



Dear Friend of Safe Harbor,

I hope this letter finds you and your loved ones well.

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month—this is the time for everyone to be vigilant of children who may be falling victim to abuse or neglect. **But the pandemic requires additional vigilance.**

Family stress is known to put children at risk of abuse or neglect. Families are now under unprecedented stress. Many are losing their source of income, health care has become more difficult to access and, with daycare and schools closed, parents have 24-7 childcare responsibilities for the foreseeable future. **Each of these challenges compound the risks to children.**

Schools and daycares make the largest number of abuse and neglect reports to child protection agencies. Local departments of social services have experienced a marked decrease in reports over the last several weeks. This trend suggests that some children who are isolated in their homes are not getting the protection they might normally receive. **While reports have decreased, this does not mean that child abuse has stopped.** Everyone, whether a mail carrier, utility worker, store clerk, neighbor or a relative, has the moral responsibility to report child abuse.

Since the pandemic began, we at Safe Harbor have been working diligently to continue serving vulnerable children with forensic interviews, medical evaluations, advocacy, and mental health treatment. **I hope you'll consider partnering with Safe Harbor to plant a virtual pinwheel garden.** Pinwheels are the national symbol for child abuse prevention; the Pinwheels for Prevention campaign focuses on positive efforts—such as those by Safe Harbor—to ensure that all children have the safe, stable, nurturing families they deserve.

For each \$25 donated, a pinwheel will be added to the virtual garden; or you may purchase five pinwheels for \$100. Pinwheels may be dedicated to special children in your life. Over the next several weeks, Safe Harbor will post pictures of the garden "growing". Follow along on our Facebook page (@cacsafeharbor) or website ([www.safeharborva.org](http://www.safeharborva.org)) to see the difference a caring community can make in the lives of children. Instructions for how to purchase a pinwheel are on the reverse side of this letter.



**All of us at Safe Harbor are so grateful for your support; thank you for understanding our special need during this time when children are especially vulnerable.**

With gratitude,

Elizabeth McNally, MSW

Executive Director

Safe Harbor Child Advocacy Center