



Healing Hearts

Volume 1, Issue 1
Quarter 1, 2011

Welcome to Atlanta Center for Healing!



Did you know that 25 percent of American youth will experience a traumatic event before their 16th birthday and many of them are subjected to multiple and repeated episodes of trauma?

Atlanta Center for Healing (ACH) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the healing of traumatized children and their families.

Our initiatives include evaluating, developing, and utilizing the most cutting edge and effective mental health treatment methods for its clients.

ACH also aims to provide innovative and intensive training to its clinicians and other professionals in the field in addition to being a valuable resource for the parenting of traumatized, attachment-resistant children.

Healing a victim exposed to trauma involves the “whole person” being treated. Thus, ACH seeks to provide holistic treatment practices to restore balance, both psychologically

and physically.

The founders of ACH, collectively, have over 50 years of experience in the mental health field and take a vested interest in their surrounding community.

Atlanta Center for Healing offers a vast array of alternatives and support for victims of traumatic events.

Call us today to find out what programs we offer to assist your child in the healing process.

See contact information on page 4.

We are looking for board members!

Join us as we serve Georgia's children and families.

Be a part of a meaningful team!

Donate Today to make a difference in the life of a child.



UPCOMING TRAINING: Friday, February 25th, 2011

Working With Children & Adolescents Who Commit Sexual Offenses

This workshop will provide an overview of emerging models related to treating Children & Adolescents Who Commit Sexual Offenses; provide an overview of current research and literature; and focus on current thinking regarding treatment modalities.

Presenters: Roy Chancey, L.C.S.W. & Jeanne Gersh, Psy. D.


Cost: \$75.00

Group Rate (4 or more attendees): \$65.00

Location: DoubleTree Hotel
4156 Lavista Road
Atlanta, GA 30084

CEUs: (6 CORE Continuing Education Units Hours)

[Click here](#) for more information and to register



Inside this issue:

Welcome to ACH!	1
Upcoming Training	1
Trauma: Simply Complex	2
Poetry for Empowerment: “My Closet”	3
Upcoming Events	3
Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC): It is Happening in Your Own Backyard	4
Community Connections	5

Trauma: Simply Complex



“Trauma is a very complex issue that can manifest differently in each person that experiences it.”

Simply stated, trauma involves an event or series of events that completely overwhelms an individual’s ability to cope or integrate the emotions the crisis may have created. The fallout from trauma is rarely limited to a single moment however, and it is seldom one dimensional.

Trauma can take months to overcome, and in some cases even years, to completely manifest as the person struggles to make sense of the occurrence. Often, the long-term negative consequences of trauma can be overlooked by not only those closest to the victim, but by medical personnel as well.

Psychological trauma can happen independently or alongside physical trauma. Some common forms of trauma include: physical or sexual assault; bullying; being victimized by alcoholism or drug abuse; or the witnessing of any of the above. Others types of potential trauma could stem from war, natural disaster, homelessness, running away, and poverty.

Regardless of the cause however, trauma nearly always causes the victim to question their inalienable rights as a human being, which in turn leads to feelings of confusion and being overwhelmed. This is especially true when the

institutions or individuals that the victim depends upon for survival is seen to betray or disillusion the victim in some way; this is more likely to occur when the victim is a child.

If the victim does not receive proper psychological care, the person may re-experience the trauma over and over again, both mentally and physically, which can lead to emotional exhaustion and an inability to think clearly or remain focused.

Often, a numbing out may occur, in which the individual may seem distant or emotionally unavailable. This person may have difficulties with intimate relationships, and often confuses sex and intimacy, especially when sexual trauma has occurred.

In many cases, substance abuse is a common secondary effect of trauma; alcohol and drugs are a means by which the victim attempts to become distant and isolated. Additionally, traumatized victims may become impulsive, may self-mutilate, or may have a tendency towards suicide.

When the effects of the trauma do not disappear, the person may feel that their situation will not improve, and feelings of depression and despair may settle in. If the person’s worldview and sense of self have been challenged, the

person may even lose their sense of identity.

Extreme trauma or a combination of both physical and psychological trauma can create post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in an individual. In many cases, the threat of death to oneself or witnessing one of someone else, or the compromising of one’s physical or sexual integrity may cause an onset of PTSD, as the person’s inability to cope with the situation is called into question.

In addition to the effects of trauma listed above, PTSD victims may also deal with excessive anger and even psychotic like symptoms, nightmares and flashbacks, hyper-vigilance, avoidance of all stimuli reminiscent of the trauma, and increased arousal (such as difficulty falling or staying asleep). All of these are compounded even more when the victim is held captive and/or threatened over a period of time, as in many CSEC cases.

Trauma is a very complex issue that can manifest differently in each person that experiences it. Because of the very nature of it, it is imperative that the victim be provided with therapy and counseling services as quickly as possible in a safe and caring environment.

Written by: Janet Raftis, ACH Volunteer



Poetry for Empowerment: "My Closet"

Written by Skye

<p>There is a closet in my house that is full of all my "stuff"</p> <p>And I keep cramming things in there whenever I've had enough</p> <p>My closet's full of guilt, that's piled on top of shame</p> <p>There's anger there and sorrow, and emotions I can't name</p> <p>There's a lack of understanding but that space is filled with doubt</p> <p>And many more emotions that are crying to get out</p> <p>My closet holds resentments that I have long forgotten</p> <p>I stuff it full of memories that have made my life so rotten</p> <p>But now my closet's gotten full so I decided that today</p> <p>It was time to clean my closet out and throw this "stuff" away</p> <p>So I pulled out all the shame and emptied it out first</p> <p>Cause of all the other feelings, it's the one that hurts the worst</p> <p>Next to go was guilt and I followed it with tears</p> <p>I couldn't understand why I had kept this stuff for years</p> <p>I threw away resentments, then took anger off the shelf</p> <p>And discarded it with the pity I'd been keeping for myself</p> <p>Then I noticed something that I hadn't seen before</p> <p>A tightly wrapped up bundle lying on my closet floor</p>	<p>I carefully unwrapped it like an old forgotten toy</p> <p>And much to my surprise I found a frightened little boy</p> <p>"Who are you" I asked him he looked at me and smiled</p> <p>"Surely you remember me, I am your inner child"</p> <p>I stared at him in disbelief for somewhere back in time</p> <p>The little boy who smiled at me had been a friend of mine</p> <p>"Yes I remember you" I said, "We used to play together"</p> <p>"But I haven't seen you for so long, I thought you were gone forever."</p> <p>"No I've been here" his small voice said, his sadness did astound me</p> <p>"I've called to you but you couldn't hear, cause of all this "stuff" around me"</p> <p>"I don't know why you keep it, or what purpose it could serve"</p> <p>"But the sadness that it brings to you is much more than you deserve"</p> <p>"I'm glad that it is gone and that you have finally found me"</p> <p>"Now always keep me close to you and let love and joy surround me"</p> <p>"Please keep me close and play with me, and visit with me often"</p> <p>"Cause when you pile that "stuff" on me, your closet becomes my coffin"</p> <p>I'll not forget the lessons that I have learned today</p> <p>For if you clean your closet out, there'll be much more room for play.</p>
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Read more: <http://www.inspirational-poems.net/poems-about-life/536-my-closet#ixzz1BbERZhGu>

UPCOMING EVENTS!!!

February 1, 2011: Stop CSEC Lobby Day at the Georgia State Capitol.

<http://streetgrace.org/event/lobby-day>

February 4, 2011: CSEC Town Hall Meeting Breakfast.

North Avenue Presbyterian Church:
Contact info@afuturenotapast.org

February 5, 2011: Sisters Who Care Missions Summit.

Christian Fellowship Baptist Church:
<http://www.georgiawmu.org>

February 9, 2011: Behavioral Health Services Coalition Mental Health Day at the Capitol.

Contact rheba.smith@gpsn.org for more information!

February 25, 2011: ABC University Training~ Working With Children & Adolescents Who Commit Sexual Offenses

See Page 5 for more information or [click here](#) to register.

February 26, 2011: Wait No More~ Finding Families for Georgia's Waiting Kids.

<http://www.icareaboutorphans.org/Georgia.aspx>

Healing hearts. Healing minds.

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC): It is Happening in Your Own Back Yard

Every night, approximately 100 children are raped in Georgia, most of them repeatedly. The median age of these girls (mostly female, though the number of boys is rising) is 14, but many are 10 and 11, and some even younger. These are children that are being sold, stolen, and enticed into slavery; children that have disappeared from the radar of society and that have slipped into an underground nightmare, not visible to mainstream society's eye.

Atlanta, with its bustling convention business and multitude of sporting events, draws large crowds to the city and to its adult entertainment services, while its airport – the largest in the world – makes it a perfect hub for men from all over the globe to partake in illicit and illegal sexual activity. But to talk about the trafficking in our city only would be an evasion of the true nature of the problem of this broad term: most of the trafficking of children is happening right here in our neighborhoods with young girls that grew up not too far from us. And if it's not the girl down the street that is "providing the service", it is the man down the street that is buying it.

A recent report carried out by the Schapiro Group and commissioned by A Future, Not a Past and the Governor's Office, concluded that 7,200 men knowingly or unknowingly pay for sex with adolescents each month in Georgia (or 28,000 over the course of a year; and of this number, 10,000 of these men will purchase sex with an

adolescent *multiple times* throughout the year). This equals about 8,700 paid sex acts per month, or over 300 acts per day. In total, there are about 400 young girls being sold for sex each month. The Schapiro study further documented that the highest concentration of internet purchasing (42%) originates from outside of the city center, north of I-285. And while most of these men sampled were not actively looking to have sex with a minor – most requested "a young female" – half were not deterred from making the purchase, even when it was strongly hinted that the girl was under 18.

The fact of the matter is that without the demand, there would be no supply. Trafficking of humans *as a modern day form of slavery* has become one of the most lucrative black market occupations, third only behind drugs and guns. Federal authorities have just acquiesced that while Atlanta is third in the nation in child trafficking, it is in fact, the leading city in the U.S. for child prostitution. Because of this, pimping has hit monumental proportions.

Due to abuse and neglect in homes and high poverty levels in many areas, among other reasons, our streets have become the home of many runaways and these children have become an easy target for exploitation. In fact, one out of every three teens will be lured into sexual exploitation within 48 hours of leaving home, and 90% of runaways end up in Atlanta's sex trade.

These girls are targeted at bus stops and Underground Atlanta, while others that haven't run away, but who are suffering from abuse and/or neglect at home, are picked up at high schools and malls. These girls are led to believe that they've found someone that cares for them and understands them. They are groomed by these pimps, doted on and adored until one day the relationship turns violent and they are forced to bring in money for sex.

Many of them walk the streets, while others are negotiated over the internet or through escort services, but the result is the same: underage children – our children, and others brought to this city to be bartered from abroad or across state lines - are being raped and beaten every night while we sleep safely in our beds.

These girls need our help. They are often picked up and processed through juvenile hall or the justice system without ever being rehabilitated or treated. They become victims of the State and burdens to our tax dollars, all the while never escaping the streets; never being honored and cared for as they deserve. It is essential to these girls that they have a place to turn for help, and that they be treated for trauma and provided with a safe haven in which they can begin to heal.

Written by: Janet Raftis, ACH Volunteer



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Nafiyisa S. Simmonds
BS, MBA
Executive Director

Atlanta Center for Healing
Healing hearts. Healing minds.

3546 Habersham at Northlake
 Tucker, Georgia 30084

Phone: 678-406-9707
 Fax: 678-406-9881
 Email: nsimmonds@atlhealing.org

We're on the Web!
www.atlhealing.org

Community Connections

On February 8th, 2011, Atlanta Center for Healing had the pleasure of being a guest speaker for the Women's Missionary Union (WMU) meeting at Christian Fellowship Baptist Church (CFBC) in College Park.

This phenomenal group of women provide opportunities for mission awareness and mission involvement through age-level organizations, mission projects, and activities for the entire church family in fulfilling the great commission.

Although I was the guest speaker, whose goal was to inform these women about the ACH mission and vision, being in the presence of this "family" was truly an enlightening experience.

ACH would like to express its deepest gratitude to Christian Fellowship Baptist Church...May your blessings continue to flow in abundance!



L: Nafiyisa Simmonds
ACH Director

R: Jennifer Robinson
CFBC WMU #6 Facilitator

Acknowledgements:

Atlanta Center for Healing would like to thank Mrs. Esther L. Grissom of Christian Fellowship Baptist Church for her donation to support victims of trauma.



Serving the Mental Health Needs of the Residents of Georgia

Attachment and Bonding Center of Atlanta • Alliance for Change through Treatment • ABC University

**Our sister agencies provide an extensive array of mental health services for both children and adults. The mission of Mental Health Georgia is to provide high-quality, easily accessible services for Georgians, focused on promoting mental and emotional well-being through personal and professional development, family preservation, resource coordination, and individualized treatment.*