

# NEWS NEWS



## Department of Human Services

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**Anne Marie Ambrose,  
Commissioner**

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### DHS and PCA PA rally against child abuse

In recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month, the Department of Human Services and Prevent Child Abuse PA (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, held at Clara Barton Elementary School, featured remarks by Dr. Maria McColgan, pediatric advisor, PCA PA; DHS Commissioner Anne Marie Ambrose; and Police Captain Frank Vanore.

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.

Other highlights included a reading by children's author Staci J. Schwartz, a musical presentation by the students and an awards presentation to student winners of a child abuse prevention art contest.

According to McColgan, 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.”

Commissioner Ambrose noted that 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 stressed that 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.” To provide that support, DHS offers numerous support groups and classes aimed at helping parents improve their parenting skills and cope with the challenges of raising children.

“Each of us can play an important role in preventing child abuse,” said Ambrose. “Whether it is reporting suspected abuse, volunteering your time to help a child at risk, or simply offering a word of encouragement, we can all help promote child safety and well being.”

The rally also featured the artwork of Clara Barton second graders who participated in an art contest. Through their artwork, students answered the question I feel loved when? Winners of the contest were announced at the event.

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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.*