



**Child Advocacy Success Story  
(Safehouse, Family Support and Behavioral Health Services)**

*Having a complimentary set of services to offer families can often be the key to long lasting success.*

This year Childhaven had a 12 year old girl named Ashley\* (not her real name), scheduled for a Safehouse Forensic Interview. The purpose of the Safehouse Forensic Interviews is to improve the coordination of the various agencies involved in the investigation of child sexual abuse. In the interview she disclosed sexual abuse by an uncle who is now incarcerated. Not only was Ashley sexually abused, but she had also recently witnessed the death of a small cousin by drowning. She had experienced a lot of trauma in her life.

Her parents were devastated by the allegations of familial abuse but since both parents were present for the interview the Family Advocate (FA), was able to provide them with information about child sexual abuse and how they could help their daughter through this difficult time. Counseling was recommended for the family as a whole, not just Ashley alone. Mom disclosed that she had been sexually abused as a child as well and had never dealt with it. The FA was able to help them with a protection order against the alleged, which they were able to obtain later that day. The FA assisted the family in completing the Crime Victim Reparation Compensation forms so they would not have to incur any costs due to this crime for counseling, etc.

As part of Childhaven's outcomes, we work to assure that follow-up calls are conducted regularly with all of the Safehouse families. On a follow up call to mom, the family advocate realized that she was in crisis and struggling a great deal. The FA had recognized that mom was falling into a depression. The FA called and spoke with her husband to find out if he was aware of how his wife was feeling and to make sure she was getting support from him. He was aware and was looking into counseling for the whole family as their son was also starting to act out at home and at school.

Childhaven staff were able to get all of the family members into counseling at Childhaven and Ashley into the Comprehensive Community Support Services (CCSS), program for severely emotionally disturbed children. This is a service of Childhaven's Family Support program whereby a family support worker comes to their home regularly to work with the child and the child's family on their service plan. The family is progressing well and dealing in a healthy way with the issues that have come to them. Ashley is doing better in school and although they have removed her brother from school, he is doing much better with homeschooling and his behavior has improved. Mom is doing much better with the support from the CCSS program and with counseling. She calls periodically to give updates to the FA on the success they are having with the healing process. The family is also getting support with the judicial process from the FA and the victim advocate provided through law enforcement. Sometimes the process of healing and receiving human support is the biggest conduit to family wellness.