

Stark County Job & Family Services

HUMAN SERVICES - CHILDREN SERVICES - CHILD SUPPORT

221 3rd Street S.E., Canton, Ohio 44702

Deborah Forkas, M.Ed - Executive Director



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COMMISSIONERS DECLARE APRIL CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH, #STARKWEARSBLUE ON APRIL 14

Canton, Ohio - Stark County Commissioners Richard Regula, Janet Weir Creighton, and Bill Smith have declared April as National Child Abuse Prevention Month. The Commissioners presented a proclamation remotely on April 1, 2021 to Deborah Forkas, M.Ed, Executive Director of Stark County Job and Family Services and Robert Myers, LISW-S, Deputy Director of the Division of Children Services.

National Child Abuse Prevention Month is recognized to raise awareness about child abuse and strengthen families. In the proclamation, the Commissioners stated, "our children are our most valuable resources and will shape the future of Stark County." They urged citizens to dedicate themselves to improving the quality of life for all children and families.

Child abuse and neglect are serious problems affecting every segment of our community. In 2020, Stark County received 6,122 reports of abuse or neglect through the Division of Children Services Report Line. The reports resulted in 2,762 cases requiring assistance or intervention.

Children who have been subjected to abuse and neglect may develop long-term psychological, emotional, and physical effects. Prevention and awareness efforts in our community can help children succeed by encouraging families to build safe, stable, and nurturing environments.

"As a community, we must continue to work together to develop programs and activities for the prevention of child abuse. Stark County is fortunate to have many organizations that promote the social and emotional well-being of youths, including child welfare agencies, schools, churches, law enforcement, and neighborhood associations," said Forkas. "Together, we can build stronger families to help our children thrive."

Stark County Job and Family Services and Project KARE invite residents to wear blue on Wednesday, April 14, 2021 to promote National Child Abuse Prevention Month. Take a selfie or photograph wearing blue and share it on social media using the hashtag #StarkWearsBlue. Photos can also be sent to Stephen.Rowland@jfs.ohio.gov to be shared on Stark JFS' Facebook page at www.facebook.com/SCJFS.

"Participating in Wear Blue day on April 14 is a great way for residents to help with the prevention of child abuse. Wear blue, take a photo, share it on social media - it's that simple," said Myers. "Every effort can contribute to the reduction of neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and emotional maltreatment in our community."

If you are concerned that a child is being abused or neglected, please call (330) 455-KIDS (5437) and ask to speak to a referral specialist. This number is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

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