



PREVENTION

Idaho Children's Trust Fund Newsletter

Pinwheels for Prevention

Have you noticed how many groups are using ribbons to symbolize their cause? We even learned recently that the blue ribbon we use for prevention of child abuse is also used by people working towards a cure for pancreatic cancer. It's become hard for the public to know what the symbols stand for anymore.

Prevent Child Abuse America, of which Prevent Child Abuse Idaho is the state affiliate, has embarked on a campaign to make pinwheels the symbol of child abuse prevention. Pinwheels fit our strengths-based approach towards prevention by focusing on good outcomes for children and families. Pinwheels are a happy and uplifting symbol of childhood, a symbol that very much seems to capture the essence of child well-being. Pinwheels are fun; the image of children and parents playing with pinwheels reflect an image of positive parent-child interaction.

Ultimately, what we want to convey through the pinwheel is the message that every child deserves the chance to be raised in a healthy, safe and nurturing

environment. We will use the pinwheel in Idaho in support of our efforts to implement programs and services which provide those environments for children and families in their own community.

We know that some groups already are planning events with the blue ribbons, so this will be a transitional year.

Prevent Child Abuse Idaho will begin to use pinwheels this year in some of its awareness work and encourage other groups statewide to begin using this symbol as soon as they are able.



A pinwheel garden in Ohio

Trust Fund Weighs In on Family Debate

Two legislative task forces have been convened to discuss early childhood development and different philosophies about how to achieve the best outcomes. The Senate set up an Early Childhood Education Task Force chaired by Senator Tom Gannon of Twin Falls to focus on how the state might implement programs in the public schools and elsewhere. The House created a Task Force on the Family to look at the decline of the family since the 1950's and how to strengthen it. When the Family Task Force met in Boise in late September, Roger Sherman, the Trust Fund's director, testified to the committee chaired by Representative Steven Thayne of Emmett. Here are some of Roger's comments:

"As you've heard, research on "the decline of the family" can be ambiguous and subject to all sorts of interpretation. Still what we do know from our work is that families are under a lot of stress. And we know that stress is a major contributor to child abuse. Stress on families comes from a lot of different quarters: for example, through loss of income, illness, a death in the family, legal problems, or marital struggle. And frankly, just the day to day challenges of meeting deadlines and keeping food on the table. If the coping strategy for stress involves substance abuse, then the family problems are compounded. Through our work we set out to both prevent and reduce

stress to help people cope with the challenges that confront them. **Our goal is to prevent child abuse and neglect by strengthening families.**

Child abuse and neglect is a serious problem in Idaho. In 2004, 1,856 children were substantiated or indicated as abused or neglected in Idaho, a rate of 5.0 per 1,000 children, and representing a 21.5% increase from 2003. Of these children, 69.7% were neglected, 18.9% were physically abused, and 6.3% were sexually abused. In that same year, four children died as a result of abuse or neglect in Idaho. 2004 was not an unusual year.

In addition, the financial costs of child abuse are staggering. Direct costs for hospitalization, chronic health problems, law enforcement, mental health care costs, the child welfare system and the judicial system cost the nation over \$24 billion annually. Indirect costs are estimated at nearly \$70 billion. These are to pay for the after affects of abuse and neglect. Prevention is the only way to truly end child abuse and neglect.

A few more statistics might help give some perspective on child abuse and neglect and our approach. Most child abuse and neglect occurs in the home and 84% of the abusers are parents. Over 60 % are mothers who typically spend more time with their children. Although high profile cases make us

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Focus on Prevention: Toward a Larger Vision



heads. We need to do something. And we are—with your help.

In the mid 1960's who would have imagined that 40 years later it would be an accepted fact that smoking is bad for your health and that smoking is banned in almost all public places in Idaho and throughout the country? I imagine there were a few visionaries who did see it and began to take steps to get there.

From the first surgeon general's warning onward there was a major public information campaign to make people aware of the health risks and later the risks of second hand smoke. There were mass media messages and programs at schools. There are classes on cessation. There is extensive work to stop kids from smoking before they start.

Sound familiar? This is the kind of work that we are doing too to end child abuse and neglect but we need to do more of it and we need to make the effort a conversation around every kitchen table and every water cooler. Can it happen? It's up to us to be the visionaries of the 21st century. It's up to us to change the debate, create the programs, build the support, and educate people of all ages to make abuse of children a thing of the past.

Our conference speakers, Robin Karr Morse and Ben Tanzer, will both help us articulate the issues. Ben will focus on how we can get our message out and Robin will add to our repertoire about why prevention of child abuse is so important. I hope you will join us in April to be refreshed and renewed and recommitted.

Roger Sherman, Executive Director

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check to PO Box 2015, Boise, Idaho 83701



DON'T MISS IT!

Robin Karr-Morse and Ben Tanzer to headline Trust Fund Conference



Ben Tanzer, Director of Strategic Communications for Prevent Child Abuse America in Chicago, will kick off the first day of the annual Strengthening Families to Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect conference on April 7 & 8, 2008 in Boise.

Tanzer is responsible for PCAA's message and media work at all levels. He will challenge us to think and talk about child abuse and neglect in some new ways.

The former Executive Director of the Oregon Children's Trust Fund and author of *Ghosts from the Nursery* will keynote the second day of the conference.

In *Ghosts from the Nursery*, Karr-Morse and co-author Meredith Wiley integrate real stories with compelling new research on psychological and physiological brain development to demonstrate that positive infant care stimulates the brain's capacity for intelligence, trust, and empathy, while trauma, abuse, and neglect during the first two years of life can lead to the permanent suppression of these important protective capacities.



Prevent Child Abuse, Strengthen Families ... Continued from page 1

look for “stranger danger”, the real issues impacting abuse and neglect go back to the stresses and strains of raising children within the family. Any of us who have children—especially young children—are at risk for abusing our children. I doubt anyone with kids can honestly say that there wasn't that day when you wanted to wring the kid's neck. You just didn't do it. That is why we approach the problem broadly, recognizing that all families can use help sometimes.

The Idaho Children's Trust Fund supports efforts within the state that are designed to prevent the occurrence of child abuse and neglect before it ever occurs. We see our work as family centered with an emphasis on working with adults since adults—not children—are responsible for child abuse. We fund programs that partner with parents as well as with other caregivers such as child care centers and workers. We fund programs that help parents become better parents. We fund both classes and home visitation. The programs we fund focus on family strengths and resiliency rather than family risks and deficits because research tells us that strengths-based programs are the most effective in preventing child abuse and neglect.

While we take as a first principle that the primary responsibility for the development and well-being of children lies within the family, all segments of society must support families as they rear their children. We don't see this as an either or situation; we believe there need to be both strong families and strong community supports when families cannot do the whole job.

Families are not equally equipped to prepare their children for the future or to protect them from abuse and neglect. Sometimes they need help. Where natural supports like extended families are either not capable or not available, community based organizations and

government must fill some of the gap. While some aspects of parenting were learned from modeling behavior we saw growing up, not everyone had good role models. The Trust Fund supports projects that work with families where they are, recognizing that families come in many shapes and sizes. The work of the organizations we support enables families to build on their strengths and capacities to promote the healthy development of children.

While virtually everyone agrees that preventing child abuse and neglect saves money and is an essential goal in all of our efforts to keep children healthy and safe, the State of Idaho currently invests no money in prevention. Needless to say we must continue to deal with the after affects of abuse and neglect but we must also invest in prevention. While we agree that being in families is the best place for most children, research shows that strengthening those families and supporting parents through education, support services and quality early childhood efforts dramatically improves outcomes for children.”





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Nurturing Parenting Taking Hold in Idaho

Dr. Stephen Bavolek challenges us to be nurturing 100% of the time, especially in our role as parents. There are 157,680 hours between birth and 18 years of age ... If a child experiences abuse and neglect only 10% of the time, they will have spent 15,768 hours in a harmful environment. If there is abuse only 1% of the time, that is still 1,576 hours. Is this acceptable for our children? It's not.

In order to prevent abuse and neglect before it ever occurs, Idaho Children's Trust Fund hosted Dr. Stephen Bavolek, for a facilitator training session in Boise on October 4th & 5th. Dr. Bavolek is the principal author of the Nurturing Parenting Programs, a research based child abuse and neglect prevention strategy. The Nurturing Parenting Programs are a family-centered initiative designed to build nurturing parenting skills as an alternative to abusive and neglectful parenting and child-rearing practices. The programs feature activities to foster positive parenting skills and self-nurturing, home practice exercises, family nurturing time, and activities to promote positive brain development in children birth to 18 years.

The facilitator training included participants from throughout Idaho that

will begin to implement Nurturing Parenting programs in their own communities. Dr. Bavolek focuses on how to teach nurturing skills and approaches to all parents, no matter the age of their children. By learning these skills and ways to interact with our families we all are able to do our part to eradicate child abuse and neglect in Idaho.

Feedback from participants attending the training indicated this is an approach that will catch on here in Idaho. Understanding the value of empathy and the role nurturing plays in positive brain development were concepts that people appreciated hearing and learning how to teach to others. Participants stated that by learning about the positive effects of nurturing behaviors they feel more equipped and committed to being nurturing 100% of the time in their own lives. In our ongoing efforts to eradicate child abuse and neglect focusing on all aspects of nurturing will go a long way towards reaching our goal. For more information on Nurturing Parenting Programs please see:

<http://www.nurturingparenting.com/home.php>. Also watch our website in January for applications for our annual grants that may be utilized to implement a Nurturing Parenting Program in your community.

**Applications for Annual Grants and Board Award available on the
ITCF website January 2, 2008.
For more information on grant guidelines check our website:
www.idahochildrenstrustfund.idaho.gov**

