

Stewards of Children sexual abuse prevention program scheduled for twice in April

Written by Betsy Blevins
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March 10, 2011 - Child sexual abuse is a problem facing every community. Estimates are that one in four girls and one in six boys will be sexually abused by the time they reach their eighteenth birthday.

"Stewards of Children" is a comprehensive sexual abuse prevention training program that educates adults to prevent, recognize, and react responsibly to child sexual abuse. The program is designed by Darkness 2 Light for individuals and organizations that serve children and adolescents, providing prevention training for staff, volunteers, parents, and other interested adults.

"We are excited to report that more than 160 people in Fannin County have already completed this training," said Sandy Barber, Executive Director of the Fannin County Children's Center. Barber completed special training to become an authorized facilitator of "Stewards of Children."

"The verbal feedback and written evaluations from participants have been overwhelmingly positive," said Barber. "One common theme among the comments is that participants want everyone working with children to have this training."

Many of the participants expressed how this will help them personally with their own children as well as with the children they encounter as they work and volunteer in schools, churches, sports leagues, etc.

Darkness 2 Light estimates that for each adult trained, ten children will be protected from sexual abuse. For Fannin County, this means at least 1,600 children are protected.

The three hour training program utilizes a video that integrates segments of sexual abuse survivors relating their stories of violation and healing, with segments from the author of the curriculum and from professionals who interface daily with the problem of sexual abuse. The program also provides each participant with an interactive workbook and includes group discussion about critical issues in sexual abuse prevention and the relevance of these issues within organizations that serve children and adolescents.

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"This training deals with the serious subject of child sexual abuse," said Barber "and it does illustrate the devastating effects child sexual abuse has on its victims. However, it also has a clear and inspiring message that healing is possible. Plus, the class empowers you to have several clear, concrete ideas of how you can dramatically reduce the risk of the children you know from being sexually abused."

Two classes are scheduled during Child Abuse Awareness Month. On Tuesday, April 5 the class will be from 5:30 to 8:30 pm. The class on Tuesday, April 19 will be from 9 am to 12 noon. Both classes will be held at the Children's Center at 112 West Fifth Street in Bonham. The cost is \$10 per person. Seating is limited. For more information, call (903) 583-4339 or visit www.fanninccc.org.