Spring is in the air. One thing that means for the Fannin County Children's Center is that it is time for their annual youth art contest. This local nonprofit organization that helps abused and neglected children is seeking artwork from area children and youth.

Two winning entries which best illustrate the theme "Open Your Heart" will win special ribbons and VISA gift cards donated by Dr. Jim and Valerie Tarpley. The winning artwork will be reproduced on cards to help the agency raise funds to provide advocacy, counseling and other critical support services for the abused and neglected children of Fannin County.

"Artwork done by children and youth is exciting to see," said Sandy Barber, Executive Director of the Children's Center. "Kids can be so creative and talented in their drawings for this contest. My experience is that kids also love to help other kids. This contest gives kids a chance to put their artistic talents to good use helping other kids."

"Winning entries in the past have included hearts, kids, families and bright, cheerful colors," said Barber. Organizers suggest that children may want to include the words "Open Your Heart" and/or "Children's Center" in their drawings.

The winning artist will receive a $100 VISA gift card and their artwork will be reproduced on the front of the campaign card. Second place will win a $50 VISA gift card and have their artwork included inside of the card.

All artwork will be on display and the winners will be recognized at the Children's Center during their annual open house on April 19 from 5:30 to 7 p.m.

Artwork must be turned in by March 31 at the Children's Center at 112 West Fifth in Bonham. Entry forms, which include complete contest rules and information, can be picked up at the Children's Center or downloaded from the agency website at www.fanninccc.org . For more information, call (903) 583-4339.