

The First Annual Protect Our Children Fair:

A Day to Remember!



Children and Families enjoyed performances at the First Annual Protect Our Children Rally and Fair.

Sunday, April 27th, was a beautiful day of somber remembrance and hopeful celebration for the 1st Annual “Protect Our Children” event, sponsored by The Children’s Network and The News-Press. Families came to Centennial Park, downtown Ft. Myers, in large numbers to play, eat, win prizes and learn how to keep our children safe.

Amidst the fire trucks, EMS vehicles, crime prevention programs, DARE vehicles, and special police “hot cars,” a pleasant mix of young and old enjoyed live performances and gathered life-saving information.

Talented children from the Quality Life Center shared their beautiful voices with the crowd and there were special performances by our local Florida Repertory Theatre and “Nana Star” and company, who came all the way from Virginia to support our mission.

Children had fun drawing “A Happy Family” in the coloring tent and submitted their masterpieces for use in future publications of the Children’s Network newsletters. Many community service organizations displayed information about water and vehicle safety, health care options, special medical needs services, behavioral and mental health assistance, as well as internet crime awareness and child identification programs.

There were so many incredible people who gave in some way to help make this event a fun, yet educational, day. In addition to several volunteers from the Cape Coral High School International Baccalaureate Program, the Ft. Myers area Police Explorers Post, some Children’s Network Board members and other wonderful helpers, there were several “behind the scenes” donations and amazing helpers. A special “thank you” goes out to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, for allowing Ernest Graham to sign a photo and our football, and the Minnesota Twins, for allowing Michael Cuddyer to sign our baseball glove. Both items were raffled off with proceeds going to help fund child abuse prevention programs in our community.



Florida Repertory Theatre performs “Mischief Makers” for the crowd.



Law enforcement shows their support for child abuse prevention.

This was our first “Protect Our Children” event and, although we are already planning for next year with many more participants and activities to be added, we urge all of you not to wait until then to promote abuse prevention. Successful prevention is a long, steady journey not a short trip or a one-time event, and it takes a solid network of determined individuals like you to be successful. Thank you for caring and please plan on joining us on April 4, 2009 for an even more awesome event!