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GOVERNOR SCHWARZENEGGER PROCLAIMS APRIL 2008 CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

“Kids’ Day at the Capitol” Celebration Emphasizes Community Involvement

SACRAMENTO – Reaffirming his commitment to protecting the health and safety of California’s children, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger proclaimed April 2008 as Child Abuse Prevention Month to coincide with National Child Abuse Prevention Month.

Child abuse and neglect affects children of all ages, races and incomes. In California, nearly 500,000 reports of child abuse are reported each year.

“We must work collaboratively to uphold our promise of protecting our children,” said Governor Schwarzenegger in his proclamation. “With the strength of our entire state, we can better the life of every child and family, and together continue the fight against child abuse.”

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS), in partnership with Prevent Child Abuse California, was joined today by children, families, teachers, advocates, law enforcement and other organizations from across the State to commemorate Child Abuse Prevention Month. “Kids’ Day at the Capitol” is an annual celebration designed to heighten awareness of child abuse – the “single greatest public health epidemic in our country today” – and how strong community involvement is the key factor in prevention and intervention strategies.

“Keeping our children safe and out of harm’s way is a shared responsibility,” said John Wagner, director of the California Department of Social Services. “We are fortunate to have good community partners working in tandem with the Schwarzenegger administration to ensure child safety and provide vital assistance to families in crisis.”

“Kids’ Day at the Capitol” featured Dr. Kyle Pruett, clinical professor of psychiatry at the Yale Child Study Center, who discussed the important role of fathers in today’s society. “Our research has shown how engaged fathering can positively change the life of the entire family,” explained Pruett. Sheila Anderson, president and CEO of Prevent Child Abuse California encouraged local and state partners to continue advancing the critical issues of child abuse prevention. “We are obligated to do everything in our power to prevent another child from suffering the harm,” said Anderson.

Mark S. Allen of CW31’s *Good Day Sacramento* served as the emcee of the daylong event that also included participation by representatives from the Republican Women’s Caucus and other community advocates.

(more)

Page 2
Kids Day

Children of all ages enjoyed fun-filled, interactive activities and viewed displays of the winning entries and honorable mentions from the Heroes for Kids art contest.

The winners are: Carlee Anne W (Palm Desert); Mia Rose W (Sacramento); Holly C (Sacramento); Stephanie B (Torrance) and Joshua Soles (Victorville). Each received a framed copy of their winning artwork and a gift certificate.

Today's celebration also featured free immunizations, dental screenings and free ID cards for children and more than 60 resource and information booths.

"Kids' Day at the Capitol" is one of many events being held nationwide and throughout the state in April to commemorate Child Abuse Prevention Month. Through the support of government, community organizations, child abuse prevention councils and advocates, child abuse prevention awareness helps to educate adults about their responsibilities in caring for children. For more information about child abuse prevention, log on to <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/cdssweb/PG91.htm>.

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