



Wayne County Children Services Board

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The CONNECTION

MAY/JUNE 2009

Child Abuse Prevention Month: A Flurry of Activity

By: Lisa Cygan, Executive Secretary & Voices for Children Member

Two thousand nine's Child Abuse Prevention Month came to a close on April 30 with 378 community members attending the 16th Annual Child Abuse Prevention Month Community Breakfast at The Shisler Center. The Voices for Children Committee, who plans this event, was thrilled to see so many professionals come out so early in the morning to support this event.



(l to r) Randy Muth, Children Services Executive Director; Jim & Anita Miller; Carrie Moreland, Voices for Children, Co-Chairperson; & Cedric Riley

This year's honorary chairpersons for the month were Jim and Anita Miller of Wooster. While Anita wrote the speech, Jim did the honors of sharing their story of foster parenting with attendees. Jim compared foster parenting to Johnny Appleseed by stating, "You see in foster care it's like Johnny Appleseed, you may not see the grove of trees or the fruits of your labor, you just have faith that it will be there." Jim is the Executive Director at The Village Network and Anita is a therapist at Catholic Charities in Wooster.

Cedric Riley, the keynote speaker, shared his story of being in foster care with his brothers and sisters. He was a foster child for seven years, moving from family to family, until he finally found a home he felt he belonged in. Cedric stated this was a pivotal moment where he needed to realize where the value was and what he had been through. He knew he had energy bottled up inside him that he wanted to use to move forward and show his brothers and sisters they could be successful members of society. It was from that moment on that Cedric decided to take advantage of past experiences, both good and bad, in a way that would build children up and motivate them, instead of bringing them down. His goal became to share his story and communicate to others that "success is a choice because of what we've been through."

Cedric is currently a student at The Ohio State University and travels the country as a motivational speaker. If you'd like to learn more about Cedric, please visit his website at cedricriley.com.

One week prior to the breakfast, on April 23, the Voices for Children Committee held its annual awards banquet for Child Abuse Prevention Month at Memories Party and Conference Center. It's at this event that the Child Advocate, Law Enforcement Officer and Caseworker of the Year are announced and celebrated, along

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with winners of the annual 6th grade poster contest. This year's award winners were: Mary Jane Miller, Child Advocate of the Year; Detective Josh Hunt of the Orrville Police Department, Law Enforcement Officer of the Year; and Jessica Musser, Caseworker of the Year. Poster contest winners included Logan Hale, Marissa Schroeder and Gabrielle Schmucker from Orrville City Schools; Laura Yoder, Megan Geitgey and Emily Price from Wayne County Schools; and Becca Cornelius, Daniel Ackerman and Kalyn Brown from Wooster City Schools. Poster winners received a monetary gift, along with a t-shirt with their poster on it.

The activities that occur during Child Abuse Prevention Month wouldn't be possible without the support of our corporate sponsors. This year's sponsors included The Apple Creek Banking Company, Cleveland Clinic Wooster, The Commercial & Savings Bank, The Daily Record, Expert T's/Embroidery Joe, The J.M. Smucker Company, Wenger Excavating, Wooster Glass Company, and the Wooster Kiwanis Club.



(l to r) Josh Hunt, Jessica Musser and Mary Jane Miller gathered around the poster contest display.

In addition to the events mentioned above, corporate sponsors make it possible for us to print and distribute over 82,000 placemats, with a child abuse prevention message on them, to 23 restaurants in Wayne County. We also distributed over 10,000 plastic bags to libraries, bookstores and gift shops in the county. These items help us spread the message of child abuse prevention throughout the entire county. They also provide contact information for anyone wanting to report abuse or neglect to Wayne County Children Services.

If you drove past The Kinney Building during April, you couldn't miss the 1,293 brightly colored pinwheels displayed on the front lawn. Each pinwheel represents one incident of reported child abuse or neglect from 2007. The Pinwheels for Prevention display is part of a state-wide campaign to bring attention to child abuse prevention. In 2009, all 88 Ohio counties participated and displayed pinwheels! The Wayne County display was organized by the Pinwheels for Prevention Committee and is sponsored by the Wayne County Children's Advocacy Center.

Numerous people contribute to Child Abuse Prevention Month and making it the success that it is in Wayne County. All of the activities mentioned above help us "protect children and strengthen families," which is the ultimate goal for those of us working in the field of child welfare. Thanks to everyone who contributed to a successful month!