



COMMISSIONERS OF CUMBERLAND COUNTY

Barbara B. Cross
Chairman

Jim Hertzler
Vice Chairman

Gary Eichelberger
Secretary

**MARCH 31, 2014
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Linda Rosenberry, CASA Outreach Coordinator
717.240.6159**

Commissioners Proclaim April as Child Abuse Prevention Month

CARLISLE, PA – At their public meeting today, the Cumberland County Commissioners proclaimed April as Child Abuse Prevention Month in an effort to raise awareness of a problem that often goes unrecognized in our communities. The Commissioners encourage all individuals and organizations to play a role in making Cumberland County a better place for children and families. Focusing on ways to build and promote the protective factors, in every interaction with children and families, is one of the most important things the County can do to prevent child maltreatment and promote optimal child development. In addition to issuing a Proclamation, the Commissioners also highlighted the upcoming activities of two County agencies that work together on behalf of child victims of abuse and/or neglect.

The CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) Program will hold their Annual Swearing-in and Light of Hope Ceremony on April 2nd at 6:00 p.m. in the Old Courthouse on the Square in Carlisle. In addition to swearing-in five new CASA volunteers, candles will be lit signifying the hope that having a caring adult in a child's life can give. These volunteers recently completed extensive training to help equip them to advocate for the best interests of the children to whom they will be appointed. In the 13 years the CASA Program has existed in Cumberland County, 182 volunteers have been trained, representing 376 children who have been deemed to be dependent (without proper parental care and control) by the Court of Common Pleas.

The Cumberland County Children and Youth Services agency is responsible for the oversight of children and families with 38 caseworkers serving 820 children. Out of the 248 children who have been adjudicated as dependent children when there are safety concerns regarding the children, 154 are currently in the care and custody of Children & Youth Services.

In honor of Child Abuse Prevention Month, the Children's Memorial flag will fly at Veterans' Square at the end of April. This flag, sponsored by the Child Welfare League of America, is flown to direct attention to the tragedy of violent child deaths as part of a national initiative to reduce child mortality. The flag is a simple, moving image – a red field depicting blue, paper-doll-like figures of children holding hands. In the center, the white chalk outline of a missing child symbolizes the children lost to violence.

The Cumberland County Children and Youth Services and the CASA Program work collaboratively to safeguard the wellbeing of children most at risk. For more information on protecting our children, contact the CASA Program at 717.240.6159 or casa@ccpa.net, or Children and Youth Services at 717.240.6120 or cccys@ccpa.net.

###