

# Continuing the Mission: One Child, One Story, One Safe Place

By Melissa Greenwell

## What's Ahead for Buffalo Trace Children's Advocacy Center This Year

As communities across the Buffalo Trace region look ahead to a new year, the Buffalo Trace Children's Advocacy Center (BTCAC) is preparing for another year of critical, lifesaving work on behalf of the most vulnerable children—those impacted by abuse, violence, and trauma.

For more than two decades, BTCAC has served as a safe place where children can begin to heal. Since opening its doors in 2002, the center has grown from a small operation offering limited services into a fully staffed, multidisciplinary organization providing coordinated forensic interviews, child sexual abuse medical exams, advocacy, and trauma-focused therapy. Today, BTCAC serves children across the region through offices in Maysville and Flemingsburg, ensuring access to care regardless of where families live.

## Continuing the Mission: One Child, One Story, One Safe Place

At the heart of BTCAC's work is a simple but powerful goal: to minimize additional trauma for children who have already experienced abuse. Through the Children's Advocacy Center

model, children tell their story once, in a child-friendly environment, while law enforcement, child protective services, prosecutors, medical professionals, mental health providers, and advocates work together behind the scenes.

Last fiscal year alone, BTCAC served 661 children, including 268 new cases. Staff conducted nearly 200 forensic interviews and provided support to 184 caregivers—many of whom were navigating the shock, fear, and uncertainty that follow a disclosure of abuse. These numbers represent real children, real families, and real moments where safety and compassion mattered.

As the need for services continues to grow, BTCAC is committed to maintaining high-quality, child-centered care while expanding its capacity to meet increasing demand. In the coming year, the center will continue providing forensic interviews in cases of sexual abuse, physical abuse, and instances where children have witnessed violent crimes. Therapy services will remain a key focus, ensuring children and non-offending caregivers have access to trauma-informed support throughout the healing process.

## Looking Ahead: Investing in Care, Capacity, and Community

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The year ahead will be one of both continuity and growth for BTCAC. Priorities include:

- Sustaining and expanding therapy services to meet the ongoing mental health needs of children and families.
- Supporting a highly trained, multidisciplinary staff equipped to respond to complex and sensitive cases.
- Enhancing outreach and education efforts to strengthen community understanding of abuse, reporting requirements, and the importance of believing children.
- Ensuring facilities remain welcoming, safe, and accessible for children across the region.

None of this work happens in isolation. BTCAC relies on strong partnerships with local agencies, professionals, and supporters who believe that children deserve safety, dignity, and hope—especially during their most difficult moments.

## A Night That Makes a Difference: The Great Give & Win

One of the most important ways the community can support BTCAC's work this year is through its signature fundraising event, The Great Give & Win – May the Odds Be Ever in Your Favor, taking place on October 23, 2026, at the Limestone Center in Maysville.

This exciting evening combines a reverse raffle (under Kentucky charitable gaming license number EXE0003057), dinner, and interactive fundraising activities with a powerful mission moment highlighting the impact of BTCAC's services. Every ticket purchased and every dollar raised directly supports children in the Buffalo Trace region—helping ensure they receive coordinated, trauma-informed care in a safe environment.

Hope Burns, BTCAC Executive Director, says the event is designed to be both meaningful and memorable.

"This event allows our community to come together in a way that is engaging, exciting, and impactful," Burns said. "Every sponsorship and every ticket purchased helps ensure that children who have experienced abuse can find safety, healing, and hope through our services."

## A Call for Sponsors: Partnering to Protect Children

Sponsorships are essential to the success of The Great Give & Win and to BTCAC's ability to serve children throughout the year. Event sponsors not only help underwrite the cost of the event, but also make it possible for BTCAC to direct more resources toward direct

services for children and families.

Sponsorship opportunities range from community-level support to presenting sponsorships, offering businesses and individuals meaningful visibility while demonstrating a strong commitment to child safety and family well-being. Sponsors are recognized through event materials, media coverage, social media, and on-site acknowledgments.

Melissa Greenwell, BTCAC Development Coordinator, says the event represents something entirely new for the region.

"This type of event hasn't been done in our area before," Greenwell said. "We wanted to create something fun, fresh, and engaging—and what better mission to launch something new than protecting children and helping them heal? We're excited to invite the community to be part of something special from the very beginning."

More importantly, sponsorship is an investment in healing. It supports forensic interviews that reduce trauma, therapy sessions that help children regain a sense of safety, advocacy services that guide families through overwhelming systems, and a coordinated response that puts children first.

## Why It Matters

Abuse does not always leave visible scars. In most cases, there is no physical evidence—making belief, advocacy, and coordinated intervention even more critical. BTCAC exists to ensure children are not asked to carry their trauma alone and that families have a trusted place to turn during unimaginable circumstances.

As BTCAC looks ahead to the coming year, the mission remains clear: to serve every child with compassion, professionalism, and care, and to ensure that healing is possible, even after harm.

Community support—through sponsorships, event participation, and ongoing giving—makes this work possible. Together, we can ensure that the Buffalo Trace Children's Advocacy Center continues to be a place of protection, healing, and hope for the children who need it most.

For more information about sponsorship opportunities or to get involved, contact Hope Burns at hope@btcac.com or 606-563-0572. You can also reach Melissa Greenwell at melissa@btcac.com or 606-776-0212. For event updates and ticket information as it unfolds, follow the Buffalo Trace Children's Advocacy Center on Facebook.

## Vanceburg Lions Club

By Bill Tom Stone



The Vanceburg Lions Club held its meeting on February 5th at the Vanceburg Methodist Church fellowship hall at 6:30. President Lion David Lucas called the meeting to order, with Lion Mike Edington leading in the pledge of allegiance to the United States flag and Lion Austin Rucker giving the prayer. Then, Lion Lucas invited the members to enjoy a time of dining and fellowship.

President Lucas reported that the Vanceburg Lions Club will be hosting the next zone meeting for our zone. We discussed the meal and decided on ribs, chicken, cheesy potatoes, green beans, and rolls. Lion Bill Tom Stone will cover the cooking. The event will be held at the Black Oak Volunteer Fire Department. Lions Austin Rucker and TJ Evans will help in setting up and cleaning up after the event. We have not heard back from zone chairman Craig Stanfield yet on how many have reported back that they will be attending, but we should have the numbers in the near future.

Lion Lucas then asked the group if we plan to have a booth at the May Festival hosted by the Chamber of Commerce? The group discussed the various options for a booth and what type of booth we should have.

Lions Austin Evans and Austin Rucker are going to see if we could have the Kentucky Eye Foundation mobile eye testing equipment for the day and have a few volunteers run the equipment. Lion Cary Cagle informed the club that the date for the May Fest was the second week of May. Many of the members will be supporting the football team that day, but will work later in the evening. Lion Evans and Rucker will report back at our next meeting about the mobile eye van.

Lion Austin Rucker reminded the club that the annual "Night to Shine" will be held at the Clarksburg Christian Church. He reminded everyone that if they wanted to volunteer, they needed to have gone to the church website and fill out the volunteer or guest form. Training is scheduled for this coming Saturday. The event will be held on February 13th at the church.

President Lucas then said with Lion Gage Yates not present, if anyone had an update on the Fall festival that the Lions Club voted to take back at a meeting a few

weeks back. Lion Rucker said that Lion Yates had been contacting a few groups for entertainment to see availability and cost. He also said that a few vendors who plan on being at the event had contacted Lion Yates. It is one of the last of the season, so they are making plans for their last few events.

We talked about gathering the equipment and historical documents scattered around town and keeping them in one place. Lion Austin Rucker volunteered to store them temporarily at his place until we find a permanent location for them.

Lion Lucas also informed the group that he had tentatively scheduled the softball tournament for July 18th. He was going to get that date approved by the school in the next few days.

We also added a new member to the club, Mr. Derrick Butler. We continue to see the club grow and we are excited about the future of the club.

There being no more business to come before the club, we adjourned

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## Legislative Update

State Representative Patrick Flannery



## Flannery files Kentucky Buy American Act

Frankfort, Kentucky (February 2, 2026) – HB 472, filed by Representative Patrick Flannery (R-Olive Hill), would require state and local contracts to include a provision that any iron, steel, or aluminum used in all state and local projects be manufactured in the United States, unless a waiver is granted. The measure is known as the Kentucky Buy American Act.

"This bill would strengthen the economy by supporting American workers and manufacturers," said Flannery. "Buying American-made empowers those workers and manufacturers to continue making great products and lets them know

how much we value their work."

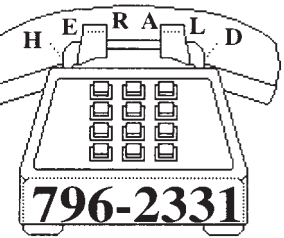
HB 472 requires the consideration of American-made products, but does not require the use of American made products. Waivers can be granted to contractors if there is not a sufficient supply of American-made iron, steel, or aluminum for the project, or if the cost of these materials would increase the overall cost of the project more than 10%.

Additionally, any person who intentionally represents or labels products as "Made in America" which are not American-made will be prohibited from receiving any future subcontracts with a government body.

"Northeast Kentucky has a strong heritage of iron and

steel manufacturing. This bill encourages that we make iron, steel, and aluminum here at home and across the United States," said Flannery. "My district and the surrounding area have a talented workforce that I know creates quality products. We are ready to manufacture for ourselves again and reignite our local economy."

To learn more about HB 472, please visit legislature.ky.gov or click here.



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