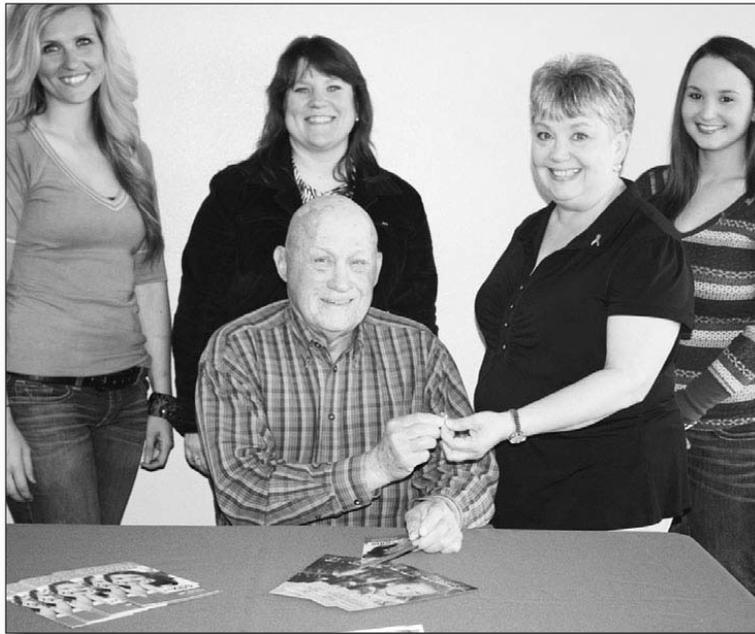


Mother-to-Mother: April is Child Abuse Prevention Month



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Dexter Mayor Joe Weber is shown receiving a Missouri Trust Fund Child Abuse Prevention lapel pin from Jeanie Huey, a volunteer mentor with the Mother-to-Mother Program. Huey is standing with three other volunteer mentors, Rachel Watson, Katrina Henderson, and Rachelle Bennett. "It is fitting that the mayor of Dexter assist in the Prevention of Child Abuse Public Awareness Campaign," said Beth Bischoff of the Regional Healthcare Foundation, "because of the emphasis that The Missouri Children's Trust Fund places on community involvement in preventing child maltreatment and promoting optimal child development." Other Dexter mentors not shown are Darla Grossman, Tonya Jenkins, Alana Dowdy and Danielle Bateman.

Mother-to-Mother, along with one of its key allies, The Missouri Children's Trust Fund, has joined hands in the promotion of National Child Abuse Prevention Month throughout April. Mother-to-Mother is a prevention program aimed at working with young mothers to help them cope with the demands of early parenthood as well as encouraging them to prepare for the future through education and employment. A key component of Mother-to-Mother is its volunteer mentors. These mothers work on a one-to-basis to support and guide their young mentees through the first year of their baby's life.

During the month of April and throughout the year the Regional Healthcare Foundation, through the Mother-to-Mother Program, encourages all individuals and organizations to

play a role in making the Southeast Missouri area a better place for children and families. "By ensuring that parents have the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to care for their children," says Mother-to-Mother Coordinator Yvonne Hall, "we can help promote children's social and emotional well-being and prevent child maltreatment within families and communities."

Research shows that when parents possess six protective factors the risk for neglect and abuse diminish and optimal outcomes for children, youth, and families are promoted. Those six protective factors are:

- Nurturing and attachment
- Knowledge of parenting and of child and youth development
- Parental resilience
- Social connections

- Concrete supports for parents

- Social and emotional developmental well-being

"April is a time to celebrate the important role that communities play in protecting children" said

Hall, Coordinator of Mother-to-Mother. "Everyone's participation is critical. Focusing on ways to build and promote the protective factors, in every interaction with children and families, is the best thing our community can do to prevent child maltreatment and promote optimal child development."

Hall went on to thank the community and the Missouri Children's Trust Fund for its generosity and support of Mother-to-Mother. "Without such support our jobs would be more difficult and certainly less effective."