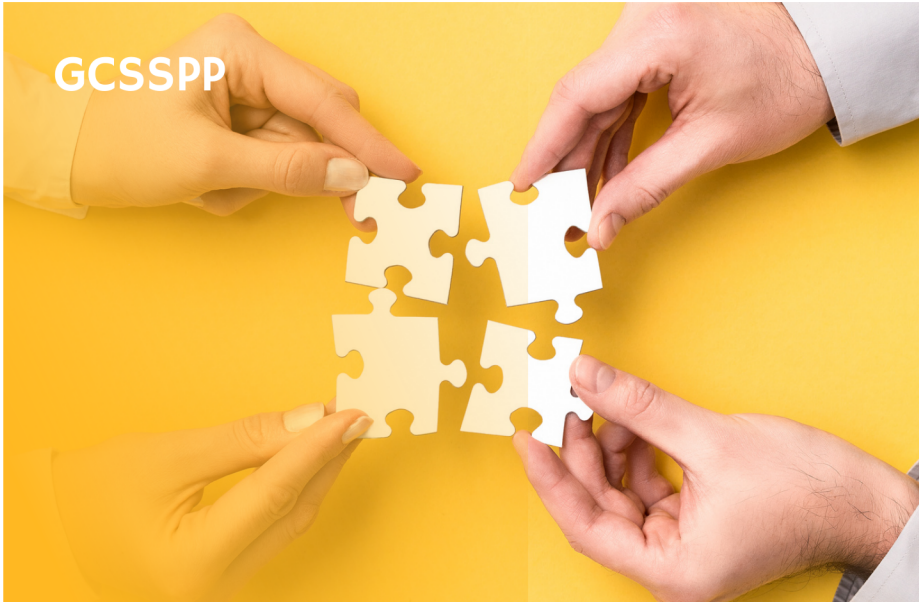


The Coalition Corner

VOLUME 01

Prevention. Collaboration. Education. Change.



WELCOME

By Emily Rayburn
GCSSP Program Director
Child Advocacy

WELCOME!

I have been searching for ways to review and provide updates about our Coalition, and things that we have accomplished, for some time now and I have settled on creating this newsletter that I will send to you all quarterly. I believe that there are benefits to taking ten to fifteen minutes out of your day to read up on current events, especially when they are related to your very own community and a group we are all passionate about.

I am extremely excited to announce our new name! The Gratiot County Substance and Suicide Prevention Program (GCSSPP). It has been a work in progress to removing "abuse" from our name to reduce stigma and also a need to add in a nod to our ever-growing suicide prevention efforts. Along with our new name, we have a new logo as well! Please see the side of this page, at the bottom, for our new logo!

My goals for this newsletter are to provide a space where GCSSPP staff and members are able to share ideas, events and emerging trends from a different platform. If you are interested in highlighting a topic in the future newsletters, please reach out to me!

I am looking forward to seeing where this newsletter takes us and hope that you enjoy!

-Emily

Newsletter Highlights

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Above the Influence

A Message from our past GCSSPP Chair

Meet the Staff

A Year in Review: Our 2023 Milestones



MEMBER HIGHLIGHT



St. Louis Police Department Chief of Police, Rich Ramereiz, has been a part of the Gratiot County Substance Abuse and Suicide Prevention Coalition for over 11 years. He is currently the Chair of GCSSPP. Chief Ramereiz has dedicated time and effort by attending countless trainings to increase his knowledge to greatly impact our community. In 2018 he attended the CADCA Coalition Academy in Houston, TX to learn more about Coalitions and how to make ours better. He also continues to collaborate by recording radio ads, providing prescription drug presentations throughout the community, recording social media campaigns, promoting SLPD's prescription drop box, partnering to bring the mobile prescription drop box to the St. Louis Farmer's Market and much more!

GCSSPP is extremely thankful for Chief Ramereiz and his dedication to our community and our Coalition.

Thank you, Chief!



ABOVE THE INFLUENCE: A NEW OUTLOOK

By Rachel Molands & Caleb Loomis

This year has brought on plenty of changes for the GCSSPP team and our programs. One of those changes being the addition of Rachel Molands and Caleb Loomis. These two are excited to start the 2023-2024 School Year with all SIX Gratiot County school districts! With two staff dedicated to youth education, programs like Question Persuade Refer (QPR), Prescription Drug Safety Presentations, NOT on Tobacco, and Above the Influence are ready to thrive. Already into the new school year, interest has spiked for bringing our programs to Gratiot County middle schools as well! More than anything else, Caleb and Rachel believe that every student deserves the best quality education in a safe and welcoming environment.

Over the summer, rigorous planning has taken place to complete trainings and develop plans for the new school year. Throughout the past month, students at all six high schools have met a total of 20



times to discuss ways their district can take action in substance and suicide prevention. Students in Ithaca, St. Louis, and Alma put up posters with the 988 Suicide Prevention Lifeline Number. Students in Ashley, Breckenridge, and Ithaca played Jeopardy to test their knowledge on Tobacco, Marijuana, Alcohol, and Prescription Drugs. Fulton hosted a suicide prevention speaker and displayed a Field of Flags as a part of their regular activities to promote a caring and supportive place of learning.

Students were energized to attend the 5th Annual Leadership Summit that happened just last week! During the day-long event students had the opportunity to learn from top-class CADCA master trainers, collaborate with classmates and brainstorm ideas to better their schools and communities. Our goals for the upcoming school year include expanding overall student participation while also encouraging them to lead by example in all that they do. We are excited to make positive change for our students, their districts, and the communities we serve!

A Message from GCSAC's Past Chair



Jen Cook
Executive Director
Gratiot County Commission on Aging

Welcome to the first ever Gratiot County Substance and Suicide Prevention Program's (GCSSPP) newsletter! The GCSSPP gathers monthly to discuss substance misuse concerns and issues facing our community. It has been a privilege to serve as the Substance Abuse Coalition Chair for the last several years. The knowledge I have gained regarding substance misuse and suicide prevention has assisted in raising my children during these ever-changing times. I have been a member of the coalition since 2016 and have witnessed some wonderful programs and opportunities which allow our community to become educated regarding the heavy topic of substance misuse.

The GCSSPP has numerous members from all facets of the community, and all are willing to rise to the challenges presented while working together to minimize the use and abuse of substances in our county. The Child Advocacy staff, with support from the GCSSPP, has created programs that touch lives on a daily basis. Come join us and be part of the change!

MEET THE STAFF



Jennifer Stambaugh
President & CEO of Child Advocacy
 jennifer@childadvocacy.net

Jennifer is President/CEO here at Child Advocacy. She was born and raised in Alma, Michigan. She received her bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree in administration both from Central Michigan University. Jennifer has worked in the human services field for more than 25 years. She started her journey with Child Advocacy as a member of the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Committee back in 2010. She became a Child Advocacy Board Member in 2012 before joining the staff as a Victim Advocate in April 2018. Jennifer continues as a member of the local Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Committee, is the current County Collaborative Chair-person, is a member of the Gratiot County Substance and Suicide Prevention Coalition, is an Alma-St. Louis Rotary member, and is a Gratiot County Crisis Response Team Member.

In her free time, Jennifer enjoys spending time with her family and friends and spending time enjoying the great outdoors here in Michigan. She loves hiking, gardening, and any excuse to be in nature even in the winter.



Emily Rayburn
GCSSPP Program Director-Child Advocacy
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Emily Rayburn is a Gratiot County native, growing up in Ithaca MI. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Public Administration from Saginaw Valley State University. As the Gratiot County Substance and Suicide Prevention Program Director (GCSSPP) Emily is responsible for ensuring compliance with all of our current and future grant activities and directives, recruiting key membership for the Coalition, overseeing program day to day, and more. The Substance and Suicide Prevention Program and Coalition strives to educate residents regarding substance use, which is a passion of Emily's. Emily is also passionate about Suicide Prevention and Awareness and working towards implementing key programming to reduce Suicides in Gratiot County. Emily represents Child Advocacy and the GCSSPP at the Gratiot County Collaborative Council and their executive team, Gratiot County's FAN Board of Directors, Gratiot Young Professionals, Ithaca Rotary, State of Michigan Coalition Council, and Gratiot County Sobriety Court and Drug Court. During her free time, she enjoys spending time with her children, Spencer and Gracelyn as well as her husband, Jon.



Sara Krebs
GCSSPP Prevention Coordinator-Child Advocacy
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Sara is an Alma native, growing up in Gratiot County, graduating from Alma High School and earning her Bachelor of Science Degree in Exercise and Health Science with a minor in Public Health at Alma College. Sara has always loved living an active lifestyle and has participated in many sports throughout her life; a few of her favorites include tennis and Highland Dancing. Her passion for health grew as she worked in the health field for 10 years helping others make healthy and sustainable changes prior to taking her position at Child Advocacy. In her role as the Prevention Coordinator in the Gratiot County Substance Abuse Coalition Program, she works to provide prevention education to the community by organizing trainings and taking an active part in organizing community events. She is a member of the Optimist Club of Gratiot County and is a certified Group Fitness Instructor. Sara loves spending time with her family, working in her garden, cooking, crafting, exercising, and promoting an active and healthy lifestyle in her community.



Rachel Molands
GCSSPP Prevention Educator-Child Advocacy
 rachel@childadvocacy.net

Rachel Molands has called mid-Michigan her home since 2012. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Social and Criminal Justice and Psychology from Central Michigan University. Fire Up Chips! Rachel has spent the past 10 years working with individuals in the social work field. As the GCSSPP Prevention Educator, she will be responsible for providing substance use prevention education and activities to children and their families in our community. Rachel is on the Executive Board for the Optimist Club of Gratiot County and the Gratiot Young Professionals Network. She has a passion for bettering the lives of children and giving them a voice as a CASA Volunteer for over 7 years. In her free time, Rachel loves reading, CrossFit, and spending time with her nephews.



Caleb Loomis
GCSSPP Prevention Educator-Child Advocacy
 caleb@childadvocacy.net

Caleb grew up in Gratiot County, graduating from Alma High School and earning his bachelor's degree in family studies with a minor in child development at Central Michigan University. During the 2019-21 school years he served as the School Success Mentor at AHS where he provided support to at-risk and online students. Caleb is now joining Child Advocacy as a Prevention Educator where he will have the opportunity to reach an even wider base of local students and community members. In his free time, Caleb enjoys bonding with his niece and nephews, hanging out with friends, and spending his summers with family at the lake.



A LOOK BACK AT THIS FISCAL YEAR: OUR 2023 MILESTONES

By Emily Rayburn

What an amazing fiscal year it has been. With the change of the seasons, GCSAC... or should I say GCSSPP!

At our meeting in September, we finalized the new logo and name change for our Program, we will now be known as the Gratiot County Substance and Suicide Prevention Program. I am extremely excited that we, as a team, decided to exclude the term “abuse” and include our suicide prevention efforts in our new name.

With exciting changes and a new fiscal year, it is a time of reflection of what amazing things were accomplished as well as looking to the future as to what can be done to continue with great things and what new ideas can come to fruition. This year GCSSPP also welcomed Rachel Molands and Caleb Loomis to our team and we are more than excited to see what these two will bring to the table and the impacts that they will make for our youth.

In February we hosted our first ever Coalition Conference with CADCA. We had a great turnout and hope that we can implement the skills that we learned. GCSSPP also hosted countless trainings, from QPR, Narcan Administration as well as partnering with other programs to bring quality education and awareness.

GCSSPP staff and partners were also able to implement a Narcan Vending Machine, with help from a mini-grant through MidState Health Network. Since this was installed

in March of 2023, the vending machine has provided 190 Narcan Kits as well as 47 at-home prescription disposal kits. I wanted to send a HUGE thank you to Gratiot Integrated Health Network for housing the vending machine and being a key player in this positive change in our community!

GCSSPP also had an extremely successful Suicide Prevention Month in September. We had around 65 Fields of Flags throughout the community; that is the most we have ever had! We also had 200 Cont;inue shirts sold to help raise funds so that GCSSPP may continue spreading awareness and education in regards to Suicide Prevention and Awareness in Gratiot County. This has truly energized GCSSPP staff to make next year even more exciting! Lastly, I am excited to announce the beginning of a Survivors of Suicide Support Group that will be held once a month in partnership with nine mental health professionals volunteering their time-keep your eyes peeled for more information!

I want to thank all of you. Thank you for continuing to support GCSAC and Child Advocacy. Our Coalition and our collective efforts would not have the impact that they have without YOU. Partnering, bringing ideas to the table, and being a truly collaborative group. The wonderful impacts that we get to make in Gratiot County are all thanks to you. Let's make FY 2023 another successful year!

Upcoming Meeting Dates

November 13, 2023 - 1:00pm - Child Advocacy
December 11, 2023 - 1:00pm - Child Advocacy
January 8, 2024 - 1:00pm - Child Advocacy
February 12, 2024 - 1:00pm - Child Advocacy
March 11, 2024 - 1:00pm - Child Advocacy

April 8, 2024 - 1:00pm - Child Advocacy
May 13, 2024 - 1:00pm - Child Advocacy
June 10, 2024 - 1:00pm - Child Advocacy
July 2024 - No Meeting
August 12, 2024 - 1:00pm - Child Advocacy
September 9, 2024 - 1:00pm - Child Advocacy



In FY 2023, Child Advocacy's Baby Pantry had 1,821 visits and provided 51,463 diapers. The CAC conducted 165 forensic interviews, involving children whom were affected by abuse and/or neglect. The CAC also completed with 2,576 advocacy/support services for alleged victims and their families. GCSSPP provided 375 lock boxes to Gratiot County residents, as well as 350 Narcan Kits. CASA was able to serve 25 children going through the Foster Care system, as well. These numbers are just a few of the visible impacts that we make on Gratiot County.

Child Advocacy continues to grow and offer other amazing programs such as: Supply the Cycle, Safer, Smarter Teens, NOT on Tobacco, Protect Yourself, Art Therapy Groups, Car Seat Safety and Installation, Caregiver Support group and much more.

Child Advocacy invites you to join us for on of our upcoming trainings, coalition/committee meetings, or to set up a time to learn about volunteering opportunities in the Baby Pantry or CASA!

Visit our website at www.childadvocacy.net.

CHILD ADVOCACY: THE LINK FOR FAMILIES

Child Advocacy began in 1976 by Gratiot County Professionals and citizens interested in working together to provide services for children and their families. Since then, Child Advocacy has blossomed into the agency we are today - being the home to FOUR crucial programs that provide services to our community's children and their families. The Mission of Child Advocacy is to improve the welfare of children and their families through education, training and support for the prevention of substance abuse and child abuse and neglect.

Child Advocacy is home to the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Program (CAN), The Children's Advocacy Center (CAC), Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), and the Gratiot County Substance and Suicide Prevention Program (GCSSPP). Child Advocacy is home to the Gratiot County Pantry Programs as well as the newly established, Breastfeeding Coalition.

Child Advocacy offers a wide range of evidence-based trainings in child abuse and neglect as well as substance misuse. Child Advocacy staff thrives to bring educational opportunities that are with the trends and will aid in the well-being of our community.



A Message from the President/CEO



Jennifer Stambaugh
President & CEO
jennifer@childadvocacy.net

October is the start to the new fiscal year for us here at Child Advocacy. With that, comes new programs and new services. The Gratiot County Substance and Suicide Prevention Program (GCSSPP) has been a big part of the updates for this next fiscal year. With a new logo and name, GCSSPP kicked off an exciting start to the new school year with a very successful Suicide Prevention Month Awareness campaign, new prevention educators (Caleb and Rachel) initiating new Above the Influence (ATI) groups in each school, a new ATI Leadership Conference, and new schools involved in the Not on Tobacco Program.

We look forward to all of the fresh ideas this team and Coalition have in store for this next year.

Additionally, please continue to follow Child Advocacy-Gratiot County on Facebook for updates, training, and educational opportunities from all of our other Programs (CASA, CAC, and CAN). Thank you for reading the first edition of our Quarterly GCSSPP Newsletter.