

# The HOPE Connection

~a quarterly publication from Hands of Hope Resource Center  
~SPRING 2022~



## *A message from the director ~*

April kicks off a busy season for Hands of Hope Resource Center. Take a moment to check out all of the upcoming events by scrolling through the newsletter-- and please actively participate in our April Awareness Month events.

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month and I'd like to take a moment to highlight a special day coming up. **APRIL 6, 2022 marks the 7th Annual Start by Believing Day.** When someone tells you they were raped or sexually assaulted, knowing how to respond is critical. Your reaction can make a huge difference in their healing. A negative response can worsen the trauma and foster an environment where perpetrators face no consequences for their crimes.

Start by Believing stops this cycle by improving our personal and professional reactions-- and it all starts with you! Make your personal commitment to Start by Believing. You can take the online pledge by going to [this link](#).

~ Stephenie Och

## **National Child Abuse Prevention Month** by Taylor Hernandez

Since 1983, April has been named National Child Abuse Prevention Month (NCAPM). This year's theme is *"Thriving Children and Families: Prevention With Purpose."* It is a month-long observation to be aware of the harsh acts that are happening to children all around us and to incite change, and to come together as a community to educate and raise a better future. In this month-long observation, we wear a blue ribbon to show support.

The blue ribbon is the symbol of child abuse prevention. It's origins date back to 1989 when a Chesapeake, Virginia grandmother named Bonnie Finney adopted the symbol as a testimonial to her 3-year-old grandson who was murdered by his mother's abusive boyfriend—*"One day I was just thinking about all the bruises on the grandchildren, especially my grandson's head. I decided I was going to tie a blue ribbon on my van. Why blue? I intend never to forget the battered, bruised bodies of my grandchildren. Blue serves as a constant reminder to me to fight for the protection of our children."*—



According to childhelp.org, *the United States has a child abuse report made every ten seconds. The United States has one of the worst records among industrialized nations – losing on average five children every day to child abuse and neglect. In 2019 alone, state agencies found over 656,000 victims of child maltreatment, but that only tells part of the story. This would pack 10 modern football stadiums.*

There are many things that can be done to help prevent this from happening. Listed below are some options:

- Help a parent rather than judge.
- Recognize the signs of abuse.
- Help distract a child if they are acting out.
- Praise parents and children when you see positive behaviors.

Hands of Hope Resource Center in Morrison County helped 105 individual children in the fiscal year 2021. Our community can make a difference.



### What is Denim Day? *by Connie Nelson*

Denim Day began as a local campaign in an Italian city to bring awareness to victim blaming and other destructive myths that often surround sexual assaults. No one knew that it would grow to an International Day of Activism.

Denim Day is April 27, 2022 and is the thirtieth anniversary of the incident that brought this awareness to the public's eye. An eighteen-year-old Italian woman had been raped by a 45-year-old man. He appealed his conviction, and the justice of the Italian Supreme Court overturned the conviction by saying that there was no way he could rape her without her helping him to remove her tight jeans, thus making the sex consensual. By the next day, the women of the Italian Parliament showed up for work wearing jeans in solidarity with the victim. The incident became known internationally, and today is a major awareness campaign for Sexual Assault Awareness Month around the world.

Hands of Hope asks that you support Denim Day and all sexual assault victims by wearing jeans on April 27, 2022. Talk about it and take a stand to end sexual violence.

### National Volunteer Appreciation Week *by Lyndsey Dimateo*

National Volunteer Appreciation Week is an annual celebration in the month of April that recognizes the hard work and dedication of volunteers. This year, volunteer appreciation week is April 17 – April 23. Volunteering is such a selfless act; giving up your valuable time and resources to help others without receiving anything in return. Volunteering helps build and provide support to communities--creating a better society. This is exactly what our volunteers do at Hands of Hope. The work our volunteers do directly and positively impacts the clients we serve.



Our volunteer members have been with us as long as 30 years! They are not only devoted to the work they do, but to making a difference and spreading awareness to others within our community. They are dedicated to keep learning and participate in ongoing trainings to best understand and serve our clients. In fiscal year 2021, our volunteers have donated a grand total of 3,944 hours of their time to Hands of Hope Resource Center. Thank you volunteers! We truly cannot thank you enough for all you contribute to our organization. Hands of Hope would not be what it is without you all.

“Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they have the heart.” – Elizabeth Andrew



### 40th Anniversary of National Crime Victims' Rights Week April 24 – 30, 2022 *by Kim Cook*

Beginning in 1981, the observance of National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW) during the month of April provides the United States the opportunity to honor survivors and to promote crime victims' rights and services.

The 2022 NCVRW theme is ***Rights, access, equity, for all victims.*** The theme underscores the importance of helping crime survivors find their justice by 1) Enforcing victims' rights, 2) Expanding access to services, and 3) Ensuring equity and inclusion for all.

NCVRW has challenged the Nation to confront and remove barriers to achieving justice for all victims of crime. During NCVRW, we celebrate the victims' rights movement and reflect on how far we have come.

Crime Victims' Rights Week was first recognized in the state of Minnesota in April 2014 by Governor Mark Dayton.

### **May is Mental Health Awareness Month**

*by Barb Goodrich*

Mental Health Awareness Month was first celebrated in 1949. Since then, a theme is selected each year to be highlighted and celebrated throughout the month of May. This year's theme - "Together for Mental Health" – is a wonderful message that we need to come together and raise public knowledge of mental health disorders, reduce the stigmas associated with them, and foster positive attitudes towards seeking help. Awareness also helps people understand that mental illness is NOT a character flaw but rather an illness like any other, and affects millions of people.



Mental illness is a term used to describe mental health conditions that impact mood, thinking, and behavior. These disorders may interfere with a person's ability to relate to others and function on a daily basis. Common mental illnesses include:

- Mood disorders (depression, bipolar disorder, etc.)
- Psychotic disorders (schizophrenia, etc.)
- Anxiety disorders (generalized anxiety, PTSD, phobias, etc.)

Understanding more about these common mental disorders will further reduce discriminatory practices, create greater acceptance across communities, and leave those who suffer from mental illness feeling comfortable sharing their stories.

The more the general population knows about mental illness and its symptoms, the easier it will be for them to identify people who may be struggling and get them the care they need.

Many struggle in silence. Therefore, EDUCATE yourself about mental health. TALK about mental health. Having better knowledge about mental health will help you understand where others are coming from and how to interact with them in a compassionate, helpful manner. Everyone's mental health needs to be taken care of now so there is a better tomorrow for our future generations.



### **June 15, 2022 - World Elder Abuse Day** *by Johanna Klinkner*

On June 15, every year folks around the world wear purple and raise awareness about millions of older adults who experience elder abuse. It is said that 1 in 10 older Americans are abused or neglected each year, and only 1 in 14 cases come to authorities' attention.

Some types of elder abuse are:

- Self-Neglect
- Physical Abuse

- Neglect by Others
- Sexual Abuse
- Financial Abuse
- Mental Abuse
- Abandonment
- Isolation

Some of the signs of abuse are but not limited to: lack of basic amenities, cluttered, filthy living environment, unexplained or uncharacteristic changes in behavior, unexplained sexually transmitted diseases, unpaid bills, new credit cards and or increased cash withdrawals, harassment, coercion, humiliation, and isolation by an elder's caregiver.

Please join Hands of Hope Resource Center on June 15 and wear purple to raise awareness to this important issue. Remember: In the Circle of Life, we all will get to be elderly, and No One deserves to be abused!

The Minnesota Department of Human Services reports that in 2017 all counties and agencies within Minnesota reported 80,666 allegations of elder abuse, neglect or exploitation (48-52% of those allegations were confirmed after investigated.)

If you would like to learn more about Elder Abuse, you can call Hands of Hope Resource Center at 320-632-1657 (Little Falls) or 320-732-2319 (Long Prairie) or you can call Minnesota Adult Abuse Reporting Center (MAARC) at 844-880-1574, or you can go to [mn.gov/dhs/reportadultabuse/](http://mn.gov/dhs/reportadultabuse/), or Google elder abuse.



### **National Law Enforcement Appreciation Week**

*by Johanna Klinkner*

National Law Enforcement Appreciation Week is June 12-18. This is an important time to recognize the courageous men and women of our law enforcement agencies. Officers and deputies put their lives on the line daily to help protect the community and keep us safe from harm.

Hands of Hope Resource Center would like to thank all of our law enforcement agencies for their commitment and dedication to keeping our communities safe. This THANK YOU goes out to our County Sheriffs, Police Chiefs, Investigators, Officers, Deputies, Support Staff, Bailiffs, Jail Staff, and anyone who works within the law enforcement offices. Thank you all so much for all that you do to keep our communities safe and free from harm!

During this week in June, please stop into your local law enforcement agency and let them know how much you appreciate them.



Our **1st Annual Denim Day Raffle** will wrap up on Wednesday, April 27, 2022 at 4:30pm - Hart Mall Conference Room in Long Prairie.

The drawing will also be livestreamed on our Facebook page. Reach out to a board member or employee if you still need to get your ticket. Only 500 tickets sold!

Tickets are \$20 each. **Prizes:**

- 1st prize: \$2,500.00
- 2nd prize: \$1,000.00
- 3rd prize: \$500.00
- 4th prize: (2) \$250.00
- 5th prize: (5) \$100.00

Thank you to the businesses that assisted in selling tickets in their store or at their counter.

Proceeds from the raffle will go to cover the cost of services that grants do not fully cover.



### Violence Prevention Program

In March, Taylor gave presentations at Holy Trinity in Pierz to 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders. The topics were Good Physical and Mental Health, Healthy Relationships, and Protecting Youth Against Violence. The students were so engaging and willing to participate on some pretty tough topics.

Also in March, Taylor met once a week with a group of students at Midstate School in Little Falls where they discussed Boundaries & Consent, Healthy & Unhealthy Relationships, Communication (in person & online), and Safety Planning.

In April, Taylor will be presenting to one of the churches in town.

If your group is interested in having someone from Hands of Hope come in to present, please give us a call in either office!

