



Children's Assault  
Treatment Services

Northridge Hospital  
Medical Center



# NEWSLETTER

## LAPD's Abused Child Unit

The Abused Child Unit (ACU) of the Los Angeles Police Department's Child Protection Section is responsible for covering child abuse cases in the San Fernando Valley. The goal of this specialized unit of 11 people (nine investigating officers, one supervisor and one support staff) is to eradicate child abuse in the San Fernando Valley of Los Angeles County.



*CATS Clinical Manager Kathy Adams, BSN (standing 2nd from left) and CATS Medical Director Ed Lowder, MD (sitting on right) at a recent CATS open house with LAPD Detectives (standing L-R) Brigitta "Bibi" Shapiro, (Adams), Nancy Nelson, and Juan Perez, (sitting L-R) Theresa Seipel, Bob Ward, Mark Pursel, (Lowder)*

ACU handles physical and sexual abuse cases and cases where the suspect is the natural parent, step-parent, common law parent or legal guardian (i.e. foster care parents). Also under the jurisdiction of this

unit are homicides committed by the same suspects on children who are age 10 and below, such as undetermined deaths like children thrown in trash cans, drowned or left abandoned.

Detective Harold Castillo, ACU Supervising Officer, stated that CATS' expertise in recognizing symptoms of sexual abuse, the quality of its forensic interviews, and the responsiveness of all members of the CATS team, are critical to the work of LAPD's Abused Child Unit.

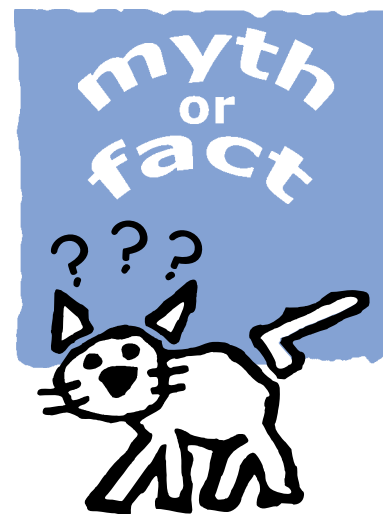
CATS is the only L.A. County designated Sexual Assault Response Center operating 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week in the San Fernando Valley. CATS works closely with ACU, the District Attorney's Office and child protective services to help eradicate child abuse in the San Fernando Valley.

## CATS Remains Open

CATS remains open and fully operational at its current site in Van Nuys. Last November, CATS transferred its affiliation (not its location) to the Roscoe Boulevard campus of Northridge Hospital Medical Center.

Founded in 1955, Northridge Hospital Medical Center is a 425-bed non-profit hospital that serves residents of the San Fernando Valley through a variety of healthcare programs and Centers of Excellence. Visit [www.NorthridgeHospital.org](http://www.NorthridgeHospital.org).

## Shattering Myths of Child Abuse



**MYTH:** Children are usually sexually abused by strangers.

**FACT:** It is estimated that 80-90% of assailants are people the child knows (family member or friend, neighbor, etc.).

**MYTH:** People can usually spot a child molester because they are emotionally disturbed, psychotic people.

**FACT:** Child molesters usually lead normal lives and can not be spotted in a crowd.

## WHAT'S INSIDE

- Scope of the Problem
- Sponsor Profile
- Barriers to Reporting
- Composite Drawing
- Casino Night
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- AND MORE!

# Children's Assault Treatment Services

Founded in 1997 in response to a community need, Northridge Hospital Medical Center's CATS is the only 24-hour, 7-day-a-week program for victims of physical and sexual abuse of all ages in the San Fernando and Santa Clarita Valleys of Los Angeles County, California. CATS has three service components: 1) Medical evidentiary examinations and forensic interviews provided in a supportive environment by specially trained Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners; 2) Case managed counseling and referrals; and 3) Outreach and training.

scope  
of problem

**M**ore children (age four and younger) die from child abuse and neglect than any other single, leading

**cause of death for infants and young children.**

- This includes falls, choking on food, suffocation, drowning, residential fires, and motor vehicle accidents. *Source: A Nation's Shame: Fatal child abuse and Neglect in the United States (Published April 1995, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect.)*

**Nine in 10 Americans polled regard child abuse as a serious problem, yet only 1 in 3 reported abuse when confronted with an actual situation.** *Source: National poll conducted by Penn, Schoen & Berland for Los Angeles-based Children's Institute International (CII). Results released June 3, 1999.*

- This supports an earlier report in which the actual

incidence of abuse and neglect was estimated to be 3 times greater than the number reported to authorities. *Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect. Third National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect: Washington D.C., September 1996.*

**Convicted rape and sexual assault offenders serving time in state prisons report that two-thirds of their victims were under the age of 18.** *Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics and data from Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program of the FBI.*

**One of every seven victims of sexual assault reported to law enforcement agencies were under age six.** *Source: Findings from the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). Based on reports from law enforcement agencies for years 1991 through 1996.*

Corporate Sponsor  
profile

## Lighting the Way for Child Abuse Prevention



This year's Double Platinum Sponsor of the "Victory for Victims Walk/Run," **CONSUMERS CHOICE LIGHTING (CCL)** has been proudly "lighting the world for more than 17 years" with one of the largest lines of indoor and outdoor lighting offered anywhere! Headquartered in Valencia, CCL offers worldwide real factory-direct wholesale prices with no middleman via catalogs and their award winning web site [www.cclsite.com](http://www.cclsite.com).



Founder and President George Kalta and his wife Lara are the proud parents of 3 year old son Alex. Their generous donation to the "Victory for Victims Walk/Run" lights the way for child abuse prevention and touches the hearts and minds of victims of abuse! Please visit their website for further information about CCL and their partnership with the CATS Program.

**We're  
Always  
Available**



CATS is available to conduct on-site workshops on Mandated Reporting & Child Abuse at Los Angeles-based agencies.

For more information, please call Priscilla at **(818) 908-8789**.



Visit our web site at: [www.abuse-assaultservices.org](http://www.abuse-assaultservices.org) and check out our online computer based training on reporting child abuse.

**Together we can make a difference**

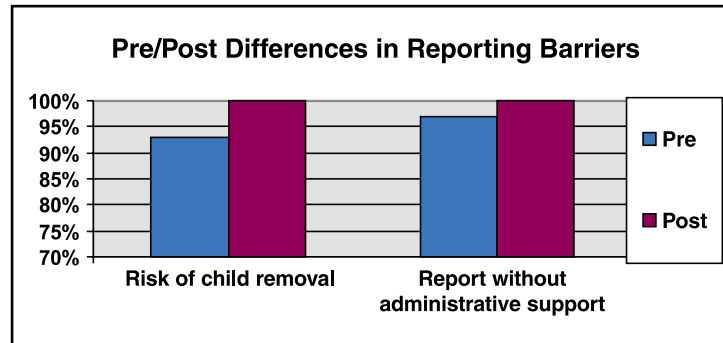
**Help support the vital work of CATS by sending a donation to: Northridge Hospital Foundation/CATS  
14624 Sherman Way, Suite 204  
Van Nuys, CA 91405**

## Overcoming Barriers to Reporting Suspected Cases of Child Abuse

Since opening in 1997, the Children's Assault Treatment Services (CATS) team has proactively targeted the issue of reporting (including the dilemma of under-reporting) suspected child abuse cases by providing workshops for *Mandated Child Abuse Reporting*. Based on research that identified perceived barriers to reporting, participants in these workshops gain the knowledge and, more important, the confidence to effectively identify and report suspected cases.

Over 5,000 mandated reporters have participated in the CATS trainings throughout the San Fernando Valley region of Los Angeles County. All participants complete a simple pre-post workshop survey addressing their knowledge and attitudes regarding mandated reporting. Findings have shown that by the end of the workshop 100% of the participants intend to report a case of child abuse if suspected. The percentage who intend to report even if the child could be removed from the home, or even if their boss may disagree with reporting, also improves (93% to 100% and 96% to 100%, respectively). Statistically significant increases occur in both the participants' behavioral intention and self-efficacy (self-confidence) to report.

To verify the longer-term positive impact of the training program, a random sample of participants participated in a telephone survey up to six months after the workshop to determine changes in their (1) behavioral intention to report suspected cases, and in their (2) self-efficacy to report even in the face of personal concerns or agency obstacles.



It was found that more than 50% of mandated child abuse reporters subsequently suspected a case of child abuse, as a direct result of learning the signs and signals of abuse during the workshop. In addition, many mandated reporters felt they increased their skill in reporting their suspicions, and 75% said that

policies and procedures at their respective work agencies have now been modified to improve reporting practices.

CATS is not only making a valuable contribution to the assessment and treatment of child and adult abuse cases, but also to the likelihood that mandated reporters throughout the San Fernando Valley will increasingly recognize and report suspected cases.

*Hoffman Clark & Associates, independent evaluators*

## FORENSICS: Composite Drawing

### What is a composite drawing?

Composite drawing is the most common service a forensic artist, also known as a "sketch artist," or "police artist" provides. Composite drawings are drawings done by an artist with the help of the witness to identify the suspect involved in the crime. The artist sits down with the witness and draws the facial characteristics, using the description of the suspect that the witness recalls.

### Is composite drawing a powerful tool?

Yes, because a suspect's composite sketch enables the officers and the community to better imagine how a suspect may appear based on the witness' descriptive information. By using this method all police departments and news me-

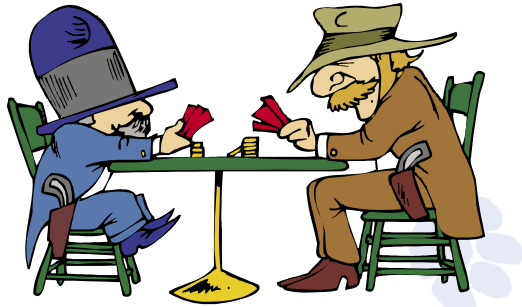
dia have the information in their hands to ask for the help of the general public in identifying the suspect quickly.



### Composite drawing leads to recent arrest

A composite drawing recently led to the arrest of a North Hollywood man that was a suspect in the rape and torture of a twenty-four year old patient of the CATS program. The Los Angeles Regional Fugitive Task Force made up of federal, state and local law enforcement authorities arrested the alleged suspect in a motel in Phoenix Arizona after receiving a tip from a caller who recognized the alleged suspect based on the composite drawing released to the media.

# Casino Night



Please join us on Casino Night to benefit

## C.A.T.S

**August 27, 2005**

Black Jack • Craps • Roulette

Every Hour-on-the-Hour Drawings

Live Entertainment • Silent and Live Auction

Appetizer and Dessert Buffets to Die for!

Fun Western Theme

For more information, please contact

Priscilla at **(818) 908-8789**

## CATS Meow Guild

The CATS Meow is a guild dedicated to ensuring healthier, happier lives for children who have been sexually and/or physically abused by supporting the prompt medical treatment, psycho-social intervention and prevention education provided by the Children's Assault Treatment Services program and its community partners.

### CATS Meow Guild Founding Members

Christine Schaeffer, Chair

Kathy and Randy Adams

John & Pam Alfenito

Bonnie Bailer

C.J. & Joan Geisbush

Richard & Barbara Hawthorne

Dr. Harold E. Lowder

Dr. Gordon & Marge McGregor

Beckaa Mosher

Darell & Thordis Norris

Carole Pump

David & Ube Pump

Dr. Michael & Denise Vitullo

Thomas & June Waugh

Bessie Wilson

### *Center for Healthier Communities*

Northridge Hospital  
Medical Center



14624 Sherman Way, Suite 204  
Van Nuys, CA 91405

### **Center for Healthier Communities**

(818) 908-8789

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