



April 2010

In This Issue

- Make Your Gift Now
- CSC Training: The Wakanheza Project
- Supervised Visitation in the News
- CSC Spotlight!
- SVN Gold Standards

Make your gift now to support Children's Safety Centers. Just click the button below.



Gifts made through GiveMN.org will ensure that 100% of your donation goes directly to our agency with no processing fees. Thank you for your support!

Quick Links...

- [Our Website](#)
- [Charity Golf Classic](#)
- [Donate now](#)
- [Services](#)

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

Spring has arrived and it continues to be busy at all of our sites. Great things are happening and we want to continue to share news, events, stories and successes with you. Thank you for taking the time to stay up to date with the latest about the Children's Safety Centers and the profession of supervised visitation.

CSC STAFF GET TRAINING IN THE PRINCIPLES OF THE WAKANHEZA PROJECT

One of the many ways CSC sets itself apart from other supervised visitation options is the continued commitment to training for our staff. After completing a rigorous initial training to become a visit supervisor, all staff and volunteers attend continuing education trainings every other month. At these trainings, CSC brings in experts to train on a variety of subjects including cultural inclusion and sensitivity, domestic violence, child abuse, chemical dependency, de-escalation, updated safety protocols and various other topics of importance to ensure that staff are able to deliver the highest quality service to our families. In addition to inviting local experts to train at these events, CSC staff also participate in role plays, watch videos, and participate in ongoing dialogue to refresh skills, act out particularly high stress situations, and have a forum for which to discuss the "grey areas" of providing supervised visitation for families in crisis.

We are very excited to announce and provide information from our most recent training.

While much of the focus of CSC's time and energy (and newsletter space!) goes into creating a safe environment for the families we serve, it is also of great importance to us that the families that use our services are able to connect and (re)build relationships while they are here. To create an environment where our families feel comfortable, our staff practice respectful interactions and are forward thinking and proactive about preventing problems before they arise. With this in mind, we were excited to welcome Don Gault and Darleen Simmons from the St. Paul/Ramsey County Department of Public Health to train our staff and volunteers on The Wakanheza Project.

The Wakanheza Project was established by The Initiative for Peaceful

Families and Communities in Ramsey County. The Wakanheza Project mission is to teach principles and strategies that can help you to create healthy, welcoming environments for children, young people, families and adults in your community. The main tenets of the Wakanheza Project philosophy are to avoid judgment, assess the situation, assess yourself, offer assurance, show empathy, redirect, and find something positive to offer encouragement about. These tactics help our staff with their interactions with our families. When a parent with a history of violence or abuse becomes increasingly agitated, our staff can display empathy, de-escalate the situation, and offer support to avoid a potentially dangerous situation. Creating an environment and a way of communicating that prevents violence can be as critical to maintaining safety as any of our other safety procedures. We are very grateful to Don and Darlene as well as the Wakanheza project and look forward to utilizing what was learned to best serve our families.

[For more information about the Wakanhez Project click here.](#)

IN THE NEWS:

WE MUST INVEST IN PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISED VISITATION SERVICES OR THE COST IS TOO GREAT

In the recent months we have highlighted several instances where well-intentioned "professionals" have made seemingly "minor" oversights while monitoring visitations that have resulted in tragedy. We continue to be disappointed at the level of rigor that court appointed supervised visitation services are held to when dealing with these potentially dangerous cases. Often, assessments will be made about the danger of a case, but the truth is that you never know when safety is a concern, therefore, all supervised visitation should be done by professionals that are trained in this very specific service.

In the recent tragedies, courts have directed these families in crisis to utilize either poorly trained court appointed monitors or family members to monitor the visits. Many court appointed monitors do not have the network of colleagues and depth of experience to understand how to safely counteract all the possible nuances that may go awry during a visit with a potentially dangerous family member. Furthermore, many family members may be so deeply embedded in the situation or socialized by family norms to not be able to recognize warning signs, or not be properly equipped to handle them when they occur. While recent newsletters have certainly spoken to this dangerous trend, the most recent story pulled from the headlines speaks to another chilling danger within the arena of supervised visitation.

Two years ago in Florida, a family was ordered by the court-ordered to have the mother utilize the visitation services of a local psychologist

when visiting with her 15 year old son. Although one may assume that the years of training in psychology and family dynamics would equip a psychologist to remain in control of a supervised visit, this psychologist's failure to perform basic safety protocol led to another family tragedy. Without effectively pre-screening the mother for weapons, she was able to bring two knives into the visitation and stabbed her son multiple times. While the psychologist was knowledgeable about many aspects of family psychology, there is no indication that she or the agency she is employed with is a member of the multinational supervised visitation network. The basic preventative safety measures of a supervised visitation center such as Children's Safety Centers would have found the knives before the visit began and would have clear procedures to properly address the situation.

[To read more about the attack during the supervised visitation click here](#)

CSC Spotlight!

With the many roles and responsibilities that go into making CSC a success, we wanted to use the CSC SPOTLIGHT in each newsletter as a way to highlight members of the CSC family. In this space we will let you get to know a member of our staff, board members, or one of our many volunteers. This newsletter spotlights our Finance Manager, Delia Ruiz who has been on the staff for just over sixth months. Here is a bit of information to get to know Delia better:

What role do you play at the Children's Safety Centers?

I am the accountant and Spanish translator.

Why have you worked with CSC in this capacity?

I love CSC's Mission, love to serve people and I feel that I am a great accountant.

Where did you grow up?

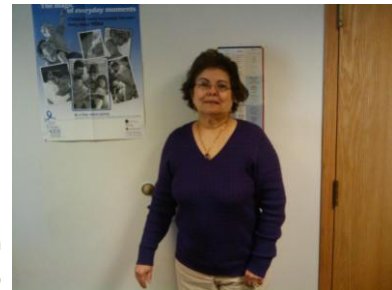
I lived on a farm in Cidra, Puerto Rico until I was 12 years old. After that I moved to Chicago and lived there until I came to Minnesota fifteen years ago.

What is your favorite food?

My favorite food is "Pork with Vianda" (Vianda are a variety of roots that grows in tropical places.)

What is your biggest accomplishment?

My biggest accomplishment was leaving a domestic abuse situation, putting myself through school while I was working to be able to



provide a comfortable life for my son and I.

What do you do in your free time?

I love to help members of my community by translating. Educating others on health, nutrition and how to live a healthier less stressful life.

If you could go anywhere in the world where would you go?

I am not sure; every country has beautiful and interesting places to visit and I would love to see all of them.

SUPERVISED VISITATION NETWORK ANNOUNCES ITS NEW GOLD STANDARDS

The Supervised Visitation Network (SVN) is an international membership organization of professionals who provide supervised visitation services. SVN provides standards and guidelines for best practices based on the experience of supervised visitation providers and domestic violence/child abuse activists throughout the world. SVN also conducts trainings all around the country and provides a network of providers to consult with and share ideas for bettering the practices of supervised visitation providers everywhere. CSC has been a longtime member of SVN since opening its doors in 1991 and our Executive Director, Teri Walker McLaughlin, was a past SVN President as well as the recipient of SVN's prestigious 2009 Judith Wallach President's Award for Outstanding Contribution and Service to the Supervised Visitation Profession. Teri is also an approved SVN trainer and a consultant for visitation and exchange centers, providing training and consultation to many programs state-wide and nationally. Over the years, CSC has opened its doors to other providers looking to model their visitation centers around the standards and practices that Children's Safety Centers follows.

In early February, the Supervised Visitation Network decided to enhance their expectation for the standards that providers of supervised visitations abide by. SVN has created different levels of membership that included the new highest level being denoted as the "Gold Standard." Once learning of this addition, CSC began working towards meeting the necessary requirements to become a Gold Standard member. In the early stages of this process it is clear that CSC already is doing what is required and in some cases more to be a Gold Standard member and we are well underway to meeting this standard completely. As always, CSC is committed to upholding the highest standards to ensure that we are prepared and trained to work with the diverse needs of every family we serve.

To learn more about SVN and the new gold standards for visitation providers go to:

<http://www.svnetwork.net>

