

## National Child Abuse Prevention Month Ends with Memorial at Head Start

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*Madison County, IL, April 26, 2011-* Jeremiah Bradford, a four year-old whose death last fall was due to child abuse, will be remembered by his family at a ceremony this Saturday, April 30 at 11:00 a.m. at the Edwardsville Head Start center located at 710 N. Main Street in Edwardsville. The public is invited to attend.

Also to be remembered is Taylor Rogers who died in 2009. She was shaken as a baby and suffered medical consequences from it before passing away at age 9. Both children's families were enrolled in Head Start.

The event includes speakers Reverend Jackie Havis Shear from Immanuel United Methodist Church, Reverend Steve Jackson, Mayor Gary Niebur and members of Jeremiah and Taylor's families.

At the event bricks engraved with Jeremiah and Taylor's names will be placed in a memorial garden created to honor all children who have suffered from child abuse. The garden, created by Heyl, Royster, Boelker & Allen law firm, also commemorates the strength of family members who help children heal after suffering abuse.

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month, a time to raise awareness about child abuse and neglect and create strong communities to support children and families. The Madison County Child Advocacy Center estimates that 3,500 local children are physically and sexually abused each year.

Though April is nearly over, the cause to prevent child abuse continues. The parents and staff of the Edwardsville Head Start center planned the memorial garden dedication as a bookend to the April 1 kick off of National Child Abuse Prevention Month at the Madison County Government Building.

Sponsors of the event include Land & Lantz, Inc., owner of the Edwardsville Head Start center building, and TheBANK of Edwardsville, a longtime supporter of families in need at the center.

The Edwardsville Head Start center is one of six operated by Riverbend Head Start & Family Services, a non-profit organization battling childhood poverty through education. Because poverty is a predictor of child abuse, the agency ensures that parents have the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to care for their children. This helps prevent child abuse and neglect by strengthening families and communities.

Riverbend Head Start & Family Services provides early childhood education, parenting education, health and social services to nearly 1,000 children and their families through its Alton, Edwardsville, Collinsville, Granite City and Venice Head Start centers. Its goal is to strengthen families and prepare economically disadvantaged children for kindergarten.

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