

Release Date: 4/1/2017

Contact: Rebekah Bakker
Director of Development
Children's Advocacy Center
rbakker@cac-ottawa.org
616-393-6123

We All Can Play a Part in Building Community, Building Hope

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month

HOLLAND, MI – The Children's Advocacy Center of Ottawa County believes child abuse is a community problem. 1 in 10 children will be sexually abused before their 18th birthday. No single agency can possibly meet all the needs of these sexually victimized children and their families. Experience has shown that moving child victims from agency to agency for multiple interviews traumatizes children and, in fact, revictimizes them. Instead, the Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) provides a coordinated, multidisciplinary team approach including protective services, law enforcement, prosecution, medical and mental health professionals.

The CAC's mission is to provide programs and support services for child victims and their families, which will enable them to heal emotionally and physically. The Children's Advocacy Center is in its 19th year serving children who are victims of sexual abuse in Ottawa County.

The CAC will hold a groundbreaking ceremony on April 14th to kick off a building expansion and capital campaign that will nearly double the Center's current footprint. The goal of the expansion is to increase space to meet the growing demands for innovative treatment therapy, expand resources for children and families, and increase prevention education and outreach throughout the community.

April is nationally recognized as Child Abuse Prevention Month, and the Children's Advocacy Center encourages all individuals and organizations to play a role in making Ottawa County a better place for children and families. By ensuring that parents and community members have the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to care for their children, we can help prevent child abuse by making meaningful connections and providing education and awareness. The CAC has partnered with local businesses and municipalities to help raise awareness by displaying banners, hosting pinwheel gardens, and decorating parks with blue ribbons as a visual reminder to help protect children and in support for those who have been victims of abuse.

"April is a time to celebrate the important role that communities play in protecting children and strengthening families," said Executive Director Darcy Komejan. "Everyone's participation is critical. Focusing on ways to connect with families is the best thing our community can do to strengthen families and prevent child abuse and neglect. We are thrilled that our groundbreaking ceremony and capital campaign begin at the same time that our community is coming together to support Child Abuse Prevention Month. To learn more about the programs, resources offered by the CAC, and Prevention Month Activities throughout April please call 616-393-6123 or visit cac-ottawa.org.

###