



INDIANA ASSOCIATION OF RESOURCES
AND CHILD ADVOCACY

May 9, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is written in support of Ascent 121, a member agency of the Indiana Association of Resources & Child Advocacy (IARCA). IARCA's 84 member agencies serve Indiana's abused, neglected, delinquent, and other vulnerable youth and their families. On any given day, over 12,000 children are receiving foster family care, residential treatment, or home-based services from IARCA member agencies. Ascent 121 is unique among IARCA's members in that the services it provides are focused on teen survivors of domestic minor sex trafficking.

Ascent 121 is well-respected by IARCA member agencies and other professionals for the strength of its leadership. Chief Executive Officer Megan McGuire has a Master's degree in Business Administration and twenty years of business leadership. Co-founder and Chief Operating Officer Megan Jessup has a Master's degree in Social Work and is licensed as a clinical social worker and certified to work with youth who have sexual maladaptive behaviors. Ms. Jessup has 15 years of experience in working with abused and neglected children.

Ascent 121 is called upon to respond to media questions about domestic minor sex trafficking and is an active member of the Attorney General's Indiana Protection and Advocacy for Trafficked Humans (IPATH) Task Force. The Department of Child Services contracts with Ascent 121 to provide specialized services for victims of human trafficking. Ascent 121 also works in collaboration with Community Health Network and Lutheran Child & Family Services to treat victims of human trafficking in a safe setting. Ascent 121 is unique in its formal partnership with Wellspring of Atlanta, which provides expert mentoring to new victim services agencies.

IARCA recognizes the leadership role that Ascent 121 plays in treating victims of sex trafficking and has asked Ms. Jessup to provide a workshop on the commercial sexual exploitation of children at IARCA's 2016 Annual Conference in September. We support Ascent 121's request for additional funds so that they may not only continue to address the needs of these most vulnerable youth, but also that they may expand these services and share their expertise with others in throughout Indiana. Thank you for your consideration of Ascent 121's request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Cathleen Graham'.

Cathleen Graham, MSW, LCSW
Executive Director