



Unified Child Advocacy Network Discusses Mission, Upcoming Fundraiser

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter
February 1 2023 2:45 PM

JERSEYVILLE/CARLINVILLE - Melissa Dandino, fundraising coordinator at the Unified Child Advocacy Network, recently appeared on an episode of [Our Daily Show! on Riverbender.com](https://www.riverbender.com) to discuss the work the organization does for local child victims of abuse, as well as their upcoming fundraiser at Reno's Pizza in Carlinville.

“We’re a nonprofit organization representing Calhoun, Greene, Jersey, Macoupin, and Montgomery counties,” Dandino said. “We help children tell their stories in a child-friendly environment - from there, we help them to seek out medical doctors and counseling, and we also help the families receive and find services that will help them all move on with their healing.”

She said the organization has a Child Advocate who works with families and children to get them medical attention and counseling and make sure the counselors are “doing what they should do to help the child.” They also have a forensic interviewer named Holly who conducts these interviews with children, and Dandino said “she is absolutely amazing.”

“She takes these children in, she will have coloring books and all of that for them, and she’ll just sit and talk with them and get them to open up,” she said. “They get to tell their story, they make it a safe environment.”

The Child Advocacy Network was founded in 2017, and Dandino recently joined as Fundraising Coordinator about a month ago. She hopes that their fundraising efforts can eventually bring them enough money to hire an in-house counselor for the children.

“Our goal in the long-term would be to get a counselor on staff so that we can help the kids better,” Dandino said. “Sometimes it can take us four to six months to get these children in to see a counselor, so we’re really hoping that we can raise enough money that we can get a counselor on staff to help these kids as soon as they need it.”

The fundraiser will be held at Reno’s Pizza on Feb. 2, 2023. Danino described it as a “Pack the House” event and said 20% of every dollar spent at Reno’s that day will go toward the Unified Child Advocacy Network.

“Go into Reno’s Pizza, order some of their delicious food, and let them know that you’re there to pack the house and to help Unified Child Advocacy Network,” she said.

Reno’s Pizza is located at 130 N. Broad St. in Carlinville will be open from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., and from 3:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Feb. 2. Their phone number is (217) 854-6655, and you can [order online at this link](#).

The Unified Child Advocacy Network has offices at 122 W. Pearl St. in Jerseyville, and Dandino said they’d like to host Open House events soon. Find out more about the Unified Child Advocacy Network on their [Facebook page](#) or at unifiedchildadvocacy.org.

The full interview with Dandino is available below from [Riverbender.com](https://riverbender.com):