

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month



April 2020-Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention

Danna Guerrero, M.Ed.

Catholic Charities of Lubbock FAYS Program

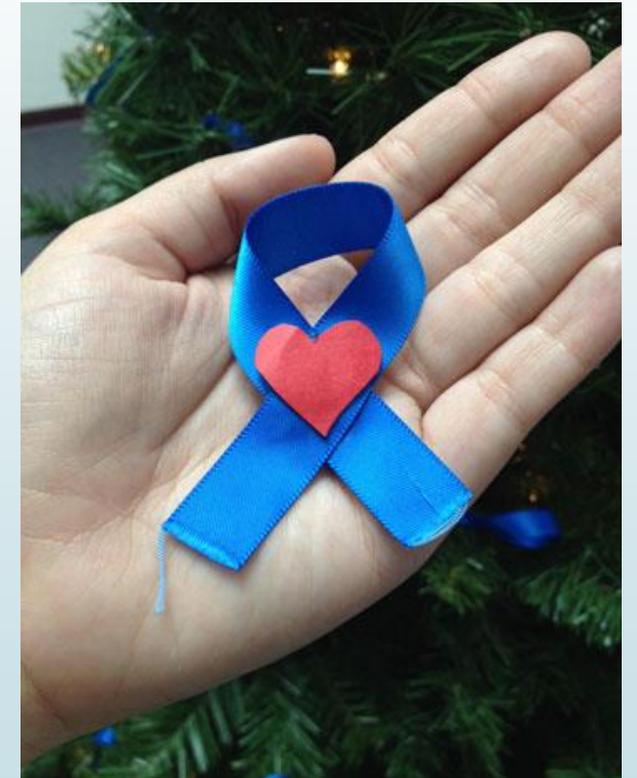


# Child abuse & neglect in Lubbock & South Plains Area

- ▶ In 2019: 1,217 children; an average of 3 children per day were confirmed by investigation as victims of abuse/neglect.
- ▶ In 2019, Lubbock County had 5 child fatalities related to abuse and neglect - a 500% increase from the previous year.
- ▶ Lubbock County's Rate of Occurrence (confirmed victims per 1,000 children) is 16.35 - the State Average is 9.05.

# What is Child Abuse Prevention Month?

- ▶ National Child Abuse Prevention Month was first observed in 1983 by proclamation by President Ronald Reagan.
- ▶ Every April, Child Abuse Prevention Month provides communities, individuals and organizations the opportunity to learn about the signs of child abuse and how to prevent it.
- ▶ It is important to support families and children through:
  - ▶ outreach programs, resources, and activities
  - ▶ offer tools for identifying abuse and neglect. With each opportunity, come closer to an end for child abuse and neglect.



# Child Abuse Prevention (cont.)

- ▶ Child abuse occurs at:
  - ▶ Every socioeconomic status level
  - ▶ Across all ethnicities and cultures
  - ▶ Within all religions/beliefs
  - ▶ Across all levels of education





# What can you do at home?

- ▶ Empower children to make decisions about their bodies by allowing them age-appropriate privacy and encouraging them to say “no” when they do not want to touch or be touched by others—even in nonsexual ways.
- ▶ Teach children to take care of their own bodies (e.g., bathing or using the bathroom) so they do not have to rely on adults or older children for help.
- ▶ Educate children about the difference between good secrets (such as birthday surprises) and bad secrets (those that make the child feel unsafe or uncomfortable).
- ▶ Monitor children’s use of technology, including cell phones, social networking sites, and messaging. Review their friends lists regularly and ask about any people you don’t recognize.
- ▶ Take an active role in your children’s lives. Learn about their activities and people with whom they are involved. Stay alert for possible problems.
- ▶ Watch for “grooming” behaviors in adults who spend time with your child. Warning signs may include frequently finding ways to be alone with your child, ignoring your child’s need for privacy (e.g., in the bathroom), or giving gifts or money for no particular occasion.
- ▶ Ensure that organizations, groups, and teams that your children are involved with minimize one-on-one time between children and adults. Ask how staff and volunteers are screened and supervised.
- ▶ Make sure your children know that they can talk to you about anything that bothers or confuses them.
- ▶ Teach children accurate names of private body parts and the difference between touches that are “okay” and “not okay.”



# Catholic Charities FAYS Program

- ▶ FAYS Program (formerly STAR) offers short-term services to youth ages 0-17 and their families who are dealing with conflict at home, school attendance issues, delinquency, or have a youth who runs away from home.
- ▶ FAYS services are not for youth who have been adjudicated delinquent by a juvenile court.
- ▶ All services are Free.
- ▶ Free parent skills training classes available on an on-going basis. Registration **is required** for all parent(s) and/or guardian(s). Certificates of completion are issued once entire series has been completed.
- ▶ Call 806-765-8475 & ask to be transferred for a counseling intake or visit <https://cclubbock.org/yaf-intake>
- ▶ 24-hour Crisis Hotline: **1-800-530-4704.**
- ▶ **For emergencies dial 911**

# Why the Blue Ribbon & Pinwheels?

- The blue pinwheel has become a symbol representing the bright future and happy childhood every child deserves.
- The color blue & the ribbons began in the spring of 1989, a Virginia grandmother named Bonnie Finney tied a blue ribbon to the antenna of her van. When people asked her why, she shared with them the story of her grandchildren and the child abuse they had suffered, which ultimately led to the death of her 3-year-old grandson.
- The spirit of the blue ribbon grew and by the following year it had become the symbol of child abuse prevention in the state of Virginia. Now a national symbol, Bonnie's story demonstrates the effect just one concerned citizen can have on raising public awareness and promoting child abuse prevention efforts.





# The Blue Ribbon Story/La Historia de la Cinta Azul

- In the spring 1989, a Virginia grandmother, Bonnie Finney, tied a blue ribbon to the antenna of her van. When community members started to question the reasoning, the story they heard was tragic. The ribbon started the conversation of the horrific abuse that Bonnie's grandchildren had suffered by their parents, which ultimately led to the brutal death of her 3-year-old grandson, Michael. "My grandchildren had suffered and battled so much throughout their young lives that it sickened me. My life was turned into physical and mental chaos. My efforts to understand became a plea to stop abusing children. I tied a blue ribbon on my van antenna to make people wonder. Why blue? I intend never to forget the battered, bruised bodies of my grandchildren. Blue serves as a constant reminder to me to fight for protection for our children." Since the year of 1989, millions of people across the country have participated in the Blue-Ribbon Campaign each year. With every year that passes, more people join in effort by wearing and displaying blue ribbons and encouraging others to do the same.
- En la primavera de 1989, una abuela de Virginia, Bonnie Finney, ató una cinta azul a la antena de su vehículo. Cuando miembros de la comunidad comenzaron a cuestionar el razonamiento, la historia que escucharon fue trágica. La cinta empezó la conversación del horrible abuso que los nietos de Bonnie habían sufrido por sus padres, que finalmente llevó a la brutal muerte de su nieto de 3 años llamado Michael. "Mis nietos habían sufrido y luchado tanto durante toda su vida joven que me enfermó." Mi vida se convirtió en caos físico y mental. Mis esfuerzos por entender se convirtieron en un motivo para suplicar y detener el abuso de niños. Até una cinta azul en mi antena de mi vehículo para hacer que las personas se pregunten. ¿Por qué azul? No pretendo olvidar los cuerpos maltratados, y con moretones de mis nietos. Azul sirve como un recordatorio constante para mí para luchar por la protección de nuestros hijos". Desde el año de 1989, millones de personas en todo el país han participado en la campaña del listón azul cada año. Con cada año que pasa, más personas se unen en esfuerzo por usar y exhibir cintas azules y animar a otros a hacer lo mismo.

## Pinwheel DIY Craft Activity

- ▶ <https://www.makeandtakes.com/garden-pinwheel-craft>



## Prevention is everyone's job; What should you do if you suspect abuse of a child?

- ▶ If you are a **counselor, parent, teacher, or anyone else** concerned about a child whom you suspect is being abused, the best way to begin is by talking to the child.
- Start with open-ended questions. Don't assume that the child is being abused. There may be many explanations for why a child is behaving in a particular way or for how a child was injured. Some children have conditions, such as osteogenesis imperfecta or blood clotting disorders, that make them more vulnerable to bruising and/or broken bones.
- If the child has a visible injury, ask how the child was injured. Ask open-ended follow up questions to look for inconsistencies if the explanation for the injury seems implausible or doesn't match the injuries.



# WEAR BLUE ON

- ▶ Friday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020
- ▶ Every Friday in April
- ▶ Share photos on social media with #gobluelubbock
- ▶ Why Blue?
  - ▶ It's the official color of prevention

APRIL IS CHILD  
ABUSE PREVENTION  
MONTH



APRIL 3  
IS WEAR BLUE DAY  
#WEARBLUEDAY2020



# References

- ▶ Child Abuse & Neglect. Retrieved March 31, 2020, from <http://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/can/>
- ▶ <https://www.liveunitedlubbock.org/gobluelubbock>
- ▶ <https://www.https://www.nctsn.org/>