



NEWS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release
March 20, 2015**

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ORANGE COUNTY RECOGNIZES APRIL AS CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH *Activities Highlight Efforts to Protect Children*

Orange County, VA – April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month and Orange County is partnering with the Virginia Coalition for Child Abuse Prevention, the Virginia Department of Social Services and Prevent Child Abuse Virginia to raise awareness about the role everyone can play in valuing children and strengthening their families.

“We all can play a role to safeguard children,” said William A. Hazel, Jr., M.D., Secretary of Health and Human Resources and Honorary Co-Chairman of Child Abuse Prevention Month. “Together, we can take steps to make sure that families struggling to support their children get the resources needed to make a difference.”

Secretary of Commerce and Trade Maurice Jones, who is serving as Honorary Co-Chairman of this statewide awareness initiative, encourages residents to become advocates for children in need. “I invite all Virginians to join efforts to protect and nurture the lives of our youngest citizens,” Jones said. “And please, consider extending your involvement beyond the month of April. Learn more about the numerous programs and services that could benefit from your talents as the year unfolds.”

Thousands of Virginia children suffer abuse or neglect every year. In FY2014, there were 50,136 children reported as possible victims of abuse and/or neglect. The Virginia Department of Social Services found that 6,792 children were maltreated, and of those, 37 children died as a result of abuse and/or neglect.

The statistics can be overwhelming, but they are reminders that no one can afford to look the other way. Everyone can find a way to make a difference so that children reach their potential. The 2015 Virginia Child Abuse Prevention Month theme, **Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect: Nurture Children. Support Families. Build Strong Communities.**, promotes the need for meaningful involvement by parents, concerned individuals, communities and organizations.

Child Abuse Prevention Month activities across the Commonwealth and in Orange County will include:

- ❖ Pinwheels for Prevention. The planting of pinwheel “gardens” by organizations, schools and businesses throughout Virginia. The pinwheel is the shared symbol for child abuse prevention and reflects childhood hope, health, and happiness. The Orange County Office on Youth will be accepting donations for pinwheels to be “planted” in highly visible areas of Orange County. Each \$1.00 received will be used to purchase a pinwheel from Prevent Child Abuse Virginia. Remaining proceeds will benefit Orange County Food Pantries. Send your donation to the Office on Youth (146 N. Madison Road, Suite 205, Orange, Virginia 22960) by Friday, March 27th and see hundreds of pinwheels planted in Orange County on April 3rd. For more information on how to order a pinwheel, please call (540) 672-5484 or visit www.orangecountyva.gov/officeonyouth.
- ❖ WEAR SOMETHING BLUE on April 13, 2015, to raise awareness for the community’s most vulnerable citizens – our children. Advocates for children throughout Virginia will show support by wearing blue, which is the official color of child abuse and neglect prevention.

For more information on how to keep children safe from abuse and neglect, visit www.orangecountyva.gov/officeonyouth, www.dss.virginia.gov, or www.preventchildabuseva.org or call the Virginia Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-552-7096.

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