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Hospital leads ‘Children’s March on Child Abuse’ to increase awareness, prevent harm to kids

PHOENIX, Ariz. (February 15, 2008) – Their footsteps are silent. Last year, 60 of Arizona’s children died from child abuse. On **Monday, March 31st, at 10 a.m.**, Phoenix Children’s Hospital, and child abuse prevention advocates from across the Valley will gather at the **Hospital’s main entrance** to show their dedication to keeping these children’s memories alive and preventing harm to other children at the **“Children’s March on Child Abuse”**.

At the event, officials will donate children’s shoes commemorating the death or disability of victims of child abuse. Phoenix Children’s medical staff, Valley families, caregivers, paramedics, fire and police officers, families and friends will also donate shoes, along with a letter, note, or poem in memory of an abused child.

Members of the public are invited to participate in the “Children’s March on Child Abuse” by donating children’s shoes at the March 31st event or leaving a pair at the Hospital’s front desk, 1919 E. Thomas Rd., Phoenix, 85016. The shoes donated to the “Children’s March on Child Abuse” will be displayed at Phoenix Children’s throughout April, which is Child Abuse Prevention Month.

Mireya Hernandez, RN, a pediatric emergency nurse in the hospital’s Emergency Department donated the first pair of shoes. Hernandez included a short note in the tiny pink sandals stating the shoes represented a 16-month-old little girl that she cared for in the Emergency Department. She had been violently abused by her mother’s boyfriend. After a week in the Pediatric Intensive Care unit and another two weeks in the rehabilitation unit, the child is making a remarkable recovery, despite her injuries. Hernandez noted the prevalence of these cases in the unit. I can’t say specifically she said, but if not daily - probably weekly. Phoenix Children’s physicians and staff evaluated 393 cases of neglect and abuse, 150 physical abuse cases, 189 cases of neglect and 104 substance exposed newborns. Nine of these children died.

According to a national study based on data drawn from a variety of sources, the total direct cost of Child Abuse and neglect in the United States in 2007 was conservatively estimated to be \$103.8 billion dollars
(http://www.preventchildabuse.org/about_us/media_releases/pcaa_pew_economic_impact_study_final.pdf)

“Armed with this kind of data, it’s no wonder Phoenix Children’s staff and administration are passionately committed to prevent child abuse,” said Marcia Stanton, child abuse prevention coordinator at Phoenix Children’s.

Phoenix Children’s Hospital has several child prevention programs and collaborations active at Phoenix Children’s including: Project S.A.F. E. (Supporting a Family – Friendly Environment), the Shaken Baby Prevention Project, Forensic Pediatrics, and Stewards of Children, a program that trains caregivers to recognize sexual child abuse. To learn more, visit the Hospital’s website and search “preventing child abuse”.

Phoenix Children’s Hospital is Arizona’s leader in pediatric care and is one of the 10 largest free-standing children’s hospitals in the nation. The outstanding clinical expertise, as well as high patient volume, and an unwavering commitment to caring only for children, all contribute to Children’s leadership position. For information about Phoenix Children’s, visit the Hospital’s website at www.phoenixchildrens.com.

