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Club Donates \$15,000 to Support Abused Children

Every eight minutes a child is sexually abused in the United States. Only 10 percent will ever tell their story.

There was a time in the Rochester community when the system made the challenges of abused children greater. Without a centralized and focused resource, children had to repeat their traumatic stories of abuse over and over again to emergency room staff and police. The lack of organization allowed families to fall through the cracks of bureaucracy.

In 2004, the Bivona Child Advocacy Center opened in Rochester. This organization is focused on child abuse response, healing, and prevention. They are the first line of support and defense for children that have been sexually and physically abused. They guide the children through the process to ensure their safety and feelings are always considered above all others.

Annually 1,500 children benefit from Bivona's services, and sadly, that number continues to grow. Without room to meet growing needs, they recognized that a new and larger facility was necessary. In 2014, Bivona started the "Building Hope Campaign" to raise money to fund the expansion. A new facility meant Bivonia would have more room for child interviews, medical examinations, therapist sessions, and more, all in a child-friendly environment. They could also work more closely with local hospitals, police, and other victim service organizations to simplify and shorten the process.

Mary Whittier, executive director of Bivonia and a Farmington-Victor Kiwanis Club member, brought attention to the rebuild. She and the Club agreed that funding the facility was a worthy cause that would benefit the community for years



to come.

In 2014, the Club's Board of Directors voted unanimously to donate \$15,000 toward the naming of a medical lab within the new center.

"As Kiwanians, we do our best to strengthen our communities and serve children," said Kiwanis' Past Lieutenant Governor, David Jacobus.

"Giving back to Bivona was a natural connection. They help children when they are at their most vulnerable," he said.

On Sept. 10, several members of the Kiwanis Club of Farmington-Victor were on-hand to celebrate the opening of the new Bivona Child Advocacy Center.