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**Hundreds rally at the State Capitol united to help Michigan children grow up safely**

LANSING, Mich. – Hundreds of people gathered today in front of the east steps of the Michigan Capitol building in support of Michigan's Child Abuse Prevention Awareness Day, one of the key events of Child Abuse Prevention Month. The Children's Trust Fund (CTF) in partnership with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) organized the annual rally, procession and the planting of a pinwheel garden – the national symbol for child abuse and neglect prevention – to recognize the issues of child maltreatment and to underscore the belief every child has the right to grow and flourish in a nurturing environment. This year's theme for the day was "The Power of One."

"Keeping our children safe and nurturing them to a bright future is the most important work any of us can do," said Nick Lyon, director of MDHHS. "Today's activities are an excellent opportunity to celebrate the great progress being made across the state to support the development of healthy children and families in Michigan, and I applaud the Children's Trust Fund for the pivotal role it plays in preventing child abuse and neglect."

Lyon stressed that we all have a role to play. "The Power of One" theme underscores the idea that every one of us can make a difference. This statewide effort under the leadership of the Children's Trust Fund asserts that one person, one community, one dollar, or one action will help to protect children from abuse and neglect throughout Michigan.

Other leaders joined Lyon at the event in support of Child Abuse Prevention Awareness Month. Participants included Dr. Stephen Guertin, medical director, Sparrow Children's Center Hospital; state Rep. Lisa Lyons; state Sen. Rebecca Warren; Lori Wortz, CTF chair; Bill Hardiman, CTF board member and MDHHS director of the Office of Interagency Collaboration and Reengineering; and Tom Karnes, president of National Exchange Clubs, who also spoke about efforts throughout the state to protect Michigan's children from abuse and neglect.

The program included entertainment by Michigan State University Music School students Leis Gearhart-Hall and Aaron Meyer, the Lansing Community College Choir under the direction of Lydia Erickson, and the Averill Elementary School All-Stars Chorus under the direction of Lexa Bell.

Immediately following the presentations, there was a procession to the traffic circle at Michigan and Capitol avenues, where this year's Pinwheel Garden was planted as a powerful symbol of every child's potential and right to grow and flourish.

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Since 1985, April has been nationally recognized as Child Abuse Prevention Month. The Michigan Children's Trust Fund has used this special time each year to acknowledge the importance of families and communities working together to prevent child maltreatment in all its forms.

In conjunction with Prevention Awareness Day, each year the Children's Trust Fund hosts a Legislative Education Day. Organizations and individuals have the opportunity to meet with their respective legislators about child abuse and neglect prevention needs and to update them on the progress being made to reduce and ultimately end child maltreatment in their local communities.

The Children's Trust Fund, housed within MDHHS, serves as a voice for Michigan's children and families and promotes their health, safety and welfare by funding effective local programs and services that prevent child abuse and neglect. Since 1982, CTF has generated more than \$60 million to support prevention programs and services in communities. Additionally, CTF funds 73 local child abuse and neglect prevention councils that serve all of Michigan's 83 counties and administers more than 20 community-based direct service grants across the state, including childhood development programs, respite care and home visitation programs.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services is a customer-focused department that combines the programs formerly under the Michigan departments of Community Health and Human Services. Its focus is to promote better health outcomes, reduce health risks and support stable and safe families while encouraging self-sufficiency. The creation of the new department is a natural next step in our efforts to coordinate our systems, be better aligned internally and build upon much of the successful partnerships we already have together.

Learn more about CTF-funded local councils throughout Michigan.

For more information about Michigan Child Abuse Prevention Month activities and 2015 Prevention Awareness Day, contact Emily Wachsberger at 517-335-0671, or go to [www.michigan.gov/PreventChildAbuse](http://www.michigan.gov/PreventChildAbuse).

A key post-April event for CTF is the 13th Annual Pam Posthumus Auction, which takes place this year on May 13, 2015. Contact us at 517-373-4320 for more information. Learn more about becoming a sponsor or table host or donating to a live auction [here](#).

For more information on the Children's Trust Fund, visit the CTF website at [www.michigan.gov/ctf](http://www.michigan.gov/ctf).

For more information on reporting suspected child abuse or neglect go to:  
[www.michigan.gov/abuseneglect](http://www.michigan.gov/abuseneglect)

Help Spread the Word!

Help spread the word via social media using hashtags: #ChildAbusePreventionMonth or #PreventChildAbuse.

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