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**ARCHBISHOP CHAPUT JOINED BY
150 ARCHDIOCESAN SCHOOL CHILDREN
TO MARK NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH**
*Elementary, secondary, and special education students from across the Archdiocese
helped plant a “Pinwheels for Prevention” garden*

As part of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia’s observance of National Child Abuse Prevention Month, Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap. was joined by approximately 150 elementary, secondary, and special education students from schools throughout the Archdiocese for the planting of a “Pinwheels for Prevention” garden. The blue and silver pinwheels will be displayed outside the Archdiocesan Pastoral Center through the remainder of the month as a demonstration of solidarity with all those working to stop child abuse.

The event was sponsored by the [Office for Child and Youth Protection](#) (OCYP) and is an outgrowth of a national movement developed as a grass roots initiative by [Prevent Child Abuse America](#).

Archbishop Chaput addressed the assembly this morning about the importance of ongoing efforts within the Archdiocese to prevent abuse and re-affirmed the local Church’s commitment to creating and maintaining school and parish environments that are safe.

The schools participating today were

- Father Judge Catholic High School for Boys;
- John W. Hallahan Catholic High School for Girls;
- Little Flower Catholic High School for Girls;
- Roman Catholic High School for Boys;
- West Catholic Preparatory High School;
- Saint Hubert’s Catholic High School for Girls;
- Saints John Neumann—Maria Goretti Catholic High School;
- Saint Francis de Sales Catholic School;
- Saint Francis Xavier Catholic School;
- Saint George Catholic School;
- Saint Mary Interparochial School;
- Our Lady of Confidence Day School;
- and Saint Katherine Day School.

The students represented nearly 100,000 young people who are educated in Archdiocesan schools and parish-based religious education programs each year.

Background on Archdiocesan Efforts to Prevent Abuse and Assist Survivors

- All people working with children in the Archdiocese, including volunteers, undergo background checks and child abuse clearances.
- All Archdiocesan employees and volunteers attend Safe Environment training programs as well as Mandated Reporter training programs.
- All young people in grades K-12 receive age-appropriate abuse prevention education.
- All Archdiocesan employees and volunteers who have regular contact with children are required to report suspicion of child abuse.

The Archdiocese has a zero tolerance policy for clergy, lay employees, and volunteers who engage in misconduct with children and takes *immediate* action when an accusation is made. It is committed to educating all those who work with children, as well as the children in its schools and education programs, on how to recognize improper conduct and be comfortable enough to report a problem.

- There are over 280 designated Safe Environment Coordinators working in Archdiocesan parishes, schools, and youth ministry programs to ensure compliance with laws and policies.
- Over 100,000 adults have received training to recognize, respond and report child abuse since 2003.
- Nearly 30,000 adults have received mandatory reporter training.
- Over 100,000 children receive age-appropriate abuse prevention education each year.
- The Archdiocese has invested over \$2.4 million in education and training since 2006.

The Archdiocese is also committed to helping survivors of childhood sexual abuse and their families heal, no matter who committed the crime against them or when the crime occurred. Every year, the Archdiocesan Victim Assistance Program offers compassionate and supportive assistance to individuals and families. During the 2014-15 fiscal year alone, the Archdiocese dedicated over \$1.7 million to make available counseling, provide medication, childcare, and eliminate barriers to travel in addition to other forms of support.

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Editor's Notes: For additional information on the Archdiocese of Philadelphia's Office for Child and Youth Protection, please visit www.childyouthprotection.org.

Two photos from today's event are also attached and can be used for publication with credit to CatholicPhilly.com/Sarah Webb.