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Award Winners for Child Abuse Prevention Efforts Announced

Awards to recognize outstanding child abuse prevention programs in Oklahoma as well as individual child abuse prevention efforts were presented at the 18th Annual Child Abuse and Neglect and Healthy Families Conference on Sept. 1, at the Embassy Suites Hotel and Conference Center in Norman. The 2010 award winners are: Smart Start North Central Oklahoma for the Outstanding Program Award, Robyn Sears for the Marion Jacewitz Award, and Larry Brown for the Mary Ellen Wilson Award.

Outstanding Program Award winner is Smart Start North Central Oklahoma, which provides exceptional community program services with a focus in child abuse prevention. This organization teaches others the importance of relationship building through training events, mentoring, media and collaborating with 18 community partners in Payne, Pawnee, Noble and Lincoln counties. Smart Start North Central Oklahoma began its Strengthening Families Initiative in 2007 by using the strong points in a family to develop protective factors to increase the natural health of the family and reduce risks. They provide training and mentoring for early child care and education program staff and use innovative ways to reach the community. They also reach incarcerated fathers through a program called “Fathers Acting to Heal, Educate and Reconnect” (FATHERS), which teaches parenting skills, child brain development and how to reconnect and maintain healthy relationships with the child and mother.

The Marion Jacewitz Award winner is Robyn Sears, a child development specialist in Child Guidance at the Oklahoma City-County Health Department. Sears is a certified child and parenting specialist and a certified family life educator with almost 20 years experience in working with young children and their families. She has demonstrated leadership through development of innovative community child abuse prevention programs that make a difference in the lives of young children and their families.

The Mary Ellen Wilson Award winner is Larry Brown, a foster parent recruiter for the Oklahoma Department of Human Services. Brown is chair of the Community Resource Awareness Task Force, a community action group for the Fetal Infant Mortality Review Board and works with numerous child abuse prevention initiatives and task forces. His current project involves a training program for child care providers aimed at preventing Shaken Baby Syndrome, which often causes severe permanent disability or death. For more information about the award recipients or their programs, contact the OSDH Family Support and Prevention Service at (405) 271-7611.

Editors: Photos of Award Winners Follow.

Outstanding Program Award winner: Smart Start North Central Oklahoma



Sue Brinkley
Strengthening Families Coordinator

Robyn Sears
Executive Director



The Marion Jacewitz Award winner: Robyn Sears



The Mary Ellen Wilson Award winner: Larry Brown



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