensic interviews, prevention education, and support services that change lives.

The Ripple Effect of Giving

Your donation doesn't stop at the doors of the MCCAC. It creates a ripple effect that strengthens the entire Monongalia County community. When children are protected and supported, they grow into adults who contribute positively to society. They're more likely to succeed in school, form healthy relationships, and build a brighter future—not just for themselves, but for everyone around them.

Supporting the MCCAC also helps reduce long-term societal costs associated with untreated trauma, such as substance abuse, mental health challenges, and cycles of violence. Simply put: **when we invest in our children, we invest in our future.**

What You Gain by Giving

Donating to the MCCAC isn't just a kind gesture—it's a deeply rewarding experience. As a donor, you become a partner in healing. You see your impact firsthand through newsletters, success stories, and invitations to community events. You're recognized as a compassionate leader who is actively making your community safer and stronger.

But there's more. **Did you know giving is actually good for your health?**

The Health Benefits of Giving

Science shows that charitable giving doesn't just help others—it helps you, too. People who donate to causes they care about often report increased happiness, lower stress, and better overall well-being. Here are just a few of the health benefits:

- **Boosted Mood & Mental Health:** Giving activates areas of the brain linked to joy and connection. It reduces anxiety, combats depression, and increases feelings of purpose.



- **Lower Stress Levels:** Studies show that generosity lowers cortisol levels and helps people feel calmer and more in control.
- **Improved Heart Health:** Charitable people have a reduced risk of high blood pressure and cardiovascular issues.
- **Longer Lifespan:** Those who give time or money regularly tend to live longer, healthier lives.
- **Stronger Social Connections:** Being part of a giving community enhances relationships and reduces loneliness.
- **So when you support MCCAC, you're not just making a difference in a child's life—you're investing in your own well-being, too.**

Ways to Get Involved

- **One-Time or Monthly Giving:** Whether it's a single gift or a recurring donation, every dollar counts.
- **Sponsorship Opportunities:** Businesses and individuals can sponsor events or special projects for the center.
- **In-Kind Donations:** MCCAC has a running wish list on Amazon that allows supporters to donate items that are the most in need at any given time.
- **Volunteering & Fundraising:** Host a fundraiser, join the MCCAC's Ambassador Program, volunteer at the center, or invite us to speak at your social circle event.

Join the Mission

At the Monongalia County Child Advocacy Center, healing begins with community. By choosing to support MCCAC, you're becoming part of a mission that uplifts the most vulnerable among us and builds a better tomorrow—for them and for you.

Donate today. Heal a child's tomorrow. Enrich your own life.

Visit www.moncocac.org or call (304) 598-0344 to learn more about how you can help.

Build the Bounce: **Monongalia County Child Advocacy's 2025 Campaign**

Launched in early 2025, Build the Bounce is a fundraising campaign centered on one powerful goal: strengthening resilience in children. The name comes from the idea that every child has the ability to “bounce back” from adversity—with the right support and resources.

The campaign supports trauma informed and evidence based therapy in Monongalia County to high risk children. The goal with this initiative is to bring an additional \$100,000 to Monongalia County Child Advocacy Center (MCCAC) to continue to meet the needs of the children and families in our community.

“We can’t prevent every bad thing from happening,” says Taylor Shultz, director of awareness and development, “but we can create a community where children have the resources and relationships they need to recover and thrive.”

Friday Night Fundraiser Series: Game Show Edition

As a centerpiece of the Build the Bounce campaign, MCCAC is hosting the Friday Night Fundraiser Series: Game Show Edition. Each evening will feature a different game show theme and will be held at the Monongalia County Center. Proceeds from this series will count towards the Build the Bounce campaign goal. Follow Monongalia County Child Advocacy Center on social media platforms to stay in the know and find out the themes for each night!

Mark your calendars:

- August 15
- August 29
- September 5
- September 26



How To *make a difference* *in your community*

Monongalia County Child Advocacy Center (MCCAC) has long been a beacon of hope and support for children and families navigating the challenges of abuse and trauma. MCCAC relies on the dedication and compassion of volunteers to maintain its operations and extend its reach within the community. From yard work to event planning, there are numerous ways for individuals to contribute their time and skills to this worthy cause.

One of the most tangible ways to assist MCCAC is through outdoor spruce-up activities. Volunteers can help maintain and beautify the Center's grounds by engaging in tasks such as mowing the lawn, planting flowers, and general yard work. This not only creates a welcoming environment for the children and families who visit but also reflects the community's commitment to providing a safe and nurturing space. Additionally, those with a knack for deep cleaning can offer their services to ensure that the Center remains a clean and hygienic space for its clients.

Beyond hands-on tasks,

volunteers can amplify MCCAC's mission by sharing it with friends and family. Raising awareness about the Center's work helps to attract support and resources,

including donations to their Amazon wish list or Birthday Club. These contributions are vital for providing essential items and special treats for the children, enhancing their experience and sense of care.

Moreover, individuals with a flair for organizing and creativity can lend their talents to event planning, helping to orchestrate fundraisers and community events that sustain the Center's operations and foster a sense of solidarity among supporters.

In essence, volunteering with Monongalia County Child Advocacy Center offers numerous avenues for individuals to make a meaningful impact. Whether through physical



labor, spreading the word, or contributing to special projects, every effort helps to sustain the Center's mission of supporting children and families in need. By coming together as a community, we can ensure that MCCAC continues to be a place of healing and hope for those who need it most.

If you are interested in volunteering with MCCAC or if you have any questions, please contact MCCAC's Director of Awareness and Development, Taylor, at tshultz@moncocac.org or (304)598-0344.



**Mon
County
Child
Advocacy
Center**



Monongalia County Child Advocacy Center

Providing The Help We Need.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

The MCCAC is looking for a group of volunteers to help with indoor and outdoor activities:

Event planning • Cleaning waiting areas
Weeding • Pressure washing

Contact Taylor Shultz at the MCAC if you or your group is interested in this volunteer opportunity.

tshultz@moncocac.org • 304-598-0344

Message on Facebook

909 Green Bag Road • Morgantown, WV 26508

moncocac@comcast.net • moncocac.org

MCCAC needs community's support for next 20 years

BY TRISTA THURSTON

It takes a village to help children, and the Monongalia County Child Advocacy Center depends on various volunteers, supporters, donors and board members to run smoothly, including Lynda Goldberg, MCCAC's current board president, and Rachel Wood, past board member, supporter and donor.

Child advocacy centers aim to lessen the trauma children can often endure when sharing their experiences of sexual abuse and other severe trauma with law enforcement and other agencies.

Wood and Goldberg both cited director Dr. Laura Capage's tireless work, commitment and dedication. Wood said she got involved with MCCAC because Dr. Capage and her staff's work touched her heart, work that gets accomplished with minimal resources. Dr. Capage is the glue that holds the organization together, and she is grateful for her and her team's hard work.

"It's pretty shocking when you look at the statistics," Wood said. "I was shocked when I found out how many people (MCCAC) treated."

The MCCAC, she said, provides a crucial step in trying to break the cycle and heal hurts. Wood said the 20th anniversary of MCCAC is a bittersweet achievement. It is hard to acknowledge that there is still a need for this sort of organization in 2025, but the organization also serves as a triumph in a dark world, a symbol of light and hope.

Wood was recently honored as the Champion for Children award recipient at the Girls' Night Out, the organization's largest annual fundraiser.

"I am both surprised and deeply honored to be named this year's MCCAC Champion for Children. It is a privilege to stand alongside so many esteemed advocates and supporters who share a commitment to this vital cause," said

Wood. "MCCAC continues to inspire me with its unwavering dedication and passionate efforts to support survivors of sexual abuse. I sincerely hope this recognition helps shine a brighter light on the importance of their mission and contributes to raising the necessary funds to sustain the incredible work of Dr. Capage and her exceptional team."

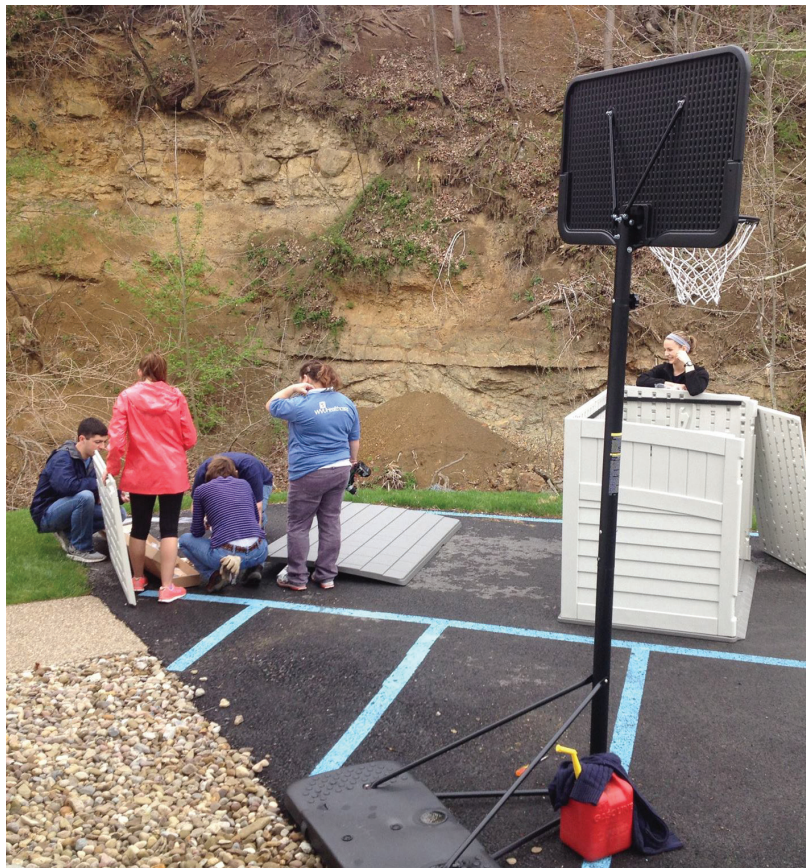
Goldberg said children should have the best start in life, and the MCCAC helps children build resilience and become healthy, happy adults.

"I am helping Dr. Capage achieve that goal, one client and family at a time," she said, adding that she is happy to be a small part of it.

The center's 20 years in the community are a significant milestone worth celebrating. Goldberg said that in the next 20 years, she hopes the center can continue expanding its services, as the need grows. A community's children belong to everyone, so their health, wellness and growth are everyone's responsibility.

Goldberg added that if people do not have children involved in the center, they might not even know about it. If people can see the center's work, they will understand why it's so important.

"Also, I kept thinking about why people may be reluctant to support the MCCAC: there is still stigma attached to mental health care, and they think they are immune because their own children have not needed it," said Goldberg. "I have told people that their own children may be brilliant and perfect, but they are in school with kids who need the services. I know that because of my own children's peers ... a child advocacy center would have been useful then my own children were teens."





Congratulations, MCCAC, on 20 years!



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MCCAC's Journey **Celebrating 20 Years of Advocacy and Impact**



As the Monongalia County Child Advocacy Center (MCCAC) marks its 20th anniversary, we reflect on two decades of commitment to fostering resilience and well-being among children and families in our community. Over the years, MCCAC has evolved, adapting to the changing needs of those we serve while expanding our reach and impact.

Transformations Over Two Decades

Rising Mental Health Concerns

One of the most significant changes we have observed is the increase in mental health issues among children. The challenges facing today's youth are complex, with factors such as social media and technology, pandemic impact, and familial stressors contributing to heightened anxiety and depression rates. MCCAC has responded to this issue by ensuring children receive the comprehensive care they need by pro-

viding trauma informed and evidence-based therapy and thorough family advocacy services. Additionally, MCCAC identifies children who could benefit from mental health services by conducting mental health screenings after forensic interviews. Through these efforts, in 2024 89% of children were receiving therapy after a forensic interview.

In recent years, MCCAC has seen a significant increase in the number of risk assessments needed in our community. These risk assessments evaluate a client's likelihood of causing harm to themselves or others; the assessment helps providers create treatment plans and ensure safety. This surge reflects the rising mental health concerns among young people.

Expanded Reach and Services

From our humble beginnings, MCCAC has significantly increased the number of children and families we support. In 2024, MCCAC pro-

vided advocacy and support to 945 clients, which is our biggest reach yet. Our services have expanded from our Child Advocacy Center Program (forensic interviews, family advocacy services, and therapy) to include three additional programs: Community Education Program, Preventative Care Program, and the Drug Endangered Children Program. With expanding services, comes the need for more staff. Our agency now has eight full-time and six part-time staff members and numerous interns. This growth reflects our unwavering commitment to meeting the diverse needs of our community.

Impact and Achievements

Success Stories and Outcome Data

The successes of MCCAC can be measured not only in numbers but in the stories of resilience and recovery. Our data shows a marked improvement in outcomes for children who have engaged with our programs. Our data shows that children who receive our mental health services have:

- statistically significant decreases in behavioral symptoms such as hyperactivity, aggression, and conduct problems
- statistically significant decreases in emotional symptoms such as anxiety and depression
- statistically significant increases in coping skills such as resilience and adaptability

Parents of children who receive our mental health services have:

- decreased stress levels
- improvements in their relationships with their children

Impact isn't solely data, hearing from our clients is just as powerful - if not more.

"Recommended it to a friend - tells those she knows and suggests the center to provide them help. The CAC has done so much."

"They always listened to my concerns and/or anything else. Even when I talked way too much and took up more time. They have made my child very comfort-



able to be here."

"The staff are all so kind & helpful. We are new to fostering & they have been the best resource through all this. Thank you, CAC!"

"The employees at the Center are very friendly & professional. They truly care about the well being of the child."

"The help. I have been a very independent person my whole life and didn't know I could get that help I needed, but I did. Have helped me to find myself and go down a better path."

"Compassionate, the care is overwhelming. They are there for everything. Even if you repeat yourself 100 times, they say they are always there for you and listen anyways. Never-ending services. It's wonderful."

"Positive interventions; foster child wanting to come to CAC without whining & crying; very family centered goes out of the way to see child as part of a family unit. Thank you for your caring hearts & hands!"

Collaboration and Teamwork

The heart of MCCAC's success lies in our team's collaborative spirit. We provide not only direct services through our CAC Program, but we also coordinate and support a multidisciplinary team of professionals through this program that includes prosecutors, law enforcement officers, child protection workers, medical professionals, mental health professionals, and victim advocates. In the neutral setting of the MCCAC, team members can collaborate on strategies for investigations and plan interventions that put the child first. This innovative, multidisciplinary approach has been shown to improve outcomes for children.

Looking Forward

As we celebrate our 20th anniversary, we remain focused on our mission to protect and empower children and families. The challenges are ever evolving, but with the support of our community, we are confident in our ability to continue making a significant impact. Here's to the next 20 years of advocacy, growth, and success at MCCAC!

Hope and Healing at the Monongalia County Child Advocacy Center

What We Do: A Safe Place for Kids to Be Heard and Begin to Heal

At the heart of the MCCAC is a mission to ensure that children who have experienced abuse receive the support, care, and justice they deserve—all in a setting that prioritizes their safety, comfort, and dignity. When a child walks through our doors, they're entering a place designed just for them: one that listens without judgment, believes without hesitation, and responds with care.

We do this by providing three main resiliency building services: forensic interviews, therapy, and family advocacy services—at no out of pocket costs for the families.

Forensic Interviews: Centering the Child's Voice

When a child discloses abuse, it's critical that they only have to share their story once—to someone trained to listen. Our **forensic interviewers** are professionals who are specially trained to ask child victims a series of unbiased, non-leading questions to elicit information about the abuse in an age and developmentally appropriate manner. These interviews are recorded and observed by the investigative team (law enforcement, child protective services, prosecuting attorneys), minimizing trauma by avoiding repeated questioning.

By prioritizing the child's needs and well-being, forensic interviews not only protect the child but also strengthen the investigation process—ensuring that justice is pursued with accuracy and compassion.

Therapy Services: Healing Begins Here

Trauma can leave lasting scars, but with the right support, healing is absolutely possible. At MCCAC, we offer trauma-focused therapy to help children process their experiences, rebuild their sense of safety, and develop the tools they need to thrive. Our licensed therapists specialize in working with children who have experienced abuse, neglect, or other forms of trauma.

We provide individual, group, and family therapy that is trauma-focused and research-based. We use assessments to guide treatment decisions and track progress in treatment. Whether onsite at our Center,



through telehealth, or at the child's school, therapists create a comfortable, safe space for children to tell their trauma stories, identify and overcome challenges, develop positive coping skills and build healthy relationships. Because each child responds to trauma differently, our strategies focus on meeting the child where they are, and they provide general guidelines for care through art, play or conversation.

Family Advocacy: Walking Alongside Every Step of the Way

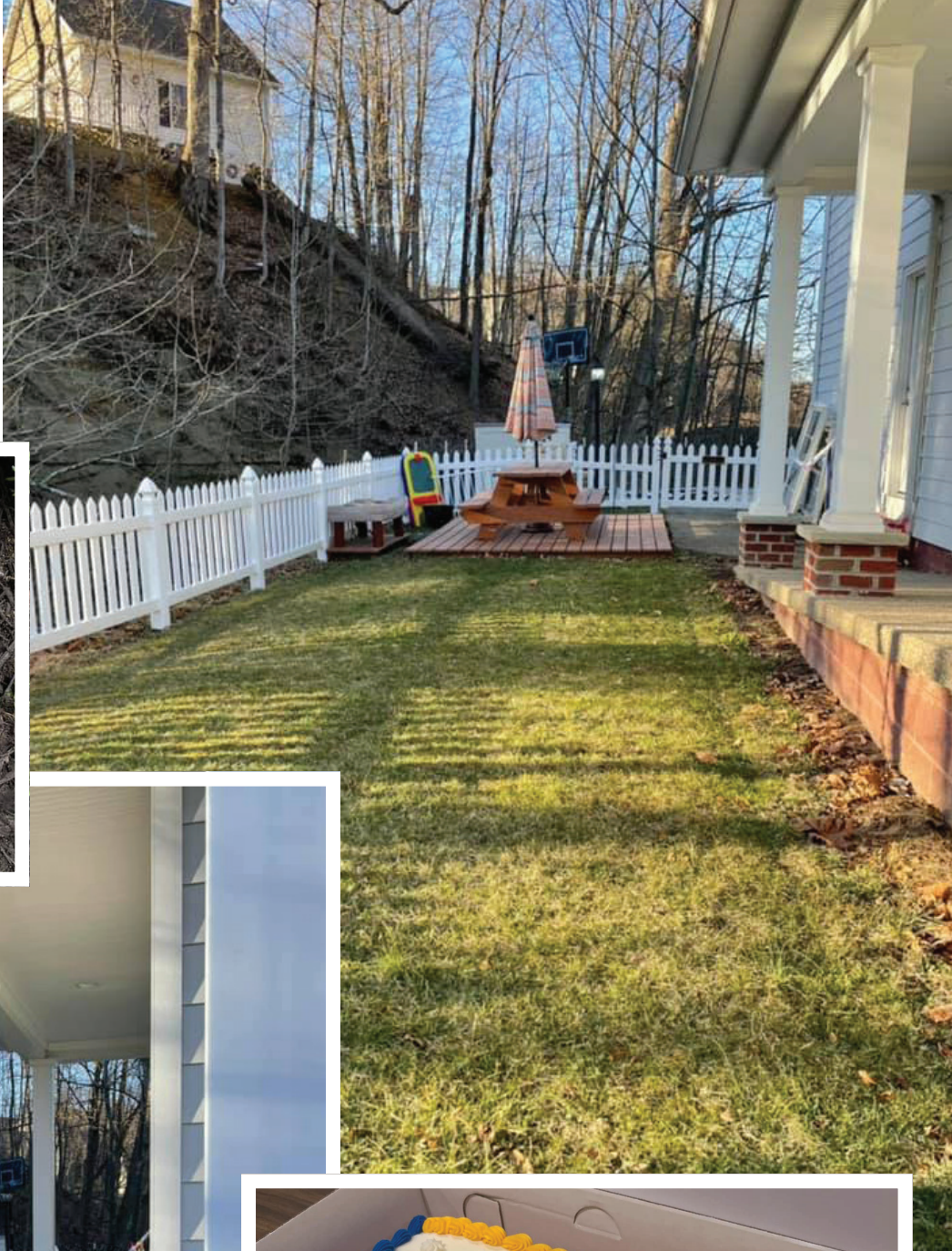
No family should ever have to navigate the aftermath of abuse alone. Our family advocates are here to guide, inform, and support families through every stage of the process—from the initial report and investigation to therapy and legal proceedings. They help families understand their rights, connect with resources, and stay grounded during what is often an overwhelming and emotional time.

Our Family Advocates have a strong background in child development and family systems and look at the strengths and needs of the entire family. Whether it's providing court accompaniment, connecting a family with resources in our community, assisting



with safety planning, or simply being a shoulder to lean on, our advocates are committed to standing beside families with empathy and knowledge.

At the Monongalia County Child Advocacy Center, hope is not just an idea—it's a promise. Every story shared, every step taken, and every life touched at MCCAC is a testament to the resilience of children and the power of community.





We're big fans of people who look out for people.

Congratulations to Mon County Child Advocacy Center on serving our children for 20 years. Hard work doesn't always get the recognition it deserves, so when it makes a community better, we take notice. We appreciate all your efforts, and keep making us stronger.

