

Child Abuse Prevention Month 2019

WHEREAS, children are the foundation for the future of our society and every child deserves to grow up feeling safe and loved; Marion County's prosperity depends on fostering the healthy development of its 66.618 plus children currently living, growing and learning within our many diverse communities; and

WHEREAS, research has proven that safe and nurturing relationships, and stimulating and stable environments improve a child's brain development and overall child wellbeing; while neglectful and abusive experiences, and unstable, stressful environments negatively impact childhood outcomes that in turn have lasting adverse effects on our communities; and

WHEREAS, abuse and neglect impair a child's physical, mental and emotional well-being and can lead to learning and behavioral problems as well as increased risk for long-term physical and mental illness into adulthood; the top alleged child maltreatments for Marion County in 2019 included: substance misuse, violence threatens child, and inadequate supervision.

WHEREAS, we must take action to support the physical, social, emotional and educational development of all children; effective child abuse prevention programs succeed due to partnerships and alliances among parents, state agencies, schools, faith based, non-profit and business organizations, law enforcement and the judicial system; and research shows that parents and caregivers who are connected to their local communities are more resilient and better able to provide safe environments and nurturing experiences for their children; and

WHEREAS, during the month of April, the Florida Department of Children and Families, along with Kids Central Inc., Kimberly's Center, Marion County Schools, Marion County Sheriff's Office, Marion County Safe Kids Coalition, Florida Department of Health –Marion County, The Centers Inc., Early Learning Coalition of Marion County, Guardian ad Litem Program, Ocala Domestic Violence/ Sexual Assault Center, Ocala Police Department and the Marion County Children's Alliance, will be engaging communities throughout Florida to renew a collaborative commitment to break the cycle of abuse and neglect, to coordinate efforts to promote awareness of healthy child development, and to empower positive parenting practices and the types of concrete support families need within their communities,

NOW, THEREFORE, be it proclaimed by the Mayor of the City of Ocala, Kent Guinn:

That the board hereby recognizes April 2019 as "Child Abuse Prevention Month" in Marion County, Florida.