

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, April 9, 2013

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Commissioners urge Franklin County community to take action
Recognize April as Child Abuse Prevention Month

During the month of April, the Franklin County Commissioners are joining efforts underway by Franklin County Children Services (FCCS) to raise awareness about the prevalence of child abuse and neglect in our community and to empower the community to take action.

This morning, Commissioners were joined by FCCS Executive Director Chip Spinning and Ohio Children's Trust Fund Executive Director Kristen Rost to raise awareness about the prevalence of child abuse and neglect in our community and to empower the community to take action.

Nationally, three million reports of child abuse and neglect are made every year. Last year, Franklin County Children Services (FCCS) received 29,000 reports of child abuse and neglect -- a record high for the County's agency tasked with protecting our most vulnerable residents and strengthening their families.

"Caring for our community's children and ensuring their safety is one of our greatest responsibilities," said County Commissioner John O'Grady, Board President. "From our local social-service agencies and our schools to neighbors and community leaders, we need to do everything we can to prevent abuse and neglect. We must also forge strong partnerships with the Courts and law enforcement so that we may hold those individuals who violate the law accountable for their actions."

"Each of us has a duty to protect our next generation and to ensure that every child reaches her or his God-given potential. We want every child to grow up safe and in a stable and nurturing environment, loved, and free from abuse and neglect," said Commissioner Paula Brooks.

"Each of us has a role in ending abuse," said Commissioner Marilyn Brown who serves on the Board of the Center for Family Safety and Healing at Nationwide Children's Hospital. "Speak up and lead by example. If you suspect a child is being abuse or neglected, report it. If you know an adult who would be a great role model for a child or parent, ask them to volunteer, and look for opportunities in your own life where you can support a family or child who may be facing challenges."

Franklin County Children Services operates a 24-hour abuse and neglect hotline. Reports of suspected child abuse or neglect should be phoned in to 614-229-7000.

"To prevent child abuse, we need active involvement from all aspects of the community" said Chip M. Spinning, Executive Director of Franklin County Children Services. "That is why awareness efforts like this are so important. It serves as a reminder that it takes everyone—whether a law enforcement officer, foster or adoptive parent, volunteer, community-service provider, public official, social worker, teacher, parent or concerned citizen—to help keep children safe."

Commissioners will attend the annual Child Abuse Prevention Breakfast on Wednesday, April 10 at the Aladdin Shrine Center, 2850 Stelzer Rd., at 8 a.m. The program will highlight child abuse prevention efforts, and the accomplishments of social work professionals, FCCS families, youth and community advocates.

Also on Wednesday, April 10, all Franklin County residents are encouraged to “Wear Blue to Work” to support the efforts aimed at child abuse prevention.

“April is a time to celebrate the important role that communities play in protecting children,” said Kristen Rost, Executive Director of the Ohio Children's Trust Fund. “Everyone’s participation is critical. This month, I encourage all Ohioans to find a way to make a difference in the lives of the children and families around them and help stop child abuse and neglect throughout Ohio.”

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