



▶ “CATAWBA COUNTY MOURNS DEATH CAUSED BY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE”.....1

▶ CHILD ABUSE AWARENESS MONTH.....2



▶ PRICELESS PRINCESS PROJECT.....3

▶ THANK YOU TO ALL WHO VOLUNTEER.....3



▶ THANK YOU TO ALL WHO VOLUNTEER.....3

○ April

○ 2010

# Spotlight On Domestic Violence

*First Step Newsletter  
A Program of  
The Family Guidance Center*

THE MISSION OF FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER'S FIRST STEP DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM IS TO PROVIDE NEEDED SERVICES TO VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND TO INCREASE COMMUNITY'S AWARENESS ABOUT THE PROBLEM.

## Domestic Violence is a Deadly Problem

We join the community in mourning the loss of Christy Dawn Whitmore, 32, murdered on March 34, 2010. She was a loved mother, a daughter, a sister, and a neighbor. She died at the hands of her boyfriend. Our thoughts and prayers go out to her family.



To all the teenage girls, boys, women, and men, we want to “SHOUT OUT LOUD”, if you are with someone who insults you, controls you, slaps, kicks you, curses you ect. **He or she is not likely to change without INTERVENTION.** They may promise you they will never do it

again and even mean it at that moment. Unfortunately, the promise usually does not last long.

Last year, 131 people were murdered by their intimate partner in North Carolina.

In 2007, the estimated population in Catawba County was 153,404. Out of that population 2,693 were domestic violence victims. Domestic violence is happening here and now in Catawba County. The First Step Program is available to help any victim of domestic violence. Domestic Violence affects the entire community, so it is important to be aware of the warning signs of abusive relationships and educate others.

If you or someone you know is in an abusive relationship call the *First Step Program at the Family Guidance Center at 828-322-1400.*

As a community, we must work together to educate others about domestic violence, which is a deadly problem.

Below, is an important list of warning signs. Learn, know, and teach them to others.

### Signs someone is in an Abusive Relationship

- Unexplained Bruises, scratches, marks, or other injuries
- Failing grades
- Changes in clothes or makeup that does not match up with the weather (sweater during the summer)
- Secrecy
- Extreme indecision
- Anxiety and depression
- Alcohol or drug use
- Constant thought about the partner
- Fearfulness around the partner or when his or her name is mentioned
- Sudden changes in mood or personality
- Crying spells or hysteria fits
- Avoiding eye contact, and contact with friends/family, and social events

# Public Awareness: April Is National Child Abuse Prevention Month



Family Guidance Center is supporting National Child Abuse Prevention Month. We believe that every child deserves to be loved, emotionally nurtured, and to grow up in a safe home. We realize; however, that thousands of children are abused every year. Some even die at the hands of their parents.

Child abuse includes physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and child neglect. It can occur in any family, regardless of income level, race, or ethnic group. Let's take a closer look at the categories of abuse and examine their meanings:

1. Physical Abuse- physically hurting a child by hitting, slapping, punching, throwing objects at child, throwing a child in bed, up against a wall, etc.
2. Emotional Abuse- withholding love and affection, cursing at, constant put-downs, hurtful words, i.e. "you're stupid, you're bad, you're never going to be anything," etc.

3. Sexual Abuse- inappropriate touching, any sex act, inappropriate sexual talk or behavior
4. Child Neglect- inadequate supervision, lack of necessities such as food, adequate clothing or housing, lack of medical attention.

It's also considered abuse when a child is in an injurious environment, including homes where there's substance abuse, domestic violence, or an unsafe structure.

Parenting is the most difficult job anyone can ever have. And it's the most important one. Catawba County is fortunate to have many resources to support parents, including: The Parenting Network (828-465-9295), Children's Advocacy Center (828-465-9296) Children's Resource Center (828-328-8228), Parents as Teachers (828-241-2459), and parenting classes through the Department of Social Services (828-695-5600).

The wounds of child abuse become emotional scars that can last a lifetime. Let's all do our part to insure the safety and well-being of all children.

**If you suspect child abuse, the law requires that you report it to the Department of Social Services at (828) 324-9111**

## Need Help?

If you or someone you know is struggling or feeling overwhelmed as a parent, call our COUNSELING SERVICES at **828-322-1400**.

Family Guidance Center offers help with domestic violence information, counseling, court advocacy, a safe shelter, and support groups. We also provide Consumer Credit/ Housing Counseling Services.

## Indicators of an abused/ Neglected child

- Unexplained bruises, burns, fractures
- Nervousness of others and the parents/caregiver, wary of physical contact
- Child's clothing is inappropriate for the weather
- Unattended medical, hygiene needs
- steals or begs for food
- Child appears pale, fatigued,
- poor social skills, withdrawal, or has extreme attention seeking, and/or frequently misses school
- Signs of depression, aggressive behavior, compulsive lying, stealing, or destructive behaviors.
- Play activities, which have sexual activity not appropriate for child's age



Help is Available  
Call First Step  
(828) 322-1400

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# Upcoming Community Events

## Priceless Princess Project

Again this year, the Family Guidance Center is sponsoring the Priceless Princess Project with your help.

Hundreds of girls in Catawba County do not attend prom because they lack the funds for a prom dress. Many new, will be given to the girls, who, live in Catawba County and need help with this year's prom dress, on **APRIL 10<sup>th</sup>**



from 10:00am-3:00pm at the Purple Ribbon Thrift Store, located across from the Catawba Furniture Mall on HWY 70, Hickory.

## Volunteer Appreciation Month

The Family Guidance Center is very fortunate to have had wonderful volunteers throughout the existence of the agency.

Volunteers help extend our efforts in our First Step/Shelter

Services. Many churches donate food, household goods, and clothing for the women and

*“Volunteers give the perfect picture of people coming together in the community to change lives.”*

children in our shelter. Our Board of Directors volunteers their time and provide leadership to our agency. Volunteers provide tremendous help at the Purple Ribbon Thrift Store. The time volunteers give to our agency makes a better tomorrow for our community! If you are interested in joining the crew of volunteers at the *Family Guidance Center* call: 828-322-1400.

**THANKS TO ALL OUR VOLUNTEERS!**



**Help is Available**

**Call First Step**

**(828) 322-1400**

**Evenings or**

**Weekends (828) 228-1787**

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## Good Food, Good Cause

Zion Lutheran Church Pathfinders Sunday school Class is having their **8<sup>th</sup> Annual Barbecue and Bake Sale Fundraiser**

Proceeds from the barbecue and bake sale will go to the *Family Guidance Center's First Step Domestic Violence Women's Shelter*.

DATE: Saturday,  
April 24, 2010

TIME: 11:00am-7:00pm

WHERE: Zion Church Parish Center  
1911 Zion Church Rd Hickory

BBQ plate dinner includes:

Pork Bar-B-Q, BBQ sauce, Beans, Cole Slaw, and a Roll

Cost is \$7.00

Dine in or take out!

Tickets can be purchased at the Family Guidance Center.  
Please come join the fun and food for a good cause!

