

The Alliance

SPRING 2017

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Be a PA Blue Ribbon Champion for Kids

Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance (PFSA) will kick off Child Abuse Prevention Month with its first **PA Blue Ribbon Champion Awards Ceremony and Rally for Kids on April 5 at noon** on the front steps of the State Capitol. Elected officials, members of law enforcement, child care professionals,

educators, advocates, social service workers and families will join us to emphasize that we all share responsibility for the safety and well-being of our children. The event is free and everyone is invited!



The *PA Blue Ribbon Champion for Kids* campaign brings together professionals

on the front lines of child protection and community members from all walks of life, as we honor four Pennsylvanians who have made exceptional contributions to the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

Along with the awards presentation, the ceremony will feature a display of 4,032 blue ribbon flags on the Capitol grounds and surrounding streets, to represent the number of Pennsylvania children who were victims of child abuse in 2015. A special tribute will also honor the memory of 34 children who died of child abuse-related causes. The ribbons will be installed by volunteers on April 1, who will also attach blue ribbons to light poles in the area. The front exterior of the Capitol entrance will be lighted in blue for the first week of April to mark Child Abuse Prevention Month.

Additional Child Abuse Prevention Month events will be held in April. PFSA will be at the **Harrisburg Senators baseball game**, beginning at 6:00 PM, to recognize our PA Blue Ribbon Champions and raise awareness about child abuse prevention. The game will feature a flat screen TV giveaway and the best fireworks in central PA. You can support PFSA by purchasing a ticket and enjoying this fun, family event. See page 2 for more events and visit PFSA's website and Facebook page for details and links to purchase tickets.

Please join us in April to show your support for children—because every kid needs a champion! ●



PFSA President/CEO Angela Liddle with Harrisburg radio personality R.J. Harris. R.J. will be the emcee at the PA Blue Ribbon Champion Awards Ceremony.

Mission

Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance educates, informs and leads communities to action to protect children from abuse and neglect.

pa-fsa.org

Working Together to Prevent Child Abuse

This year, PFSA is adding something new to the observance of Child Abuse Prevention Month: *Working Together to Prevent Child Abuse*. Pennsylvania will be part of the Interdependence Hexagon Project, whose goal is to work towards a more civil, peace-minded, and just world. It began as a way to help people identify what they can do to change the world. The Hexagon Project is about seeing the big picture collectively.

Child maltreatment is a problem that's too big for any one non-profit organization, government office, or law enforcement agency to solve. ***Working Together to Prevent Child Abuse is a way to begin finding solutions.*** It's an opportunity to identify what you're already doing as an individual or a group, talk with others to come up with more ideas, and share those ideas via creation of hexagons. When placed together, the hexagons are a reminder that each of us is part of a community that cares about keeping kids safe. Each life touches the lives of others and when we work together we can prevent child abuse.

You can be part of *Working Together* as an individual, family, group or organization – anyone can participate! There is no art talent needed, just a commitment to preventing child abuse. We provide you with a template for the hexagon and suggestions for creating your unique picture of how you help prevent child abuse. Most people make the hexagon from card-stock paper, but anything is possible! After you're finished, send a digital photo to PFSA (you can also send the original) and we will share them. Check out PFSA's website and Facebook page to get started, or call PFSA at 717-238-0937 for more information.

When we realize that **we're all connected**, we begin to see solutions and make commitments to help. Join us! ●



Painting for Prevention: Communities and Children Create Murals

This is the tenth anniversary of PFSA's popular Child Abuse Prevention Month event, *Painting for Prevention*. This year, we will be working with community groups in Lycoming County and with children in South Philadelphia:

- Tuesday, April 11, from 1:00 to 4:00 PM at Antioch Baptist Church, 514 High Street in Williamsport: the theme of this mural is "Hope for Families Impacted by Addiction and Recovery." It will focus on Lycoming County's community supports for parents in recovery and their children, along with local landmarks and family activities. The event is free and open to everyone—join us to add your touch to the painting!
- Monday, April 24 at Stephen Girard School in Philadelphia: In partnership with Educating Communities for Parenting (ECP), the theme of the mural will be "What Kids Need." A second-grade class is part of ECP's Baby Watch Program, which teaches children about, among many things, empathy towards others. Our Painting for Prevention mural gives children in the program a chance to express what they have learned since the program began in the fall.

Each of the 26 murals created between 2008 to 2016 is available as a poster, which can be purchased from our online store at www.pa-fsa.org. They make great additions to your office walls, and serve as reminders that **child abuse prevention happens every month.** ●



The 2009 murals.

Remembering Ruth



Ruth McCall

Children in western Pennsylvania lost a blue ribbon champion with the death of Ruth McCall in February. Ruth was employed by Head Start for more than 30 years, and facilitated

PFSA-affiliated support groups for parents in Armstrong and Allegheny Counties for more than 40 years. A Girl Scout leader, board member for many organizations, driving force behind the community's Angel Tree and Toys for Tots—that was Ruth. She was the one that folks called when they needed help, or just wanted to talk. She taught parents to cook, to play with their children and to ask for help. Ruth and her husband Tony often said that their greatest joy in life was having been foster parents to 42 children, many of whom remain part of the family. Ruth's age was the best-kept secret in the county; she was 92 when she passed away. A longtime colleague and parent educator said it best: "Ruth made people better just by loving them." ●

Front Porch Project Crosses the Border to Canada

During a snowy week in Montreal, Canada, PFSA's Program Director Beth Bitler met with staff and partners of *Fondation du Dr Julien* to prepare for adaptation of the Front Porch Project (FPP) into the culture and language of Quebec.

At the heart of the *Fondation's* work is Dr. Gilles Julien, a renowned social entrepreneur and pediatrician. Dr. Julien became interested very early in his career in the causes of morbidity in children suffering the effects of social and economic inequalities. He made it his mission to provide disadvantaged children with the care and services they need to flourish and reach their full potential. In 1997, he opened the first community social pediatrics center in Montreal. Mrs. Hélène (Sioui) Trudel enriched the community social pediatrics model by adding a legal perspective in 2006, and then by founding *Garage à musique* (music instruction for children) in 2009. **It's a unique approach that combines, under one roof, the expertise of medicine, law and social work to reduce and eliminate stressors in a child's life.** The model is based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, an international treaty that sets out basic rights for children.

Bringing the Front Porch Project to Montreal was an idea that was eight years in the making. "We wanted to develop our programs for communities, with the goal of creating a circle



Dr. Julien at the Fondation Center.

around each child – people who care for the child, whether they are parents, family members, professionals or neighbors. I had been looking for programs that would fit our needs when I found PA Family Support Alliance," said Helene Trudel. "The



Beth Bitler (fourth from right) with training participants at the Fondation du Dr Julien. Kneeling in front are Helene Sioui Trudel (left) and Laetitia Angba.

Front Porch Project supports our mission of involving community members in caring for children."

Fondation staff member Laetitia Angba worked with PFSA's Beth Bitler to set up three days of discussions and training to get the program off the ground. Laetitia faced some challenges, primarily around the French/English language barrier. Eight community workers from the Fondation and organizations in the neighborhood attended the sessions and will be part of the planning as the project gets started. They will be working with the Fondation in adapting the content and training community members. During her time in Montreal, Beth shared the principles of FPP, along with the community training and information for trainers. "I couldn't believe how excited and committed everyone was," Beth said. "It was one of the best experiences of my career, and I am looking forward to seeing where it goes from here."

The next steps are to adapt PFSA's FPP to make it relevant to the issues in neighborhoods served by *Fondation du Dr Julien*, translate it into French, and work closely with community groups and families as the project moves forward. Visit PFSA's website and Facebook page for updates. ●

Coming Soon: Mandated Reporter Training in Spanish!

PFSA's Mandated Reporter training is the best way to ensure that mandated reporters know how to fulfill their important role in protecting children. PFSA is excited to announce that the On-Demand Online Mandated Reporter Training and the On-Site/In-Person **Mandated Reporter Training will soon be available in Spanish.** The Spanish version of the In-Person training materials will also be made available to PFSA's Train-The-Trainer program for mandated reporters. Watch for the release date to be posted on our website and social media very soon! For more information, contact PFSA at 717-238-0937. ●

Frequently Answered Questions

PFSA staff field numerous calls each day from mandated reporters, and others, who want **information on mandated reporting of suspected child abuse**. Here are a few:

Q: I took PFSA's training. Can I call PFSA to find out if I should make a report?

A: No. PFSA can answer any questions you may have regarding the information received during training, but we cannot give legal advice nor tell you whether or not to report a specific situation. As you learned in the training, a report must be made when you have a reasonable cause to suspect child abuse has occurred.

Mandated reporters are required to call ChildLine, the state's hotline for reporting suspected child abuse.

ChildLine takes calls 24 hours a day, every day. The number is **1-800-932-0313**.

Q: If I suspect child abuse, can I just let my supervisor know so she can make the report?

A: No. Changes to CPSL now require that **a mandated reporter must personally make the report**. Your supervisor may assist you in making the report (for example, sit with you for support if you are uncomfortable in the process) as long as they do not interfere in any way with the making of the report. Afterward, you should inform your supervisor (or whoever is designated at your place of employment) that you made the report.

Q: What happens after I make a report?

A: ChildLine forwards the report to the appropriate county child welfare agency, who investigates the circumstances. The investigating agency may contact you for additional information or if they have questions. They conduct a safety and risk assessment and **proceed with whatever action is needed to insure the safety of the children**. They often offer services to families even if no abuse is present to help prevent future abuse. Mandated reporters will automatically receive the results of the investigation (if it was investigated as suspected abuse) within three days of the investigation's conclusion. You will be told the final status of the case and any services provided to the child/family.

Q: What happens if I don't report suspected child abuse?

A: Willful failure to report suspected abuse is a serious crime. The penalties for a mandated reporter who willfully fails to report child abuse range from a misdemeanor of second degree to a felony of the second degree, depending on factors of the offense (1st or subsequent offense, degree of child abuse, whether there was direct knowledge of abuse, or if child was actively being abused). ●



CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION
BEGINS WITH



LEARN. REPORT. PROTECT. PREVENT.

Free Mandated Reporter Training Sessions

Training on how to recognize and report child abuse is available at no charge; these sessions are open to anyone. Registration in advance is required; visit www.pa-fsa.org to register.

Tuesday, April 11, 9:00 AM to Noon
at PFSA office in Harrisburg

Friday, April 28, 1:00 to 4:00 PM
at DHS in Pittsburgh

Friday, April 28, 9:00 AM to noon
at Catholic Social Services in Philadelphia

Train-the-Trainer Sessions

These sessions are for staff of organizations who want to offer PFSA training to their own employees or volunteers. Contact Haven Evans at PFSA (717-238-0937) to find out more about the train-the-trainer program.

Monday, April 17 and Tuesday, April 18, 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM at PFSA office in Harrisburg

Monday, April 24 and Tuesday, April 25, 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM at Northeastern IU in Archbald ●

How You Can Help PFSA Prevent Child Abuse

 **Show your support.** Wear a blue ribbon every day. When you're asked what it means, share the idea that each person can do something to prevent child abuse, and talk about what you are doing to help.

 **Participate in events.** When many people gather to support child abuse prevention events and fundraising campaign, it sends a clear message that the safety of children is important in Pennsylvania. Our **Blue Ribbon Champion Awards Ceremony and Rally for Kids, as well as Painting for Prevention**, are both fun ways to get involved.

 **Talk with children, listen to what they say, and believe them.** Kids have a right to be safe, and it's up to adults to guarantee that happens!

 **Volunteer.** You can help with special events, outreach and general office work. PFSA also welcomes applications from students at all levels to be interns in our programs.



Teens volunteered to assemble over 4,000 blue ribbon flags at PFSA office.

 **Know how to recognize and report child abuse.** Sponsor a free, on-site training for your organization, religious program or volunteer group.

 **Be a good neighbor.** In today's "mind your own business" society, neighbors often don't know each other. Step out of your comfort zone and get to know the kids and families in your neighborhood. Want some ideas on how neighbors can help? Contact PFSA to sponsor a Front Porch Project session.

 **Support our supporters.** There are lots of ways to help PFSA. One great example is the **Hershey 10K Race**, being held on Saturday, April 8 at Hersheypark Stadium. Register to run, or come out and cheer for the runners; **a portion of the proceeds go to PFSA.**



 **Donate.** Just like everyone can do something small to help, donations don't have to be large to be important. Take a look at our Text to Donate program, below, to make a recurring donation of \$10. These donations support PFSA's education programs.

 **Turn on your creative juices.** This year's **Working Together to Prevent Child Abuse** hexagons are a fun, easy way to make a commitment to helping kids. Individuals, families and groups can participate – it's free! ●

Text to Donate

Text **CHAMPION** to **20222**
to donate **\$10**

For more information, visit
www.pablueribbonchampion.org

A recurring donation of **\$10.00** will be added to your mobile phone bill or deducted from your prepaid balance. All donations must be authorized by the account holder. All charges are billed by and payable to your mobile service provider. User must be age 18 or older or have parental permission to participate. By texting YES, the user agrees to the terms and conditions. Service is available on most carriers. Message & Data Rates May Apply. Donations are collected for the benefit of the Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance by the Mobile Giving Foundation and subject to the terms found at www.hmgf.org/t. You can unsubscribe at any time by texting **STOP** to short code "20222"; text **HELP** to "20222" for help.

Your donation helps save a child from abuse.
THANK YOU!



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“We get to know each other by talking and sharing—first toys, then deeper thoughts and feelings. We establish a connection and then we start working together to find solutions.”

— Dr. Gilles Julien

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