

Children's Justice Center receives March Mayhem donation

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(left to right – Jack Rolfe, Patricia Sheffield, Ron Current, Jeff Tuscano, Alii Alo)

ST. GEORGE - The director of the Children's Justice Center accepted a \$500 check Tuesday morning from leaders of Team RAW, Impact and School of Life.

The March Mayhem basketball event on March 22 not only brought members of the community together, but it brought these programs together with their kids to raise money for the Children's Justice Center.

Jeff Tuscano, director of program development for School of Life, said no one knew what March Mayhem was until the week before.

"Now it's history. We had two overtime games and we've raised awareness," he said.

Patricia Sheffield, director of the Children's Justice Center, accepted the money graciously.

"It's heartwarming, and it's the thing that keeps our center going," she said.

Sheffield said the state covers 50 percent of their operations. Everything else comes from grants and local donations.

"We rely on our community," she said.

The Children's Justice Center is a safe neutral environment for children to be interviewed pursuant to abuse allegations. The Center serves about 300 children and their families.

"Healthy children are going to turn into healthy adults," Sheffield said. "If we can prevent abuse and intervene with abused kids, we can get them to a place where they can really contribute to the community."

She added it's been great to have all the local programs get together and help in the combined effort of serving the children.

"They (the programs) are all pieces in addressing similar issues and helping them grow up so they can grow and contribute," Sheffield said.

Ron Current, founder of Impact, said he was able to have his older guys, ex-gang members, play basketball together for this cause.

"Communities think they can't change. They can," he said.

With all these different programs everyone is accounted for.

"Nobody goes unattended," Current said. "It's important for a city to understand all tools are important so no one falls through the cracks."

Alii Alo, known as Bear, is an outreach counselor for Team RAW.

"Our philosophy is who is spending more time with our kids," he said. "The hustlers work 24/7."

Sheffield said all the programs play a part in helping the kids.

"What's exciting to me about this formation is the revelation of abuse, because it doesn't come out unless they feel safe," she said. "Everyone's role is so important because you never know when they're going to share these experiences."

Sheffield said the money will go to the ongoing operation of the new facility, which opens April 22.

"That's (the money) the beginning of so much more," said Jack Rolfe, president of the School of Life Foundation.