



Press Release

For Immediate Release
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Child Abuse Prevention & Internet Safety

Two of Family Service Agency's programs will be teaming up this month to host a Child Abuse Prevention and Internet Safety event. The Big Brothers Big Sisters program will team up with the Children's Advocacy Center to discuss child abuse prevention. The event, originally intended for the parents and children involved with Big Brothers Big Sisters, is now an event open to the community. The decision to make the event open to the community was made because child abuse prevention is an issue of great importance to both departments, and the team is enthusiastic about the collaboration.

The event, which is sponsored by National Bank and Trust Company, is scheduled to take place on Monday, November 23rd from 6:30- 8:00 pm at Family Service Agency, located at 14 Health Services Drive. These topics will focus primarily on protecting children grades K-6, and will provide helpful information to both the children *and* the adults. The topics of the evening will include:

- Healthy Boundaries
- Identifying Abuser Behaviors
- Learning How to Keep Safe
- Child Abuse Awareness
- How to Protect Your Children from Abuse
- Internet Safety
- Child Pornography

Monique Heilemeier, Director of the Children's Advocacy Center, will discuss fundamentals of child abuse prevention, such as recognizing predator behavior, appropriate boundaries in a child-adult relationship, and Stranger Danger. Understanding how to recognize inappropriate behaviors can help both adults and children take important steps towards preventing abuse. Heilemeier's presentation will be followed by internet safety information presented by local author, Ann Matalonis, and an additional speaker (TBA) who will discuss peer-to-peer networking on the internet, and child pornography.

Matalonis, author of *The Fox Behind the Chatterbox*, has teamed up with the Children's Advocacy Center in the past in order to share important information about Internet safety with the community. *The Fox Behind the Chatterbox* is an allegory about the dangers of speaking to someone who cannot be seen, and the importance of remaining guarded with such individuals. While the Internet can be an excellent tool for learning, and for making friends, it is also a place where predators can easily form relationships with children. Matalonis's book imparts: Internet safety is a key element when it comes to preventing child abuse.

Family Service Agency's Children's Advocacy Center and Family Service Agency's Big Brothers Big Sisters hope that this event will provide adults and children with the tools they need in order to better prevent incidents of child abuse.

Family Service Agency of DeKalb County is a premier social service agency, protecting and developing children and older adults through exceptional service. Family Service Agency is comprised of five distinct departments – Big Brothers Big Sisters, Center for Counseling, Child Life & Family Education, Children's Advocacy Center and Senior Services Center. A host of programs are available through these departments, and all services are provided by experienced professionals.

Family Service Agency of DeKalb County accepts insurance, and scholarship and reduced fees are available for those who qualify. In some instances, services can be provided at no cost to the client. Family Service Agency's main office is located at 14 Health Services Drive, and satellite offices are located in DeKalb and Sandwich. Family Service Agency is a Kishwaukee United Way Agency. For more information about the services at Family Service Agency call 815-758-8616, 815-786-7079 in Sandwich, or visit their website at www.realsolutionstoday.org.

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