



Board of Commissioners

PRESS RELEASE

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Lake County Commissioners Declare April as Child Abuse Prevention Month

PAINESVILLE, Ohio, March 31, 2023— April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month across the country, including here in Lake County. It is an opportunity for cities and states to acknowledge the devastating impact of child abuse and neglect and call on their communities to work together to protect children.

Unfortunately, Lake County is not immune to the issue of Child Abuse. It is the responsibility of the Lake County Department of Job and Family Services to provide protective services to children residing in Lake County. During 2022, Social Workers from the Lake County Department of Job and Family Services responded to nearly 1,700 calls concerning the safety of children. Staff worked with approximately 1,000 children who presented with a variety of needs requiring the assistance of the agency.

“Staff from Lake County Job and Family Services will again be participating in the Wear Blue to Work Day event, which will be held on Wednesday, April 12, 2023. ‘Ohio Wears Blue’ is a statewide initiative that encourages Ohioans to wear blue – to school, to work, to an event in the community as a way of showing support for the prevention of child abuse and neglect,” said Commission President John Hamercheck.

Additionally, staff from the Children Services Division at Lake County Job and Family Services will be planting blue pinwheels in front of the JFS building on April 12, 2023, symbolizing the children and families served by the agency during 2022 and a reminder that all children deserve happy, carefree childhoods.

“We express our sincere gratitude to the concerned citizens and mandated reporters who call our child abuse hotline to report their concerns regarding the safety of a child. Furthermore, I applaud the difficult work our social workers do each day investigating allegations of child abuse and neglect to promote child safety throughout the county,” said Job and Family Services Director Suzanne Casar.

The Board of Lake County Commissioners supports and recognizes the efforts of the Lake County Department of Job and Family Services to ensure that all children in Lake County have the opportunity to grow and thrive in a safe environment. During their March 30, 2023 meeting, the Lake County



From the left: Commissioner John Plecnik, Lake County JFS Director Suzanne Casar, Mary Udics, Commissioner Richard J. Regovich, Commissioner John R. Hamercheck.

Commissioners graciously passed a resolution declaring April 2023 as Child Abuse Prevention Month in Lake County.

Commissioner John Plecnik added, "This is a time in particular to recognize Lake County Job and Family Services Department. In every discussion we have, we talk about the primary importance of safety in our community and we need to speak for those who have no voice; sometimes that's the seniors, and our JFS works in particular with seniors for elder abuse but sometimes it's for our children too. I won't repeat the terrible situations our department has to deal with on a daily basis, but they do it with love and with care and with respect. They do it for less pay than they deserve, but all we can afford, and they make sure that the children of Lake County are safe one way or the other. We ask all of you to help Lake County Job and Family Services in this important work. If you see something, say something. It may not benefit you personally, but you have to be the voice for the voiceless. We join with Job and Family Services in this important task as we publicly announce Child Abuse Prevention Month in Lake County." To promote awareness of the issue of child abuse and the importance of prevention efforts, the Lake County Department of Job and Family Services passes out blue wristbands and blue ribbon pins to community members and organizations. The Department has also reached out to the cities and villages in Lake County with a request that they pass a resolution declaring April as Child Abuse Prevention Month.

"Lake County Job and Family Services Department does a great job, and the children are our future. Thank you and keep up the good work," said Commissioner Richard J. Regovich.

The Lake County Department of Job and Family Services provides training for various groups such as educators, day care centers, and mental health agencies. If you are interested in receiving educational services regarding child abuse and neglect reporting and recognition, please contact Mary Udics at 440-350-4333.

Anyone who suspects that a child in Lake County is being abused or neglected should report their concerns to the 24-hour child abuse hotline at 440-350-4000, press 1.

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