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PA Family Support Alliance Honors Four Residents as Champions for Safe Kids

Residents across the state are honored for their work to #ProtectPAKids from abuse

HARRISBURG, Pa. (April 4, 2023) – The song “Lean on Me” resonated loudly in the Main Rotunda of the state Capitol Building today as Department of Human Services Acting Secretary Val Arkoosh, members of the General Assembly, child advocates, business leaders, students, and [PA Family Support Alliance \(PFSA\)](#) board members and staff lifted up their collective voices to kick off National Child Abuse Prevention Month by honoring four Pennsylvanians who have gone above and beyond the call of duty to protect children.

Prior to the official award ceremony, PFSA, along with lawmakers and child advocates, started the morning by planting thousands of blue ribbon flags along State Street outside the Capitol in Harrisburg. These flags visually symbolize the number of substantiated child abuse cases that occurred in Pennsylvania in 2021. According to Department of Human Services’ [Child Protective Services 2021 Annual Report](#), there were 5,036 substantiated cases of child abuse, 58 substantiated fatalities, and 136 substantiated near fatalities.

“Our award ceremony and flag-planting event are a symbolic way to call the public’s attention to the overwhelming number of cases of child abuse and neglect --- it is a systemic issue plaguing our society,” PFSA President and CEO Angela Liddle said. “While these issues can be difficult for many to talk about, it will take each and every one of us to combat them. Our four Blue Ribbon Champions demonstrate that one individual can truly make a difference in the life of a child. We are incredibly grateful to have such strong leadership in the Commonwealth, as the administration of Governor Josh Shapiro, with the leadership of Acting Secretary Arkoosh, remains boldly committed to prevention measures.”

Several pictures and short b-roll clips from the award ceremony and flag-planting can be found by [CLICKING HERE](#).

“Protecting children from abuse and neglect is a shared responsibility and requires involvement from all of us --- families, educators, social services workers, law enforcement, and everyday citizens,” Acting Secretary Val Arkoosh said. “At DHS, we provide a strong safety net for families because when we are able to connect parents with the supports they need, we are also providing the resources for children to live in a safe and protected environment they deserve.”

Known as the Blue Ribbon Champions for Safe Kids, the four honorees received an award and were recognized for their steadfast commitment to protecting Pennsylvania’s children. An independent panel of judges selected the winners from nominations submitted from across the state. As the state’s leader

in child abuse prevention, PFSA has been giving out this award for six years. The winners include a police chief, child welfare professional, community educator, and an abuse prevention specialist.

The 2023 award recipients are:

- **Jessica Crouse**, Community Educator, Over the Rainbow Children's Advocacy Center, Franklin County.
- **Michelle McDyre**, Director of Prevention and Outreach, Mission Kids Child Advocacy Center, Montgomery County.
- **Christina Roland**, Director of Intake Services, Cumberland County Children and Youth Services, Cumberland County.
- **Charles Streightiff**, Chief of Police, Huntingdon Borough Police Department, Huntingdon County.

For the week April 1-7, the Capitol as well as the Walnut and Market Street bridges in downtown Harrisburg will be lit up blue --- the official color of National Child Abuse Prevention Awareness Month --- at PFSA's request.

Members of the Senate Aging & Youth Committee and House Children and Youth Committee joined PFAS at the ceremony and flag-planting. Other local elected leaders included Dauphin County Commissioner George Hartwick, who read a proclamation regarding National Child Abuse Prevention Month, and Cumberland County District Attorney Sean McCormack.

Performances during the ceremony featured the Susquehanna Township High School Chorus, Cumberland Valley High School Cello Quartet, and Dauphin County 4-H Fur & Feathers Club. Other guests were Miss Pennsylvania Alysa Bainbridge and Pennsylvania Dairy Princess Selina Horst. The Hershey's Characters and PA Dairymen's Association also were on hand to show support.

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About Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance

[PA Family Support Alliance](https://pa-fsa.org) prevents child abuse and protects children from harm by helping parents learn positive parenting techniques, educating professionals and volunteers who work with children to recognize and report child abuse, and helping community members learn how they can play a positive role in keeping children safe. To learn more about our programs, schedule a training, or donate, please visit pa-fsa.org, or call 800-448-4906.

