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For Child Abuse Prevention Month, CASA DuPage staff and DuPage County judges put up blue ribbons at the entrance to the DuPage County Courthouse. Pictured, from left, are: Alison Baughman, Suzanne Skala, Kathie Paravola, Judge Chantelle Porter, Chief Judge Kenneth Popejoy, Judge Ann Celine Walsh, Judge Demetrios Panoushis, Advocate Supervisor Tammy Cetina, Jackie Rankin, Judge James Orel (behind), CASA staff Stacie Coaker. (Courtesy of Vicki Shaw)

Vicki Shaw
DuPage CASA Development Director

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Nearly 700,000 children are abused in the United States each year. Children under the age of one year have the highest level of victimization and children growing up in households with domestic violence and drug abuse are at the highest risk of abuse and neglect in their homes.

Preventing child abuse starts with recognizing the importance of strengthening families in our community.

Establishing economic support, positive parenting education and quality child care are cited by the CDC as the most effective child abuse prevention strategies.

This month CASA of DuPage County tied blue ribbons at the entrance to the DuPage County Courthouse in observance of this important community issue.

The organization representatives were joined by the DuPage County Chief Judge Kenneth Popejoy; along with Juvenile Court Judges Demetrios Panoushis and Chantelle Porter; Probate Court Judge James Orel; and Judge Ann Celine Walsh, Presiding Judge of Specialty and Juvenile Courts Division.

The Blue Ribbon Campaign began in the spring of 1989 when Bonnie Finney of Virginia tied a ribbon on her car to acknowledge the loss of her three-year-old grandson who was a victim of abuse. She encouraged her neighbors to do the same to bring her community together to protect children.

The blue ribbon has been the national symbol for child abuse prevention ever since.

CASA of DuPage County encourages everyone in the community to play a role in keeping children safe. Join the effort and tie a blue ribbon to a tree in your

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the safety of a child, call the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services hotline 1-800-25-ABUSE.

Other ways you can show your support this month:

- Be a positive and nurturing parent or caregiver and help others do the same.
- Make children in your life a priority, assuring they are in safe and healthy environments.
- Wear a blue ribbon during the month of April to show your support.
- Call the DCFS hotline 1-800-25-ABUSE if you suspect abuse or neglect.
- Follow DuPage CASA on social media: Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/casaofdupage>), Twitter (<https://twitter.com/casaofdupage>), LinkedIn (<https://www.linkedin.com/company/casa-of-dupage-county/>), Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/casaofdupage/>).

"We express our sincerest gratitude to the entire DuPage County Community for participating in this important campaign and supporting our vision that every child deserves a safe, permanent and nurturing home." Suzanne Skala, CASA of DuPage County Executive Director.

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CASA of DuPage County is a nonprofit, community organization supporting children who have been abused or neglected by recruiting and training volunteer advocates to speak to their best interests in the court and in the community.

The organization has 167 trained community volunteers who are actively advocating for more than 400 children annually. Learn more about CASA of DuPage County programs by visiting dupagecasa.org (<https://dupagecasa.org/>).

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