

# Connector

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## Pinwheels for Prevention

Robins. Tulips. Daffodils. Each of these represent the blossoming signs of spring. Many of us are starting to think about our summer gardens and may even be planting seeds indoors, preparing for the warm weather to come. At KVCAP we are anxious to plant our own special garden of blue pinwheels at Winslow Elementary School.

Why blue pinwheels? Because April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month and our annual pinwheel garden is one of the ways we raise awareness of this challenging problem.

During this month and throughout the year KVCAP's Family Enrichment Council of Kennebec and Somerset Counties, and its nine partner Councils around the state, are dedicated to supporting families and reducing the risk of child abuse and neglect.

Throughout April the Councils are partnering with Wicked Whoopies to support this cause through the creation and sale of a special mini-whoopie pie, honoring the prevention of child abuse and neglect. All proceeds from the sale of these delicious treats will be donated to the prevention work happening in Maine. These mini-whoopie pies can be purchased at either of their store locations in Freeport or Farmingdale or through our local program.

We encourage all individuals and organizations to play a role in making Maine a better place for children and families. By ensuring that parents have the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to care for their children, we can help promote children's social and emotional well-being and prevent child maltreatment within families and communities.

Research shows that when parents possess six protective factors the risk for neglect and abuse diminish and optimal outcomes for children, youth, and families are promoted. The six protective factors are: nurturing and attachment, knowledge of parenting and child and youth development, parental resilience, social connections, supports for parents, and social and emotional well-being.

"We all play a very important role in protecting children," said Lanelle Freeman, KVCAP's Director of Social Services. "The best thing our community can do to prevent child maltreatment and promote



optimal child development is to focus on ways to build and promote these protective factors in every interaction with children and families."

By working together as a community, we can all play a part in promoting children's emotional well-being and strengthening families. For more information on upcoming events or to purchase the special whoopie pies, please contact Deb at 859-1580, [debr@kvcap.org](mailto:debr@kvcap.org) or Emily at 859-1514, [emilyb@kvcap.org](mailto:emilyb@kvcap.org).

## Child Abuse Prevention - April Events

**Awareness Vigil – April 1**  
5:30-6:00pm, Castonguay Square, Waterville

**Annual Kick-off Event – April 3**  
8:30-10:00am, Winslow Elementary School

**Wear Blue – April 10**  
Show your support for child abuse prevention!

**Skowpendous! Free Family Fun Night – April 24**  
April 24, 5:00-7:30pm, Skowhegan Municipal Parking Lot



## Early Years Are Learning Years®

As part of the national Week of the Young Child™ celebrated across the country, KVCAP is honoring young children and all those who make a difference in children's lives during the week of April 12-18.

Decades of research have produced substantial evidence that children who do well despite serious hardship have had at least one stable and committed relationship with a supportive parent, caregiver, or other adult. The Working Paper from the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child explains how protective factors in the social environment and highly responsive biological systems interact to produce resilience, or the ability to adapt in the face of significant adversity.

“All young children need and deserve high-quality early learning experiences that will prepare them for success in school and life,” said Kathy Colfer, KVCAP's Child and Family Services Director. “The science is clear that more than 85% of the brain's architecture is formed before a child enters public school, and that nurturing, quality relationships and learning environments in the early years has an enormous impact on the formation of the brain.”



Stable and supportive relationships are critical to a child's healthy development, as it builds resiliency and the ability to adapt in the face of significant adversity. This community has numerous dedicated providers and home visitors who either care for our youngest citizens, or work with parents to elevate their knowledge of child development. The Week of the Young Child™ is a time for our community to recognize that Early Years are Learning Years® for all young children.

“Please take special care to thank them this week for their dedication to Maine's children and families,” said Colfer.

Our Child & Family Services Department provides comprehensive, high quality early care and education for children (age birth to 5 years) in public school based care, Educare Central Maine, and through home visiting throughout northern Kennebec and Somerset Counties. The overarching goal is to increase children's social competence and school readiness skills so they experience success in public school. Children receive nutritious meals, medical, mental and dental health supports, and specialized services for those with disabilities.

Families are supported in meeting individualized goals and parent education activities. The program prioritizes low-income families eligible for Early/Head Start and child care, yet serves all income levels through a universal design.

Additionally, KVCAP's Social Services Department administers the Maine Families Home Visiting program in Kennebec and Somerset Counties, working with families prenatally to age 3. Our home visitors partner with parents and share information and resources that support the physical and emotional health of babies and the entire family.

Week of the Young Child™, sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, is an opportunity for early childhood programs across the country, including child care and Head Start programs, preschools, and elementary schools, to hold activities to bring awareness to the needs of young children. All of KVCAP locations will be celebrating this week by focusing on a different theme each day.

“Children learn so much when they sing together, cook food, build together, create art, and celebrate their families,” said Rhonda Kaiser, Site Manager for Educare Central Maine.

## Are You a Community Investor?

The Poverty Action Coalition (PAC) of Waterville is creating opportunities to help residents move out of poverty. The PAC was formed in January 2014 by the Mayor of Waterville, in partnership with KVCAP. Members include a range of concerned citizens, agencies and businesses who care about our community.

The Hope Project grew out of this initiative and is designed to help families overcome obstacles that threaten their social and/or financial stability when all other resources have been exhausted. This is largely accomplished through our group of **Community Investors**, who are local residents that have signed up to receive weekly emails highlighting one or two families in need. Requested items often include donations of gently used clothing, furniture or other household items.

Join our email list and become a **Community Investor!** Contact Paige Barker at 859-1666 or [paigeb@kvcap.org](mailto:paigeb@kvcap.org).

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