



# Board of Commissioners

## PRESS RELEASE

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### Commissioners Proclaim April as Child Abuse Prevention Month in Lake County

PAINESVILLE, Ohio, March 28, 2024— Across the nation, including here in Lake County, the month of April is recognized as Child Abuse Prevention Month. This initiative is rooted in communities working together to ensure that children and families are provided with the support they need, especially during challenging times. During the March 28, 2024, Commissioners' meeting the Lake County Commissioners passed a resolution proclaiming April 2024 as Child Abuse Prevention Month throughout Lake County.

Child abuse and neglect occurs across all cultures, races, and socio-economic groups and we are not immune to this issue in Lake County. During 2023, staff with the Children Services Division of the Lake County Department of Job and Family Services responded to over 1,500 calls regarding child safety and worked with approximately 1,000 children who presented with a variety of needs requiring the assistance of the agency.



*From the left: Commissioner John T. Plecnik, Susan Cazar, Mary Udics, Commissioners Richard J. Regovich and John R. Hamercheck.*

“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,” said Commission President John T. Plecnik.

“We remain grateful to the concerned citizens and mandated reporters who call our child abuse hotline to report concerns regarding the safety of a child. We also thank our many community partners who assist our agency every day in the difficult work we do helping children and families,” said Job and Family Services Director Suzanne Casar.

The Board of Lake County Commissioners supports the efforts of the Lake County Department of Job and Family Services in ensuring that all Lake County Children have the opportunity to grow up in safe, supportive environments.

To promote prevention and awareness of the issue of Child Abuse, the Lake County Department of Job and Family Services provides blue wristbands and blue ribbon pins to community members and organizations. The Department also reaches out to the cities and villages within the County to request they pass a resolution declaring April as Child Abuse Prevention Month in their individual communities.

“Child Abuse Prevention Month is a reminder that we must remain vigilant in protecting our most vulnerable members of society. Let's stand together and make a difference,” said Commissioner John R. Hamercheck.

Staff with the Children Services Division will be planting blue pinwheels in front of the JFS building on April 10, 2024. The pinwheels serve as a reminder that all children deserve to grow up in a healthy, safe, and nurturing environment. Also on April 10, Lake County Department of Job and Family Services staff will once again be participating in Wear Blue to Work, a statewide initiative that encourages all Ohioans to wear blue as a way of showing support for child abuse prevention.

"Child abuse prevention is everyone's responsibility. Let's educate ourselves and take action to create a safer world for our children. Thank you, Suzanne, and all the JFS staff for the incredible job they do to protect our children," 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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