



Child Abuse Prevention Council Member Spotlight:

Pamela Kahn, RN, MPH



Pamela Kahn, the Coordinator of Health and Wellness for the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE), is grateful to serve on Orange County's Child Abuse Prevention Council (CAPC). She finds the collaboration and collective expertise between those in law enforcement, human and health services, schools, nonprofits and the judicial system invaluable.

Kahn especially appreciates the CAPC's in-depth discussions on how to address and prevent child abuse and neglect. As a result, she has continued to provide school trainings about human trafficking as well as trainings on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES), the Child Abuse Registry and self-care for school nurses and non-licensed staff, among other topics. One thing is for certain, Kahn says, "If the CAPC is talking about it, you know it is a priority. And when it comes to the well-being of children, addressing priorities is imperative."

Kahn is a registered nurse and is credentialed in school nursing and school health services. In her role at OCDE, she serves in an advisory position regarding health programs and health care to the 27 public school districts in the county. She works closely with school nurses as well as community and private

agencies to provide 450,000 students in Orange County with the health services they need in order to be successful in school.

The recipient of the Nursing of Excellence honor from schoolnurse.com and a CalOptima Circle of Caring awardee, Kahn also serves as the current President of the California School Nurses Organization. The organization's mission includes uniting nurses to foster maximum health and educational potential in children. Having previously served as a school nurse in a local school district, she knows first-hand the importance of an informed school nurse when it comes to dealing with the issues of child abuse and neglect. Kahn has a thirst for learning and teaching and has been published in Nursing World Magazine and the Journal of School Nursing, among other resources.

Kahn is pleased that over the years OCDE has participated and partnered in child abuse prevention conferences, events and the Blue Ribbon awareness campaign with The Raise Foundation, who is tasked to convene the CAPC.

The mother of three grown children and two beloved standard poodles, as well grandmother of four grandchildren, offers this advice, "One way for people in our community and on our school campuses to keep kids safe is to keep your eyes open. Be kind and offer help. Don't be afraid to do that." She also wants people to know that Orange County's CAPC meets year-round and though some families may not need the kinds of services or assistance provided by the group, she asserts that each person may know others who do. She urges everyone to do all they can to help prevent child abuse and neglect in their community.



De-Stressing the Holiday Season:

Helpful Tips for Parents from Western Youth Services

The holiday season can be a very happy time for individuals and families. Yet it is important to understand that it may also be one of the most anxiety-ridden times of the year for children, as well as adults. Keeping kids safe, healthy and happy is something everyone in our community can play a role in, and the following provides some insights and tips to consider this holiday season and throughout the year.

Leaving the safety and structure of school during winter break might be difficult for some children, according to Licensed Marriage Family Therapist Zane Meints. Meints, a Program Director for Western Youth Services, has spent half a decade working on school campuses with children and families and suggests it can be helpful for parents to develop routines for their children to follow during winter break.

Children may also be stressed if they know they are going to be spending more time around a challenging family dynamic or in an unsafe neighborhood during the holidays. How parents and other adults act around children during the holidays can help lessen such stress or escalate it. Meints shares that kids are sponges, absorbing the energy around them, bad or good. As a result, he says it is helpful for parents to find time to get grounded and practice staying balanced during emotional times. This means to be aware of your own challenges, treating yourself with compassion and asking yourself 'How can I manage stress that may come up?' or 'How can I take care of myself?' Something as simple as slowing down and focusing on deep breathing can make a big difference. Meints further explains that when we find ways to manage our stress, our kids can begin to feel safer as well.

If the holidays remind you of a loss in the family, consider as a family ways to honor the person you are missing so much. If the holidays bring up an unhappy childhood memory for you, create new traditions which lead to happier memories. Just listening to your favorite holiday songs may lift your spirits. If you

are experiencing financial stress, consider activities and gifts that focus on togetherness rather than those that make a dent in your bank account.

The best gifts you can give children this holiday season, and all year long, are to listen to them with sincere curiosity rather than judgement, to be compassionate and patient, to be in the moment and to learn coping strategies for when anxiety arises. It is likely that if you are coping successfully, you may find your child is better equipped to cope more easily as well -- and that may just be the best holiday gift you could ever receive!

If you and/or your family need help building resiliency, there are many resources available throughout the county you can reach out to for support. Western Youth Services is one such organization that has helped more than sixty thousand children and families annually.

To learn about Western Youth Services' six core programs, go to www.westernyouthservices.org or call (844) 243-0048.

College Student Speaks Up About the Importance of Keeping Kids Safe



Twenty-year-old Yadira Garcia is on a mission to tell as many college students as possible that they play a critical role in keeping children safe. She is currently finishing her training to become a Raise Awareness Ambassador and will focus on visiting college campuses and youth organizations to speak about the prevention of child abuse and neglect. She wants to inspire her peers to be “water watchers” and “chosen child checkers” to prevent drownings and help children being left unattended in cars, respectively. She will also encourage the next generation of parents to consider fostering and adopting children when they are ready to start families. Given that her generation grew up with cell phones and other technologies, she plans to challenge her peers to stop the cycle of distracting parenting and to take the time to report suspected child abuse. Garcia has learned -- from orientations and attending trainings, as well as watching presentations, and helping translate materials into Spanish -- that many people are unaware how prevalent child abuse and neglect is in Orange County and that there is a lot of help available for families that are going through difficult times.

Though she had a happy childhood, she says she grew up in a community surrounded by children that had been abused — and some of them were among her closest friends. Feeling heartbroken and not knowing then how to help, she recalls often wondering why more adults around the neighborhood didn’t speak up either. “I have come to the conclusion that there was a lack of education on the subject, even general knowledge that everyone should know,” she explains. “I saw the traumatic effects that abuse and neglect were having on my friends and I decided right then that I’d find a way to honor them by dedicating my life to helping as many children as possible be safe.” As college approached, Garcia learned about what social workers do and knew deep down that her calling was to pursue social work in the child welfare system.

Garcia is well on her way towards reaching her career goal. She will graduate this December from Santa Ana College with four Associate of Arts degrees in Humanities and Communications, Community Social Services, University Transfer Studies, as well as Social and Behavioral Sciences. This spring she will transfer to California State University, Fullerton to pursue a degree in Human Services. In addition, Garcia supplemented her class studies by becoming a certified California Domestic Violence Counselor/Advocate and Mandated Reporter. She also began volunteering at Orangewood Children and Family Center and spending time with children in the foster system, where she hopes to bring, "compassion and happiness to the children and adolescents there."

In one of her many child development courses, Garcia was formally introduced to the topic of child abuse and neglect. Learning about the long-term and short-term outcomes of child maltreatment, made her realize the importance of educating the public about prevention strategies.

"I believe it is everyone's job to ensure the safety of children and that raising awareness is essential in order for change to occur in our society. I would one day like to have and raise children in an environment where they can enjoy their childhood. The Raise Foundation is giving me the opportunity to be a part of the change that I would like to see in my community," concludes Garcia.



Blue Ribbon Month 2020: Planning Update

This year's Blue Ribbon Committee is off to a great start planning the countywide awareness campaign for National Child Abuse Prevention Month in April 2020. In addition to planning a community-wide ceremony during the first week of April and special events taking place throughout the month, the Committee is working to facilitate the following activities:

- Promoting age appropriate Blue Ribbon Week activities to all Orange County schools.
- Offering educational presentations to social and service clubs, places of worship and parent groups.
- Providing youth with opportunities to show off their creativity around our theme, "Keep Kids Safe, Healthy, and Happy!"
- Encouraging and inviting community and family members to plant Pinwheels for Prevention® gardens.

The committee includes representatives from the American Academy of Pediatrics Orange County Chapter, Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Anaheim-Cypress, the Orange County Department of Education, the Ocean View School District, the Orange County Fire Authority, the Orange County Sheriff's Department, the County of Orange Social Services Agency and The Raise Foundation, as well as parent and college student representatives.

For more information about the campaign and how to get involved, please contact The Raise Foundation at info@theraisefoundation.org or call (714) 884-3421, ext. 104.



Save the Date: PCAN Holiday Breakfast 2019

This year's Prevent Child Abuse Network (PCAN) Holiday Breakfast will be held on December 13 from 8:00 a.m. to 10 a.m. at The Hacienda, located at 1725 College Avenue, Santa Ana CA 92706.

Come enjoy a festive complimentary breakfast with fellow professionals and volunteers, and hear presentations from Executive Director of The Raise Foundation Eldon Baber, followed by an agency update from Scott Burdick, Deputy Division Director, County of Orange Social Services Agency. Then, finish the morning with a brief training on Implicit Bias.

Register to attend at pcanbreakfast.eventbrite.com by Monday, December 2nd!