



April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

"Education key in prevention efforts"

After decades of intensive efforts to heighten public awareness of the problem of child abuse and neglect, we find our children no safer and our families less stable today than before such campaigns were initiated. The statistics are telling: the leading cause of death in this country of children under 5 is child abuse; more than 1,400 children died from abuse/neglect in 2004-2005, while Mississippi had 12 child fatalities in that same period. The problem is growing, rather than shrinking; in reality, child abuse has assumed epidemic proportions in our nation and our state. While no one has "The Answer," surely a part of the solution will have to involve making more resources available to fund prevention and early intervention programs.



Joe Bennett

In 1981, the Exchange Club Family Support Center opened its doors, becoming the second Child Abuse Prevention Center in the United States sponsored by the National Exchange Club Foundation. This year, the Center celebrates its silver anniversary of providing direct educational and support services to children and families experiencing, or at risk to experience, child abuse or neglect in Hinds, Madison and Rankin counties. Our programs, designed to protect the victims of abuse, stabilize and strengthen families, and provide parents with the information and skills to raise their children in a positive, nurturing environment, include adult and teen parent training and support groups, supervised visitation, case management, day treatment and community outreach programs.

This month – National Child Abuse Prevention Month – the Family Support Center is joining with community partners Southern Christian Services for Children and Youth, Inc., the Metropolitan Jackson YMCA, Mississippi Children's Home Services, and the departments of Mental Health and Human Services to call for an end to violence against children and youth in this state. One of our projects will be to highlight the problem of child abuse in the womb – Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, a leading cause of mental retardation – by conducting an educational awareness campaign on the seriousness of drinking alcohol during pregnancy.

Later in the month, we will join other states, cities and community organizations to observe Children's Flag Day to remember the thousands of children lost in the last year to violence. The Memorial Ceremony will be held Friday, April 28 at 10 a.m. at Southern Christian Services for Children and Youth, 1900 N. West St., and the public is invited to attend.

This summer, the Exchange Club of Downtown Jackson presents its annual fundraiser for the Center, the 18th annual "Save the Child" Golf Tournament at Lake Caroline Golf Club in Madison on June 22, while the Metro Area Exchange Clubs will hold their fundraiser, the "Night of the Child" Drawdown and Dinner Party, on July 13 from 6-9 p.m. at the Mississippi Agricultural Museum's Sparkman Auditorium. The Drawdown features great

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Programs

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The services of the Family Support Center are offered at no charge to anyone interested in learning more about parenting children in a positive, nurturing and effective manner. Parents may be referred by other professional agencies (Department of Human Services, County Youth Court, mental health centers, hospital-based social workers, etc.) or self-referred. Office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Listed below are the programs offered by the Center.

Parent Education Program—Adults participating in parenting classes receive appropriate instruction on positive and effective techniques for disciplining their children as well as relevant information on child development, anger management and stress control. The service mix consists of a 12-week parent education session and direct supportive contacts between staff and program clients. Classes meet once per week for approximately 90 minutes. The Center currently provides five ongoing parent education classes in the metro area. A Child Enrichment Program (C.E.P.) is offered in conjunction with the parenting classes. The C.E.P. coordinator and volunteers provide daycare and child enrichment activities – reading, tutoring, art and crafts instruction, and educational games – for children whose parents are enrolled in parent education classes.

Supervised Visitation Program—This service provides visitation for parent(s) and child(ren) in out-of-home placements. The supervised visits are normally scheduled between 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, but the Visitation Coordinator makes every effort to offer flexibility in arranging visits, and provides transportation to and from the visit for the children. The Center is equipped with a room designed as a home environment, with couches and chairs for the visitors and age appropriate books and toys for the children and parents to utilize.

Case Management Program—Parents referred to either the Parent Education Program or the Supervised Visitation Program are also eligible for Case Management services. Initial assessments and interviews by program coordinators determine the need and appropriateness of a particular client for case management. Upon identification, the case manager will conduct an extensive assessment that surveys the client's status in the following areas: Employment/Employability, Education, Housing, Transportation, Money Management, Health and Personal Support System.

Day Treatment Program—Day Treatment is a behavioral intervention program, provided in the context of a therapeutic setting, which provides children ages 3 to 6 with serious emotional disturbances an alternative to hospitalization. The goal is to maintain the children in their homes/schools by helping them to learn acceptable behavior. The program is designed to nurture the physical, cognitive, and psychological development of the preschool participants to prepare them to be successful in social and academic settings. Each class has nine children and two staff members (a behavioral specialist and a program aide). Classes are held Monday-Friday, five hours per day.



Funding Sources

The following agencies provide funding to the Family Support Center:

MS Department of Human Services
MS Department of Mental Health
Hinds County Mental Health Commission
United Way of the Capital Area
Community Foundation of Greater Jackson
Women's Fund of the Community Foundation
City of Jackson

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out more about volunteer opportunities, Center services and programs, or any of the upcoming events and activities, contact us at (601) 944-1055.

The Family Support Center offers its services free of charge to anyone interested in learning more about effective and nurturing parenting. Volunteers are an invaluable resource in our abuse prevention efforts; to find

out more about volunteer opportunities, Center services and programs, or any of the upcoming events and activities, contact us at (601) 944-1055.

Joe Bennett is the executive director of the Family Support Center, a position he's held since November 2004.

Happenings

MBRAVES TEAM UP WITH FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER



The Mississippi Braves teamed with GAP Moving and Storage Company to implement the K for Kids program in 2005. For each strikeout Braves' pitchers threw during the 2005 season, both home and away, the Mississippi Braves, GAP Moving and Storage, and a number of Braves' fans committed to making a donation to local charities. Mississippi Braves pitchers totaled 916 strikeouts in 2005. On March 8, the Mississippi Braves presented three checks for \$1,000 to three local charities, including the Family Support Center. Pictured are (from left) FSC board members Ken Sullivan, Elise Turner, Stan Martin (Board President) and Robert Hancock; Mississippi Braves General Manager Steve DeSalvo; GAP Moving and Storage's Angela Jones; Center Executive Director Joe Bennett; and FSC board members Sam Morris, Clarice Baker and Randall Walters.

RICHLAND EXCHANGE CLUB DONATES TO CENTER



The Richland Exchange Club contributed \$1,000 to the Center. Shown are FSC Board president Stan Martin, Richland Exchange club members Robert Hancock and Samantha Kyzar and FSC Executive Director Joe Bennett.

EXCHANGE CLUB'S NATIONAL DAY OF SERVICE



Local Exchange Club members volunteered to help clean up during the Exchange Club's National Day of Service last year. Pictured are (from left) Allison Lunsford (Ridgeland Club); Johnny Middleton (Ridgeland Club) (in back); Cheryn Baker (Downtown Jackson Club); Larry Greer (Downtown Jackson); Erskine Oglesby (Downtown Jackson); Joe Bennett (Downtown Jackson); and Stan Martin (Northwoods Jackson Club). Not shown is Rebeca Middleton (Ridgeland Club).

Thanks for Supporting Us

We would like to thank our donors for supporting us as we help protect the children from the shattering effects of child abuse. Below is a list of our wonderful donors. We look forward to your continued support!

Ahrend, Freddy	McLean, Elizabeth
Baker, Cheryn	Middleton, Johnny
Baker, Chris	Middleton, Rebecca
Baker, Clarice	Miller, John
Bennett, Joe	Mitchell, Meade
Bourn, Trey	Neely, Clay
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Holman, Phillip	Exchange Club of Crossgates
Hospodor, Eric	Exchange Club of Byram
Hudyma, Roberta	Exchange Club of Pearl
Jack, Michele Kimball	Exchange Club of Crystal Springs
Knellinger, R.L.	Downtown Exchange Club of Jackson
Kyzar, Samatha	National Exchange Club Foundation
Lakey, Tina	MGM Mirage Voice Foundation
Lawrence, Kevin R.	Dean & Dean Associates Architects
Matthews, Brett	Trustmark National Bank
McCain, Mike	Ergon Foundation
McHenry, Cleet	In Step School of Dance
McKenzie, Betsy	Brown's Fine Art and Framing, Inc.
McLaurin, Donna	Magnolia Ballroom Association
McLaurin, W. T.	Security Ballew Corp.

You can help fight child abuse by making a tax deductible contribution to the Family Support Center. Just complete the form below and mail to: The Family Support Center, 826 North St., Jackson, MS 39202. For every dollar you contribute, 94 cents will go to direct services.

YES! I want to support the work of the Family Support Center.

___ My tax deductible contribution of \$_____ is enclosed.

___ I pledge \$_____ as a _____ (monthly/yearly) contribution.



Name or Company _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____



826 North St. Jackson, MS 39202

WHO DO YOU CALL IF YOU SUSPECT CHILD ABUSE?

Call the Department of Human Services at **1-800-222-8000** to report it **IMMEDIATELY!** Remember, it is your responsibility to report it and their responsibility to prove it.

Mississippi Department of Human Services
1-800-222-8000 (24 hours)

