



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Local Organizations Come Together for Child Abuse Prevention Month Event

GAINESVILLE, FLA – On Saturday, April 4, the Alachua County Child Abuse Prevention Task Force will host “Storybook Swamp” at the Northwood Family YMCA as a component of Child Abuse Prevention Month, which is celebrated nationally each April. The event is free and open to the public.

The family-friendly event, formerly known as “Celebrate the Child,” will run from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. This will be the first year the event will be at the YMCA. In years past, the event was held in Downtown Gainesville.

“We are excited to partner with the Northwood Family YMCA to host Storybook Swamp this year,” stated Cathy Winfrey, chair of the Child Abuse Prevention Task Force and program manager for Healthy Families. “The new location will give us the opportunity to grow our event and increase our community reach.”

“Storybook Swamp” will feature themed booths, storybook characters and activities for children of all ages. The event will also offer safety information, snacks and giveaways. All services and resources provided will be centered on the celebration of Child Abuse Prevention Month.

The event will host participants from community agencies within the Child Abuse Prevention Taskforce as well as other local agencies that are dedicated to serving the children of our community. Participating agencies include Acorn Dental Clinic, Alachua County Library District, Alachua County Sheriff’s Office, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Bikers Against Child Abuse, Boulware Springs Charter School, Child Advocacy Center, Children’s Home Society, Children’s Medical Services, DentaQuest, Department of Children and Families, Early Learning Coalition, Early Steps, Florida Kid Care, Gainesville Fire Department, Gainesville HIPPI, Girl Scouts, Healthy Families, Junior League, Meridian Behavioral Healthcare, Partnership for Strong Families, Staywell, the UF Child Protection Team, the United Way and the YMCA.

In recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month, the Child Abuse Prevention Task Force has also joined organizations throughout Florida in planting pinwheel garden displays that can now be seen around Gainesville, the largest of which is in front of North Florida Regional Medical Center.

“These gardens serve as a reminder that child abuse is preventable with the help of a supportive community, stated Jenn Petion, director of community and government relations for Partnership for Strong Families. “Each pinwheel represents the happy, healthy childhood that all children deserve.”

Jenn Petion will receive the City of Gainesville's Child Abuse Prevention Month proclamation on April 2, and Cathy Winfrey will receive Alachua County's proclamation on April 14.

To learn more about Partnership for Strong Families, please visit www.pfsf.org.

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About Partnership for Strong Families:

Partnership for Strong Families is the lead community-based care agency for Florida Judicial Circuits Three and Eight, including Alachua County. PSF is contracted by the Florida Department of Children and Families to deliver comprehensive child welfare services to children who are victims of abuse and neglect. Partnership for Strong Families also works with at-risk families to prevent child abuse and to decrease the risk of children entering the foster care system. PSF serves more than 5,000 children in 13 counties annually.