

# Children's Center Current Highlights

Summer 2025



**Barbara Sinatra**  
CHILDREN'S CENTER



# Passion to Prevent Campaign<sup>!</sup> Realizes Remarkable Success

The Barbara Sinatra Children's Center Foundation began the ***Passion to Prevent Campaign*** in January of 2024 with the development of our Case for Support, selection of our Co-chairs Diane Gershowitz and Aly Raisman, and our first meeting with a prospective donor. In less than a year, we had reached our original goal of \$10,000,000. Due to rising construction costs and other operational cost increases in our campaign elements, we are continuing the campaign to raise as much as we can over the next fiscal year.



Groundbreaking: Perry Shwachman, Bill Nicholson, Terri Ketover, Carina Blakeley Marx, Diane Gershowitz, Hal Gershowitz, Carole Haes Landon, Aubrey Serfling, Toni Ackermann, Nelda Linsk, Angie Gerber, Bob Marx (photo: Lani Garfield)

As of July 1, 2025, we are at nearly \$12 million and growing as we enter the public phase of the campaign and the follow-up meetings with donor prospects that were unavailable this past season. We are most pleased with the recruitment of our new Vice President of Philanthropy, Mary Ann Schwartz Graffeo (see newsletter article), who will take the lead on continued and new fundraising, working with a new Barbara Sinatra Children’s Center Development Committee.

Let’s examine some highlights of the campaign effort, recommendations of the Campaign Consultant, and implementation to date.

Total Raised to Date	Number of Gifts	Average Gift Size
\$12,000,000	55	\$218,000
Cash, Non-Cash, Pledges	Planned Estate Gifts	Unrealized Portion of Verbal Pledges
\$9,700,000	\$2,100,000	\$200,000
Cash Payments and Non-Cash Payments Received as of July 1, 2025		
\$7,000,000		

## Recommendations of Campaign Consultant

- Establish and manage a BSCC Development Committee
- Continue to cultivate unsolicited campaign donor prospects
- Continue to conduct campaign parlor meetings
- Maximize funds raised in the public phase
- Continue campaign communications
- Hire new philanthropy staff leader
- Develop a “Grateful Survivor” program of former patients or parents of patients to help advocate on behalf of the Center



## Implementation of Campaign Strategies as of July 1, 2025

- First new animated abuse awareness/protection video released in March 2025.
- Retained Mike Nelson and WonderMedia to begin the national marketing program to attract more states and school districts to adopt the BSCC Foundation Abuse Prevention videos and curriculum. Over 15 states have already been contacted.
- New Child Abuse Research Fellowship established at the School of Psychology, University of California, Riverside. Dr. Misaki Natsuaki, Ph.D. selected as researcher.
- Mary Ann Schwartz Graffeo hired as new Vice President of Philanthropy, Barbara Sinatra Children's Center Foundation.
- Architectural renderings, construction drawings, land use plans ready for submittal to City of Rancho Mirage for permitting of the new ***AC and Shaughne Warnack Pavilion for Child and Adolescent Health***.





# National Survey Work of Child Sexual Abuse

By Jon R. Conte, Ph.D., professor emeritus University of Washington and Barbara Sinatra Children's Center Volunteer Consultant

Under the direction of me and the Barbara Sinatra Children's Center analytics team at DKC, the BSCC conducted two national surveys of American adults: one in 2022 and the other in 2025. Each survey questioned 1,000 adults, and the resulting samples were roughly equivalent to the U.S. population. The 2022 survey focused on adults over the age of 18. The 2025 survey focused on adults 18 to 30 years old. Each survey asked respondents questions about their attitudes and experiences with child sexual abuse (CSA) and prevention. A manuscript for professional publication is in process.

Among the interesting findings are the rates of victimization in the two samples (39.3% in 2022 and 21% in 2025). The reasons for the large difference in the number of adult survivors in the samples is unknown, but it is possible that because 2025 only included adults under 30 years of age and adult disclosure of child sexual abuse takes place over adulthood, some survivors may not have been ready to disclose yet. Recently it has been reported that average age of sexual abuse disclosure is age 51.

Of note, 60% of the 2025 survey and 70% of the 2022 survey were either abused themselves or knew someone who was abused. This finding, coupled with the frequent news coverage of cases involving child sexual abuse, and the fact that CSA is a theme or subtheme of countless television, movies, and other scripted dramas in popular culture, points to the fact that awareness of the problem of child sexual abuse is increasingly widespread. The sexual abuse of children is no longer a secret.

In concert with increased awareness of the sexual abuse of children, there has been a virtual explosion at local and national levels in the development of various programs to prevent CSA. Programs vary in what they believe will best prevent CSA, and many programs show creativity and dedication. Research demonstrating the effectiveness of most programs is lacking, which is one of the reasons the Barbara Sinatra Children’s Center Foundation through the ***Passion to Prevent Campaign*** is establishing a prevention research fellowship and center in the psychology department at the University of California, Riverside. The new researcher, Dr. Misaki Natsuaki, Ph.D. will begin her fellowship on August 1, 2025.

The first step in a national effort to prevent the sexual abuse of children is awareness of the problem. We have accomplished this. What is needed is a strategic plan with specific action steps coordinated and widely supported by professionals and the public.

## Survey Results

### 2022

Please select ALL of the following you personally know who were sexually assaulted or abused before the age of 18:

- Sibling: 22.9%
- Parent: 17.5%
- Cousin: 26.0%
- Friend: 71.4%
- Neighbor: 18.9%
- Coworker: 20.6%
- Me: 38.3%
- Other: 15.8%

### 2025

Which of the following child, youth, or adult survivors of child sexual abuse do you personally know:

- Older family member: 17.0%
- Sibling or cousin: 15.4%
- Friend or coworker: 31.6%
- My partner: 9.5%
- Myself: 21.1%
- My child: 3.8%
- None of the above: 43.0%

# Please Welcome Mary Ann Schwartz Graffeo As the New Vice President of Philanthropy, Barbara Sinatra Children's Center Foundation



We are excited to announce that the Board of the BSCC Foundation and the Barbara Sinatra Children's Center have welcomed Mary Ann Schwartz Graffeo to the newly created position of Vice President of Philanthropy.

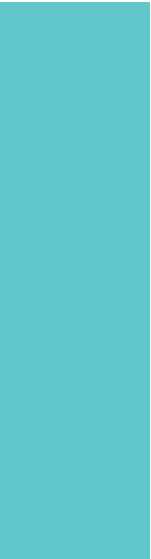
This new leadership role was a key recommendation of the ***Passion to Prevent Campaign*** final report, prepared by the campaign consultant, CCS Fundraising, and is a crucial next step in continuing the momentum of the campaign. The position is designed to foster a deeper philanthropic culture and grow donor involvement with the Barbara Sinatra Children's Center and Foundation.

Mary Ann possesses an outstanding résumé of executing multi-million-dollar fundraising campaigns in health care, higher education and non-profit organizations. She has accomplished this success through strategic campaign planning, relationship building, and a hands-on approach to meeting the goals and objectives of noteworthy organizations, including Dell Children's Hospital, Austin, Texas; the University of Texas McCombs School of Business; the Austin, Texas March of Dimes; American Cancer Society; and the Viterbi School of Engineering at the University of Southern California.



A native of Austin, Texas, Mary Ann earned her bachelor's degree from the University of Texas at Austin, and later pursued her master's in Business with a focus on social entrepreneurship from the University of Southern California. Her academic and professional journey reflects a lifelong commitment to blending purpose with performance—helping mission-driven organizations grow and thrive.

Mary Ann will work closely with a newly established Development Committee of the Barbara Sinatra Children's Center to build on the success of the ***Passion to Prevent Campaign*** and bring to life other key recommendations from the campaign report.



“From my first visit to the Sinatra Center and especially during the summer art camp at the Center, I was deeply moved by what I witnessed,” said Mary Ann. “The sense of healing, creativity, and shared experience was profound. I immediately knew this was work I needed to be part of—not just professionally, but personally. I believe so strongly in the Center’s mission of breaking the cycle of abuse and helping children reclaim their voices.”

Mary Ann also had the opportunity to attend the Champion Honors Luncheon this year, headlined by the legendary Connie Chung.



“I left that luncheon inspired by the strength of our mission and the passion of our supporters.”

“From our very first meeting, it was clear that Mary Ann is a perfect fit for this role. She brings not only professional excellence but a heart and commitment that align beautifully with the spirit of the Barbara Sinatra Children's Center. We are thrilled to have her join our leadership team as we chart the Center's next chapter,” said Board President, Hal Gershowitz.

Please join us in welcoming Mary Ann to the team and in supporting her work to elevate the future of the Barbara Sinatra Children's Center and Foundation.



# 2024/2025 Events

## Aly Raisman Tour

Photos: Lani Garfield



Kim and Perry Shwachman with Aly Raisman



BSCC Patients with Aly Raisman



# One Night Only Parlor Meeting

Photos: Lani Garfield



Diane Gershowitz, Peggy Jacobs, Bill Nicholson, Donna MacMillan, Terri Ketover, Barbara Fromm



Entertainer Chris Mann salutes host Hal Gershowitz



# 2025 Champion Honors Luncheon

Photos: Lani Garfield



Bart Ketover, Lenny Eber, Diane Rubin, Garry Kief, Terri Ketover, PS Police Chief Andy Mills, Cathy Mills, Debbie Miller, Doug Miller, Lori Serfling, Aubrey Serfling



Dick Shalhoub, Tracy Smith, Connie Chung



Giselle Fernandez and Connie Chung



# Vintage Parlor Meeting



Atlanta and Richard Warke  
and Friends  
(photo: Lani Garfield)



Pavilion for Child and  
Adolescent Health Rendering



BSCC "Grateful Survivor"  
speakers Maleyna and  
Cristina Gregorio chat with  
John and Cheryl Thoresen  
(photo: Lani Garfield)



# Vintage Campaign Celebration Party

Photos: Lani Garfield



Connie and Bob Lurie



John Thoresen,  
Diane Gershowitz,  
Shaughne Warnack





# Case Study

The COVID-19 pandemic was challenging for everyone, but it took an especially heavy toll on our school-aged children, who faced isolation, disruption, and, for some, an unsafe home environment. As schools closed and learning moved to a home school format with virtual online classes, many parents needed to find care during work hours for their children. An unintended consequence resulted in heartbreaking cases, where children were abused physically and sexually by those entrusted to protect them.

Such was the case for a young girl who was referred to the Barbara Sinatra Children's Center. The client was a nine-year-old Caucasian Hispanic female. She was brought to the Center by her mother. During the pandemic, both of her parents were required to work, and this young girl was left in the care of a paternal grandfather. Her suffering went unnoticed until much later when her mother asked her if something had happened. The young girl denied any incident. Two years later, the mother asked her daughter again. This time the girl was able to state that her grandfather sexually abused her.

The mother took appropriate steps and immediately called the police. The client identified her grandfather in a police station lineup. A forensic interview was conducted by the Barbara Sinatra Children's Center, Forensic Department. Following legal intervention, the client was referred to the Center for psychotherapy.

The girl's main symptomatology was an anxious mood, fidgety, poor attention span, preoccupation with her weight and body image, and poor sleep which included difficulty falling asleep and nightmares. At intake she was enrolled in the fourth grade. However, educational testing was conducted, and the client was reported to perform at a first grade level.



The heart of the Barbara Sinatra Children's Center clinical approach is the implementation of the certified trauma model, Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF CBT). Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is an evidence-based treatment model designed to help children, adolescents and their caretakers overcome the harmful effects of trauma. Through the components of the model, areas addressed are psychoeducation regarding symptoms and impact of trauma, parenting skills, relaxation and stress management, affective and feeling identification, cognitive intervention to identify and challenge unhelpful thoughts related to the trauma and replacing such thoughts with more accurate beliefs, the development of a trauma narrative to process the experience of abuse, a conjoint sharing of the trauma with a chosen family member, and lastly intervention to enhance safety and future self-protection.

For this child, a critical focus of treatment involved processing the bribes in which her participation in the abuse was a requirement in order to have playtime. Additionally, a core element of her trauma was the belief that the abuse was her fault, which was a central part of the treatment to address and work through shame and promote healing. Adjuncts in support of her individual and family therapy included a life skills and tennis group where she had the opportunity to build confidence, practice emotional regulation in a structured environment, and interact and build healthy peer relationships. Another therapeutic adjunct to her treatment was a week-long art camp where the child engaged in morning meditation exercises for children, followed by structured art therapy.



As treatment progressed, the client showed improvement with symptoms related to anxiety, attention span, and sleep quality. She shared that upon going to the courthouse she felt “alright because I really know this was not my fault.” Importantly, the mother’s desired goal of strengthening the parent-child bond was addressed and met. The quality of the interactions between the mother and child demonstrated a trust and closeness that was enriched through the therapy process.

Through compassionate treatment and the rebuilding of family support, this child’s healing reflects the possibilities that come with therapy and the importance of learning how to protect oneself in the future.

Artwork created by BSCC client





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