

David Holden

Child Abuse Network



In 1997 when Tulsa's Child Abuse Network recruited **David Holden** to its board, it didn't take long before he was enticed into leading its strategic planning process.

He promised to give them about four weeks; that four weeks turned into a year-long process. That year became a commitment that continues today.

Seven years ago, Holden seemed perfect for clarifying the organization's direction as it evolved.

He kept asking knotty questions like, "Who are we?," "What do we do?," "Where are we going?," and "What's missing?" says **Barbara Findeiss**, CAN executive director.

Those questions became a succinct plan on one sheet of paper that continues "to serve as our framework today," she says, adding "He was the gnat that made CAN recognize the critical role of strategic planning in our organization — so we made him president."

After serving in that capacity for two years, he has been chairman of the board ever since.

An attorney, business coach and consultant, Holden has earned a reputation for guiding not-for-profit projects. He had already assisted with the merger of two community programs into the Parent Child Center.

The year Holden joined CAN's board it was a small, community non-profit which, with partner agencies, provided a "one-stop" center where reported cases of child abuse were investigated.

But Holden saw the need for an even more organized approach. Part of his business expertise lies in formulating and implementing business strategies.

"I was determined to have a useful result," he says. "I'm prejudiced against large, useless, sit-on-a-shelf plans."

In preparation, he interviewed personnel from each agency and found a common conviction that their participation in CAN "raised the standard of their job performance."

When asked what would happen if the program couldn't be sustained, he says they all responded, "That can't happen. We can't go back to the old ways now that we know what can be done."

"Some 600 cases of child abuse are reported in Tulsa County every month," he says. "Before CAN, a child abuse investigation might require the child be interviewed 15 times, over a number of weeks, in a variety of environments. At CAN only one or two interviews, conducted by trained forensic interviewers, are necessary."

Pertinent agencies share this

information, and take immediate action.

CAN, he says "is the glue that holds things together — the keeper of the vision."

The vision is clear: "To be the international model of effective community response to reported child abuse," Holden says. "The plan is referred to frequently at every meeting and is the focal point of almost every conversation."

Findeiss says Holden has a way of focusing meetings by asking, "What's missing?" and "What's next?" Next for CAN is expanding the facility and the services to and by the partner agencies, as well as "franchising" their knowledge and experience as a model for others to follow.

And what's missing is the necessary funding.

"That will require a major fundraising program with the participation of each partner agency and the people of Tulsa County," he says. ■

TULSA'S CHILD ABUSE NETWORK

To learn more:

2829 S. Sheridan Road.
831-4550