



## **Go Blue in April to Support Our Community, Our Kids**

*By: Cindy Small, President, Board of Directors*

In just a few short days April begins and kicks off countless nationwide efforts to recognize National Child Abuse Prevention Month.

Why is Child Abuse Prevention Month important to our community? While the Adams County Children's Advocacy Center (ACCAC) has been supporting child victims and their families in Adams County for the past 16 years, there is still work to be done. Through those years, the ACCAC experienced an increase in physical abuse cases seen at our center, especially during the COVID-19 Pandemic, with 36% of children experiencing multiple forms of abuse.

Community support is essential in creating awareness that together, we can prevent child abuse. In 2022, over 100 Adams County businesses SHINED BLUE for Child Abuse Prevention Month. We hope you will SHINE BLUE to help raise awareness for 2023 by displaying blue lights outside your home and/or business. Displaying blue lights shows your support of Child Abuse Prevention Month and helps raise further awareness.

SHOW UP for BLUE and join us Friday, April 7 from 4 to 7 p.m. at 224 Baltimore Street for a fun, FREE First Friday event at the Children's Advocacy Center's Brighter Tomorrows Center! This event is free and open to the entire community with fun for all ages! We'll have live music, snacks, art activities, resources, and Cruse the Comfort Dog!

WAVE BLUE all month by displaying an Adams County Children's Advocacy garden flag and yard sign at your home and/or business to show your support and help raise awareness of Child Abuse Prevention Month. You can purchase a flag/sign for \$25 by calling 717-337-9888.

WEAR BLUE clothing Fridays in April as a tangible way to show your compassion and empathy for child victims and your support for kids, families, and prevention. Publicly displaying your blue helps to raise awareness for Child Abuse Prevention Month and start the conversation that prevention is in our hands. Wear blue clothing (shirt, pants, socks, scarf, hat, etc.) every Friday in April and share photos on social media of your team, staff, friends, family, pets, and of course yourself wearing blue and tag us! #PreventionIsInOurHands #AdamsCountyCAC and #PreventChildAbuse.

Why GO BLUE in our community? Child abuse happens here. During the 2021-2022 fiscal year, 225 children were provided advocacy support services through the ACCAC. Nearly 220 caregivers and child family members received support services. Mental health services were provided. There were 227 forensic interviews conducted. In terms of age, 58% of the children were age 3-12 years old and 41% were age 13-17 years old.

We can prevent child abuse but we need to join together. When 5% of a community's adults learn about child abuse prevention, that is the "tipping point" in reducing child abuse in the community. Will you be one of the 5%? Will you GO BLUE and commit to showing your support and creating awareness that child abuse happens right here in our community?

*To learn more ways you can GO BLUE, visit [www.kidsagaincac.org](http://www.kidsagaincac.org) to view our GO BLUE Toolkit and calendar of GO BLUE events for April.*

**Let's come together to ensure the children in our community are safe. Every Child Safe. Every Family Strong. Prevent Child Abuse.**