

## Pinwheels for Prevention

By Bright Tomorrows Staff

April has been a time to acknowledge the importance of families and communities working together to prevent child abuse. At the beginning of the month we held our kickoff for “Child Abuse Awareness” month with proclamations being read by Mayor Blad and Mayor England. The recent tragedy, in which the life of a six year old was lost in our community has raised the awareness of us all, and the importance of prevention and taking action.

The *Pinwheels for Prevention* campaign is part of a national movement to change the way people think about prevention. In addition to engaging individuals in community activities that support children and families, the campaign advocates for public policies that prioritize healthy child development so abuse and neglect never begin.

“The campaign uses pinwheels to represent the happy childhoods and bright futures all children deserve.” Roger Sherman, Executive Director of the Idaho Children’s Trust Fund/Prevent Child Abuse Idaho. “We are hopeful that the pinwheel displays in Idaho and across the nation serve as a reminder and a call to action, because we all have a role in putting children first. Whether it is in classrooms, community centers or neighborhoods – everyone’s involvement is essential.”

Hospitals throughout the state are providing information to new parents using proven methods for soothing crying babies and encouraging parents to walk away if necessary to calm their nerves. These programs have been highly effective throughout the country in reducing shaking incidents.

“Babies are innocent and defenseless,” said Brandi Whaley, founder of Shaken Baby Prevention of Idaho. Her daughter, Lauren, was badly injured as a result of being shaken by her childcare provider. “This could have been prevented had she known how dangerous shaking a baby can be. The only way to reduce the incidence of this unnecessary, preventable tragedy is through education.”