

# National Child Abuse Prevention Month: The History of the Blue Ribbon



All throughout April, organizations in local communities and across the country hold a wide range of ceremonial events and educational activities focusing on the prevention of child abuse and neglect in honor of **National Child Abuse Prevention Month**.

They make resources available and support extra efforts to raise awareness of the issue in hopes of reducing and avoiding child abuse in each community. They also promote and wear blue ribbons to remind individuals that we all have a role to play in preventing child abuse and neglect. But how did the blue ribbon become a symbol of child abuse prevention?

In 1989, Bonnie Finney tied a blue ribbon to the antenna of her minivan as a way to honor her grandson, Michael Wayne “Bubba” Dickenson, who tragically lost his life because of the abuse he endured. Bubba was 3 years old when he was found bound and beaten in

a weighted toolbox at the bottom of a Norfolk, Virginia canal. Bonnie tried desperately to intervene during his young life because she knew that Bubba and his siblings lived in an abusive home.

While Bonnie’s efforts to stop her grandson’s abuse did not work, local businesses, schools, churches, and social service agencies began displaying the blue ribbon as a way to spread awareness about child abuse prevention. From town to town and state to state, the blue ribbon became a national child abuse awareness symbol.

In the four decades that have passed, Bonnie’s work to educate communities inspired a movement, with April becoming **National Child Abuse Prevention Month**. In fact, the blue ribbon continues to be the international child abuse awareness symbol.



# PA BLUE RIBBON CHAMPIONS for SAFE KIDS

Each year, Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance honors individuals from across the commonwealth who have gone the extra mile to protect Pennsylvania children. These individuals are recognized as **PA Blue Ribbon Champions for Safe Kids** for their exceptional contributions as we continue to make every effort to prevent child abuse and neglect throughout Pennsylvania. This year, our Blue Ribbon Champions were recognized by PFSA during a special ceremony at the Harrisburg Capitol, where each champion was honored and received an award for their efforts to keep kids safe.



## Crystal Long

Forensic Interview/  
Prevention Educator

Adams County Children's  
Advocacy Center



## Nancy Reitzel

Early Childhood  
Education Instructor

Cumberland Perry Area  
Career and Technical  
Center



## Kimberly Saltsman

Executive Director

Children's Advocacy  
Center of Centre County  
Mount Nittany Health



## Lisa K. Wilcox

Director of Children  
and Youth

Sullivan County  
Children and Youth  
Services

We are so thankful to these individuals and so proud to honor them as the 2024 Blue Ribbon Champions for Safe Kids.

# Thank You

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Because of your financial support, we can do more to help children and families throughout our Commonwealth and beyond. Thank you!



## MANDATED REPORTER TRAINER SPOTLIGHT

# Ellen Knecht

We recently interviewed Ellen Knecht, who has been a contracted trainer for PFSA since 2015. Here is what she had to say about why she is so passionate about training mandated reporters.

### Why do you care about mandated reporters of child abuse?

*The efforts and work we collectively do to keep children safe is sacred work, and each person makes a difference. These trainings impart information that guides how we can better recognize signs and symptoms of child abuse as well as report suspected abuse in a timely manner. Overall, it's for the common goal of keeping children safe as well as supporting one another as professionals in meeting our obligations in doing so.*

### Why do you train for PFSA?

*As a licensed clinical social worker and art therapist, I find value in my role as a trainer. These training opportunities enable me to share my knowledge and experience with other professionals who work with and care for the well-being of children and their families.*



We appreciate the wealth of knowledge Ellen brings to each training she provides to mandated reporters. She looks forward to meeting you in her trainings!

# PA Child Abuse PREVENTION SYMPOSIUM

**NOV 7<sup>th</sup> 2024**

## SAVE THE DATE!

Mark your calendar and plan to join us virtually on **November 7, 2024**, for PFSA's annual **PA Child Abuse Prevention Symposium!**

**CREDITS** ACT 48 | CEUs | CLEs



# UPCOMING PFSA TRAININGS

## Families in Recovery New Facilitator Training

This research-based program is a great resource for parents, guardians, and caretakers recovering from substance use disorder. The program aims to teach healthy coping and parenting skills while balancing the needs of recovery.

New facilitators of the Families in Recovery (FiR) program will be fully prepared to implement the program and provide training after attending a two-day comprehensive session consisting of content, education, and application instruction of the curriculum. FiR facilitators come together to share program implementation experience, ideas, and insights following initial training.

All organizations interested in implementing the Families in Recovery program are required to enter an agreement contract with PFSA and participate in the evaluation requirements of the program. FiR contracts include ongoing technical assistance, program development, facilitator calls, and assistance with data collection procedures.

**Dates:** April 23 & 24, 2024 (*virtual*)  
July 16 & 17, 2024 (*virtual*)

**Time:** 9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m.  
(*half-hour lunch break*)

**Cost:** Email Justin Donofrio, Prevention Services Manager, at [jdonofrio@pafsa.org](mailto:jdonofrio@pafsa.org) for the paperwork or to ask any questions.

## Mandated Reporter Training

PFSA has several options for mandated reporter training for staff and volunteers. Certificates are provided to the participants, and, upon request, we will upload confirmation of your training to the Departments of State or Education for CE fulfillments under Act 31 and/or Act 48. CLEs are also available for attorneys.

### LIVE IN-PERSON/VIRTUAL

**Cost:** Free

**How to register:** Find and register for a virtual session here: [pafsa.org/mandated-reporter-training](https://pafsa.org/mandated-reporter-training)

### INDIVIDUAL ONLINE, ON-DEMAND

**Cost:** \$30

**Take anytime:** [pafsa.org/on-demand-online-training](https://pafsa.org/on-demand-online-training)

### TRAIN-THE-TRAINER

This is an opportunity for organizations to develop their own quality, cost-efficient, in-house training program for employees on child abuse recognition and reporting.

**Dates:** April 16 & 17, 2024 (*virtual*)  
July 25 & 26, 2024 (*virtual*)

**Time:** 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.  
(*half-hour lunch break*)

**Cost:** \$1,000 per trainer, entering into a three-year contract with PFSA. Email Haven Evans, Director of Programs, at [hevans@pafsa.org](mailto:hevans@pafsa.org) for the paperwork or to ask any questions.

# Consider a Donation

**#ProtectPAKids** Help us support the families and communities across Pennsylvania by donating to PFSA today. Your gift will help PFSA continue to deliver successful training, education, and ongoing support to PA families and children.

Visit [pafsa.org](https://pafsa.org) to learn more about our services and to donate!



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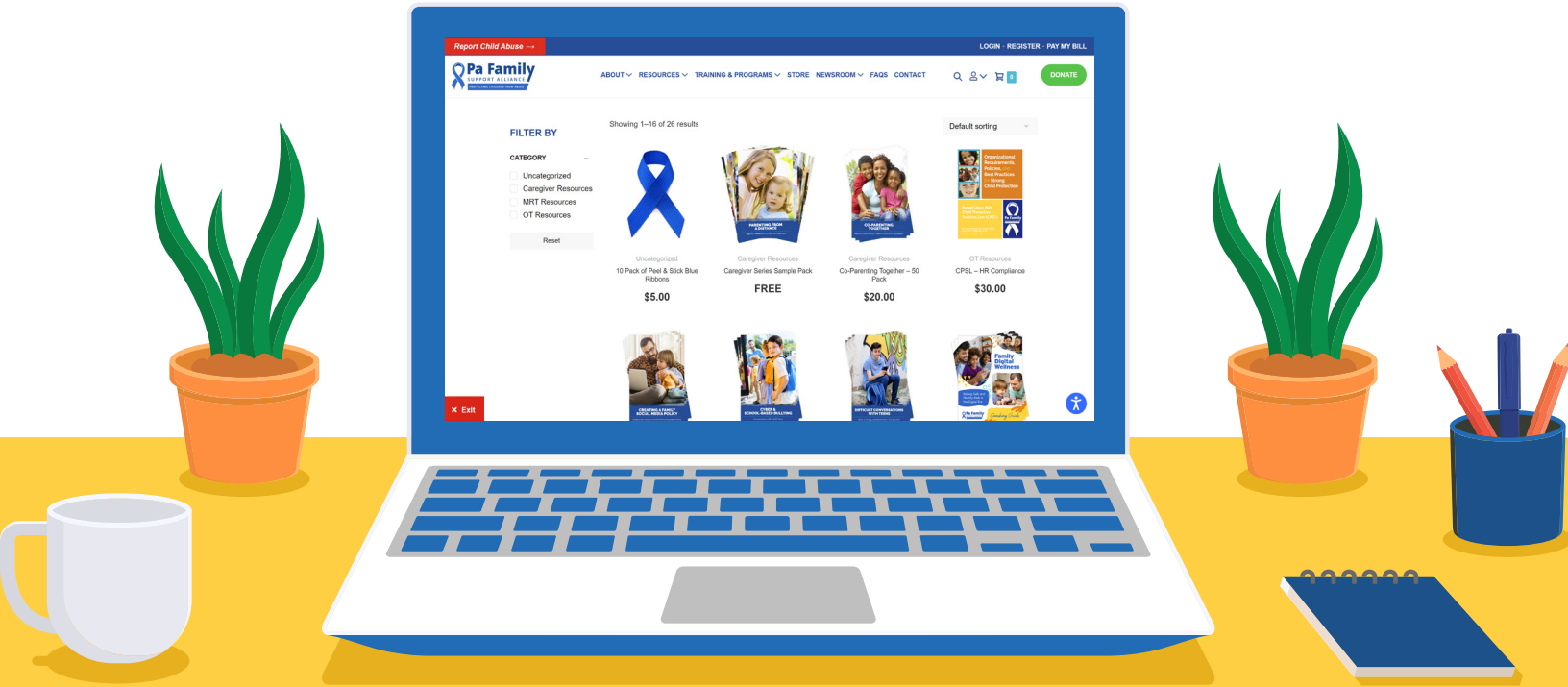
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# Visit Our Online Store!

PFSA has educational resources available in our online store. You can find informative materials covering a wide range of topics designed to assist caregivers, parents, and professionals in an effort to protect children. Please visit [pafsa.org/store](https://pafsa.org/store) to learn more!



Consider joining our **Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) Network!** This is a diverse network of child protective and family-serving organizations that positively impact children and families throughout Pennsylvania.

All CBCAP Network members receive benefits from PFSA, such as parenting and caregiver resources, educational materials, professional development opportunities for staff, discounts on training and materials, and much more.

To learn more about the CBCAP Network, the benefits, or how to sign up, contact PFSA's Prevention Services Manager, Justin Donofrio, at [jdonofrio@pafsa.org](mailto:jdonofrio@pafsa.org).