

Supported by
Bureau of
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Virginia Depart-
ment of Welfare



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Virginia Child Protection Newsletter

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Two Family Support Centers Offer Services

Since 1976, the Virginia Department of Welfare, Bureau of Protective Service has been receiving federal money for state assistance grants. This money has been used by the bureau in several ways, such as establishing the central registry and providing training for bureau workers. Over the last two years, however, it has been used for grants to various local offices or community agencies desiring to develop innovative child abuse and neglect programming. These grants have been awarded in large sums for Family Support Centers or as minigrants for development of single, specialized service.

Last year, the bureau awarded grants of \$35,500 for Family Support Centers to two localities—the Parent Child Development Center in West Point and the Mental Health Association in Harrisonburg. Though the thrust of their programming is different, both focused on prevention and intervention in child abuse and neglect.

Parent Child Development Center

The Parent Child Development Center (PCDC) began ten years ago with the basic concept of improving family life. However, because funds in the small community of West Point were not always available to provide desired services, the center has had to "go where the money is." Gradually, the center developed its major focus to provide basic adult education programs and child care to preschool children. The availability of the Family Support Center grant was seen by the staff as a means to return to their initial goal of becoming directly involved with family life.

"As you write for grants and scratch for money, you begin to realize you can't always do exactly what you want to do," said Myrna Whitt, director for the Parent Child Development Center's



A child gets the rest she needs while her mother takes classes at the Parent Child Development Center.

Family Support division. "So we've had to do job training, and look at various other areas, changing our programming each year. This grant allowed us to get back to what we wanted to do," added Whitt.

The regular programming offered by the PCDC is a highly individualized curriculum with a heavy emphasis on educational and employment needs. The participants, mostly women, spend three days a week, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., learning basic skills. Such classes as math, reading, social studies and science prepare the women to take the GED exam in an effort to increase employability. For those participants

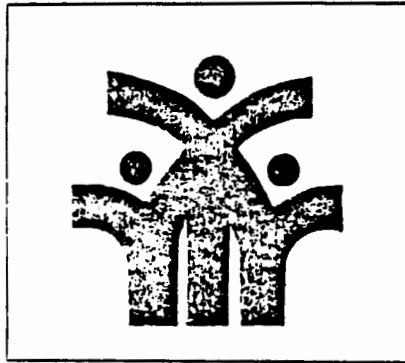
who have a high school diploma, Rappahannock Community College offers classes from their instructional aid program at the center, again facilitating employability. Also, driver education is offered to anyone desiring to get their drivers license.

The first hint of the center's desire to impact on family life comes upon hearing about the availability of parenting skills and child development classes interspersed with their many basic education courses. These two classes are available to anyone.

The Family Support Center grant allowed the PCDC to take what was a

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NCPCA Chapter Established in Virginia



(Ed. Note: This article will be a regular feature of the newsletter, written by Janice Beeman, representative of the Virginia Chapter of the NCPCA)

Virginia now has its own chapter of the National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse (NCPCA). The Virginia NCPCA has a working board composed of one-third private, one-third professional and one-third corporate volunteer members. This board will establish and maintain a statewide program that is both supportive of NCPCA's goals and responsive to Virginia's needs.

Trying to *prevent* child abuse and neglect is the goal of the chapter, according to Janice Beeman, Virginia chapter board member. The Virginia Chapter and the NCPCA are dedicated to involving citizens in actions to prevent child abuse.

A membership entitles members to a packet of information from the NCPCA on prevention and a quarterly newsletter entitled *Caring*. The goal of membership is combating child abuse, says Beeman. Prevention services are especially necessary to cut back on the abuse problem. "It is more cost effective to get behind primary prevention programs," added Beeman.

To adequately promote prevention, the Virginia chapter has the following program objectives:

1. To promote cooperation among organizations and agencies in Virginia in the field of child abuse prevention by compiling a resource directory listing all programs on child abuse prevention by June 1982.
2. To establish an effective statewide communication network to highlight child abuse prevention activities and to exchange program ideas by creating and circulating a newsletter or securing

a space in an already existent publication by September 1981; and, by sponsoring periodic statewide conferences directed to both professional and lay people: the first conference to be held in spring 1983.

3. To encourage the development of primary programs where none exist by disseminating information about new programs throughout the state dealing specifically with prevention; one new program to be established by September 1982.

4. To engage in legislative activity aimed at producing a change in systems that encourage the establishment of prevention programs, and specifically by introducing into the 1982 General Assembly the Children's Trust Fund Bill.

According to Beeman, this bill would add a surcharge to marriage license fees which would come back to a children's trust fund used for primary prevention programs.

5. To work with the Governor's Advisory Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect and support the sponsor-

ship of periodic Governor's State Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect, the first to be held in 1983.

6. To promote the creation and strengthening of existing Multi-Disciplinary Teams in Virginia as advocated by the Governor's Advisory Committee with the creation of five new MD teams, and to utilize the Multi-Disciplinary Team Conference held August 28, 1981, and September 24, 1981 for resource sharing. (Ed. Note: See next issue for report on this excellent conference).

The Virginia chapter for Prevention of Child Abuse has received a grant from the Tidewater Children's Foundation for development and specific activities for child abuse prevention. This is a challenge grant to assist in further statewide resource development efforts.

To function effectively in bringing about the prevention of child abuse, the Virginia Chapter must strengthen its statewide membership. Your financial support and assistance can make a difference.



NCPCA Membership

Yes. I want to help stop the hurt!

Please accept my membership in the Virginia Chapter of the National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse today.

Name _____ Organization _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Contributions and bequests to NCPCA are charitable contributions which are tax deductible to the extent provided by law.

\$15 Regular

\$100 Donor

\$25 Supporting

\$250 Patron

\$50 Sustaining

\$500 Friend of Abused Children

\$1,000 Corporate Friend of Abused Children

Enclosed is my membership fee of \$_____ I will receive the National Committee's newsletter *Caring*.

Please return this form with your check or money order to the Virginia Chapter for Prevention of Child Abuse, Phyllis Breidenbaugh, 3135 Ashking Drive, Mechanicsville, Virginia 23111.

Nineteen Minigrants Awarded

The Virginia Department of Welfare's Bureau of Child Protective Services has finalized nineteen contracts from minigrants. The minigrants were selected from 35 proposals received for Child Protective Service enhancement funding. The funding is a part of the bureau's State Assistance Grant received from the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect. Awards were made in the following categories:

Sexual Abuse

The 15th District (Fredericksburg) Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court Service Unit plans to help establish a Parents United Chapter for families where there is a sexual abuse problem.

Virginia Polytechnic Institute will be using their money to produce a video presentation to provide easy access to information about child sexual abuse for teachers and school counselors.

A training program to increase the public's awareness and to teach professionals to recognize indicators of sexual abuse will be developed by the Henrico Mental Health Center.

Establishment of Self Help Groups

To familiarize parents with what to expect of parenthood and children, the Fauquier County Department of Social

Services is establishing a parenting group.

The Henrico County Department of Social Services will be implementing a course designed to improve life management skills of CPS and AFDC recipients.

A grant to the Petersburg Tri-Cities Chapter of Parents Anonymous (PA) has been awarded to help them in reestablishing their chapter.

The Culpeper County Department of Social Services will be organizing a babysitting co-op for AFDC mothers living in subsidized housing in an effort to give the mothers some respite from childcare, provide an opportunity to form friendships and to develop the concept of a cooperative.

Legal Issues

The Hopewell Department of Social Services plans to institute a system for contracting with the local attorneys to provide the agency with concentrated legal assistance in selected Child Protective Service cases.

Perinatal Education

For expectant and new parents in their county, the King and Queen County Department of Social Services will be publishing a newsletter, *The Prince and Princess Gazette*.

The Greene County Department of Social Services and the Greene County VPI Extension Agent are jointly planning a parenting group for expectant teenage parents. Prevention, education, and support is the focus of the program.

The Fairfax Hospital Child Protection Committee plans to create a resource pamphlet for new parents to be distributed while the baby is still in the hospital.

To increase the likelihood of positive parenting through education, the Crater Child Protection Team plans to use their grant to develop a program for new and expectant parents.

Prevention and Treatment

The James City County Department of Social Services plans to organize and conduct a group to educate parents in the importance of understanding the needs of their child and teach them specific skills necessary for normal child development.

Lee County Social Services will use its grant to provide parenting training.

St. Mary's Hospital plans to use their grant funding to sponsor a parenting course for expectant parents designed by the Red Cross.

To strengthen the Parents Anonymous organization in the state, the Parents Anonymous, Inc., of Virginia is developing a statewide newsletter.

The Fluvanna Department of Social Services will be sponsoring a perinatal education program for expectant adolescent mothers and peer support for families of preschool children.

Specialized Treatment

To provide concentrated supportive services to Child Protective Services clients, the Tazewell County Department of Social Service will implement a parent aide program. Funds are to pay parent aides and maintain supportive costs of the program. Twelve families are involved in the project.

The Albemarle County Department of Social Services will be supporting a group for abused/neglected adolescents. Abused/neglected adolescents have special needs, and the program's intent is to focus on these children's specific problems.

Congratulations to all of you! We wish you a successful year in providing these services.

Family Support Center Grant Awarded

The Charlottesville Infant Development Project (IDP) has been awarded the \$34,500 Child Protective Services' Family Support Center grant from Virginia Department of Welfare.

This new walk-in community agency has been named Garrett Center, and is located in Garrett Square, a low income, government subsidized housing development.

Garrett Center's emphasis will be on meeting the needs of low income families who have children below school age, and parents will be encouraged to bring family and friends to join in the center's activities. By doing this, the center will be able to have a positive effect on the family's broader social environment and influence the family support network.

According to Erla Hagan, Garrett Center executive director and IDP director, neighborhood residents will

be involved in staffing the center along with social work professionals. The center will offer individual appointments with IDP and other community agency staff, parent education, training in social skills, opportunities for parents social involvement and drop-in care.

Rather than merely a babysitting service, drop-in care is described as an important concept in fostering positive parenting. It offers a woman a short respite from child care responsibility. It is hoped that this rest results in positive time when parent and child are together. Each family who uses drop-in child care service will be asked to volunteer as a child caretaker for a period of time equal to half the drop-in care time they have used. This payback agreement may be met by the mother herself, another member of the family, or a willing teenager.

Two, Family Support Systems continued from page 1



Nursery school activities for children.

small part of the programming and make it into a major emphasis for those clients at risk for child abuse and neglect. It allowed the PCDC to further tailor the program to the individual needs of the parents, many of whom were referred from social services or juvenile court.

The Family Support Center program emphasized parenting skills, nutrition and child development. It allowed for a social worker to offer individual and group counseling and art therapy to the clients. In addition, it provided a local mental health worker who came one day a week for those people needing greater therapeutic assistance. Ms. Whitt was also able to make monthly home visits, allowing her to learn more about her clients through their home environment.

As we took a walking tour of the center, we were notably impressed by the facilities. There are several large, well equipped rooms for the adult classes. It is particularly pleasing, however, to come upon the charming and colorful area designed for the preschool children. These rooms are well equipped for children of all preschool stages. Ms. Whitt explains that there are certified teachers and teacher's aides working with the various groups. "It's just like you would find in any nursery school," she said. There is one added benefit, however, and that is the immediate, on-site availability of counseling services

which the Family Support Center was able to add.

A complete picture of the original programs blending with the new emerges. Parent and child come together in a facility to receive several services which are bound to impact positively on their lives. One has to be impressed by the fact that all services are received by the participants through this one facility. In addition to the several classes and counseling services, the center's staff invites community service providers — such as legal aid and fuel assistance — to come and meet with clients when needed. An examination of a map shows the vastness of the rural counties served by the center; the transportation problems of clients become a stark reality. The center staff's sensitivity to this matter is apparent not only through understanding their programming but also by the presence of the old bus in the driveway. This is the vehicle that runs throughout the two counties three days a week, picking up the families at the beginning of their day and returning them at the end. It would be impossible for some to get to the center without it.

During the 1980-1981 fiscal year covered by the Family Support Center grant, the PCDC served 37 adults and 59 children. Of these, 15 adults and 20 children received the more intense program of the Family Support Center. In addition, Ms. Whitt believes the home visits allowed the program to

impact on 10 additional school aged children.

When asked for a profile of the typical person using the FSC service, Ms. Whitt gives the following information: 21 year old female with 2.5 children, extremely low income, high school drop-out. She and her children have 75 percent attendance rate at the center during the year. Only three participants dropped out totally.

In order to help the community become aware of the PCDC in-house programs, the staff held two open houses during the last year. The fall open house was held for the community at large, and was a way of introducing the services and their importance. The community was invited to attend through public service announcements and special invitation.

In contrast, the spring open house was held for family members so that they could feel that they were a part of the program. It was hoped that this might result in further encouragement by families to members who were taking part in the program.

Though both open houses were not as well attended as Ms. Whitt had hoped, she thinks they were instrumental in increasing community awareness.

Community Awareness Program Component

Another aspect of the PCDC Family Support Center grant was the educational programming for the community. These programs took on several forms.

School Programs

We were particularly impressed by Ms. Whitt's ability to implement two school based programs concerning child abuse and neglect. The intent of both school based programs was to convey information about child abuse and neglect with the hope of obtaining increased reporting in the schools. One was for children in grades 1-3 in which she used the cassette tape, "Sometimes It's Okay to Tattle," along with a puppet for visual effect. In grades 4-7 she presented a panel discussion. The panel was made up of a probation officer, a doctor, and Ms. Whitt as representative of the PCDC. Although many questions were asked, particularly by the older children, Ms. Whitt does not think reporting showed an increase. Since she has not received any

direct feedback as yet, she is not sure of the exact impact of these programs on the children.

Community Programs

Ms. Whitt was invited to visit several civic groups and churches to present programs. These presentations focused on the general problem of child abuse and neglect, the law, and how the PCDC is meeting the needs of its community. Having presented 20 or more of these community awareness programs, Ms. Whitt thinks the people in the area have had their consciousness raised to the problem.

Ms. Whitt asserts that several services provided through the Family Support Center grant have been extremely valuable and important to her community. Positive family life is a primary goal of the PCDC and the grant allowed the Center to bring that goal to life. There is hope of being able to continue these added programs through a federal grant. Without a grant, it will be difficult to run the buses and keep the physical plant maintained. With the help of some educational funds and many volunteers, the PCDC can function as they were before the Family Support Center grant. However, this is not the level they believe to be necessary for the quality of life they would like to ensure their clients.

When asked what she would like stressed about the work of the Center, Whitt clearly emphasized her frustration with funding. "We see the needs of the people and see what we can accomplish, and yet every year the story is the same. We beat the bushes for money. We have proven we are cost effective. We have cut in half the cost of other job training programs and the need for foster care as a solution to families at high risk. We want to keep families intact and work with them. It takes money," she explained.

The local statistics bear her out. One family with three children placed in foster care in King and Queen County costs the local government a fee ranging from \$2,124 to \$3,666 a year. The PCDC offers support as well as classroom training and overall improvement of the families' long range chance for success for less than that.

For more information about the programs offered through the Parent Child Development Center and the

Family Support Center, contact Ms. Myrna Whitt, Box 647, West Point, Virginia 23181.

Harrisonburg/Rockingham: Family Support Center

In sharp contrast to the highly individual client programs of the West Point Family Support Center, we find the Harrisonburg Center to have a very broad base of services. These services directly involved eight local agencies, indirectly involved approximately 20 more, reached a population of over 250 at risk or abusive families, offered training to over 200 professionals and reached an undetermined number through community education programs.

The initiative for this program came from Joann Grayson, PhD, a clinical psychologist teaching at James Madison University. Dr. Grayson has an intense interest in the problems of child abuse and neglect. Therefore, when she became aware of the availability of the grant, it made sense that she would take action.

"In approaching the community about developing services, I decided to use a needs assessment method to gather and organize opinion and information," said Grayson. "Our needs assessment was designed with two main goals: first, determining existing services and expertise; and, second, ascertaining service gaps. I felt that beginning with a needs assessment was particularly important to assure that proposed services were warranted and to avoid duplication of effort," she added.

Dr. Grayson went about carrying out this assessment first by identifying key agencies and individuals. Each was contacted by phone to discuss their current programming, their feelings about existing needs and service gaps and possible services they would like to see developed through the grant. After making these contacts, ideas were written down for each agency to consider, and, it was hoped, to add their own staff ideas and programming information. Information was compiled and the current programming was abstracted. Analysis of this information unearthed several recurring and strong ideas. These were:

1. Another agency was not needed. All persons contacted agree that any new

services were best shared within existing agencies where they could be continued if response warranted.

2. Most professionals reported some uncertainty or reluctance in dealing with child abuse and neglect cases. This was felt, in part, to be due to the lack of training in child abuse and neglect.

3. A list of specific community program gaps were identified. Several of these were beyond the scope of the grant, but others the grant could address.

For each of the higher priority service needs, a pilot program was developed. A person with special interest and expertise in each area was identified. That person became the program developer, creating an outline of proposed services and budget. These ideas and budget requests were combined and compiled and became the outline of the local Family Support Center.

A temporary office was needed to coordinate services, distribute money, keep books, keep track of programs and engage in public relations. This was done by setting up a central office, and hiring Charlotte McNulty, MA, as 2/3 time administrator, and Bev Mackey as 3/5 time administrative assistant. In addition, consultants were needed to evaluate all services in order to determine program effectiveness. All of these people were to work very closely with service providers in implementation of such components.

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Joe Lynch, ACSW, Community Counseling Center.

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Several services were offered by the community:

1. A child psychologist from a local mental health center provided parenting classes in two high risk residential areas.

2. The same psychologist offered child therapy to a high risk group of adolescent girls at a local school.

3. Supervision and training were provided for a group of volunteers working with children at First Step, the local shelter for battered women.

4. A local therapist contracted with the Family Support Center to lead a weekly group for women who were victims of spouse abuse. This was held at a local church and included child care.

5. It was intended that a local halfway house would implement six groups for teenagers whose parents were alcoholics.

6. Prenatal classes were taught at the local health department during the maternity clinic.

7. Family therapy and travel stipends were provided on a priority basis to abusive or high risk clients referred to a local counseling center by the Family Support Center.

8. Paraprofessional counseling services were provided to families needing someone to spend time with them in their home. These paraprofessionals received training and supervision through a class taught at James Madison University.

9. Several training programs were available to local professionals through the Family Support Center grant and the local Mental Health Continuing Education Services. In addition, training packages were developed for volunteers with Big Brothers/Big Sisters, First Step (a shelter for battered women), and Listening Ear (a local hotline).

10. A library of play materials was established. It was available to any professional working with children of all ages. These toys were seen as tools for teaching parents how to play with their children or help the children entertain themselves. These materials were used occasionally by local protective service workers, but were used most often by paraprofessionals working with high risk or abusive families and volunteers working with the shelter's children.

11. The local Mental Health Association was provided with funds to engage

in a year of community awareness activities. The activities centered around this year's theme, "A Family is Hard Work but it Can Work." The year culminated with a Family Fun Fair which offered activities for the whole family. It was a huge success. In fact, the Virginia Mental Health Association gave it a first place award for innovative programming for 1980-1981.

After a year of working with this program and without having the actual completed data analysis available, the coordinator said that some services were definitely more successful than others. For instance, while 12 families were referred for therapy, it was a rare client who attended therapy sessions more than twice, with many going once or not at all. On the other hand, the lay therapy program was found to have just the opposite results. Though referrals came from the same agencies, these clients generally accepted the paraprofessional into their homes with a great deal of enthusiasm. The 20 students trained and supervised at James Madison University acted as friend and advocate for their individual families, spending as much as five hours a week with them. They spent time serving the families in several capacities ranging from playing with or tutoring children to going through the court process with a woman involved in a custody dispute. Regardless of what capacity they filled with their family, these students had a positive impact on their lives and behavior patterns.

It is interesting to note that this pattern is consistent with recent

research findings. Berkeley Planning Associates (1977), in a study of 11 major demonstration programs across the country, reported similar patterns. In fact, in some cases families in individual or family therapy actually regressed while lay therapy and group models proved to be effective techniques in reducing abusive behaviors.

Because the family therapy component was not working as well as hoped, Joe Lynch, the director of the Counseling Center, started making inquiries into the possibility of providing a new service with the grant funds. He was very interested in running a group for men who abuse other people, particularly their wives and children. Since funds could be reallocated, Joe launched ahead with the project. Because of cooperation with the district and juvenile domestic relations judges, combined with many hours of planning and screening, eight men were referred to the group. The combination therapy/education group ran for eight weeks. It was an exciting as well as positive endeavor and shows what creativity and flexibility can produce!

One of the more disappointing parts of the Family Support Center's year was the inability to start the several alcohol teen groups which the staff at Pear Street, a local halfway house, had thought were very much needed in the area. It seemed that no matter how much ground work in public relations was done with the professional and lay community, no serious interest could be

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Betty Kline, MA, of Massanutten Mental Health



Dr. Joann Gravson author of Harrisonburg/Rockingham County Family Support Center Grant

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generated. Local schools and Alcoholic Anonymous organizations were reluctant to become involved. Possibly the failure to get any group started was due to a lack of a realistic attitude about the difficulties in reaching teenagers. Though no groups were ever started, the various efforts toward this goal did have a positive effect on community awareness. Several articles appeared in the newspaper and on the radio. In addition, the city and county officials declared February 15-21 as Alcohol Awareness Week. During this week a very large display and several films were at the local shopping mall. And, a new film, "If You Loved Me," purchased through grant funds, has been used on several occasions in community education efforts. Though the original goal remains unmet, Pear Street's and the Family Support Center's voices were heard.

One of the more enjoyable parts of the coordinator's year, said Ms.

McNulty, was watching the evolution of some innovative parenting groups. Parenting classes are an experience most parents can use at various stages in their parenting career, but few receive them. This is probably due to several factors including the reading and cognitive levels needed for the manuals and workbooks of existing parenting programs, the cost of attending, and the problems of getting to a place, usually a mental health facility, where classes are being held. Betty Kline, a child psychologist at Massanutten Mental Health, decided to use a new approach. She wanted to reach people who were least likely to attend parenting classes. Kline planned classes which primarily utilized audio-visual material, using the Footsteps series extensively, and offered door prizes, \$2 stipends per participant per meeting, refreshments and babysitting. Most important, however, she traveled to them! Though it took a great deal of work locating a

person in a low income housing area willing to host her classes, she did it twice! It was a positive experience for all; the model worked. The first eight people came consistently, with a near perfect attendance record. The second larger group was less consistent in attendance but still achieved better than 85% attendance rate. And, fortunately, Ms. Kline plans to try them again.

Though we have in no way covered all of the services involved in this broad based program, we presented an idea of the mixture of successes and failures as well as the need for creativity and flexibility in offering innovative programming. Should any reader desire more complete information on any of the Harrisonburg/Rockingham Family Support Center programs, contact either Charlotte McNulty or Dr. Joann Grayson at the Center for Child Abuse Education, Psychology Department, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia 22807.

Salutations

The Child Protection Newsletter has a new location and is once again being printed.

James Madison University received a grant from Child Protective Services to publish the newsletter starting this fall. Joann Grayson, PhD, editor of the newsletter, is a clinical psychologist and a member of the JMU faculty. She has a long history of interest and experience in the problems of child abuse and neglect.

Editorial staff also consists of Charlotte McNulty, MA, managing editor, and four student interns. The newsletter is being published with the cooperation of Doug Hutton of the JMU Publications Office and Ken Parmalee of the JMU Printing Services Office.

Let us know your reaction to our first newsletter. Also let us know if you have suggestions for articles. Our second edition is scheduled for the middle of February.

VCPN

The Child Protection Newsletter is trying to update its mailing list. The publication has not been distributed in over a year. If anyone wishes to be removed from the mailing list or has new additions, please fill out the following form and send to:

Charlotte McNulty
Center for Child Abuse Education
Psychology Department
James Madison University
Harrisonburg, Virginia 22807

Name: _____

Organization _____

Address _____

Please remove from list: _____

Please add to list: _____