

ARBEST

Arkansas Building Effective Services for Trauma
A Program of the UAMS Psychiatric Research Institute



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Noteworthy News

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Dear Partners,

We wish you a wonderful December and all the glad tidings it brings. But we also recognize that this time of year can be stressful, especially for children who have experienced loss or trauma. Did you know that an estimated **21,000** children in Arkansas have experienced the loss of a parent or guardian? Or that an estimated **61,000** children in our state have witnessed domestic violence? That's according to the latest [National Child Health Survey \(2011/2012\)](#) conducted by the [Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health](#). Those numbers are why this month we offer you some resources to help your clients deal with the additional anxiety and stress the holidays can bring.

Finally, we welcome to our newsletter readership the 24 forensic interviewers of our state. Thanks to Lisette Yang (CPC Forensic Interviewer and this month's VIP) for helping us reach out to them. For newsletter subscriptions, ideas, or comments, [email us](#).

[Highlight](#)

Mental Health Appropriation FY15

We want to commend everyone's participation in the Mental Health Appropriation, especially on entering data. When we look at data that was entered in the first quarter of 2013 and compare it to the first quarter of 2014, we are seeing major improvements. Here are some highlights:

- CAC-affiliated MHPs are registering MORE eligible

clients this year: 20% compared to 8% this same time last year.

- The number of direct client hours has dramatically increased: 1,620 compared to 451 this same time last year.

On the 15th of this month we will have completed our second quarter of the fiscal year (FY15). Data for the second quarter will be pulled on Tuesday, December 16th. Child Advocacy Center directors, we will send you a report that indicates how much funding you will receive based on the FY15 service formula; you will need to copy and paste this into your letterhead, sign and date it, and email it to [Gayle Pipkin](#) by the date indicated in the email.

Update

Changes to the Peer Review Process

The Peer Review Process that was begun last year is about to celebrate its one-year anniversary. In an effort to make the process helpful to MHPs and to keep it going, leaders Kathy Helpenstill, LCSW (White Co. CSC), and Karrah Dickerson, LPC (Texarkana CAC), have considered holding an in-person peer review day that is similar to the advanced training meeting. This would take place in the fall and include MHPs contracted with CACs. "Details are still rough, but we are thinking four case presentations and maybe a literature presentation and resource display," said Helpenstill. After the final call of this year in December, ARBEST will review participants' feedback on previous calls, attendance rates, and potential costs for a half-day conference. A report will be made available to CAC directors so they can make an informed decision about the Peer Review Process. Stay tuned for more details.

Resources

Holiday Help Guide

Because the holiday season can be a very stressful time, our friends at the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) have put together a [list of resources](#) for educators, families, and mental health professionals. From NCTSN: "As the holiday season approaches, many of us begin to look forward to

spending time with family and friends, and to sharing in the joys of the season. However, for people who have been exposed to a traumatic event, the holiday season may bring up negative feelings." For example, the estimated 21,000 children in Arkansas who have experienced the loss of a parent or guardian may show increased symptoms of grief or bereavement during this time. Others who have experienced or witnessed abuse and who have been taken into foster care may experience sadness and more trauma triggers during the holidays. Help them with these seasonal challenges by consulting the NCTSN resources.

NIMH Chat on SAD

In addition to holiday anxiety, you may also see clients this time of year presenting with symptoms of seasonal affective disorder (SAD). If you missed NIMH's Twitter chat on SAD a few weeks ago, you can catch up by viewing the [transcript](#). NIMH has other chats as well that could be helpful with children's behavioral issues such as the Twitter Chat on Bullying Prevention with NIH experts. View transcripts from this and other past chats on [various topics](#). Speaking of NIMH, it's gone mobile! Because more and more U.S. adults are accessing the web through smartphones and tablets, NIMH created a new [mobile-friendly website](#) so that visitors can access its information and resources "anywhere, anytime, and on any device—from desktop computers to tablets and mobile phones." You are encouraged to check it out.

Meet a VIP

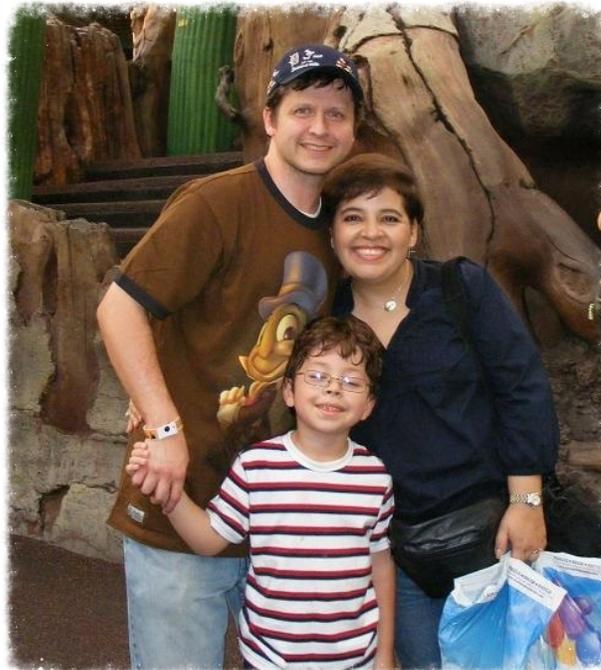
We feature a VIP (Very Interesting Person) working with a Child Advocacy Center in every newsletter. This month meet forensic interviewer Lisette Yang, Children's Protection Center (CPC) in Little Rock.

December VIP: Lisette Yang

Lisette Yang has been a forensic interviewer for more than two years. She was working in marketing when she took time off to have a child. Afterwards she knew she wanted to do something meaningful, "something that would be more rewarding, not only for me but for others as well," she describes. By chance she came across an opportunity to develop a new program doing advocacy for immigrants and Latino victims of crimes. She adds, "It was something I thought I knew nothing about, but I

guess life had been preparing me for it.” She did that for seven years until two events suddenly changed her life: The agency she worked for closed on Mother’s Day and a week later — on her wedding anniversary — her mother passed away. After some time off, she ran into an acquaintance from her advocacy work, Jennifer Long, the director of the Children’s Protection Center. Lisette recalls the ensuing conversation, “She told me she was looking for a forensic interviewer and thought it was right up my alley. The rest is history.”

Lisette is now trained in ChildFirst, a special national protocol to professionally interview children who have been physically or sexually abused. It allows the interviewer to talk to kids according to age and cognitive skills while gathering crucial information in a non-leading and less traumatic manner. She explains, “A good way to make them comfortable is to be really present and attentive to each word they say, to make them feel that the interview room is a safe place where they can talk about anything.”



Lisette Yang (far right, with husband and son), Forensic Interviewer, Children’s Protection Center, Little Rock

Biggest challenge of job: Trying to erase from your mind and heart the graphic and painful disclosures you receive from children so you can continue to be healthy and to avoid taking the events home.

Advice for a new forensic interviewer: Remember that there is no perfect interview (best advice I received

during training), and don't forget that it's all about the child, not you.

A typical day at the office looks like: Every day is different. I can start a day planning on doing data entry for our case's database or some other office work, and suddenly we get a call for an emergency interview that turns into several interviews with various children. On Thursdays I attend our multi-disciplinary team meeting to review child abuse cases reported in Pulaski County.

Enjoys doing when not at work: Cooking, being at home with my family or friends, ice skating, writing, watching interesting documentaries, and learning about anything.

Your claim to fame: My "how I met my husband" story. He was born near where I grew up in Mexico when his German-American parents were in a serious car accident. His father died instantly, his mother passed away after birthing him. An unidentified orphan, he was the first baby in the rural hospital's new nursery and lived there unclaimed for many months. When he was put up for adoption, a distant relative of my mother's came from America with her Chinese husband to adopt him, and took him to the U.S. Meanwhile, back in Guadalajara, the hospital immortalized their first "client" in a picture that hung in the nursery. My great aunt was a nun who worked there and every time I went to visit her, I would see the picture of this baby, forever preserved as a beautiful four-month-old, and I fell in love with him over the years. When I was 18, his adopted mom came to visit my family and took a video of me and my sisters—we are triplets—to show her son. When he watched the video, he pointed to me and told his mom, "I am going to marry that girl." Four years later we met for the first time. That was followed by three years of long distance dating. We got married on our sixth time to meet and have been together ever since, for almost 19 years. Our love story is a story of destiny.

A VIP from a CAC will be featured in the ARBEST newsletter every month. Send us your [suggestions](#) for our next VIP.

[Calendar](#)

December 11 ▪ 9 am-2 pm [Little Rock Pre-Legislative Conference](#), Arkansas Advocates for Children and

Families and the Arkansas Kids Count Coalition, Saint Mark Baptist Church, Little Rock. Registration required.

December 16 ▪ Quarterly ARBEST Report to CAC Directors (9/16/14-12/15/14)

December 16 ▪ **10-11 am** ARBEST Community Advisory Council, PRI Clothier Library at UAMS, Little Rock

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