

Centre success story shows Cornwall cares

pointofview

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In the years leading up to the Cornwall Public Inquiry and Commissioner Normand Glaude's voluminous report, Cornwall was painted by some as a community that didn't care about sexual abuse victims.

One sign at a rally proclaimed that Cornwall protected pedophiles.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

Long before the Cornwall Public Inquiry called its first witness, the Children's Treatment Centre was launched in June 1996 by a group of citizens.

The centre was the dream of retired Children's Aid Society social worker Angelo Towndale, who still plays a large behind-the-scenes role. He logs 40-hour weeks and has never collected a penny in salary.

The centre is supported by a large cast of volunteers.

It has become a huge success story.

Incredibly, it has never received any government funding.

This allows the centre to avoid costly bureaucratic bookkeeping and permits it to devote more resources to helping abused children.

Instead of going cap in hand to government agencies for funding, it has developed a series of creative fundraising events to finance the centre, everything from garage sales to bike-a-thons. To say these events have been successful would be an understatement. Each year fundraising records are broken.

The centre is committed to the prevention and treatment of child abuse, free of charge. Its clients come from Cornwall, the United Counties and Akwesasne.

The centre's staff -that includes a team of professional psychologists, psychiatrists and counsellors -has provided treatment for hundreds of children in individual, group and family settings.

Clients are referred to the centre by the Children's Aid Society along with 31 other agencies: law enforcement, the education system and other children's health organizations.

Three years after it opened, the centre carried out an anonymous survey of its clients to see where it needed to improve. The response was overwhelming: nothing needed to be changed.

The inquiry report urged the government to spend more money on giving sexual abuse victims, especially adult males, the counselling they need.

We support that.

However, if somebody is looking for a model of how a community comes together to help abused children, look no further than the community-funded treatment centre.