



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Statehouse Event Kicked Off Child Abuse Prevention Month

COLUMBUS, Ohio – Governor Mike DeWine, state legislators, child abuse and neglect prevention advocates, and others met in the Statehouse Atrium at 10 a.m. on Monday, March 25, to kick off Child Abuse Prevention Month. This year's campaign theme, #EverydayOhioHeroes, encourages Ohioans to "Be a Hero in the Eyes of a Child – one simple act of encouragement at a time."

"More than 19,000 confirmed reports of child abuse and/or neglect were recorded in Ohio last year, which equates to approximately one confirmed case of child abuse or neglect every 27 minutes," said Lindsay Williams, Executive Director of the Ohio Children's Trust Fund, which is coordinating the campaign. "In Ohio, everyday heroes such as parents, family members, educators, service providers, public officials and faith-based organizations share the responsibility to protect our youth. All of us play a critical role in ensuring that children are safe and can grow up without fear of abuse and neglect to realize their full potential."

To help raise awareness, the trust fund held two contests in February: a youth art contest and an "Everyday Ohio Hero" contest. The winners of both were honored at the event. The art contest invited students in grades 5 through 12 to submit creative works to help educate the public and inspire them to action. The winning entries were submitted by Frankie Schlabach, a 9th grader at West Holmes High School, Katie McManis, an 8th grader at Berne Union High School, and Joshlyn Rice, a 4th grader at Project Jericho.

The "Everyday Ohio Hero" contest sought nominations of those who have committed their time, effort or even their entire lives to child abuse and child neglect prevention. The following winners were chosen from each of eight regions:

The Hagmeirer Family (Dan, Jen, Jack, and Fin) of Madison County

Julia Hill and Kathryn LePage from the Julia Paige Family Center in Guernsey County

iCare Family Support Team of Stark County

Judge Andy Devine of Lucas County

Terry Smith of Athens County

Tracy Funke of Lebanon City Schools in Warren County

Denise Uhl Jenkins of Montgomery County

Visconsi Companies of Cuyahoga County

The Ohio Children's Trust Fund is the state's sole public funding source dedicated to preventing abuse and neglect. Housed within the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, the Ohio Children's Trust Fund works with its partners in every county to serve all Ohio communities.