

News Today

An online newsletter for ODJFS employees · Friday, April 1, 2011

Event Kicks Off Child Abuse Prevention Month

The April observance of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month kicked off yesterday with a ceremony at the Main Library in downtown Columbus. Presented by the Ohio Children's Trust Fund (OCTF) and Prevent Child Abuse Ohio, the ceremony focused on the theme *Pause for a Child*, which encourages all individuals and organizations to take an active role in making their communities a better place for families and children.

Director Colbert read a proclamation from Governor Kasich declaring April as Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month.

"Preventing child abuse is important to me, and it's important to Governor Kasich," Director Colbert said. "The governor's budget maintains the safety net, with support for the Children's Trust Fund, for child welfare programs, for child care subsidy programs and for Families and Children."

The OCTF works with its 88 county partners to prevent abuse in all Ohio communities, said OCTF Executive Director Monica Gillison.

"One thing we know for certain is that child



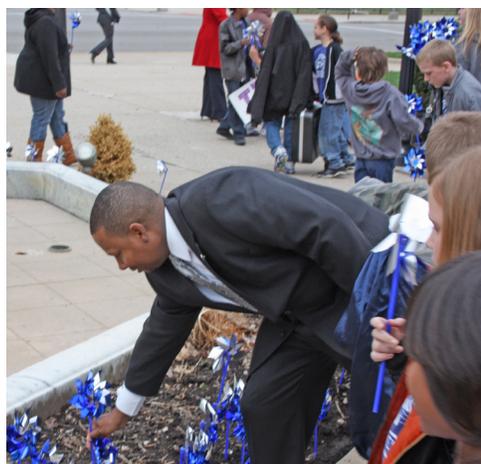
(Left to right) OCTF board member Kelly Lynch, Supreme Court of Ohio Justice Yvette McGee Brown, OCTF Executive Director Monica Gillison, Administrative Assistant Carolyn Brewer and Program Manager David Monder planted pinwheels outside the Columbus Metropolitan Main Library.

abuse is completely preventable," she said. "At the Ohio Children's Trust Fund, we try to stop child abuse before it happens. We do that by investing in strong communities, healthy families and safe children."

Continued on next page



Director Colbert read a proclamation from Governor Kasich declaring April as Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month.



Director Colbert joined those in attendance in planting pinwheels to symbolize child abuse prevention.



State Sen. Kevin Bacon, OCTF chairman, detailed the organization's efforts year-round to prevent child abuse and neglect.

Continued from previous page

State Sen. Kevin Bacon (R-Minerva Park), who serves as OCTF chairman, presented an Ohio Senate resolution recognizing Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month to Gillison and board members Crystal Ward Allen, executive director of the Public Children Services Association of Ohio; Kelly Lynch, director of the Guernsey County Children Services Board; and Michael McCreight, ODJFS assistant director of Health and Human Services.

“Child abuse is one of the most critical issues facing our state,” Sen. Bacon said. “Research has demonstrated that our past efforts have been successful in raising awareness of child abuse and neglect prevention.”

Justice Yvette McGee Brown of the Ohio Supreme Court said the *Pause for a Child* theme encourages adults to stop and think when interacting with children.

“It’s a good time to remind our friends and our families how all of us have a responsibility to prevent child abuse,” she said. “It doesn’t happen in a vacuum.”

Justice Brown noted that the Alternative Response Pilot Project, which is a joint effort between ODJFS and the Supreme Court of Ohio, has been successful in providing social workers with a second option for responding to accepted reports of abuse and neglect.

“We want to see the numbers of children going into paid placement reduced,” she said.



State Sen. Kevin Bacon, OCTF chairman, presented an Ohio Senate resolution to Executive Director Monica Gillison (at podium) and (left to right) board members Michael McCreight, Crystal Ward Allen and Kelly Lynch.

“And if they go into paid placement, they stay in only as long as necessary.”

The kick-off ceremony also included a performance by the Dana Elementary School fifth grade choir and band and a special appearance by the Berenstain Bears. Following the performance, everyone in attendance took part in planting pinwheels around the fountain at the Main Library’s entrance. Pinwheels are the national symbol of child abuse prevention.

For more information about Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month and activities scheduled throughout the month, visit www.jfs.ohio.gov/OCTF/CAPM.stm.



The kick-off ceremony featured a performance by the Dana Elementary School fifth grade choir and band, under the direction of Nicole Behn (pictured above right with the band) and Ruth Hall.