



# MEDIA RELEASE

KNOX COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Coalition to offer child sexual abuse prevention training

*Knoxville, Tenn.* – In observation of National Child Abuse Prevention Month, the Community Coalition to Protect Children will host Darkness to Light’s Stewards of Children training **on Tuesday, April 11, from 6 to 8:30 p.m. at the South College Auditorium**, 400 Goody’s Lane. The training is an evidence-based program recognized by the National Children’s Alliance as the most effective tool to stop child sexual abuse. Local youth-serving agencies will be on hand before the training (beginning at 5:30 p.m.) to offer information about their services. The event is free and open to the public, but registration is requested by emailing [photosbyambler@gmail.com](mailto:photosbyambler@gmail.com).

“So many children brave horrible abuses alone. Statistics show that 1 in 10 children will be sexually abused by the age of 18, and some studies’ rates are even higher,” said Amy Rowling, violence prevention educator for the Knox County Health Department and co-facilitator of the Community Coalition to Protect Children. “What’s also heartbreaking is that 90 percent of victims are abused by someone they know and trust. These statistics are staggering and speak to the need for more training for adults to help protect our children.”

Michael Reed, a local advocate for preventing child sexual abuse, will speak at the April 11 event beginning at 6 p.m. Reed’s wife Constance and their two daughters Chloe and Lily were among the victims of the Nov. 28 Gatlinburg wildfire. Prior to her death, Constance created a video about the abuse she suffered as a child and shared it on Facebook as a way to inspire other victims to seek help. The video has since gone viral.

Following Reed’s presentation, Ambler Brown, a Stewards of Children facilitator, will conduct the training, which walks participants through a five-step approach. The session includes survivor stories, expert advice and practical guidance. Parents, those who work with children, and anyone who is interested are encouraged to attend.

According to the Child Welfare League of America, in 2013, more than 10,300 children were victims of abuse or neglect in Tennessee, which is a 3 percent increase from 2012. Of these children, 68.2 percent were neglected, 25.2 percent were sexually abused and 12.3 percent were physically abused.

“Victims of abuse can be affected for a lifetime, and can suffer emotional and health issues including depression, anxiety, self-harm, challenges with relationships, alcohol or drug abuse, and eating disorders,” added Rowling.

Created to teach adults how to prevent, recognize and react responsibly to child sexual abuse, the Community Coalition to Protect Children includes the Tennessee Department of Children’s Services East Tennessee Region; Prevent Child Abuse Tennessee; Helen Ross McNabb Center’s Therapy Center, Sexual Assault Center and Child Abuse Prevention Department; Community Coalition Against Human Trafficking; Renaissance Recovery; Childhelp; Anderson County Schools; Walking with Joy; Tracie Walker, LCSW; Youth Villages; Street Hope; Big Brothers Big Sisters of East Tennessee; Darkness to Light facilitators; Knox County Schools; and Knox County Health Department.



**About Knox County Health Department:**

The Knox County Health Department (KCHD) is a governmental agency dedicated to making every person a healthy person. As the first health department in Tennessee to achieve national accreditation by the Public Health Accreditation Board, KCHD's mission is to encourage, promote and assure the development of an active, healthy community through innovative public health practices. The organization conducts disease surveillance, prevention and control; emergency preparedness; nutrition and physical activity promotion; tobacco use prevention; health equity promotion; immunizations; and much more. For more information, visit [www.knoxcounty.org/health](http://www.knoxcounty.org/health).

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