

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
Linda Norris
THROUGH: LINDA NORRIS, CITY MANAGER PRO TEM
Jan Calvin
FROM: JAN CALVIN, ACTING DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
SUBJECT: SALEM SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDER UPDATE: LIBERTY HOUSE

ISSUE:

Monthly, the Social Service Advisory Board highlights one of the social services supported by City funding through General Fund dollars and/or federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds.

RECOMMENDATION:

Information only.

BACKGROUND:

Among the duties of the Social Service Advisory Board is the responsibility to monitor and report on the social services supported by City funds. Liberty House provides child abuse assessment to at-risk children and crisis counseling for non-offending family members of children experiencing abuse or neglect. The 2007-08 CDBG allocation to help support this program is \$16,377.

FACTS AND FINDINGS:

1. Liberty House is a nonprofit organization created to assist the community in better responding to cases of suspected child abuse and neglect. Liberty House coordinates the efforts of professionals in the fields of medicine, mental health, child protection, and law enforcement by providing specialty evaluations of child abuse and neglect as well as crisis counseling services for non-offending family members.
2. Services are centered on a respected team of medical providers who have extensive training in identifying and treating child abuse and neglect. Trained child interviewers provide important support to the medical providers in assessing concerns of abuse and helping children to talk about what has happened to them. Complementing Liberty House's medical services are crisis and support services, educational groups for non-offending parents/caregivers, information and referral services, medical case consultation, and community education. Liberty House is the only organization in our community providing these specialized intervention services.
3. In conjunction with Willamette University and the Marion County District Attorney's Office, Liberty House conducted a study to look at the legal outcomes of criminal cases where the alleged victim received a Liberty House child abuse assessment, as compared to children in comparable cases who did not come to Liberty House. This research found improved prosecution with cases whose children were assessed at Liberty House. Particularly with the youngest children, offenders are more likely to be prosecuted, convicted, and convicted of more counts when the children's abuse was documented at Liberty House. Not only is this a positive public safety outcome, but it has a preventative measure as well because it is understood that many offenders victimize more than one child.