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MEMORANDUM

TO: Goodhue County Board of Commissioners
Goodhue County Administrator Scott Arneson

FROM: Erin L. Kuester, Assistant County Attorney 3 

RE: Request to Recognize and Proclaim the month of April 2024 as Sexual Assault Awareness Month and Child Abuse Prevention Month in Goodhue County

DATE: April 9, 2024

Every April presents an opportunity for communities to raise public awareness about sexual violence and child abuse for the purpose of promoting prevention efforts. Sexual violence and Child Abuse knows no geographic or physical boundaries, impacting every member of the community, young, old, and all of us in between, having a profound impact on the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health of its members. Nationally one in three women and one in four men will experience sexual violence in their lifetime and one in five girls and one in twenty boys will be victims of child abuse. Goodhue County community members are not exceptions to these statistics.

Ending sexual violence and child abuse is a community responsibility that begins with all of us. Nothing worth fighting for comes easily. Today the Goodhue County Board has an opportunity to be part of the conversation and part of the prevention response. I am a member of the Goodhue County Sexual Assault Multidisciplinary Action Response Team (Goodhue County SMART Team) and the Multidisciplinary Child Abuse Team (Goodhue County MCAT Team). These teams bring together members from multiple disciplines, including law enforcement, prosecution, victim advocacy, Goodhue County Health and Human Services, the medical community, the faith community, and the education community, to respond to and to prevent acts of sexual violence and child abuse within the county.

Today we ask the Goodhue County Board to pass a Proclamation in Recognition of Sexual Assault Awareness Month and Child Abuse Prevention Month. Together we speak up, stand against, and fight to keep every community member, young, old, and all of us in between, free from the violence, trauma, and fear caused by sexual assault and child abuse.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Proclamation in Recognition of Sexual Assault Awareness Month and Child Abuse Prevention Month

Whereas, the issues of sexual violence and child abuse, have many connections. Both are part of overarching experiences of harm that contribute to the continued reproduction of trauma and oppression in society and across generations.

Whereas, nationally one in three women and one in four men will experience some form of sexual violence in their lifetime and one in five girls and one in twenty boys is a victim of child sexual abuse; and

Whereas, Sexual Assault Awareness Month draws attention to the fact that sexual violence is widespread and has implications for every community member; and

Whereas, Child Abuse Awareness Month is a time of recognition for the current issues affecting the safety, happiness, and wellness of children; and

Whereas, the purpose of Sexual Assault Awareness Month and Child Abuse Prevention Month is to raise public awareness about these issues, educate our community on how to prevent it and share resources available to those impacted by sexual assault and child abuse.

Whereas, both sexual violence and child abuse are preventable and there is compelling evidence that we can be successful in reducing sexual violence and child abuse through prevention education, increased awareness, and supporting families; and

Whereas, there are actions we can take within our communities, organizations, and families to address the root causes of child abuse and sexual violence; and

Whereas, ending child abuse and sexual violence is a community responsibility. We must work together to educate our community about what can be done to prevent child abuse and sexual assault and how to support survivors; and

Whereas, anyone can be a leader in preventing and ending child abuse and sexual violence. As employers, educators, parents, and friends, we all have an obligation to uphold the basic principle that every individual should be free from violence and fear; and

Now therefore, be it resolved, that the Goodhue County Board, on behalf of all residents of Goodhue County, does hereby proclaim the month of April 2024, as Sexual Assault Awareness Month and Child Abuse Prevention Month in Goodhue County, to keep our community members safe from these crimes and to stand with survivors and victims of sexual assault and child abuse.