



Sunflower House & UCS:

Creating Services to Protect & Benefit Children

Sponsored by United Community Services of Johnson County (UCS), the Child Abuse Prevention Coalition began in the late 1970s, and in 1978 offered the first county-wide child abuse prevention education program implemented in schools. Today's Sunflower House is a result of a 1997 merger between the Coalition and the Sunflower Children's Center, and serves Johnson and Wyandotte counties as a non-residential children's advocacy and abuse prevention center.

The agency addresses abuse and neglect through a comprehensive approach, engaging children, parents, child-serving professionals and the community. UCS remains a vital supporter of the agency's vision to see safe children thriving in nurturing families and communities.

The Need

In the late 1970s, child abuse was a rarely talked-about subject anywhere in the country. In Johnson County, advocates knew something needed to be done to protect children from physical and sexual abuse. At the heart of the discussion was UCS, which assumed a leadership role as the community sought to collaborate and mobilize resources to better address child abuse.

The Result

UCS assembled a task force comprised of Johnson County legislators, representatives from cities and county government, human service providers and other advocates. The group's work centered on how to deliver a child-friendly child abuse and neglect education program that could be conducted locally.

As a result of these efforts, the Johnson County Coalition to Prevent Child Abuse was incorporated in 1977 under the umbrella of UCS' 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status and was one of the first and most successful child abuse coalitions in the state.

The Impact

Over the years, Sunflower House has expanded services to include a child assessment program, which includes coordinating abuse investigation with partner organizations, conducting forensic interviewing and providing family advocacy. The agency offers education programs for both children and adults including the signature Happy Bear play, which was designed specifically for young children to help them recognize, resist and report sexual abuse.

In a welcoming and friendly environment, mental health providers on staff provide therapy to children who have experienced a trauma. Sunflower House is now an accredited member of the National Children's Alliance.

“Over the years, UCS has continued to play a vital role in the sustainability of programs and services such as Sunflower House. UCS has galvanized cities to be a part of a larger effort to help meet the human service needs of our community.”

***Michelle Herman,
Sunflower House President & CEO***

For more than 40 years, UCS has played an important role in support of Sunflower House. The agency has been a perennial recipient of grants from the UCS-managed Human Service Fund, which is financially supported by Johnson County Government and 15 cities within the County. In addition to relying on UCS planning and research, Sunflower House is a member of the UCS-led Children's Coordinating Council, which works to improve the availability and delivery of health and human services for Johnson County children and youth.

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