



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pamela Helming

## Sen. Helming Announces Grants for Domestic Violence, Child Abuse Groups

JONATHAN MONFILETTO - 315-568-9816 August 15, 2017



Senator Pamela A. Helming (R,C,I-Canandaigua) today announced that the Canandaigua-based Partnership for Ontario County received a \$50,000 grant through the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services related to its domestic violence services. Senator Helming advocated for the inclusion of this funding in this year's New York State budget, and the Partnership's grant was contained in a line item under the overall DCJS allocation. Though the Partnership has always received money through the state budget, this is the largest allocation it has ever received.

“The Partnership for Ontario County carries out a critical mission of supporting our families and communities across the seven programs it administers, and services for those affected by domestic violence are one part of that overall mission. Domestic violence is a tragedy in our community that should never happen, but sadly it does. When it does, the Partnership is there to provide support for families and individuals, and this funding is crucial to its ability to offer that help. I was proud to fight for this allocation in this year’s budget, and I am glad that we were able to set aside this money for the Partnership,” Senator Helming said.

Using a model known as Solution-Focused Brief Therapy, the Partnership’s counselors focus on solutions that build upon the strengths and past successes in the family. The family and counselor work collaboratively in setting goals and recognize that making small changes leads to larger changes. Families who have gone through this program have said the counseling helped them to identify the trauma their children were experiencing, address this trauma, and build healthier relationships.

“We are very grateful to Senator Helming for her advocacy, support, and investment in the positive futures of youth and families in Ontario County. Based on the Senator's support, the Partnership will expand its Community Support program to the community at large for those who are experiencing family challenges and barriers that include domestic violence,” Partnership for Ontario County Executive Director Bonnie Ross said.

The Partnership’s Child Advocacy Center of the Finger Lakes was also one of two child advocacy centers in the Finger Lakes region and among the 26 state-approved centers statewide that received that received a total of \$4 million to purchase video recording equipment and hire specially trained staff to interview young victims of sexual and physical abuse. These grants are administered by the New York State Office of Victim Services and funded through the federal Victims of Crime Act and New York’s Criminal Justice Improvement account, both of which are funded by fines, fees, and surcharges paid by

certain offenders after conviction in state and federal court.

The Child Advocacy Center of the Finger Lakes, whose team of professionals works with child victims of physical and sexual abuse from the time of the initial report through end of the case, received \$122,000 to implement the appropriate equipment and employ the necessary staff. Auburn-based Cayuga Counseling Services, whose Child Advocacy Center of Cayuga County helps children through the healing process from the trauma of sexual abuse, received \$8,988 to purchase the equipment.

“Our programs are further enhanced by Senator Helming's advocacy on behalf of the state grant to aid in child abuse investigations. This funding will assist the Child Advocacy Center, a program of the Partnership for Ontario County, to fund on-staff forensic interviewers and equipment. This will enhance the quality of our investigations on behalf of children who are alleged to have been physically or sexually abused,” Ms. Ross said.

Child advocacy centers bring together teams of law enforcement, child protective services professionals, prosecutors, medical and mental health providers, and victim advocates as well as center staff to respond to allegations of child abuse, reduce trauma experienced by child victims, assist their families, provide necessary support services, and allow thorough investigations. The Office of Victim Services worked with the state Office of Children and Family Services, which also funds child advocacy centers, to determine how the funding could best support the important work of these centers.

“No child should ever have to go through the trauma of physical or sexual abuse, but sadly these instances of abuse happen all too often in our society. When they do happen, we are fortunate to have these child advocacy centers that are ready to step in from the moment that the abuse is first reported and guide these child victims through the recovery process. I am so glad to learn that two such organizations in the Finger Lakes region, Partnership for

Ontario County and Cayuga Counseling Centers, received this crucial funding to carry out an even more crucial mission in supporting our children when they need support the most," Senator Helming said.

*Senator Helming represents the 54<sup>th</sup> Senate District, which consists of Seneca and Wayne Counties, parts of Cayuga and Ontario Counties, and the towns of Lansing and Webster. For more information, please visit Senator Helming's [website](#), or follow @SenatorHelming on Facebook or Twitter.*

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