

**County** Vance  
**Department of Social Services**

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**Project Title** Child Abuse Prevention Walk

**Category** Profiles in Community Collaboration  
(Please select one)

### **Project Description and Summary**

**What did you do?**

**Describe your program or project. What did you do? What is the history behind the program/project? What did you hope to accomplish? What was your timeline? Your budget? How did you identify your objectives? How well did you use available resources?**

The Agency believes that by working together as a community, everyone can play a part in promoting children's emotional well-being and strengthening families. It is because of this strong belief that in 2011 the Department of Social Services initiated a campaign to educate and engage as many community partners as possible in activities that supported the prevention of child abuse.

This began in 2011 with a small collaboration between DSS, the school system and local law enforcement agencies facilitating the 1st annual Child Abuse Prevention Walk through downtown Henderson. There were approximately 50 people in attendance at this event. This event included a walk through downtown Henderson to bring awareness to child abuse/neglect. 2012 brought about the 2nd annual Child Abuse Prevention Walk which doubled in the size of participants and featured guest speakers including the DSS Director, a presiding judge and the Mayor. The Mayor proclaimed April to be Child Abuse Prevention Month. As of 2015, this collaboration now includes, the Guardian ad Litem office, the school system, law enforcement agencies, local mental health agencies, a domestic violence agency, local doctor's offices, churches, the local NC cooperative extension and DSS agencies from surrounding counties. The 8th annual Child Abuse Prevention Walk that took place on April 26, 2017, through downtown engaged approximately 400 members of the community, the local newspaper and featured speakers from three different counties including several Mayors, a presiding judge, DSS Director, a Parenting Taskforce awarding winning parent and a former foster care child. In addition to the Child Abuse Prevention Walk, activities took place throughout the month of April including Child Abuse Prevention and Education forums on "Town Talk" (a broadcast on the local AM radio station for the area) every week of the entire month, a pinwheel garden planted by Head Start children, a day long parenting workshop at the local Parenting Resource Center and Blue Sunday in churches across the county.

The cost of this event is minimal. The budget included the purchase of pins and pinwheels for distribution and bottled water for the conclusion of the walk. There was cost in creating and mailing out flyers and letters. The total budget was less than \$300 for materials.

### **Project Success and Impact**

**What was the outcome?**

**Was your program/project a success? What was the impact? How did you measure the impact? How widespread is the impact of your program/project? How were you able to overcome obstacles and challenges? Did your program/project meet your established objectives?**

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This event has created an increased awareness of child abuse/neglect. It has prompted the community not only to understand the signs of abuse/neglect but to understand every individual's role in providing families with the support and resources they need to raise happy, healthy children in an environment free from abuse and neglect. The Child Abuse Prevention Walk in 2015 featured a former foster care child who told her story to an audience that included high school children on a field trip with their school. She encouraged them to speak up against child abuse, for themselves or someone they know. After the event, a high school student, who was moved into action, expressed her desire to tell her story next year. As this event grew over the years, several different community agencies contacted DSS to request that the agency conduct presentations throughout the year on signs of abuse/neglect, on recognizing when a child makes a disclosure and when to make a CPS report. Lastly, this event has expanded to include two neighboring counties and their community. Its impact is limitless.

Having a good working relationship with community partners makes this a very easy project to achieve and there have not been any obstacles other than the inability to predict the weather on the day of the event.

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