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What's in a name

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 Comments (No comments posted.)

GURNEE – It didn't move and it has not changed its mission. Its only changed its name to honor the people who have made so many contributions.

The Lake County Council Against Sexual Assault (La Casa) is now the Zacharias Sexual Abuse Center. The name officially changed on Jan. 1, 2008.

"We didn't like the fact that we didn't have sexual abuse center in our name because that's what we are," said Torrie Flink, executive director of Zacharias Sexual Abuse Center.

This is just one of the reasons why the decision was made to change the name of the organization. Flink said although the name change had been in the works for a long time, the move was not taken lightly.

Flink explained that it was a bold move for an organization that has been here for 25 years to change its name. But that there were many issues that made the change a good idea.

Along with consistent phone calls confusing the center with a restaurant.

"The word Lake County in our name was limiting us to funds from other places," Flink said. "We help people from all of greater northeastern Illinois."

The board also wanted to include the name of the family that made possible the construction of the building they're in.

After Richard Zacharias passed away, his family and friends chose La Casa while looking for a grassroots organization that could benefit from a substantial gift in his honor.

A gift of \$100,000 was given to La Casa 19 years ago, which allowed for the organization to grow.

"Our foundation's support meant that, for the first time, La Casa was afforded the resources to reach children through intervention, prevention, advocacy, and counseling," said Nancy Zacharias, daughter of Richard Zacharias in a press release.

"In the past 10 years we've become the people that the hospitals, police stations, and schools go to," said Joseph Howard, director of development at the Zacharias center.

Staff members of the Zacharias center go to hospitals to educate medical providers on how to properly communicate and interact with sexual assault victims.

They also visit schools to deliver age appropriate education to the students.

The Zacharias Sexual Abuse Center has changed its Web site to www.ZachariasCenter.org.



The Zacharias Center in Gurnee provides 24-hour crisis intervention, counseling services and advocacy support to people in the northeastern Illinois area. (Amanda Schwengel photo)

All services at the center are free and bilingual outreach is available.

It provides services to men, women, and children regardless of age and race.

For more information, call 847-244-1187. The hot line number is 847-872-7799.

Series recap

For five weeks, the Lake County Journals will examine the Zacharias Sexual Abuse Center and the services it provides. Below is a look at the series in its entirety.

Feb. 28: Name change and background of the center.

March 6: A look at survivors of sexual abuse: When the system works and when it fails.

March 13: How the center works with the community: The center's links with schools, hospitals and police.

March 20: The center's children's program: Youth Allies Kares.

March 27: The people who are a part of the healing: The staff, volunteers and financial supporters of the center.

COMMENTS

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