



SOCIAL SERVICES NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Jan. 15, 2015

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DEBORAH JOHNSON RETIRES AS DIRECTOR OF THE CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY AND PROTECTION CENTER

CONOVER -- Deborah Johnson, director of the Children's Advocacy and Protection Center of Catawba County, recently retired after 10 years of service.

The CAPC works with law enforcement, the District Attorney's Office, and Catawba County Social Services, to prevent and respond to child sexual abuse and severe physical abuse. Located in Conover, the agency was previously known as the Children's Advocacy Center.

Vickie Martin, chair of the CAPC Board, said: "I have had the pleasure of working with Deb for the past three years and I can certainly attest to her passion for her involvement with the CAPC during her tenure with the organization. With the vision of herself and the board, she has successfully led the organization to where we are today. We are thankful for her complete immersion into the organization and wish her well in her retirement. She will be missed by all who have been a part of this wonderful organization."



Deborah Johnson

The CAPC collaborates with other agencies during their investigations of alleged child sexual abuse in a manner that is child-centered and does not unnecessarily expose the child to repeated interviews. The CAPC provides a safe, home-like environment where the child can undergo a physical examination and be interviewed by staff trained in appropriate techniques for interviewing child victims. The CAPC also provides counseling to the child victims and their non-offending caregivers.

In 2011, the CAC merged with the Children's Protection Council to form the CAPC. During Johnson's tenure, the CAPC has expanded its mission by providing educational programs designed to prevent child abuse. Primary among these is the Stewards of Children: Darkness to Light program, which trains adults in ways to prevent child sexual abuse and respond appropriately to this type of abuse.

The agency has also promoted the Safe Sleep campaign to make parents and others aware of the importance of placing infants on their backs to sleep and having them sleep alone in their crib. Another educational

program of the CAPC has been the Period of Purple Crying, which aims to educate parents about the appropriate response to prolonged crying by an infant (formerly referred to as colic). The agency also awards the Hancock-Settlemyre Award, which is presented annually to an individual, community group, or business that has worked to enhance the quality of life in Catawba County by reducing the likelihood of child maltreatment or alleviating family stress.

Prior to joining the CAPC, Johnson served in the US Air Force for 22 years. She also previously worked for an agency that provided temporary shelter and transitional living services for persons experiencing homelessness. She holds a master's degree in social work from New Mexico State University, a master's degree in religion from Lutheran Southern Seminary, and a bachelor's in management from Park University. She also serves as a diaconal minister with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Following her retirement, Johnson said she plans to spend some time traveling.

For more information about the CAPC of Catawba County, go to www.catawbacountycapc.org or call 828-465-9296.

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