

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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LAKE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS DECLARE APRIL AS CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

PAINESVILLE, OH, March 31, 2022 – Lake County Commissioners Declare April as Child Abuse Prevention Month April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month here in Lake County and across the country. It is the time of year when cities and states acknowledge the devastating impact of child abuse and neglect.

Unfortunately, child abuse and neglect occur in Lake County, too. The Lake County Department of Job and Family Services has the responsibility and authority to provide protective services to children residing in Lake County. During the year 2021 alone, Social Workers from the Lake County Department of Job and Family Services responded to over 1,900 calls concerning the safety of children. As a result, staff worked with approximately 1,000 children who presented with a variety of needs requiring the assistance of the agency.

“Our social workers are dedicated to investigating allegations of child abuse and neglect and protecting the most vulnerable members of our community. We are grateful to the concerned citizens and mandated reporters who call our child abuse hotline to report their concerns regarding the safety of a child,” said Job and Family Services Director Suzanne Casar.

“The Lake County Department of Job and Family Services also acknowledges the hard work and commitment of our community partners to ensure that children in Lake County grow up in a safe and healthy environment,” said Casar. Each year the Lake County Department of Job and Family Services nominates a child advocate of the year - typically an individual who works with Job and Family Services in a professional capacity. Doug Battisti has been named the 2021 Child Advocate of the Year by the Lake County Department of Job and Family Services. Mr. Battisti works at Crossroads Health as an Intensive Family Therapist. He also works on the Mobile Crisis team, the Trauma Response Team and is a practitioner of Ecotherapy.

“Doug’s dedication, kindness and perseverance has impacted the lives of countless children in Lake County. His continued efforts on behalf of children and families in this county are greatly appreciated and deserve special recognition,” said Casar.

The Lake County Department of Job and Family Services is observing National Child Abuse Prevention Month by passing out blue wristbands and blue ribbon pins to members of our community. The Department has also reached out to the cities and villages of Lake County with a request that they pass a resolution declaring April as Child Abuse Prevention Month.

The Lake County Department of Job and Family Services is fortunate to receive continued support and recognition from the Lake County Commissioners each April and this year has been no different. During their March 31, 2022 meeting, the Lake County Commissioners graciously passed a resolution declaring April 2022 as Child Abuse Prevention Month in Lake County.

"Staff from Lake County Job and Family Services plan to participate in the Wear Blue to Work Day event, which will be held on Wednesday, April 13, 2022. '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 and we encourage Lake County to show their support," said Commission President John Hamercheck.

"Lake County makes every effort to promote programs and activities to support strong and thriving children and families by working together as a community. We must increase awareness about child abuse and contribute to promote the social and emotional well-being of children and families in a safe, stable, and nurturing environment," said Commissioner John Plecnik

"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," said Commissioner Ron Young.

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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