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Pa Family Support Alliance Honors Four Pennsylvania Residents as Champions for Safe Kids

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

HARRISBURG, Pa. (April 2, 2025) – “Lean on Me” resonated loudly throughout the State Capitol today as Lieutenant Governor Austin Davis, Pennsylvania Department of Human Services Secretary Valerie Arkoosh, Attorney General Dave Sunday, child advocates, business leaders, students, and Pa Family Support Alliance (PFSA) lifted up their collective voices together and honored four Pennsylvanians that have gone above and beyond the call of duty to protect children.

“April provides an important opportunity to draw attention to the widespread problem of child abuse and neglect, a deeply ingrained issue within our society,” said Angela Liddle, President, and CEO of [PFSA](#). “Though these topics can be challenging for many to discuss, it will take a collective effort to address them. The four PA Blue Ribbon Champions for Safe Kids exemplify how one person can profoundly impact a child's life. We are deeply appreciative of the exceptional leadership in the Commonwealth, with Lieutenant Governor Davis, Secretary Arkoosh and Attorney General Sunday dedicated to advancing prevention efforts.”

[Photos, videos and short B-roll clips from today's events can be found here.](#)

“The Shapiro-Davis administration is committed to protecting our children from abuse and neglect, and I was honored to join Secretary Arkoosh, Attorney General Sunday, the Pa Family Support Alliance, and other lawmakers and advocates at this event,” said Lieutenant Governor Davis. “The four Pennsylvanians recognized as Blue Ribbon Champions for Safe Kids go above and beyond to protect our most vulnerable from abuse and neglect, working tirelessly in pursuit of this mission.”

Along the grounds of the Capitol, there are 4,720 blue flags. The flags represent the number of children who were tragically the victims of abuse in 2023. PFSA, in partnership with DHS, was joined by child advocates and several lawmakers early this morning before the Capitol rotunda ceremony to plant these flags.

“Children deserve to grow and thrive in a safe, loving environment, and all parents deserve support and partnership in raising healthy, happy children, especially if they are going through something difficult. Too often situations of potential abuse and neglect start with families having difficulty meeting essential needs – situations we may be able to avoid by helping out our family, friends, and neighbors,” said DHS Secretary Dr. Val Arkoosh. “As we recognize Child Abuse

Prevention Month and celebrate our 2025 PA Blue Ribbon Champions for Safe Kids recipients, we must remember that we all can play a role in supporting families, protecting children, and building a more empathetic Commonwealth and communities that leans in to help people who are at risk or struggling. We must lift each other up — our children deserve no less from us.”

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 eight years. The winners include educators and advocates.

The 2025 award recipients are:

- LaKeisha Berry, Director of Prevention and Family Support Services, Belmont Charter Network (Philadelphia County resident)
- Joanne M. Godfrey, Family Advocate, Children's Aid Society - The Lehman Center (York County resident)
- Hailey E. Houk, Police Detective, New Castle Police Department (Lawrence County resident)
- Tyler Smay, CASA Program Director, Beginnings Inc. (Cambria County resident)

“As an advocate for our most vulnerable citizens, I was proud to join this important event with many friends who share the mission of protecting kids,” Pennsylvania Attorney General Dave Sunday said. “It was my honor to attend this event, recognize those awarded for their extraordinary work, and renew the commitment to be a helpful neighbor for any child who is being harmed.”

The Capitol and the Walnut Street and Market Street bridges in downtown Harrisburg will be lit up blue — the official color of National Child Abuse Prevention Awareness Month — April 1-3 at PFSA’s request.

At today’s ceremony, PFSA was joined by the Harrisburg Academy Upper School Chorus, and various state and local elected officials. According to the latest Pennsylvania Department of Human Services’ Annual Child Protective Services Report, there were 4,720 substantiated cases of child abuse, of which 57 were substantiated fatalities and 119 substantiated near fatalities.

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About Pa Family Support Alliance

[Pa Family Support Alliance](https://pafsa.org), in partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, 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 make a donation, please visit pafsa.org, or call 800-448-4906.

