



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

GREG ABBOTT

As Attorney General of Texas, protecting Texas' children has been one of my top priorities. We have launched new initiatives to crack down on cyber predators that use the internet to prey upon young Texans and we created a Fugitive Unit to arrest parole violating sex offenders—but there is still more work to be done.

Despite what a combination of state, local and federal authorities have done to protect young Texans, too many children fall victim to sexual abuse—and too few of these young victims come forward to report their abuser.

But there is hope. Together, we can combat child sexual abuse—and the secrecy that enables it—by ensuring that Texas communities are prepared and empowered to combat this horrific crime. In an effort to improve knowledge and communication about sexual abuse, the Texas Attorney General's Office is partnering with Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas™, Inc. to raise awareness about their "***One With Courage***" campaign.

Why "One With Courage"? Because it takes tremendous courage for young victims to come forward and talk about suffering from abuse. It takes courage for adults to listen to a child's horrendous experiences. And, it will take courage for Texans to engage in an open dialogue about child sexual abuse. We must all learn the signs of abuse so that we can recognize it and identify abusers. By working together, we can help eradicate child abuse from our communities.

Each year, thousands of Texas children seek refuge and start down the path to recovery at one of the more than 60 children's advocacy centers across our state. At these critically important centers, children find the safety, comfort, and support they need to summon the courage to cry out—and stop the abuse.

Although many children have come forward and shared the hard truth in the safety of a Child Advocacy Center, too many others live in fear and do not know how to reveal their suffering. As adults, we cannot possibly expect children to have the courage to talk about abuse if we do not have the courage to openly discuss this horrific problem. To help bridge the communication divide, Children's Advocacy Center of Texas is launching the "***One With Courage***" campaign, which will educate our fellow Texans about the signs of child sexual abuse, dispel generally accepted "myths" about this issue and provide communities with specific steps they can take to make a difference with a child's life.

The Texas Attorney General's Office is providing support to "***One With Courage***" through a crime victim's compensation fund that is designed to provide funding for child abuse prevention. But for this program to succeed, we need each and every Texan to step forward, to help us bring abuse out of the shadows and into the daylight. If we stay focused and work collaboratively, we can make a meaningful difference in the lives of the thousands of young Texans who are being abused. Together we can spread a message of courage and hope. Like these little victims, we must all be ***One with Courage***...

Sincerely,

Greg Abbott
Attorney General of Texas