

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month
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In 2007, there were 13 child deaths due to abuse and/or neglect in Bexar County. Thirteen children, who will never grow old, never fall in love, and never raise a family. These thirteen and the other 71,000 child and adolescent victims in Texas are why the Archdiocese of San Antonio must lead the fight on child abuse prevention.

April has been designated as National Child Abuse Prevention Month. This is a time, as a community, we must respond to the cries of the children. The Office of Victim Assistance & Safe Environment is dedicated to training children on abuse prevention, but a child cannot be safe without the involvement of caring adults. Too many adults claim they do not want to get involved, so they turn a blind eye and a deaf ear to abuse. We cannot allow this any longer! All adults must have a part in the protection of children. We must speak out against abuse, report abuse to the authorities, and let others know that abusing a child will not be tolerated.

During the month of April, The Office of Victim Assistance & Safe Environment will give all the children enrolled in Religious Education classes and in Catholic Schools a blue ribbon pin. These blue ribbon pins are our way to get all the children and youth within our Archdiocese to focus on one goal: No more victims! The story of the blue ribbon began in 1989 by Bonnie Finney in Norfolk, Virginia. She tied a blue ribbon to her car antennae after her grandson was murdered by Bonnie's daughter. Mrs. Finney stated that the color blue signified the bruised body of her grandson. She wanted the blue ribbon to be a reminder to others of the senseless death of children within the community.

The month of April also marks the conclusion of the abuse prevention training the children and youth have been receiving throughout the year. The abuse prevention training, which begins in October, covers age appropriate information intended to assist children and youth on how to identify unsafe situations and how to report these unsafe situations to a trusted adult. As of this date, the Archdiocese of San Antonio has trained over 100,000 children on abuse prevention, but it is not enough! As long as a child continues to suffer from abuse, the Archdiocese of San Antonio will continue to work towards creating a safe environment for all of God's children.

If you are interested in learning about the abuse prevention program of the Archdiocese, please contact the Safe Environment Coordinator at your local Catholic parish or school.