



INSTITUTE
FOR **CHILD**
ADVOCACY

Who we are
and
What we do

TERRY D. V. RADER & OKLAHOMA



- On January 4, 1978, Plaintiffs, represented by Legal Aid of Western Oklahoma, Inc., the National Juvenile Law Center and the Public Defender of Oklahoma County, filed this § 1983 class action lawsuit in the U.S. District Court Western District of Oklahoma challenging the conditions of confinement at the juvenile treatment centers of the State of Oklahoma. Plaintiffs sought injunctive and declaratory relief, as well as class certification. The Complaint alleged that plaintiffs were subjected to (1) summary imposition of disciplinary measures; (2) solitary confinement; (3) mechanical restraints or shackles (4) restrictions on access to counsel; and (5) lack of rehabilitative treatment, all in violation of their constitutional rights.
- On November 2, 1982, the District Court entered the agreed order which placed restrictions on the use of the solitary confinement and the use of mechanical restraints or shackles. The Order also required that Oklahoma juvenile institutions be in compliance with applicable state and federal regulations regarding fire, health and safety. The District Court also certified the case as a class action.
- Settlement negotiations continued and the parties reached a settlement in the form of a Consent Decree. The Decree was presented to the District Court who approved and entered it on May 31, 1984. The case was administratively dismissed at that time.

THROWAWAY KIDS

- Throwing Kids was a two-part investigative report airing on the ABC News television series 20/20 in 1981.
- The report followed a nine-month undercover investigation by producers Karen Burnes and Bill Lichtenstein. The reports detailed the documented abuse, neglect, and preventable deaths among children, the aged, and those with mental illness who were in the care and custody of the Oklahoma Department of Human Services.
- The main focus of the reports were the state's "warehousing" of children, many of whom were in state custody for being abused or abandoned. In turn, the state received per diem federal funds for each child in its custody, but it failed to provide appropriate services for the children with the revenue.
- At the time of the program, Oklahoma had no foster care system, so children who were abandoned, abused, neglected, or in need of supervision, were placed in large, outmoded, state-run institutions, many of which were located in rural towns of the state, and were without services or proper care. Lichtenstein and Burnes obtained thousands of pages of confidential "Abuse Reports," generated by state workers and kept by the Department of Human Services, detailing the mistreatment of children in state's custody, ranging from children being beaten by often unqualified staff, to kids being locked in isolation for weeks at a time. There were also numerous unexplained deaths at the state hospital for children with mental retardation, which the investigation showed were the result of neglect and abuse by state workers.



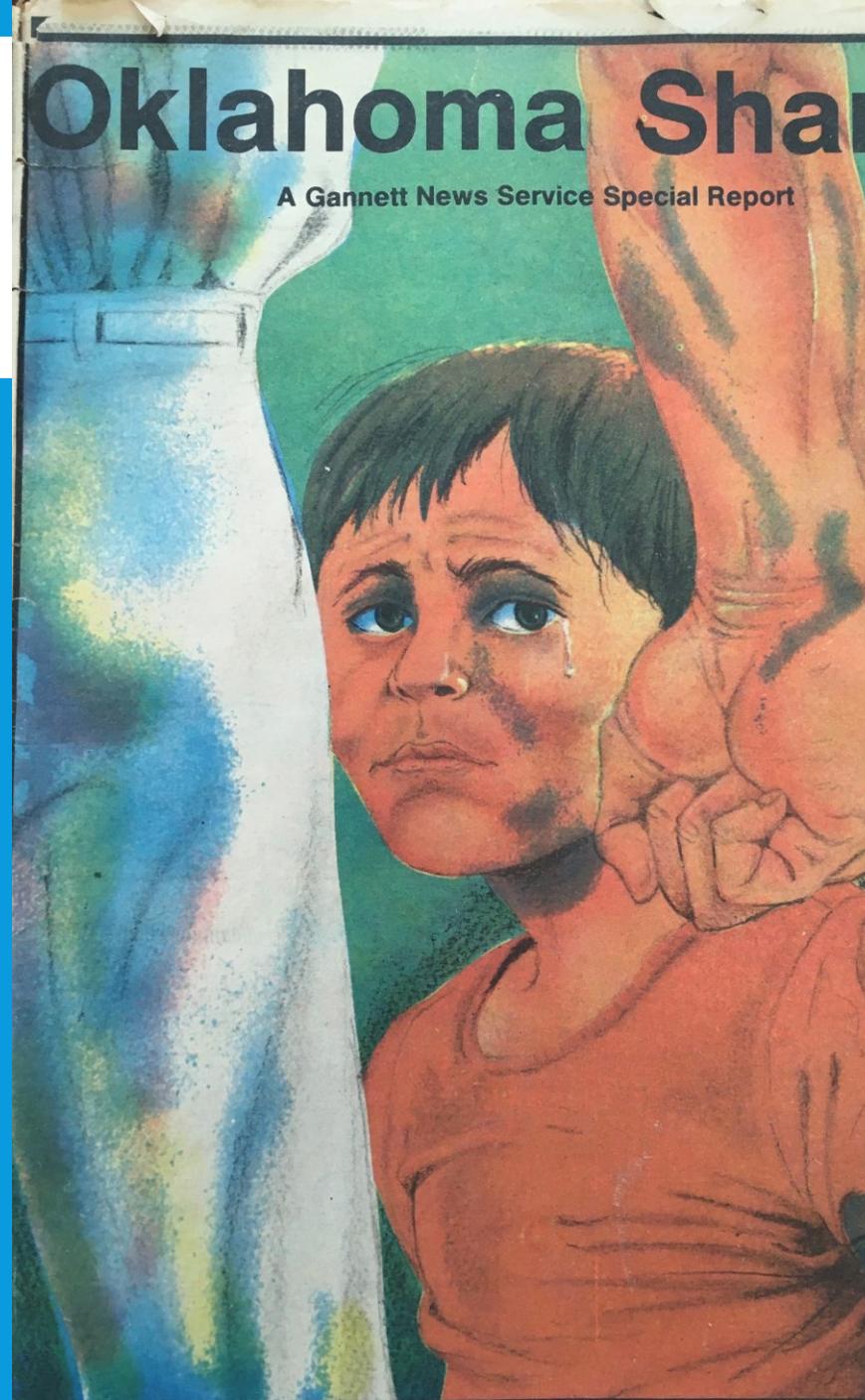
Producer Karen Burnes filming "Throwaway Kids" for ABC News [20/20](#) in Oklahoma, 1981



Producer [Bill Lichtenstein](#) in Oklahoma during production of "Throwaway Kids" for ABC News 20/20, 1981

OKLAHOMA SHAME

- Burnes and Lichtenstein were part of a team of reporters who collaborated on the investigation, which included ABC's Sylvia Chase, Pulitzer Prize-winners John Hanchette and Carlton Sherwood of Gannett News Service, and the investigative team from local TV station KOCO, which is an ABC affiliate and at the time was owned by Gannett. This unprecedented investigation, involving national and local broadcast and print reporters, culminated with articles published by Gannett, a special two-part report on 20/20, "Throwaway Kids," produced by Burnes and Lichtenstein, and a series, "Oklahoma Shame," which aired locally in Oklahoma City on KOCO-TV.
- The series was honored with a 1982 Peabody Award and a National Headliner Award, and was nominated for a national news Emmy Award.



OCCY AND OICA ARE BORN!

- As part of these changes, in 1982, House Bill 1468 was signed into law and the Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth (OCCY) was created to bring accountability and oversight into the child and youth service systems of Oklahoma. Over the years, OCCY has successfully worked for the establishment of effective services, has been instrumental in the remediation or elimination of substandard services, and has helped create a transparent system for children, youth, and families.
- In addition, advocates felt there should be a nonprofit entity working outside the confines of government to develop and assist in the development of a broad-based citizen constituency to act on behalf of the rights of children and youth. This entity would advance research in the field, identify trends which may adversely affect the rights of young Oklahomans, and to develop a moral, ethical and professional standard for legal and social services, whether public, private and/or familial. Hence the Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy was created.



WHAT WE DO

Our Mission:

“Creating awareness, taking action, and supporting policy to improve the health, safety, and well-being of Oklahoma’s children.”

OICA has remained vigilant to that mission, fighting for policies that improve the lives of children and families and being their voice at the State Capitol and in the communities where they live and learn.

Our advocacy in action:

Is Data-Driven – sharing the latest, most relevant data and research on key issues and indicators related to the well-being of children and youth.

Promotes Best Practices – translating data and research into practice and promoting best-practice program models and effective partnerships that achieve results.

Supports Policies – using data, research, and partnerships to identify solutions and inform policy-making decisions.

For almost four decades, the Institute has been informing and educating state policymakers and other citizens on the importance of investing wisely in children and families. We understand that when children thrive — our state thrives. Whether working with state policymakers and agencies, or with health, education, business, and community organizations across our state, Oklahoma’s children — and our state’s economy — are reaping the benefits of the work we do together as voices for Oklahoma’s future.

Our goal, quite simply, is to ensure that every child in Oklahoma – from birth to adulthood – is nurtured, healthy, educated, protected from harm, and thriving. We have a lot of work to do, together, to achieve that goal!

Child Advocacy Day

May 10th

Oklahoma State Capitol

Register at oica.org



let's fix this.★



WHO WE ARE

- The Board of Directors of OICA is a citizen-led group which volunteers time and effort to support the mission of the organization and maintain organization oversight.
- The staff members and contract employees of OICA work to support the day-to-day mission established by the organization. This includes programming, grant oversight, operational systems, communications and support through internships.



HOW YOU CAN HELP



Joe, Kid Governor Lucas Peterson and Sunbeam Family Services CEO Jim Priest at the OICA Fall Forum



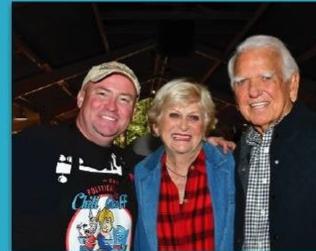
Joe, Scott Mitchell from News 9, Sen. Anastasia Pittman, Lt. Governor-elect Matt Pinnell and Dr. Keith Gaddie at the debate sponsored by OICA



Rep. Jon Echols and his daughter helping support OK Foster Wishes at our State Capitol Gift Drive during the oath of office for lawmakers



LV Crutcher receiving the 2018 Laura Choate Resilience Award



Joe, First Lady Donna Nigh and Governor George Nigh at the Political Hacks Chili Cookoff



Governor-elect Kevin Stitt with his family at the Heroes Ball



Nicole and Miranda raising awareness through a Farmers Insurance event



OICA board members presenting the 2018 Melvin & Jasmine Moran Kidzship Award



The OICA team doing voter registration and signing up educators for Chalk the Vote

- OICA operates through donor support, both individual and organizational. In addition, grants supporting child advocacy are sought to financially assist with our mission.
- Our annual Heroes Ball provides an annual event to recognize outstanding individual and organizational champions for children. This is held the final Friday of July.
- Our Fall Forum assembles advocates from around the state for a multi-day conference to review best practices in various avenues of child well-being. In addition, a legislative agenda is shaped by attendees to provide guidance on needed policy changes at the local, state and federal levels.
- Our Legislative Learning Lab occurs prior to the beginning of the Oklahoma Legislature each year. This provides a concentrated conference on understanding and learning nuances of the Oklahoma legislative process.
- OICA publishes a daily desktop calendar which highlights a different child-related statistic, an advocate of the day, and a youth program working to support children in our state.
- You can learn more or get involved by going to OICA.ORG or by following us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. You can also sign up for our weekly email newsletter by going to our website.

THANK YOU FOR BEING A CHILD ADVOCATE!



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