



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Op/Ed:

One incident of child abuse and neglect is one too many.

As a community, we must work together to keep our children out of harm's way. During this pandemic, we've not only lost the most vulnerable to the Corona virus-19; but due to problems such as mental health issues, depression, and the stress of being isolated and frustrated we've lost children at the hands of adults who would otherwise care for them. If a child can't feel safe with those that they expect to love them, then what do we as a community do to further prevent violence against children at the hands of older children and adults?

The statistics are staggering: One in ten children will be abused before the age of 18. Six out of ten won't report it, because they're almost always abused by someone they know, love, or trust. In many of the cases, someone knew but did not report the abuse; someone had a suspicion but didn't feel it was their place to report the abuse; someone wanted to report but wasn't sure to whom they should make a report.

Let's be clear: Every adult has a moral, and legal, obligation to protect children from abuse. Every child serving organization has an obligation to the children and families they serve to have policies, procedures and programming in place that protects the children under their care.

Individuals that serve or provide guidance in a volunteer capacity – such as mentors, coaches, and scout leaders – must also understand best practices in child protection, for they too are individually responsible.

The keys to protecting our children from abuse are not complicated. They are not controversial. They are not hard to implement. At Child's Hope: The Child Abuse Prevention Council for Out-Wayne County, we work with child-serving organizations to ensure that the community is informed about the need for child abuse and neglect prevention activities and actions.

Western Wayne Child and Family Service's mandated reporter training is a broad training the state of Michigan created to address these issues. Child's Hope also provides Period of Purple Crying resources to new moms and dads on Infant Head Trauma prevention. In partnership with Kids-TALK Children's Advocacy Agency, Child's Hope delivers evidence-informed child sexual abuse prevention programs called Darkness to Light: Stewards of Children and Talk, Protect, Report; which goes into much more depth about child sexual abuse prevention.

Every child-serving organization should take this call to action seriously: All those who serve and work with children should know their obligations. Prevention begins with knowledge and education.

For more information about the aforementioned trainings, visit www.childshope.org/our-work