

Brown Co Officials Focus On Child Abuse

(KNZA)--A special gathering Thursday afternoon at the Brown County Courthouse in Hiawatha, where area agency representatives came together to raise awareness against child abuse.

Blue and silver pinwheels-the symbol of child abuse awareness-were handed out to members of the public, along with informational materials regarding how communitywide efforts can help stop the crime.

The ceremony was timed with National Child Abuse Awareness Month, now underway.

Brown County Sheriff John Merchant, along with Brown County Attorney Kevin Hill, has partnered with numerous other agencies, including local tribal authorities and the Kansas Highway Patrol, to shed light on the issue(Play Audio)

While the most high profile cases of child abuse, as well as the easiest to identify, are those involving physical violence, Merchant says emotional abuse must also be considered, and recognized(Play Audio)

Brown County's involvement with the national month long time of awareness is, unfortunately, made all the more relevant following the March death of a four-year-old Brown County Boy believed to have died as the result of child abuse. His father is accused of the crime, charged with murder in the first-degree and felony abuse of a child.

According to national statistics, 90%, of child victims are abused by someone they know or are related to(Play Audio)

Brown County has seen a steady increase in reported child abuse cases in recent years.

While 16 were reported in 2009, the number last year climbed to 41.

SOME WARNING SIGNS OF ABUSE:

Unexplained or suspicious bruises, burns, fractures or marks.

Explanation of injuries that make no sense

Disturbed sleep

Pain during urination or during bowel movements

Unusual knowledge of body parts

Acting out sexually with toys or other children

Fear of certain people or places

Pain while walking or sitting

Malnourished

Unusual flinching when approached

Withdrawn, lack of energy or interest, poor school attendance, failing

grades

Kansas has a Protection Report Center where concerned citizens may report suspected child abuse anonymously. That number is 1-800-922-5330---If there is an immediate concern over the safety of a child please report immediately to your local law enforcement at once. IF YOU THINK YOU SHOULD REPORT A CONCERN--PLEASE DO SO!! Law enforcement would much rather investigate a case that does not meet the criteria of child abuse than to let an abused child continue to be victimized.

Many Signals Communications