

2017 Children's Mental Health Awareness Week

"Messengers of Hope"



(Photo Credit: Blair Boozer, Marketing Coordinator, Federation of Families of SC)

SC Representative Shannon Erickson and Federation of Families of SC Executive Director Jenah Cason delivers the official proclamation for the 2017 Children's Mental Health Awareness Week

On Wednesday, May 3rd, the Statehouse grounds were filled with messages of hope as part of the 2017 Annual Children's Mental Health Awareness Week Rally. Federation of Families of SC spearheaded the week's events designed to increase public awareness about the triumphs and challenges of children's mental health in South Carolina. Special emphasis was established regarding family and youth involvement in the children's mental and behavioral health movement.

Agencies from the Joint Council on Children & Adolescents were represented at the rally. Families were encouraged to contact their state legislators in order to help propel legislation in the positive direction for children's mental health issues. Guest speakers shared their inspiring stories of personal challenges and how they used peer support and wraparound services to get results for their child while maintaining a strong family unit. All these efforts were key in furthering the message of hope!

Unique to this year's rally, was the unveiling of the first ever "Garden of Hope." There were over 50 ribbon and heart shaped signs displayed in a covered viewing area in the center of the Statehouse grounds. These signs were decorated by children, youth, and other advocates for children's mental health across South Carolina. Signs displayed words of encouragement and celebrated those living in recovery while remembering remembered loved ones who waged a valiant effort toward wellness.

Although Children's Mental Health Awareness Week is observed once a year, supporting and advocating for children and families facing mental health challenges is a year-round focus for Federation of Families of SC. It is estimated that 1 in 5 children have a mental, emotional or behavioral health challenge. These challenges contribute to suicide being the third leading cause of death in youth ages 10-24. There is an 80 percent success rate for treatment of mental health challenges in children and youth. The Federation of Families of SC is dedicated to raising awareness around the need for accessible services and the eliminating stigma so more families will seek services and support.



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