

# **NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services and Prevent Child Abuse North Dakota**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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*April is Child Abuse Prevention Month*

## **The Pinwheel: A Symbol of Hope, Health and Happiness for Families**

BISMARCK, N.D. – On a breezy North Dakota spring afternoon, they spin at random speeds adding interest to a gardener's plot of soil. They have also grown into a symbol of hope, health, and happiness for North Dakota families. They are pinwheels.

The N.D. Department of Human Services and Prevent Child Abuse North Dakota (PCAND) are teaming up this month to educate parents, grandparents, community members, teachers and others about the importance of creating a healthy, safe and nurturing environment that can prevent child abuse and neglect.

The centerpiece of the effort is the Pinwheel for Prevention campaign. Over 25,000 silver and blue pinwheels will be on display in prominent community locations such as courthouse lawns, main streets, community gardens, medical facilities, and schools, as well as universities.

"Each pinwheel represents our effort to change the way people think about prevention, and focus on community activities that encourages prevention from the start to ensure child abuse and neglect never happen," said Tim Hathaway, executive director of Prevent Child Abuse North Dakota.

Communities participating in the pinwheel campaign will also hold coordinated special events in April including parenting classes and fairs, conferences, walks, in-school activities, and other fun family activities. A calendar of events can be found online at <http://www.pcand.org/news-a-events/events.html>.

Outdoor billboards are another way North Dakota is spreading the message about child abuse prevention in April. These billboards feature four children with a message to be safe, healthy and strong and are located in Bismarck, Bowman, Carrington, Devils Lake, Dickinson, Fargo, Grand Forks, Harvey, Jamestown, Mandan, Minot, Rolla, Steele, Valley City and Williston.

"Our goal this month is to spread the news to let parents and caregivers know about the many available educational programs and materials that can help them enrich the lives of their children, and strengthen their daily parenting," said Tara Muhlhauser, director of the Children and Families Services Division for the N.D. Department of Human Services.

The N.D. Department of Human Services' Children and Family Services Division funds child abuse and neglect prevention efforts across the state and partners with Prevent Child Abuse North Dakota to provide statewide education and prevention programming.

If individuals suspect a child is being abused or neglected, they should call their county social services office. The 53 county social services offices serve as the department's designee's for child protection services.

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