



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Local Agency Launches Child Safety Campaign

GAINESVILLE, FLA – Partnership for Strong Families (PSF), the lead community-based care agency for Florida Judicial Circuits 3 and 8, announced today the launch of its annual campaign to increase the safety and well-being of children in North Central Florida. The campaign coincides with Child Abuse Prevention Month, celebrated nationally in April.

Throughout the month, PSF will help empower families to keep their children safe by providing information, resources and greater awareness of common hazards for children. The campaign will specifically focus on safe sleep environments, water safety, vehicle safety and appropriate child care. According to the Florida Department of Children and Families, these factors are the four leading causes of child harm and death in the state.

PSF will have a variety of resources for families available at the Library Partnership Resource Center, SWAG Family Resource Center, Cone Park Library Resource Center, all of which are located in Gainesville, and the Tri-County Community Resource Center serving Dixie, Gilchrist and Levy Counties. Items include door/window alarms, door knob covers, safety latches for cabinets and drawers, outlet covers, infant sleep sacks and safe swimming information. Staff and volunteers at the centers are also prepared to have conversations with patrons about ways to help make sure their children are safe.

Additionally, these safety items and others will be available at events throughout the region as an initiative of PSF's Children's Partnership Councils. These councils are an ongoing effort to promote interagency cooperation in the delivery of services to children and families, especially in areas lacking access to critical resources.

"The councils are an effort to reach and aid families in communities where operating full-time resource centers isn't feasible," stated Stephen Pennypacker, president/CEO of Partnership for Strong Families. "The ultimate goal of the councils is the same as our resource centers: prevent child abuse by building stronger families and communities."

Safety tips and updates will also be shared daily on the agency's social media sites including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Patty Carroll, director of community relations and recruitment, said "It is our mission to raise more than just awareness. This month especially, we are working to increase the community's ability to keep children safe. Social media has proven effective to enhance our recruitment of foster and adoptive parents as well as get the community involved in special events. We hope to duplicate that success in enhancing the community's ability to identify common risk factors and signs of child abuse or neglect."

PSF has also joined child-serving agencies from across the community in planting pinwheel gardens in front of their offices and resource centers. The largest pinwheel garden can be seen in front of the UF Health Shands Hospital. The pinwheel gardens are an annual tradition that serve as a reminder of the happy, healthy childhood that all children deserve.

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.