

2025 RES-428

RECOGNIZING APRIL 2026 AS SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH AND CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

WHEREAS, April is recognized nationally as Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM), and the 2026 theme, “25 Years Stronger: Looking Back, Moving Forward,” recognizes the history and growth of the movement while reaffirming a shared commitment to a safer future; and

WHEREAS, this theme honors the survivors, advocates, and communities whose leadership and resilience have laid the foundation for progress, while calling for renewed focus on prevention, healing, accountability, and collective action; and

WHEREAS, the unique theme for the week of April 12–18, 2026, “From Awareness to Action: Prevention is a Shared Responsibility,” emphasizes that preventing sexual violence requires engagement at every level: individual, community, organizational, and systemic; and

WHEREAS, this call to action reinforces that creating environments rooted in safety, respect, and accountability is a shared responsibility that requires sustained commitment from all sectors of society; and

WHEREAS, sexual violence remains a pervasive public health and safety issue in Dane County, the State of Wisconsin, and across the United States, with more than 53 percent of women and over 29 percent of men reporting experiences of sexual violence in their lifetimes; and

WHEREAS, in Wisconsin, one in five high school students report being forced into unwanted sexual activity, and an estimated 43 percent of LGBTQ+ youth report experiencing sexual assault or coercion, highlighting disproportionate impacts on vulnerable populations; and

WHEREAS, sexual violence remains significantly underreported, with nearly 80 percent of sexual assaults in the United States going unreported, reflecting the need to create safe, supportive, and accessible pathways for survivors to come forward; and

WHEREAS, local organizations such as the Dane County Multi-Agency Center (DaneMAC), plays a vital role in supporting survivors by meeting them where they are, providing trauma-informed care, and ensuring dignity and respect throughout the reporting and healing process; and

WHEREAS, April is also recognized as Child Abuse Prevention Month, and the 2026 theme, “Pinwheels of Possibility,” acknowledges families at the center, with each turn representing the systems, programs, policies, and everyday acts of care that strengthen families and help them thrive; and

WHEREAS, in Dane County, child abuse and neglect remain critical concerns, with 1,323 Child Protective Services reports in 2024, 11.9 reports per 1,000 children, and 196 children identified as victims of substantiated maltreatment, highlighting the ongoing need to invest in prevention, strengthen families, and expand access to supportive services across the community; and

WHEREAS, there are multiple local organizations and county-led initiatives in Dane County that respond to the needs of children and families who have experienced trauma by providing a broad continuum of services including: prevention, early intervention, therapeutic support, and

family-centered programming, all designed to strengthen parent-child relationships, support mental and behavioral health, and promote resilience, which overall contributing to the well-being and stability of the county's communities; and

WHEREAS, both Sexual Assault Awareness Month and Child Abuse Prevention Month serve as an opportunity to raise awareness, center survivor and family voices, promote education, and strengthen prevention strategies across Dane County; and

WHEREAS, Dane County remains committed to advancing justice, equity, and public safety by supporting survivors, strengthening prevention efforts, and partnering with local organizations, advocates, and service providers working to end sexual violence and child abuse, and promote healing.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Dane County Board of Supervisors hereby recognizes April 2026 as Sexual Assault Awareness Month and Child Abuse Prevention Month in Dane County and honors the strength, resilience, and courage of survivors and families.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Dane County Board of Supervisors commits to advancing policies and supporting initiatives that prevent violence, strengthen families, promote accountability, and ensure accessible, culturally responsive, and trauma-informed services for all survivors.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Dane County Board of Supervisors encourages residents, community organizations, and institutions to engage in education, advocacy, and prevention efforts, reflect on the impacts of violence, and work collectively toward a future rooted in safety, justice, healing, and dignity for all.

Patrick Miles, Chair
Dane County Board of Supervisors

Signed and sealed before me this
_____ day of _____, 2026.

Scott McDonell,
Dane County Clerk