

## Sample Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** .....

Contact: *Name & Organization*      *Phone Number*      *Email Address*



# Child Abuse Prevention Month Set for April

April is **National Child Abuse Prevention Month** and *(Name of Your Organization)* is partnering with the Virginia Coalition for Child Abuse Prevention, the Virginia Department of Social Services, and Prevent Child Abuse Virginia to raise awareness about the role everyone can play in valuing children and strengthening families.

Thousands of Virginia children suffer abuse or neglect every year. In SFY 2011, there were 49,619 children reported as possible victims of abuse and/or neglect. The Virginia Department of Social Services determined that 6,116 children were maltreated, and of those, 30 children died as a result of abuse and/or neglect.

The statistics can be overwhelming, but they are reminders that no one can afford to look the other way. Everyone can make a difference, because as the 2012 Child Abuse Prevention Month theme indicates, Every Child Counts.

Assisting with efforts to raise awareness this year are Child Abuse Prevention Month Honorary Co-Chairs **Virginia Commonwealth University Men's Basketball Head Coach Shaka Smart, and his wife Maya.** Coach Smart led the VCU Rams to the Final Four of the NCAA Basketball Tournament in 2011, and this year's team also is having great success.

Since entering the collegiate coaching field in 1999, Coach Smart has served as role model for and mentor to dozens of students on the college basketball teams he has coached. Similarly, Maya Smart has long been an active volunteer with numerous programs that build children's self-esteem through writing. Now as first-time parents to an infant daughter, the couple is even more aware of the challenges of child rearing and the great need for programs and resources to inform and encourage families.

"We are enjoying the milestones along the way!" said Shaka Smart. "The opportunity to nurture and care for a child is a gift that every parent should treasure. It's important for all parents to have access to support and information that can help them do their best."

"Shaka and I support Virginia's efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect; to raise awareness about the impact positive parenting has on a child's life, and to educate communities about the need for programs that strengthen families," said Maya Smart, a professional writer.

### **Child Abuse Prevention Month activities across the state will include:**

- The planting of pinwheel "gardens" by organizations, schools and businesses throughout Virginia, including at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden in Richmond. The pinwheel is the new symbol for child abuse prevention and reflects childhood hope, health and happiness. For a list of partnering organizations, visit [www.preventchildabuseva.org](http://www.preventchildabuseva.org).
- Insert activities for your local community here.

For more information on how to keep children safe from abuse and neglect, visit *(your website)*, [www.dss.virginia.gov](http://www.dss.virginia.gov) or [www.preventchildabuseva.org](http://www.preventchildabuseva.org) or call the Virginia Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-552-7096.