



Central Michigan District Health Department
“Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities”
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To: Local Newspapers
From: Alison Fegan, Health Educator
RE: Child Abuse Prevention Month
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Tie on a Blue Ribbon to Show Support for Child Abuse Prevention Month

The month of April is devoted to celebrating everything we can do to transform our community into a place that cares about – and actively supports – families and children. April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. By ensuring that all parents in our community have access to quality childcare, affordable health services, parenting education resources, and substance abuse and mental health programs, we are making progress toward eliminating child abuse.

Child Abuse Prevention Month is about connecting all of the dots, so that solutions to child abuse receive the attention the public craves. In a recent poll, 89% of Americans reported that child abuse was a “very important” moral issue to them. But it’s not enough to care about the problem and address its consequences. We have to pay attention to the kinds of efforts that will prevent it from happening in the first place. So this April, learn more about what you and your community can do to support child abuse prevention. It is a shared responsibility and we are stronger when we work together. One way to get involved and show your support is to wear a blue ribbon.

The blue ribbon is the nationally recognized symbol for child abuse & neglect prevention. You may ask why blue? The Blue Ribbon campaign began in Virginia, in 1989,

when Grandmother Bonnie W. Finney tied a blue ribbon to the antenna of her van “to make people wonder.” The story she told to inquisitive community members was a tragic story about the abuse of her grandchildren, which ultimately led to the brutal death of her grandson. You may ask “why blue?” She intended to never forget the battered, bruised bodies of her grandchildren. Blue serves as a constant reminder to fight for the protection of our children.

The story of Bonnie Finney demonstrates the effect that just one concerned citizen can have on raising awareness and preventing child abuse. Since Bonnie Finney first tied that blue ribbon to her antenna in 1989, millions of people across the country have participated in blue ribbon campaigns. Each year, more people join the effort by wearing blue ribbons, encouraging others to wear and display them, and getting involved in community activities to “make people wonder” about the significance of the blue ribbon.

No child should have to live in fear of abuse and we all must work together as a community to ensure that our children are safe and given a chance at childhood. Children are 100 percent of Michigan’s future. Every child deserves a healthy, safe environment in which to grow up, and it should be our collective mission to provide that in Michigan. Alison Fegan, Health Educator for Central Michigan District Health Department, asks that you to wear a blue ribbon or tie a blue ribbon to the antenna of your vehicle to show your support of Child Abuse Prevention Month. For more information on Child Abuse Prevention Month activities going on in your community contact your local child abuse and neglect prevention council.

This article is brought to you by the staff at Central Michigan District Health Department, which serves residents in the counties of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola and Roscommon.

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