



Strategic Plan Vision 2020

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SUPPORT CENTER FOR CHILD ADVOCATES

VISION 2020 *

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Introduction

The *Support Center for Child Advocates* (“*Child Advocates*”) hereby presents its Strategic Plan – *Vision 2020*. The Strategic Plan was prepared over a year and half of discovery, analysis and appreciative inquiry, utilizing the **SOAR** process to review *Child Advocates*’: **S**trengths (what are our greatest assets); **O**pportunities (what are the best possible market opportunities); **A**spirations, (what is our preferred future); and **R**esults (what are the measurable results).

The Board of Directors and staff of *Child Advocates* conducted a discovery phase which included a comprehensive interview process with over 40 stakeholders who are involved in the work of *Child Advocates*. The discovery phase led to 1 ½ day retreat held on March 7 and March 9, 2013. Following the retreat, the Drafting Committee held review sessions of materials from the interviews and retreat and prepared a draft Strategic Plan for the Board’s review and approval.

The Strategic Plan comprises five main areas determined by the Strategic Planning Committee and Drafting Committee and approved by the Board of Directors and staff as crucial to the stability and growth of *Child Advocates* into the future. These areas are as follows:

1. MISSION STATEMENT
2. FINANCE AND FUNDRAISING
3. STAFFING AND VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT
4. MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS
5. POLICY

The Strategic Plan sets forth in detail the areas of future maintenance and the development of these five areas as well as a related timeline. *Child Advocates* understands the need for ongoing review and evaluation of this seven year plan. The Board of Directors and staff are committed to such review and evaluation on a consistent basis and no less than annually with a vision for a realistic but progressive strategic plan.

* Approved by Board of Directors -- June 18, 2013

Mission Statement

Throughout its history, *Child Advocates* has responded to current and emerging needs of our client children and their families, to changes in laws and practice, and to opportunities to assist the community in improving care for its most vulnerable citizens. Opportunities for service in the coming years include: child safety and the “safety model of practice” in child welfare services; community-based caregiving for children such as kinship care and Philadelphia’s regionalized initiative *Improving Outcomes for Children*; child well-being, including behavioral health and educational advocacy, and the continued development of “whole child” representation; access to justice, quality improvement and outcomes measurement for child advocacy; and local, statewide and national training needs such as we are exploring through the *Center for Excellence in Advocacy*.

The Board of Directors adopted the following Mission Statement in 1992: to advocate for victims of child abuse and neglect in Philadelphia with the goal of securing a permanent, nurturing environment for every child. In an effort to memorialize the evolving work of *Child Advocates* and its role in the community, and to guide the organization into the future under Strategic Plan – *Vision 2020*, the organization reviewed and amended the mission of the organization.

I. New Mission Statement

To advocate for victims of child abuse and neglect with the goal of securing safety, justice, well-being and a permanent, nurturing environment for every child.

II. Vision Statement

Child Advocates will create a *Statement of Vision and Agency Values* (“Vision Statement”) that will be completed and approved by January 2014. Drafters of the Vision Statement will include staff and board members. The Vision Statement will include, among others, the following concepts:

- “Change the story”
- “Justice for children”
- “Whole child representation”
- “Volunteer-lawyer/social worker team”
- High-quality representation
- Legal and social work advocacy
- Support training and consultation for volunteers
- Broad goals that are inclusive of what we seek to achieve, e.g., educational stability, special immigrant juvenile Status, privacy interest in confidential records, etc.

Finance and Fundraising

As a non-profit organization that remains largely dependent on charitable giving to meet its operating expenses, *Child Advocates'* revenues and expenses fuel each of the other areas in this Strategic Plan. The agency faces seemingly ever-increasing pressures on its fundraising efforts from the slow growth of the economy. Operational and management efficiencies continue to be sought in order to "stretch" the charitable dollar. The Board and staff remain committed to maintaining or improving the current service delivery levels in numbers of children served and the quality of professional presence we bring to their lives. *Child Advocates* wants to create new service programs and new, sustainable revenue opportunities to meet those needs, and fund other projects (i.e., expansion of policy work, training, consultation). In order to respond to the increasing complexity and time-demands of direct service cases, the agency needs to decrease case-handling staff workload to 50 cases per worker. In order to expand the total number of children served each year, we must gradually add to staff by .50 FTE per fiscal year (total of 6 FTE during the term of the Strategic Plan). The following is the plan for finance and fundraising over the next seven years:

- I. Increase Ongoing Ordinary Revenues to Fund the Program - Ongoing
 - A. Increase regular revenues at a growth rate of approximately 3% annually – to match or keep ahead of inflation
 - B. Expand donor base with focus on increasing: number of monthly donors; outreach to and engagement of younger donors (i.e., via social networking and crowd sourcing); number of and giving levels of older donors (i.e., as part of Planned Giving Campaign)
 - C. Establish pathways to turn volunteers into donors
- II. Create New and Creative Revenue Opportunities – By Year 3
 - A. Find new sources of revenue using current program parts (i.e., establish fee structure for training sessions, create CLE videos, consultation services)
 - B. Develop program to market Holiday Card, and/or recommend donation opportunities to corporate partners as a replacement for holiday gifts
 - C. Create aggregate gift recognition or combine different giving opportunities into a one time, annual gift
- III. Generate Extraordinary Revenue by Establishing and Advancing Agency Capacity for Planned Giving – By Year 3
 - A. Create tools and fundraising opportunities to encourage and obtain planned giving (i.e., from will bequests, trust instruments)

- B. Create Child Advocates Foundation to focus on Planned Giving and specialized fundraising outreach – 12 to 18 month campaign to focus on larger and long term giving
 - C. Contribute funds toward an endowment when appropriate although not part of overall strategy, unless a large unrestricted sum becomes available (e.g., from sale of current building)
- IV. Keep Expenses in Line with Revenue Growth - Ongoing
- A. Expansion of new projects and staff should be in line with expected growth
 - B. Additions to staff outside of organic growth should be phased in as increased revenue becomes available
- V. Address Current and Future Office Space Needs - Ongoing
- A. Explore options for buying new building or leasing new space, including establishing price criteria for sale, strategies to market current building and time frame/parameters for new space
 - B. Continue to explore participation in and possible leadership of Civil Justice Center initiative

Staffing and Volunteer Management

Our advocacy practice is core to the mission of *Child Advocates*. In our model of practice, staff lawyers and social workers are teamed with volunteer attorneys. We work together to represent over 800 children a year, using a whole child model of practice. This model requires teams to understand not just the presenting case facts, but all facets of the child’s world including their behavioral health, physical health and educational needs. This knowledge informs our team’s recommendations and advocacy concerning safety, justice and permanency.

Historically, staff members have handled up to 80 clients per social worker and 45 per attorney. In a time study undertaken in 2007, staff determined that this caseload number was excessive and too high to ensure the quality of representation that we demand for every client. In order to optimize the whole child representation model, caseloads were expected to decrease over time to 55 clients per social worker and 25 per attorney. Since that time *Child Advocates* has decreased caseloads to 60 clients per social worker (i.e., at any point in time), a far better number but still short of the goal of 55. Staff attorneys now represent 30 children.

Given the intricate family dynamics involved in all forms of child abuse and neglect, there is no such thing as a simple case. As such, *Child Advocates’* demonstrated interdisciplinary expertise has proven invaluable. As a result, the courts continue to refer their most complex child abuse cases to our agency, secure in the knowledge that our advocacy teams will provide zealous advocacy to each client.

Changes in the court and child welfare system have direct implications for representation. As the court has doubled the number of hearings per child per year and the county system has undertaken a significant shift in case responsibilities, we recognize that maintenance of our quality representation is more important than ever. To ensure continuation of quality representation, *Child Advocates* has created a number of team supports as noted below:

- Initial Case Meeting (ICM): When a new client is accepted, the team meets to discuss the information gathered thus far about the client. During this review, we outline a plan for gathering additional information, next steps and a trial strategy.
- Permanency Meeting: Typically held between 10 and 13 months into a representation, the team convenes again to evaluate the representation, discuss the plan for permanency and adapt the trial strategy as needed.
- Specialized software for case management and outcomes measurement.
- Special Projects: We have identified and developed expertise in representing populations of children who have special needs, including: older youth; medically needy children; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning (LGBTQ) youth; children with behavioral health needs; and children with educational needs.
- Advanced Trainings: We provide trainings on a multiplicity of topics including: trial advocacy skills; representing children in special populations; trauma-focused therapy; and other sessions to improve advocacy and care for children and youth. In fiscal year 2013, staff members were responsible for presenting or coordinating 76 trainings, presented to more than 1,700 attorneys and allied professionals.

Accordingly, we believe in continually strengthening and supporting of our staff and volunteers as set forth in the metrics below.

I. Improve Child Advocates Direct Services

A. Staffing

1. Continue caseload reforms by reducing number of cases to 50 cases per worker
 - a. Hire two additional Social Workers
 - (1) December 2013 – hire first additional social worker, reduce caseload to 55
 - (2) June 2015 – hire second additional social worker, reduce caseload to 50

- b. Hire one additional Social Work Supervisor – December 2014
 - 2. Revise Staff Attorney role and responsibility towards consulting/training – March 2014
 - 3. Hire one additional Staff Attorney – to address immigration or education issues – September 2013
 - 4. Maintaining Spanish-speaking Child Advocate Social Worker and continue to emphasize hiring of Spanish-speaking staff – Ongoing
 - 5. Hire Administrative Support
 - a. Hire Center for Excellence in Advocacy Project Manager – October 2013
 - b. Hire one Administrative Case Support person – June 2014
- B. Improve and advance case management and outcomes measurement programs - ongoing
- C. Consider increasing the number of clients served, with necessary added staff
 - 1. Hire two additional Social Workers
 - a. June 2016 – hire additional social worker, increase number of clients served by 50-60/year
 - b. June 2018 – hire additional social worker, increase number of clients served by 50-60/year
 - c. June 2018 – hire additional staff attorney, increase number of clients served by 25-30/year

II. Enhance our Relationship with Volunteers

- A. Enhance or support, training and communication with Volunteer Attorneys
 - 1. Train staff on how to more effectively work with volunteers – Ongoing
 - 2. Expand use of social media – Ongoing
 - 3. Create an on-line forum for volunteers to build community and inform about advocacy issues and case law – Ongoing
 - 4. Develop new marketing tools and techniques to reinvigorate the recruitment process

- a. Tell the stories more effectively, perhaps via social media – Ongoing
 - b. Recruit and train specialists in domestic relations – by June 2014 and annually
- 5. Improve education materials to move Volunteer Attorneys to embrace their responsibilities to appear at every court hearing and every home visit. - Ongoing
- 6. Transmit sense of value and satisfaction to our volunteers; “change your story”- Ongoing
- 7. Work with court to address issues that impact advocacy practice (e.g., wait times for hearings) – Ongoing
- 8. Develop training and consultation programs through the *Center for Excellence in Advocacy*
- B. Enhance our support for lay volunteers
 - 1. Hire a part-time Lay-Volunteer Coordinator – Seasonally
 - 2. Continue to investigate new ways to attract, utilize and support lay volunteers for various responsibilities including: Events such as Toy Drive, ABR, Run, Golf Outing, Marketing, Policy and Administration/office help – Ongoing

Marketing and Public Relations

Child Advocates' success in fundraising, volunteer recruitment and reputation rests on its ability to increase visibility, raise awareness and educate audiences through branding, marketing and public relations. In 2007, the agency underwent an extensive re-branding process led by Bruce Lev and his creative team at LevLane. The result was a new logo, tagline and brand identity that is in place today. This brand has been refreshed in recent years, but remains loyal to the original vision and purpose.

Over the years, *Child Advocates* has improved and increased press relations, publishing numerous op-eds on current events, staff and Board profiles, event highlights and more. The agency incorporated social media into its communications plan in 2009 and continue to develop new strategies to leverage various social media platforms, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram. We invested in the new half-time position of Communications Associate to manage our online presence. In 2013, *Child Advocates* upgraded our website and moved to a WordPress platform to allow staff to manage and update our site in real time.

I. Public and Media Relations

A. Show Impact - Year 1

1. Measure impact of gifts on each program
2. Identify cost of serving a child in each program
3. Develop case stories that show outcomes
4. Develop materials to show monetary impact of gift

B. Diversify Spokespersons - Year 1

1. Identify staff (and Board members) to assign press calls
2. Create subject matter expert memos on each person
3. Promote to media outlets

C. Media Training - Year 2 to 3

1. Hire consultant, for workshop
2. Create Media Guide

D. Public Campaigns

1. Acquire donated media – radio spots, billboards, ads
2. Purchase PSAs, Center City District banners, commercials - Year 5

II. Branding Loyalty and Refreshing

A. Assess Impact of Brand - Year 1 to 2

1. Identify where we currently use branding well
2. Perform SOAR analysis
3. Implement new branding opportunities

B. Expand Brand Messaging - Year 2

1. Use “Change Your Story” where appropriate
2. Develop aspirational campaign

3. Communicate impact of gifts

III. Staff and Budget Resources

- A. Add Budget Line for Marketing - Year 2
- B. Hire and Retain Marketing Associate - Year 5

Public Policy

Formed by resolution in 2012, the Public Policy Committee of the Board of Directors is an advisory committee that provides an essential link between the staff of *Child Advocates* and the Board of Directors on issues of public policy related to children and families, and other areas of concern. The Committee is tasked with the responsibility of reviewing public positions of the agency when invited by the Executive Director, the President or other Board Committees or when it elects to do so. As a resource to the Executive Director, it may be called upon to advise the Executive Director and staff as they interface with the media and participate in the public marketplace of ideas. To assist in the determination of whether *Child Advocates* should take a position on public policy matters, as well as the substance and parameters of the position, the Committee may examine and review documents and presentations such as the following: Board Resolutions; media releases; op-ed commentaries; anticipated testimony before legislative committees; and amicus briefs. The Committee may also generate public policy proposals for Board consideration.

Child Advocates has, and will continue to be committed to the work that impacts positive change in the systems of care for children. From 2002 to 2010, the agency co-led the National Children’s Law Network, a collaboration by eight independent children’s law centers to improve the quality of vigorous legal representation to children, increase and document our effectiveness, and to advocate that all court-involved children be is “in school, in the right school, and finishing school.” *Child Advocates* has sought to influence public opinion through the publishing of op-eds, pursued law reform via amicus curiae brief filings, provision of testimony in the legislature and participation in procedural rules committees, and engaged public agency initiatives such as the Philadelphia Department of Human Services’ Quality Service Review and Improving Outcomes for Children. Over the next seven years, *Child Advocates* will embrace the next phase of public policy work as set forth in the strategic matrices below.

- I. Continue to utilize the Board of Directors Public Policy Committee as an Advisory Committee.
- II. Director of Policy – Year 2 to 3
 - A. *Child Advocates* will strive to hire a full-time Director of Policy, who will support the voice of *Child Advocates* and enable the Executive Director to express the organization’s initiatives.

- B. The Executive Director will continue to influence public opinion, while the Director of Policy will work towards shaping and implementing policy.

III. Public Policy Agenda/Criteria – Year 3 to 5

- A. The Committee will develop criteria consistent with client needs and the mission, vision and values of the organization.
- B. The template will serve as a prism through which public statements are viewed and scrutinized, and through which targeted policy initiatives are pursued.

IV. Broader Initiatives Consideration – Year 5 to 7

- A. The Public Policy Committee will generate and undertake short-term, targeted policy as well as broader initiatives, including local, regional and national policy work.

V. Future of Public Policy – Ongoing

- A. *Child Advocates* will explore separating the public policy component of its work away from the program component of its work by creating a separate legal structure. This will require consideration of the relationship between our public policy positions and direct client representation and other programming.