



For Immediate Release:

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APRIL IS NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH.

Community organizations come together to raise awareness through art.

Sunbury, PA, April 30, 2024 – Geisinger Unity Group (geisinger.org), Susquehanna Valley United Way Parents as Teachers (svuw.org), Columbia County Family Center (familycenter.columbiapa.org), and the Nurse-Family Partnership (nursefamilypartnership.org) in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance (pafsa.org) displayed artwork created by the families they serve in honor of National Child Abuse Prevention Month.

Ashley Mensch, Director of Columbia County Family Centers, said that *“raising awareness of Child Abuse Prevention Month is crucial because it brings attention to the issue, educates people about signs and prevention strategies, and encourages action from the community to protect children and support families in need.”*

Starting in 1983, April was designated Child Abuse Prevention Month and is an annual observance dedicated to raising awareness and preventing child abuse. It is an opportunity for organizations and communities to commit to giving every child a chance to succeed by ensuring every child grows up in a safe, stable, and nurturing environment that is free from abuse and neglect.

“While child abuse is a tough subject to discuss with families, our partnership with Unity and PFSA allowed for the experience to be therapeutic with the painting project,” said Joanne Sloneem, Vice President of Education and Operations Officer at Susquehanna Valley United Way.

Children in each participating family painted canvases that featured a specific design for this year. The canvases were then displayed throughout the five-county region of Snyder, Union, Northumberland, Columbia, and Montour counties. Families received thank you notes for their participation that told them to where to go to find their paintings in their communities. Each host site also displayed information about the importance of child abuse prevention along with the artwork.

“A painted canvas displayed in the community might seem small, but it is a catalyst to start the needed discussions around Child Abuse Prevention at the community level,” said Stephanie Reitmeyer, Senior Director of Education at Susquehanna Valley United Way.

The paintings are currently on display throughout the 5-county region and can be seen at your local libraries and Geisinger Pediatric Centers as well as the following organizations:

AGAPE, Love from Above to our Community
Berwick YMCA
Bloomsburg Public Library
Bloomsburg YMCA
Columbia Child Development Program
Columbia County Annex Building
Columbia County Courthouse

Columbia County Traveling Library (Central Branch)
Community Giving Foundation (Berwick)

Central Susquehanna Opportunities (Shamokin)
Danville Child Development Center
McBride Memorial Library
Montour County Administration Center

(more...)

Montour County Courthouse
The Bloomsburg Children's Museum
The Exchange
The Hub at Mulberry Mills
Union and Snyder Children and Youth Services

Painting for Prevention was just one of the many opportunities' families had to participate in raising awareness. Throughout the month of April, Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance (PFSA) recognized Child Abuse Prevention Month by hosting several events and activities that called attention to the prevalence of child abuse and how private organizations, public entities, and individuals can work together to prevent and stop it. To learn more, visit <https://pafsa.org/>.

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About the Susquehanna Valley United Way:

Fights for the Health, Educational, and Financial Stability of every person in Columbia, Montour, Northumberland, Snyder and Union Counties. We do this by addressing the root causes of social issues and serving as a leader, partner, and catalyst to identify and address areas of need by engaging communities to develop long-term social change. To learn more, visit svuw.org.