



Community Leaders Spotlight Child Abuse and Neglect

Hamilton County Draws Attention to more than 6,400 Reports of Child Abuse and Neglect

Cincinnati, Ohio (March 31, 2009) More than 6,400 colorful pinwheels – each representing a report of child abuse or neglect to Hamilton County’s 241-KIDS hotline – will be planted near the Underground Railroad Freedom Center Thursday in a dramatic attempt to draw attention to one of the area’s more horrific problems.

Pinwheels for Prevention is part of Prevent Child Abuse Ohio’s statewide campaign to promote awareness and prevention of child abuse. Many citizens are unaware of how widespread the child abuse problem is in their local communities. The latest nationwide and state statistics on child abuse are startling:

- Slightly more than 900,000 children in the United States are determined to be abused or neglected each year.
- Approximately 1,500 children die each year from abuse or neglect.
- Abuse was substantiated or indicated in investigations concerning 40,000 Ohio children, and 74 children died from that abuse.

“Our 6,437 pinwheels depict this problem in a very dramatic way,” said Moira Weir, director of the Hamilton County Department of Job and Family Services, which operates the child abuse reporting hotline. “Each represents the innocence of childhood, an innocence that is often shattered by abuse and neglect.

“We work with nearly 20,000 children a year in Hamilton County. This is unacceptable. I say this every year: I dream of a day when there are no pinwheels to plant.”

Hamilton County joins all 88 Ohio counties participating in Pinwheels for Prevention as a kick off to Child Abuse Prevention Month in April. Representatives from several local agencies assisting in the fight against child abuse will answer questions from the media at 9:30 a.m., while students from Cincinnati Public Schools plant the colorful pinwheels.

This year’s Pinwheels event is sponsored by Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center, Hamilton County’s Department of Job and Family Services, Hamilton County’s Family and Children First Council, the Council on Child Abuse of Southern Ohio, Inc.,

the Cincinnati Police Department, the Hamilton County Sheriff's Department and Prevent Child Abuse Ohio.

Here are the details on this year's event:

What: Pinwheels for Prevention

When: 9:30 a.m., April 2 (best time for pictures of students planting the pinwheels; experts available for interviews)

Where: Grassy lot south of the Freedom Center; interviews available inside in case of rain.

Who: Community leaders, CPS students and Cincinnati Reds' mascot Gapper

Why: To promote the awareness and prevention of child abuse and neglect

For more information, call:

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