

Be a Volunteer and Advocate!

By

Carolyn Hendry Wyatt, Extension Agent III, 4-H/Family & Consumer Science

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month (www.preventchildabuse.org) and National Volunteer Month (www.nationalservice.gov) across the nation. It is a time to focus on ways to protect family members from abusive environments and to prevent abuse from ever occurring in our community by giving our time and support to causes we believe in. Jack Levine, Founder of 4Generations Institute (<http://4Gen.org>) offers several actions to prevent violence and promote safety at home and in our community.

- Pay attention and recognize the signs of family violence, child and elder abuse and animal neglect. . .and report your suspicions to the proper authorities. Silence may prove deadly.
- Support organizations that educate families, children, neighbors and community members on how to prevent abuse and neglect and promote positive parenting.
- Healthy Families is an excellent voluntary parent-focused program model. Visit <http://healthyfamiliesfla.org/> for localized contact information.
- Volunteer for an organization that helps vulnerable children and their families. Guardian ad Litem and CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) are especially focused on representing children in the court system. Visit <http://guardianadlitem.org/> or <http://casaforchildren.org/>.
- Invite a speaker to your civic organization, workplace or place of worship to spread the word about the threat of family violence and how to keep all of our family members safe.
- Mentor a child, visit a lonely elder or give the gift of time to your community Hospice. . .become a beacon of hope for someone who needs kindness and special attention.
- Give personal support to a mother or father in need. . .or to a caregiver of an elder or special child experiencing the stress of their round-the-clock duties.
- Support advocacy organizations and communicate with elected officials in support of parent education, abuse prevention, health care, victims rights, justice for teenagers and access to quality services across the generations.

Mr. Levine encourages everyone to continue to exert the power of your influence. Advocacy is giving voice to causes which we know need attention and effective action. Our success is rooted in what we do for others who need us, and the energy we invest in making a difference. In conclusion, become a volunteer for a worthwhile organization and an advocate for a worthwhile cause. You will be glad you did!

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