

April Newsletter

A Parent's Worst Nightmare

As parents we have worries and concerns about so many things in regard to our children. But one of the top worries is that our children will be the victims of sexual abuse.

As we enter the month of April, the DV/SV world recognizes two important "awareness" months: Sexual Assault Awareness Month and Child Abuse Prevention Month. So let's take a look at some concrete steps that parents can take to minimize the chances of sexual abuse happening to their children.

One of the most important things you can do to help your child is to have open communication. This means not being afraid to have conversations about potentially uncomfortable topics. The American Academy of Pediatrics gives the following age-appropriate guidelines for conversations to have with your child:

- ♦ **18 months**—*Teach the names of all body parts, including proper names for those that are "private".*
- ♦ **3-5 years**—*Teach about private parts and to say "no" to any touch that makes the child uncomfortable.*
- ♦ **5-8 years**—*Discuss safety guidelines for when parents are not present, including the concept of "bathing suit" areas covering private parts. Teach respect for others' bodies as well.*
- ♦ **8-12 years**—*Talk about potentially dangerous areas such as public restrooms, malls, locker rooms, social media sites, and isolated places.*
- ♦ **13-18 years**—*Encourage open discussion about sexual assault as well as your family's standards of sexual conduct.*

In general, teaching your child to have respect for his/her body, and to have the skills to maintain appropriate boundaries is one of the most important prevention skills we can offer. So is it ok for your child to refuse a hug from a loved one? Experts say yes it is - just help your child learn how to do so respectfully and be ready to intervene on behalf of your child if situations become difficult. Allowing children to decide who they give affection to helps them to be more capable of protecting themselves in unsafe situations. Not everyone will see this as an acceptable practice, but it is our job as parents to advocate for our kids!

It's also important to encourage your child to be forthcoming about experiences that they may be unsure about, especially when it relates to uncomfortable touches. Knowing that some offenders encourage the child to keep the encounters a secret, a good strategy is to help your child distinguish between secrets that might result in someone being hurt/upset and surprises that will make people happy: (birthday surprises, etc.).

It is a fact that most sexual offenders are known to the child, so it's important to realize that it might be difficult for children to distinguish between acceptable and inappropriate touches. Giving our children some of these important tools can help to lessen the chances of abuse and increase our children's chances of a safer childhood.

Special Dates

April 2 - Woodstock
Pinwheel Garden

April 3 - Strasburg
Pinwheel Garden

April 4 - New Market
Pinwheel Garden

April 7 - Fashion Show

April 14 - "Matilda" -
movie

April 24 - Denim Day

April 29 - Volunteer
Appreciation Dinner

Current Needs

- **Pine-Sol type cleaner.**
- **Cases of bottled water**
- **Canned ravioli, SpaghettiOs, etc.**
- **Disinfectant wipes and spray**

Survivor Story

Tyler Perry

Famous actor, screenwriter, playwright, director, author, songwriterall of these roles describe Tyler Perry. But his lesser known role is that of childhood sexual abuse survivor. Perry began speaking out about his childhood some years ago when he appeared on *Oprah* in 2010, as part of her effort to shed light on the topic of male sexual assault.

At that time he spoke candidly about both his physical and sexual abuse as a child; Perry used to endure severe physical beatings from his father, and described his life with his father as a "living hell". In addition to that, four different adults sexually abused him between the ages of 5 and 10. The men who molested Perry were an adult neighbor, a nurse, and a man from his church; the man from church used the Bible and God to justify the abuse after performing oral sex on Perry. His first sexual experience with a woman happened when the mother of one of his friends assaulted him at age 10.

Perry carried all of this trauma inside himself until after his mother passed away in 2009. He knew that revealing his abuse would cause her pain, and was not willing to inflict that on her. We are grateful to Perry for having the courage to step forward and share his experiences in an effort to further the dialogue about male childhood abuse survivors.

Recap of Events

Volunteer Training

Volunteer training is well underway, as we are almost halfway through! Two board members, Rhonda Lively, and Skyler Sharp participated in the beginning of the training, with Rhonda completing Level 1. We have four folks who are taking the Level 2 training, which is 32 hours of fun and learning! We would like to welcome Lore Fogle, Brenda James, Becky Wood, and Beth Kraemer to our Response volunteer family. Thanks to all who donate their time to be advocates for our clients!

Upcoming Events

Pinwheel Gardens

April is an incredibly busy month for us here at Response as we recognize Child Abuse Prevention Month in addition to Sexual Assault Awareness Month! Each year we "plant" a garden of pinwheels in towns throughout the county to honor the children in our community. "Pinwheels for Prevention" is a growing movement to increase awareness of child abuse prevention efforts. The pinwheel symbolizes the freedom and whimsy that we wish for all our children, so planting a garden in our communities is a reminder that we all need to work together to ensure a healthy and safe childhood for our young folks. Please join our local law enforcement agencies, some pre-school friends, and members of the community as we plant "Pinwheels for Prevention"!

Tues., April 2—Woodstock Circuit Courthouse—10 am

Wed. April 3—Strasburg Town Office—10 am

Thurs., April 4—New Market—Manor Memorial UMC—10 am

"Matilda"

Response

FREE FAMILY MOVIE!



SUN, APR. 14 @ 4:30 PM
WOODSTOCK COMMUNITY THEATER

In honor of Child Abuse Prevention Month, Response will host a FREE! showing of Matilda, a 1998 film based on the children's novel by Roald Dahl. This modern-day fairy tale mixes hilarious humor with a magical message of love. Rated PG.

*Thanks to our sponsor, Challenge Funeral Home, for enabling us to offer this for free!

ADMIT ONE

Who doesn't love a free movie?! Please spread the word and make plans to join us as we recognize Child Abuse Prevention Month by offering a free showing of *Matilda* to the community. It will take place at the Woodstock Community Theater on Sunday, April 14th at 4:30. *Matilda* is an adventurous movie that challenges our understanding of family as something good, loving, and safe. Through an amazing spirit of perseverance, *Matilda* is able to convey the message that even if you are young or small, you can achieve anything. Come out and enjoy this event with us!

Denim Day

Mark your calendars now for April 24 as a day to wear your jeans to work, while raising money for Response! Every year for the past 20 years the non-profit organization, Peace Over Violence, has run this campaign as an effort to raise awareness of and protest against the erroneous and destructive attitudes about sexual assault. This campaign was developed in response to a 1998 ruling by the Italian Supreme Court where a rape conviction was overturned because the victim was wearing jeans; their reasoning was that a rapist would not be able to remove a victim's tight jeans without help from the victim herself, so the sex must have been consensual. The day following the ruling, the women in the Italian Parliament protested by wearing jeans and holding protest signs. The movement quickly spread to the US, and Denim Day is now a well-established event. So talk with your employer to see if they would be willing to allow employees to wear jeans to work on the 24th for a small fee, and then donate the funds raised to Response, to assist us in our work to change the harmful beliefs about sexual assault. Thanks for helping with this important day!

DENIM DAY

WHEN: Wednesday, April 24, 2019
(or any day in April you choose)

Denim Day is a national awareness event held in honor of Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Your business can participate by asking employees to wear jeans on this day or another day of your choice in April. Bring a few dollars to wear jeans and donate proceeds to Response. P.O. Box 287, Woodstock, Virginia 22664

When you participate in Denim Day, you:

- Make it possible for more survivors of sexual assault to reach out and find help.
- Promote sexual assault prevention education.
- Encourage institutional and societal change.

Please join us and participate in Denim Day!
April 24, 2019

Questions? Contact Response at
540-459-5599
or e-mail respdn@shentel.net

To learn more about Denim Day visit: www.ddusa.peaceoverviolence.org

Spring Fashion Show

Just over a week until the 19th Annual Spring Fashion Show! The deadline to pre-register is April 1st so get your tickets or get the word out to your friends soon! Tickets may be purchased the day of the event if seating is available. It will be a wonderful afternoon filled with new fashions, raffles, wine, food, and fun. There will also be a prize for the person with the best vintage attire. All for \$35 per ticket, so spread the word! Contact us at 540-459-5599 for tickets.

Celebration of Hope

It's getting closer—the 2nd annual "Celebration of Hope"! So mark your calendars for October 12, 2019 and talk to your friends about going to this fun event at Cave Ridge Vineyard. Join us as we rock to the sounds of The Foundry Street Project! Watch our Facebook page and website in the months ahead for more information and tickets.