

# 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

## Child Advocacy Center



✉ PO Box 13454  
Gainesville, FL 32604

📍 500 E University Avenue  
Gainesville, FL 32601

☎ (352) 376-9161

📧 [info@cagainesville.org](mailto:info@cagainesville.org)

🌐 [www.cagainesville.org](http://www.cagainesville.org)

If you suspect a child is being abused or neglected, call your local law enforcement agency or the Florida Abuse Hotline at 1-800-96-ABUSE.

The Child Advocacy Center provides a safe child-friendly space for children during and after child abuse investigations.



Dear Friends -

This year I celebrated 20 years with the Child Advocacy Center, Inc. (CAC). It seems like a long time, and such a short time, simultaneously! It has been a privilege to work with such supportive Board members, talented and tireless staff, dedicated multidisciplinary team members, generous donors, and amazingly resilient children and families all these years. The child advocacy center movement inspires such heart and outpouring of support from the community. Your donations and hours of volunteerism have been critical in helping the CAC reach more children and families that need safety, compassionate and judgment free support, mental health advocacy, and educated advocates to help them navigate systems. The CAC would not be able to change lives without the support of our community.

In 2025, the CAC served 2,585 children and 1,897 caregivers. Of these, 1,116 were sexual abuse cases, 1,015 were physical abuse cases, and 76 were child sex trafficking cases. 206 cases had forensic interviews, 5,804 therapy sessions were provided, and there were 20,340 victim advocate services.

The newly developed Prevention and Training Program at the CAC formalized efforts of the organization to provide training to professionals about child abuse reporting and trauma responsive care, as well as prevention services directly to children by facilitating Lauren's Kids Foundation Safer Smarter Kids curriculum across Alachua County. Over 2,100 children and adults have received prevention and training services.

Additionally, in 2025, the CAC entered into a newly updated Multidisciplinary Team Interagency Agreement with Alachua Police Department, Alachua County Sheriff's Office, Department of Children and Families, Gainesville Police Department, Guardian Ad Litem Program, High Springs Police Department, Meridian Behavioral Healthcare, Office of the State Attorney, Partnership for Strong Families, Santa Fe Police Department, UF Child Protection Team, and UF Police Department. This Interagency Agreement allows for the organizations to share need to know information and communicate in order to create the best possible outcome for child victims and their families.

The CAC was everywhere this year! The CAC had the opportunity to partner with the Child Abuse Prevention Task Force for the annual Pinwheel Planting, UF Gator Growl / Homecoming Parade and Chomp for Charity, Lauren's Kids Walk in My Shoes, Sun Country's Howl-a-palooza, Gainesville Woman's Club Fashion Show, and Santa Fe River Ranch and the Hitchcock Family for Gainesville Gone Wild...West.

Thank you all for helping the CAC fulfill its mission and be there whenever children need safety and healing. We look forward to continuing to partner with you to meet the needs of children in 2026.

With gratitude,



Sherry Kitchens, Ed.S., LMFT  
President/CEO



#### **2025 Administrative Staff**

Sherry Kitchens, President/CEO

Lisa Sickels, HR Manager/Grants Compliance Coordinator

Vivian Dobbs, Finance Director

Jamie Saunders, Clinical Coordinator/Lead Therapist

Megan Miller-Neimes, Therapy Team Coordinator/Senior Therapist

Devon Montague, Victim Services/MDT Coordinator

Na'Triel Battles, Prevention & Training Coordinator

Brooke Beers, Development Director

Laura Clark, Volunteer Coordinator/Development Specialist

# HAPPY 20<sup>TH</sup> CAC ANNIVERSARY TO SHERRY KITCHENS

On June 5, 2025 we honored and congratulated the CAC's big-hearted President & CEO Sherry Kitchens on 20 years leading the CAC! Thank you to Sherry, a selfless leader who has dedicated her career to improving the lives of children in need. With her compassion, drive, and heart behind them, oh the places they will go! The Greater Gainesville Chamber, CAC Board, MDT members, staff, friends and family gathered to celebrate Sherry and all that the CAC has accomplished under her leadership. Congratulations!



Visit [www.cacgainesville.org](http://www.cacgainesville.org) to view our powerful **2025 Mission Video** that shares the impact just one person can have.

Thank you to Merge Event Group for their amazing talent.

Video also available on YouTube: @gainesvillecac

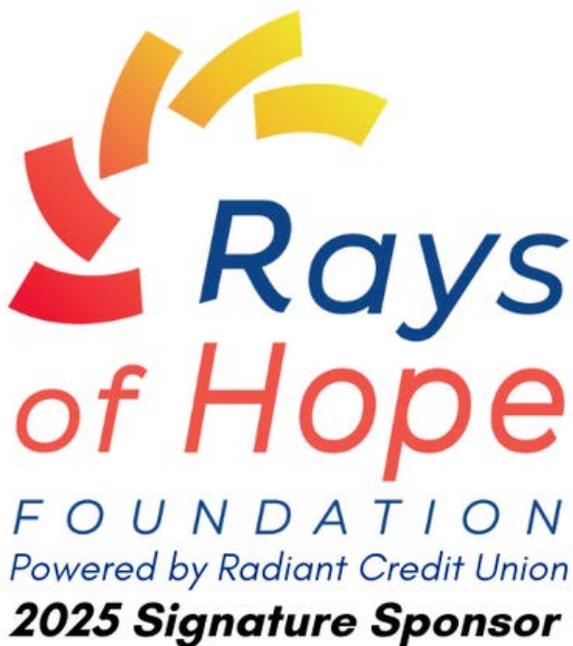
*"Oh the places you'll go!" -Dr. Seuss*



# 2025 SIGNATURE SPONSOR

Rays of Hope Foundation, powered by Radiant Credit Union has been a continuous supporter and has been the Title Sponsor for the CAC's Signature Fundraiser, Gainesville Gone, for multiple years. Not only do they provide monetary support, but Radiant Credit Union brings nearly 100 volunteers to the event to ensure it is a successful fundraiser. In 2025, Rays of Hope Foundation became the CAC's 2025 Signature Sponsor and was included in digital and print material, recognized on social media, as well as in-person events. Wherever the CAC went, Rays of Hope Foundation and Radiant Credit Union went! The CAC is forever grateful for this amazing partnership!

Learn more at [raysofhope.org](https://raysofhope.org) & [radiantcu.org](https://radiantcu.org).



The Gwen Howard Hearts to Hands Award is given each year at the CAC's Signature Fundraiser, Gainesville Gone, to a recipient who really pours their heart and soul into the success of the CAC's signature event. The team at Radiant Credit Union was given this well-deserved award for their continued dedication to this event and the CAC!

**2025  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

John Roberts  
*Board Chair*  
Tamelia Malcolm  
*Vice Chair*  
Shirley Green Brown  
*Secretary*  
Rob Deese  
*Treasurer*  
Joel Brown  
*Past Chair*

**MEMBERS**

Kristi Crane  
Maggie Drotos  
Bill Farley  
Runi Foster  
Lindsey Higgins  
Bob Krefting  
Jen Lesshafft  
Lem Purcell  
Linda Shaw  
Donna Weseman

**EMERITUS**

Leslie Bram  
Susan Chauncey Horky  
Alan Hitchcock  
Liz Jones  
Dee Dee Cain Smith  
Rod Smith  
Jay Herrington\*  
Bobbie Eubanks Holden\*

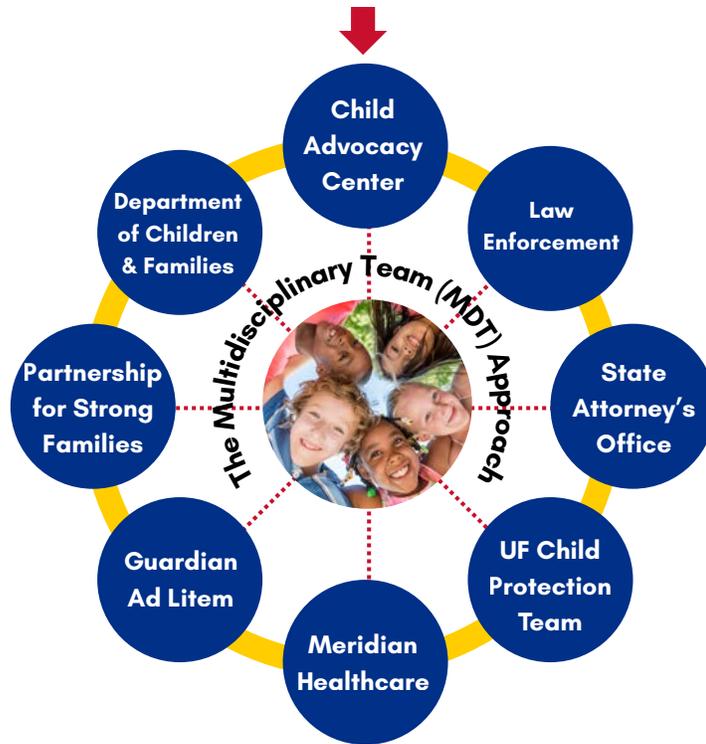
\*Posthumous Dedication

# PROGRAMS



# MISSION

A comprehensive, child-friendly facility where professionals from law enforcement, medical, child protection and therapeutic services effectively collaborate to meet the individual needs of child victims and break the cycle of abuse.



Visit our website to learn more!



The Child Advocacy Center, Inc. is supported by the Alachua County Board of County Commission's Community Agency Partnership Program & Educational Services (CAPP). Additionally, support for these programs was provided by a grant from Community Foundation of North Central Florida.

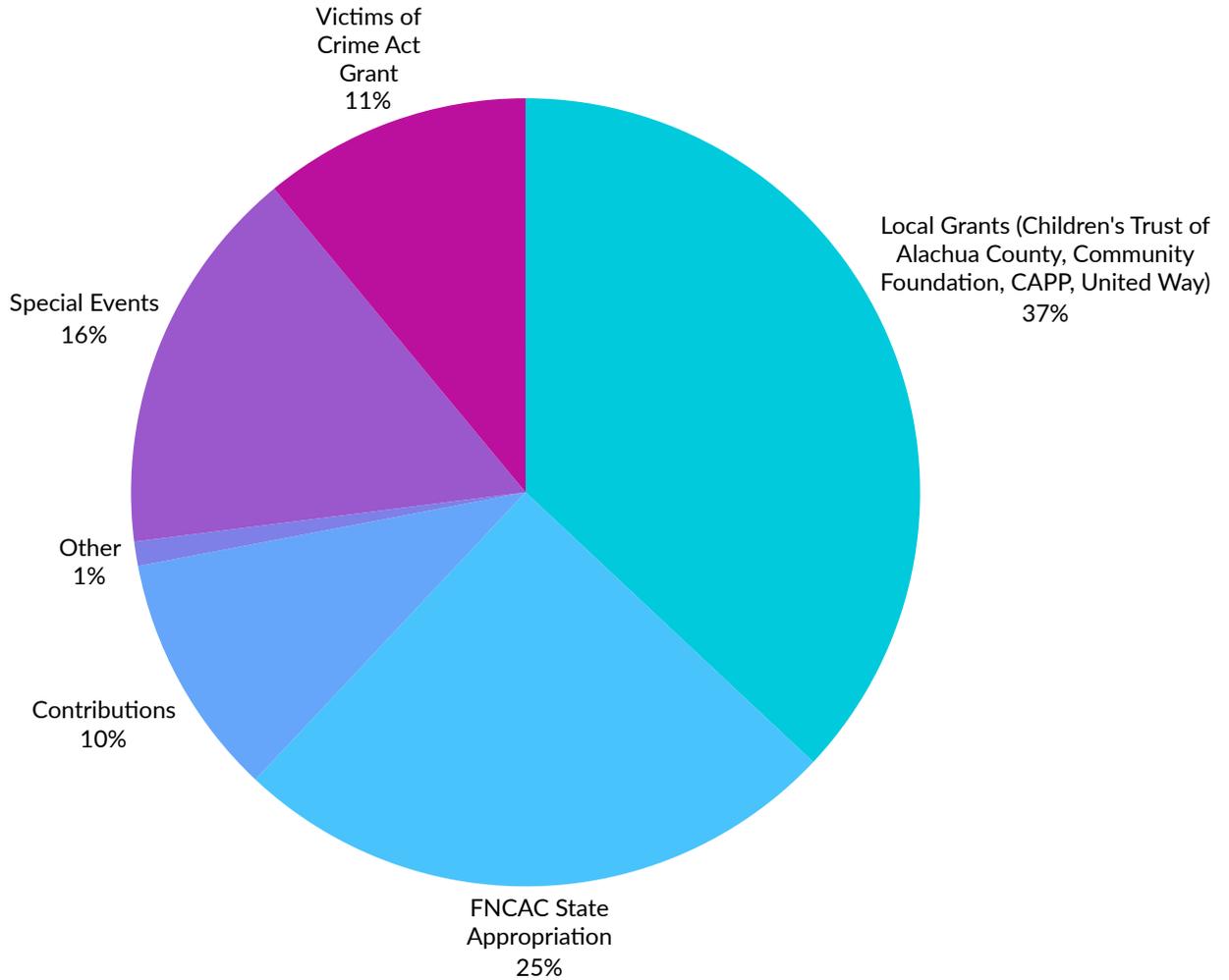
This project was supported by Award No. VOCA-C-2025-Child Advocacy Center, Inc-00216 awarded by the Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs. Sponsored by (Child Advocacy Center, Inc.) and the State of Florida.

The Child Advocacy Center, Inc. is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Thank you to all of the individuals and agencies the CAC is affiliated with and funded by. We could not do what we do without your support!



# FUNDING SOURCES



# EXPENSES

<b>Program</b>	\$1,579,999.00	83%
<b>Management &amp; Fundraising</b>	\$303,589.00	17%
<b>Totals</b>	\$1,883,388.00	100%

Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance recommends that organizations spend at least 65% of their total expenses on program activities - the CAC spends 83%. 6

# IMPROVEMENTS

**BUILDING UPGRADES** - The CAC received funding from VOCA for the enhancement of two very important rooms used during the child abuse investigation process - Crisis Intervention Room and Forensic Interviewing Room, both located at the UF Children's Medical Services building.

Both rooms were given a fresh look with brand new child-friendly furniture and decor to create more of a welcoming and comforting space during moments where children are sharing personal details of what happened to them. Thank you for the support!



**IRECORD SYSTEM** - The CAC received a grant from Clay Electric to purchase the iRecord system for forensic interviews. The iRecord system provides secure, high definition and all-digital audio and video recording, storage, and management. Having this system in place has made the forensic interviewing process more efficient and effective. Thanks Clay Electric!



**NEW MARKETING MATERIALS** - The CAC received a grant from Capital City Bank to upgrade all program marketing materials, to include our newest Prevention & Training Program! New brochures will strengthen the CAC's print presence as we continue to grow and add additional programs and services. Thank you Capital City Bank!



**NOURISH & NURTURE SNACK PROGRAM** - The CAC received funding from the Walmart Spark Good grant to fund the juice and snack program. Having juice and snacks on hand at both CAC locations and available during on-call emergency situations ensures CAC clients and siblings have nourishment during their time with CAC and MDT members. Thank you Walmart!



# PREVENTION & TRAINING

**Na'Triel Battles**  
Prevention & Training Coordinator  
**Courtney Spell**  
Prevention & Training Specialist

The Prevention and Training Team plays a vital role in promoting child safety and well-being through community development, outreach, and education. The team facilitates the Lauren's Kids Safer Smarter Kids Curriculum, an evidence-based program that empowers children with the knowledge and skills to recognize, prevent, and report abuse.

The team is also dedicated to building safer communities by providing comprehensive child abuse reporting trainings to community members and professionals. Additionally, they equip educators with the tools and information they need to recognize signs of abuse and respond appropriately, reinforcing a community-wide commitment to protecting children.

**1,409**  
children were served

**639**  
adults were served

**Aces in Motion  
Girls Place  
Hidden Oak Elementary  
Idlywild Elementary School  
Kids Count  
Lake Forest Elementary  
Stephen Foster Elementary**

**Alachua County Fire Rescue  
Alachua County School Board  
Archer Elementary School  
Big Brothers Big Sisters  
CAC parent & staff training  
City of Gainesville  
Grace Christian Prep School  
Pace Center for Girls**

**All School Counselors in Alachua County Public Schools have been trained in Child Abuse Reporting.**

Please email [natrielcacgainesville.org](mailto:natrielcacgainesville.org) to request a training.

# STAFF TRAINING

CAC staff attended various trainings and conferences to broaden their knowledge and meet with other professionals with a shared mission of helping child abuse victims.

## Events attended in 2025 included:

- Florida Network of Children's Advocacy Centers Krimes Against Kids Conference - Orlando, FL
- Florida Play Therapy Annual Conference - Orlando, FL
- National Children's Alliance Leadership Conference - Washington, DC
- National Law Enforcement Training on Child Exploitation - Atlanta, GA
- Planet Philanthropy - Orlando, FL

## CAC therapy staff were trained on the following topics:

- Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)
- Myers-Briggs Personality Types
- Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)
- Within Agency Training for Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) for CAC staff to become a trainer

## Members of the CAC therapy team gained the following certifications:

- Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) Certification
- Mental Health Counselor Licensure



**Forensic Interviewer**

Becca Bernal

**Crisis Intervention Specialist**

Jessica Moser

**Victim Services  
Support Specialist**

Bradley Gillingham

**Case Management Team**

Devon Montague

Victim Services/MDT Coordinator

Jenna Baker

Advocate/Case Manager

Celi Guzman

Advocate/Case Manager

Meylin Reyes

Advocate/Case Manager

Lisa Voigt

Advocate/Case Manager

**Therapy Team**

Jamie Saunders

Clinical Coordinator/Lead Therapist

Megan Miller-Niemes

Therapy Team Coordinator  
Senior Therapist

Latressia Cox

Staff Therapist

Maddy Johnson

Staff Therapist

Patty Bent-Thurman

Contract Therapist

Ashley Bobroff

Contract Therapist

Passion Lewis

Contract Therapist

Breanna McNeal

Contract Therapist

Connie Pierre-Antoine

Contract Therapist

Nicole Stern

Contract Therapist

Callie Reda

Contract Therapist

# ADVOCACY & MENTAL HEALTH

## With Your Help in 2025...

### 4,482 Total Victims Were Served



  
**76 were Emergency Cases that required immediate response from an on-call Victim Advocate, Forensic Interviewer and Therapist.**

# EVENTS & MEDIA

The CAC participated in two major fundraising events in 2025 - The Amazing Give and Gainesville Gone Wild...West! The CAC also partnered with The Punishers Law Enforcement Motorcycle Club - Fort King & Iron Shield Chapters to host another Helping Kids Heal Poker Run motorcycle ride.

In addition, the CAC was also the beneficiary of two very special events, Sun Country Sports Howl-a-palooza and the Gainesville Woman's Club Fashion Show.

Thank you so much for choosing the CAC!

Community individuals and groups were also very generous with the CAC in 2025 to include media coverage, as well as events for CAC clients to include an offsite holiday event and a Help for the Holidays program that provides multiple families with wish list items for Christmas. Thank you all for the support!



Howl-a-palooza check presentation from the Sunny Cares Foundation



Gainesville Woman's Club Fashion Show models

## News Coverage:

- Alachua Chronicle
- WCJB TV20 News

## Thanksgiving Support:

- Trinity United Methodist Church

## Client Holiday Event:

- Pony Paddock, Newberry, FL

## Help for the Holidays:

- 204 clients and caregivers were supported

The CAC was the starting location of the Gainesville leg of Lauren's Kids Walk in My Shoes - a 1500 mile walk to raise awareness and help put a stop to childhood sexual abuse.

## 2025 MARKED 10 YEARS FOR LAUREN'S KIDS!



## Funds Raised

**Helping Kids Heal  
Poker Run**  
\$2,085

**The Amazing Give**  
\$24,681

**Gainesville Gone  
Wild...West**  
\$202,000

**GNV Woman's Club  
Fashion Show**  
\$7,000

**Sun Country Sports  
Howl-a-palooza**  
\$25,000

## Community Tabling Events

**Alachua County  
Sheriff's Office  
Community Event**  
ASCO

**Celebrate the Child**  
Westside Park

**High Springs  
Night Out**  
High Springs

**UF Health  
Healthy Heroes**  
UF Health

**UFCC Kick-off**  
UF Reitz Union **11**

# UF STUDENTS LOVE THE CAC

## UF HOMECOMING & GATOR GROWL

**Total Raised:**  
**\$3,619.66**

Thank you to the 2025 UF Homecoming & Gator Growl team for choosing the CAC as the benefiting charity for the Charity 5K and multiple local giveback events! Our highlight was having the opportunity to be in the homecoming parade for the first time ever. CAC staff had an amazing time. Thank you!



## KAPPA DELTA AT UF

**\$297,642.97**  
raised for the  
CAC since 2010

Thank you to Kappa Delta at UF, the CAC's philanthropy sorority since 2010, for raising nearly \$300,000! Thank you for your selfless commitment to the CAC!



# VOLUNTEERS

The CAC is forever grateful to have so many individuals each year who choose to give their time.

<p><b>81 Special Event Volunteers</b> assisting with fundraisers and tabling events</p>	<p><b>46 Child-Life Volunteers</b> visiting weekly to spend time with clients</p>
<p><b>20 Interns</b> assisting with Advocacy, Forensic Interviewing, Therapy &amp; Development</p>	<p><b>16 Volunteer Groups</b> (more than one a month) organizing supply drives and projects around the CAC</p>

**347**  
**Volunteers**

**5,107+**  
**Hours**



**ONE OF THE  
GREATEST  
GIFTS YOU  
CAN GIVE IS  
YOUR TIME.**



The CAC is proud to honor the wonderful individuals who serve on the Board of Directors. Thank you all for your time and commitment to serving the mission.

thank you!



# GAINESVILLE CHAMBER AWARDS FINALIST

A very special thank you goes out to the Greater Gainesville Chamber of Commerce for selecting the CAC as one of three finalists for Small Non-profit of the Year! It is truly an honor to be recognized alongside other agencies in the community who are all making such a positive impact!



Pictured left to right: Sherry Kitchens (CAC), Brooke Beers (CAC)  
Kristin Kozelsky Reed (Pace Center for Girls)

# LOOKING AHEAD

## 2026 GOALS:

- Reaccreditation with the National Children's Alliance
- Further develop the Prevention and Training Program to bring child abuse prevention in more Alachua County schools and organizations
- Launch the BJ Raskin Legacy Society through Planned Giving Program
- Develop a strategy to secure funding to acquire additional building space
- Upgrades coming soon to therapy rooms and donation station



## SAVE THE DATES:

- Big Bend Reel Impact Jr. Classic Fishing Tournament - April 18, 2026
- Lauren's Kids: Walk in My Shoes - April 19, 2026
- Gainesville Woman's Club Fashion Show - April 26, 2026
- The Amazing Give - April 30, 2026
- Gainesville Gone Signature Fundraiser - October 22, 2026

# WAYS TO GIVE



## **Make a One-Time Gift**

You can make a one-time gift and make a difference in the lives of children who were abused.

## **Become a Monthly Donor**

For at least \$25.00 a month, which equates to \$300+ a year, you can help the CAC provide advocacy, forensic interviewing, therapy, and emergency response services to children who were abused. Know that you are continuously making a difference.

## **Organize or Sponsor a Fundraiser**

Become a third party partner and organize a fundraiser to benefit the CAC or become a sponsor of a CAC hosted event.

## **Arrange a Donation Drive**

Juice & snacks, school supplies, toys, books, clothing, shoes, personal hygiene products, & cleaning supplies

## **Join the BJ Raskin Legacy Society**

In Honor of Barbara Jean Raskin, the CAC introduces to you, the BJ Raskin Legacy Society! Help secure the future of CAC services with a planned giving strategy via a beneficiary designation, bequest, donor advised fund, IRA, minimum charitable distribution, life insurance, stocks, will, etc. Leave a legacy of helping children who really need it.

## **Center Naming Opportunities**

Want your name on the walls of our newest location? Multiple naming opportunities are still available.

## **Workplace Campaigns**

Do you work for an employer who has an active Workplace Campaign? The CAC is a partner agency of the United Way and can receive designations to help in our mission. We are also available as a guest speaker during your campaign kickoff.

## **Payroll Deduction / Employee Matching**

Make a difference each pay cycle without even thinking about it. Does your employer do matching gifts? Make a gift and the CAC will receive double the gift amount.

## **Workplace Volunteer Hours Contribution**

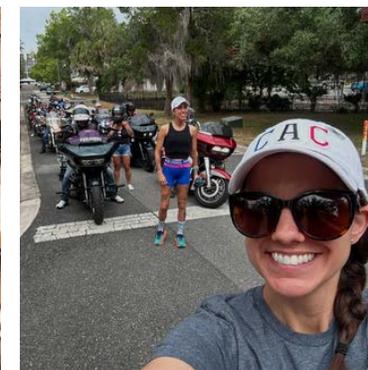
Do you work for an employer who donates when volunteer hours are submitted? Speak with them today about how your volunteer hours can help make a difference.

**Visit [www.cacgainesville.org](http://www.cacgainesville.org) or contact [brooke@cacgainesville.org](mailto:brooke@cacgainesville.org) for more details.**



# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Emergency	911
National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline	988
Child Advocacy Center	352-376-9161
Alachua County Crisis Center (24-hours)	352-264-6789
Crisis Stabilization Unit at Meridian Healthcare (24-hours)	352-374-5600
Peaceful Paths	352-377-8255
Domestic Violence Shelter	
National domestic violence hotline, 24/7	1-800-799-7233
Alachua County Victim Services and Rape Crisis Center (24-hours)	352-264-6760
Non Emergency Law Enforcement	352-955-1818
Biker's Against Child Abuse	352-239-8723
Paynes Prairie Chapter	<a href="http://www.bacaworld.org">www.bacaworld.org</a>



Thanks for a great year!



# THANK YOU FOR MAKING ALL OF THIS POSSIBLE!

Have you seen our pawsome space yet?



Therapy Dog Oliver

Therapy Dog Elliott

Email Miss Sherry to schedule your tour!

[sherry@cacgainesville.org](mailto:sherry@cacgainesville.org)



 Child Advocacy Center  
Together, breaking the cycle of child abuse

 Rays of Hope FOUNDATION  
Powered by Radiant Credit Union  
2025 Signature Sponsor