



**IF YOU KNEW WHAT WE KNEW, YOU'D HELP**

# SCAN-IT

**Volume 3  
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## Coming Events:

### SCAN's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary—2011

In 2011, SCAN will celebrate its 20th anniversary. We are planning several events throughout the year. Friend us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and visit us at [www.grscan.com](http://www.grscan.com) to stay up to date! Please contact Bethany Leighton at [bleighton@grscan.com](mailto:bleighton@grscan.com) to get involved.

### Heartbeat of Hope Benefit for SCAN – February 17, 2011

Heartbeat of Hope will be hosting a benefit for SCAN and Anna Julia Cooper Episcopal School 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. at the Tuckahoe Woman's Club. Ike Stubblefield will perform with other guests throughout the night. Purchase tickets at <http://grscan.ticketleap.com/HeartbeatofHope/>

### SCAN 5K – February 26, 2011

Run! Jog! Walk! – It doesn't matter just as long as you come out and support SCAN's work to help Richmond's most vulnerable children. Join us in the Race to Protect Children. Register at [www.grscan.com/news](http://www.grscan.com/news)!

### Bourbon Street in Shockoe Bottom – March 5, 2011

You won't want to miss the fourth annual Bourbon Street in Shockoe Bottom hosted by SCAN's Board of Young Professionals. This event will be held at the Main Street Station. Purchase tickets at <http://www.grscan.ticketleap.com/bourbonstreet/>

## From the Executive Director:

SCAN is entering its 20<sup>th</sup> year of service to the greater Richmond community. As we celebrate this milestone, SCAN staff, volunteers and supporters are reminded of why it is that we continue work to help children in our community. Often, one story of a child who has been hurt is all that it takes to remember that our services are needed. While this is true, the numbers of children who suffer from abuse and neglect also continue to compel us in our work as you can see in the most recent statistics from the Virginia Department of Social Services from the 2009-2010 fiscal year. This year, we recommit to the urgency of our mission to reduce the incidences of child abuse and neglect by offering education and treatment at the individual level and by encouraging change at the system level. Thank you for joining us in creating a community that values and cares for its children.

### *Child Abuse and Neglect in Virginia*

- 4,058** Number of founded [proven] cases of child abuse and/or neglect in Virginia
- 45** Number of children who died as a result of their abuse and/or neglect
- 55.3** Percentage of maltreated children who experienced physical neglect including failure to provide food, clothing, shelter or supervision to the extent the child's health was endangered
- 25.9** Percentage of maltreated children who were victims of physical abuse
- 13.39** Percentage of maltreated children who were victims of sexual abuse

## Abes for Babes

SCAN will be kicking off the "Abes for Babes" campaign on February 1st. This grass roots campaign is focused on engaging the community in the fight against child abuse and neglect based on the simple concept: "Have a penny? Help a child." SCAN is working with local businesses, schools and other organizations to collect pennies in support of our services. Keep an eye out for our Abes for Babes cans throughout the Spring. If you'd like to get involved or set up your own penny drive at home, please contact Bethany Leighton at [bleighton@grscan.com](mailto:bleighton@grscan.com).



### Raising a Family Member's Child

In Family Support Program education and treatment groups, SCAN is not always working with the parents of children. In our KinCare Group, SCAN facilitator Shanza Isom educates and supports relatives who take care of a family member's child. Unlike the majority of Family Support Program groups, which are comprised of court-ordered caregivers, the KinCare group does not have mandatory attendance and is considered an open group—the caregivers in the group come because they want to. SCAN provides bus tickets and taxi vouchers to ensure the group is truly open to all those who want to attend.

The group meets twice a month. During each meeting, caregivers are able to give updates on their families and share their concerns and worries. Often times this group is comprised of grandparents who take care of their own child's children. Many of the caregivers are still struggling with issues related to the child's biological parent. Also, for many of the grandparents, their age and resulting health issues create an everyday struggle when they are caring for young children. Simply sharing these stories with others who understand provides meaningful relief. While the caregivers are meeting, children also engage in support groups with other children who have had similar experiences helping them to better cope with the loss of a parent.

Shanza says she asks every few weeks about the needs of each caregiver and how SCAN can use the group to better meet those needs. The need for increased knowledge of kinship rights and financial resources often tops the list. Shanza invites guest speakers to talk about these issues. The biggest impact SCAN makes through the group, says Shanza, is by offering the platform to motivate these caregivers to persevere and for them to develop a strong support network.

### Legislative Advocacy with the CAC and CASA

While SCAN works to change lives with each client we educate, treat and empower, SCAN also aims to shape our community's future by advocating for the safety of children at the system level. On January 19, SCAN led a Legislative Advocacy Day in the Virginia General Assembly with our Virginia partners who also advocate for the best interests of children so that we could speak with lawmakers in a unified voice about the work we do, about the bills they are working on and ways in which we could assist in their initiatives to create a safer state for children.

Led by a SCAN graduate intern and the CASA Legislative Committee, nearly 30 people from CASA programs throughout the state have been meeting since last fall to discuss legislative issues and other system-wide concerns. There are 27 CASA programs throughout the state who advocate for children in their local juvenile and domestic relations courts. CASA representatives—program coordinators, case managers and volunteers—set up appointments with lawmakers to talk about the importance of CASA's work throughout the state. The group of CASA representatives was also introduced in front of both the Senate and House of Delegates.

Also making strides in the Capitol were Child Advocacy Center representatives from throughout the state. Led by SCAN staff and the CACVA Legislative Committee, CAC representatives have been arranging appointments with lawmakers since last fall. The goal of this initiative, especially in a non-budget year, says CAC Coordinator Ian Danielsen, is to educate lawmakers about the positive outcomes the state sees as a result of services such as SCAN's. Specifically, he said, it was an ideal opportunity to explain the efficiency and effectiveness of the CAC model to lawmakers. Most importantly, these meetings with legislators allows SCAN and our partners in Virginia to extend our hands as experts to lawmakers who would like to work on legislation that will affect children.

SCAN also works with Prevent Child Abuse Virginia by sitting on a legislative committee to draft a document of bills that our organizations both support and oppose. The goal of all of these initiatives is to strengthen and expand the network of people and organizations who work to protect children in Virginia.

**Right: CASA representatives from throughout the state joined legislators in the General Assembly on January 19.**



**Left: SCAN's student interns joined in on the efforts to speak with and educate lawmakers about SCAN's work and the importance of creating a safe state for Virginia's Children.**

### Treating Childhood Trauma at the Circle Preschool Program

In the Circle Preschool Program, SCAN staff will provide high quality early childhood education and mental health treatment to children who have experienced trauma. As Dr. Bruce Perry has written, "all experiences change the brain... Because the brain is organizing at such an explosive rate in the first years of life, experiences during this period have more potential to influence the brain - in positive and negative ways."

Traumatic experiences, which include all forms of abuse and neglect, impact areas of the brain that respond to threat, potentially changing these areas of the brain permanently. Children who have experienced trauma may initially express extreme worries, severe strong emotions, aggressive behaviors, overall difficulty relating to peers, intrusive thoughts, lack of trust in others, fears about safety, and nightmares. In order to heal children in a way that these short-term symptoms don't turn into long-term challenges, therapeutic interventions, like many of the strategies that will be used in the Circle Preschool Program, must target those portions of the brain that have been altered by the trauma.

Understanding of neurodevelopment is constantly evolving thanks to researchers such as Dr. Perry. Much of the current research identifies a clear rationale for early aggressive, pro-active interventions. "The earlier we intervene, the more likely we will be to preserve and express a child's potential," writes Dr. Perry. Our teachers and mental health therapists who will help children in the Circle Preschool continually look to the latest studies that suggest the best approaches for assessment, intervention and treatment.



Community members gather to see the new Circle Preschool Program classroom at an open house on Jan. 13.

For more about trauma and its effects on children, please visit: <http://childtrauma.org/index.php/articles>

### Finding Strengths to Build Happier Families

SCAN's Families are Magic (FAM) public education program aims to arm caregivers with knowledge about how to better raise their children and how to strengthen their families. Denise Noble, FAM Coordinator, bases all of FAM's programs and trainings on promoting "protective factors," of which there are five: nurturing and attachment, knowledge of parenting and of child and youth development, parental resilience, social connections, and concrete supports for parents.

The five protective factors are based on the main characteristics that help create and maintain a healthy family. Each of these protective factors allows for Denise and other FAM educators to build on the strengths of caregivers rather than focus on their negative circumstances and risk factors. Everyone wants to raise a happy and healthy child, Executive Director Jeanine Harper says, but the question is where does that plan go wrong? Protective factors are emphasized in all of SCAN's programs to strengthen families.

For instance, SCAN enhances social connections through the FAM Circle of Parents groups. Also, through its Website, [www.FAMRichmond.org](http://www.FAMRichmond.org), caregivers can access knowledge about child and youth development. In our 15 different Family Support Program treatment and education groups "parental resilience" is emphasized. This protective factor focuses on creating caregivers who are better able to handle everyday stressors and cope with occasional crises.

If you would like to learn more about protective factors, please visit [www.childwelfare.gov/parenting](http://www.childwelfare.gov/parenting).

### Thank you Protector's Circle 2010-2011 Members

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