

# NEWS NEWS



## Department of Human Services

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**Anne Marie Ambrose,  
Commissioner**

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April 6, 2011

### DHS and PCA PA rally against child abuse

In recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month, the Department of Human Services and Prevent Child Abuse (PCA) PA held a *Pinwheels for Prevention* rally to emphasize the ways community members can do their part to prevent child abuse and neglect. The rally, which was held at Clara Barton Elementary School, also honored the memory of former student Charlenni Ferreira, a 10 year old girl who died as a result of child abuse injuries. Featured speakers included Mayor Michael Nutter, Anne Marie Ambrose, DHS Commissioner, Dr. Maria McColgan, Chair of PCA PA and Johari Rollins wife of Phillies player Jimmy Rollins, who taped a message for the event.

“Charlenni’s death was tragic and preventable,” said DHS Commissioner Anne Marie Ambrose. It is our hope that this rally will inspire everyone to do all they can not only to prevent child abuse but also to be aware of and report suspected abuse.”

Holding brightly colored pinwheels, the elementary school students kicked off the event with a march around the school as a reminder that childhood is meant to be a carefree, untroubled

time. The march was followed by remarks given by Mayor Nutter who also presented a proclamation recognizing April 2011 as Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month.

“The effects of child abuse and neglect are community problems and finding solutions depends on all segments of the society;” said Nutter.

According to Commissioner Ambrose, each year, more than 20,000 children require the services of DHS’ Division of Children and Youth (CYD) for issues related to abuse and neglect. However, she noted, “Child abuse is preventable. All of the research tells us that when parents feel supported in their parenting efforts, they are less likely to abuse or neglect their children.”

Ambrose also noted that DHS offers numerous support groups and classes to help parents improve their parenting skills and cope with the challenges of raising children.

McColgan noted that PCA PA was established to help increase awareness of child abuse and neglect and educate the community about how to prevent it. “There are five things each of us can do that will have a positive impact,” she said. “We call them the five R’s and they include: Reach out; raise the issue; remember the risk factors; recognize the warning signs; and report suspected abuse and neglect.”

Throughout the event, representatives from DHS, PCA PA and other child-serving agencies were on hand to provide information to community members and parents about practical ways they can help to prevent child abuse as well and about available services and resources.

The rally also featured the artwork of Clara Barton students who participated in an art contest to mark the occasion. Winners of the contest were announced at the event and included first place winner, Romelyn Torres, who was presented a \$50 book fair certificate, as well as Natali Chacon, Daisha Salas, and Cathy Pham, each of whom received \$25 book fair certificates for a job well done. All of the winners are second graders.

St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children was the event sponsor with additional support from HealthPartners and WOAR. The pinwheels were sponsored by the Philadelphia Fire Fighters Union Local 22, IAFF and an anonymous donor with The Defenders Association of Philadelphia. Laura Anderson’s second grade class in Marysville, CA - who wish to keep all children safe from coast to coast – sponsored the art contest.

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*The Philadelphia Department of Human Services is the City agency charged with protecting children from abuse, neglect, and delinquency; ensuring their safety and permanency in nurturing home environments; and strengthening and preserving families by enhancing community-based prevention services. In partnership with community organizations, DHS*

*provides services to strengthen the overall well being of Philadelphia children, youth, and families using a customer focused approach that is responsive to evolving community needs.*