

A colorful reminder about kids' health

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By: Barry Porterfield

A new month is here and it happens to be the one that brings more attention to the prevention of child abuse.

There are a few programs set up for that very thing with one here in Garvin County bringing a colorful reminder that April is the time for the public to place an extra awareness on stopping the abuse of children.

The remainder comes in the form of blue ribbons or pinwheels that could be seen just about anywhere.

One of those places is the west lawn of the Garvin County Courthouse in Pauls Valley as officials with the McClain-Garvin County Youth and Family Center are again teaming with county's 4-H program to place the ribbons this week.

"We at Healthy Beginnings are working with 4-H to get ribbons up at the courthouse," said Betsy White, who also serves as the chairperson of the Garvin County Health Coalition.

"The ribbons or pinwheels are the national symbols of child abuse prevention," she said.

"We encourage the public at large to put up blue ribbons."

Activities like this one are expected to be duplicated in the program's region during the month, which includes Garvin, McClain and Grady counties.

White says Healthy Beginnings is the youth and family center's child abuse prevention program.

It works with pregnant women and children up to 1 year old to teach parenting skills and get youngsters ready for that time when they are old enough for school.

"We go in homes and with a parents as teachers curriculum it teaches child development," White said.

When it comes to child abuse reports, White said they're now taken on the state level. Those reports then filter down to local level investigations.

The statewide child abuse hotline is 1-800-522-3511.

Also working to better educate parents and help young children is Vicki Long of the Garvin County Health Department.

Long is a nurse in the department's Children First program, which has the exact same goals as Healthy Beginnings.

It also includes education with home visits for young mothers.



Preventing abuse ribbons—A group of 4-H students from across Garvin County place blue ribbons on a courthouse tree this week. The ribbons are a symbol to remind the public that April is Child Abuse Prevention Month.

“We provide first time moms with an education so they can be the best parent they can be,” said Long, who is a nurse for a four-county region.

“Through this education we hope to help moms and keep babies healthy,” she said. “This is about healthy babies and good parents.

“That’s why we’re here, to prevent child abuse, to make a difference.”