



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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YorkCounts issues call to action to reduce child abuse

York, May 10, 2010 – YorkCounts calls on the community to address child abuse at a June 10 town meeting at the York Jewish Community Center. YorkCounts, a community coalition that strives to improve the quality of life in York County, Pa., will host “After Darisabel: Reducing Child Abuse in York County” to find meaningful solutions to the county's high rate of child abuse.

The York Daily Record/Sunday News will co-sponsor the forum.

YorkCounts tracks child abuse statistics as part of its quality-of-life indicators. Every year, more than 100 cases of child abuse are confirmed in York County. From 2004 to 2007, York County's rate of confirmed cases of child abuse rose steadily. By 2006, that rate had outpaced that of the state. The 2009 YorkCounts Annual Report called this trend “among the most troubling in the entire report.”

But statistics alone cannot connect us with the personal tragedies that children suffer each day in York County. Sadly, that tends to happen only when we learn of extreme cases of abuse. The fatal case of Darisabel Baez, for instance, captured the attention of a community that has struggled to understand how this little girl could have been abused so badly for so long. Darisabel was beaten to death by her mother's boyfriend in 2008. Earlier this year, a documentary film produced by the York Daily Record/Sunday News illustrated the frustration, the anger and the sadness felt by the men and women who investigated her death.

To honor the memory of this 2-year-old, YorkCounts has called for a summit of local and state experts on child abuse. Advocates, organization leaders and government officials will participate in a discussion with investigators, case workers, therapists and others involved in child abuse. Among the participants in a panel discussion is Richard Gold, deputy secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare and director of the Office of Children, Youth and Families; and Deb Chronister, director of Children and Youth Services for York County.

The goal for the evening is to develop the start of a collaborative action plan for reducing child abuse in York County. Audience members will be encouraged to participate. The documentary film, “Carrying Darisabel,” will be shown at the beginning of the meeting.

Please join us for this important community conversation.

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IF YOU GO

YorkCounts presents

After Darisabel: Reducing Child Abuse in York County

When: 6 p.m. Thursday, June 10

Where: York Jewish Community Center, 2000 Hollywood Drive, York.

Cost: Free, but registration is requested. Send an e-mail with your name, e-mail and phone number to events@yorkcounts.org.

For details: Contact Dan Fink at dfink@yorkcounts.org or 717-650-1460.

Who should attend

- Representatives from agencies that provide child abuse or family support services
- Representatives from agencies tied into truancy and gang-prevention efforts
- Education professionals
- Child care professionals
- Police and other first-responders
- Church groups
- Mentoring organizations

Agenda

6-6:10 p.m. – Welcoming remarks

6:10-6:30 p.m. – Screening of “Carrying Darisabel”

6:30 p.m. – Introduction of moderator Craig Cohen, host of WITF’s “Radio Smart Talk”

6:35-6:40 p.m. – Introduction of panelists

6:40-8:10 p.m. – Panel discussion, with questions and comments from audience

8:10-8:30 p.m. – Identify next steps

8:30 p.m. – Closing remarks

Panelists and participants

- Richard Gold, deputy secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare and director of the Office of Children, Youth and Families
- Angela Liddle, director of the Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance
- Bev Mackereth, director of York County Human Services
- Deb Chronister, director of York County Children and Youth Services
- Martha Martin, director of the Lehman Center in York
- Deb Harrison, executive director of the Children’s Advocacy Center in York
- Tom Kearney, York County District Attorney
- Dr. David Turkewitz, chairman of Pediatrics at York Hospital

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YorkCounts is a community-based coalition working to assess, sustain and enhance York County's quality of life – building alliances, introducing partners, spotlighting issues and facilitating conversations on education, economic development, health and safety and diversity. Partners include Better York, the United Way of York County, WellSpan Health, York College of

Pennsylvania, the York County Commissioners, the York County Community Foundation and the York County Economic Development Corp. Learn more at yorkcounts.org.
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