

KIDS Center Launches Sexual Abuse Prevention Campaign

by Bend Weekly News Sources

In Central Oregon we have approximately 44,000 children growing up under our protection. According to national statistics, 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys are being, have been, or will be sexually abused before they reach their 18th birthday. This means approximately 8,800 children in Central Oregon will potentially fall victim to this crime.

The KIDS Center (Kids Intervention and Diagnostic Service Center), a non-profit child abuse intervention center serving Central Oregon, cares for victims of child abuse every day. Funded partially through a four-year grant from the Meyer Memorial Trust and in partnership with local media companies, the KIDS Center is launching an unprecedented child sexual abuse prevention media campaign in January, 2007. As part of the Darkness to Light Tri-county Initiative to Prevent Sexual Abuse, the KIDS Center will blanket the Central Oregon community with awareness messages and bring this problem of child sexual abuse out of the darkness and into the light. The campaign will focus on raising awareness of the epidemic of child sexual abuse and will challenge adults to take action to protect kids in Central Oregon. The media campaign will run intensively for two years and will complement the already existing Darkness to Light trainings in Central Oregon. The three hour Darkness to Light training educates adults to prevent, recognize, and react responsibly to child sexual abuse. For every 1 adult trained in this program, 10 children are potentially better protected.

“So far, 1200 adults in Central Oregon have attended a Darkness to Light training. With the launch of the media campaign, we hope all adults in Central Oregon will see the far-reaching nature of this epidemic and will step up to learn the tools to protect children through our trainings or other materials,” said Elaine Knobbs, Director of Prevention and Education at the KIDS Center. “This epidemic has been in the dark too long. Only by spreading awareness and taking the initiative for action can we make sure to protect every child in our community.”

Eleven partner agencies have joined KIDS Center in the Darkness to Light Initiative including: Crook County Health Department, Deschutes County Health Department, Jefferson County Public Health Department, Crook County Juvenile Department, Deschutes County Juvenile Community Justice Department, Jefferson County Community Justice Department, Jefferson County District Attorney’s Office, Central Oregon Battering and Rape Alliance (COBRA), Deschutes County Sheriff’s Department, J Bar J Youth Services and the Bend Police Department.

For more information about the Darkness to Light media campaign and Darkness to Light trainings, please visit us at www.kidscenter.info or contact them at 383-5958.