

CELEBRATIONS

Agencies ask public to pray for abused, neglected kids Blue Sunday calls for church congregations' assistance

By Lauren Corbell
The Herald-Zeitung

Agencies that help abused and neglected children are asking the public for prayers on Sunday.

As part of Child Abuse Prevention Month, the last Sunday of April is designated as Blue Sunday, a day of prayer for the victims of child abuse and for those who work to support them. Participating agencies and organizations ask that people pray for an end to child abuse and help for those who abuse.

"We're asking that people share information about Blue Sunday with their church congregations online," Jenni Lord, chief executive officer of Chosen Care, said. "The call to action is to pray — stop and pray collectively."

New Braunfels-based nonprofit Chosen Care works to help children heal from trauma by strengthening their families.

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During COVID-19 social distancing precautions, home is supposed to be the safest place, but for children in abusive or neglected living situations, home may not be a safe harbor, Lord said.

"We've seen an increase in the volume of teens, especially, that (the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services) is unable to place (into foster care)," Lord said. "There has been a 37% drop in reports from school personnel — they are the front lines for detecting abuse and neglect."

With children home from school and many adults furloughed, children are more likely to be in close quarters with their abusers with less opportunity for others to detect signs.

"It's alarming to us as an agency," Lord said. "Those kids who are at home — what kind of spike in unreported abuse and neglect must we be having?"

In an effort to provide parenting support, Chosen Care has launched Coffee with Chosen, a program which provides viewers with helpful videos each morning on YouTube, social media and chosen.care.

Additionally, Chosen has created a weekly online support group, Parent to Parent, available through chosen.care, which aims to help guardians survive the pandemic with children from hard places. After 30 minutes of practical teaching and real-life examples, participants can leave the meet-

ing or stay for questions and answers. The same content is available three times each week.

In addition to praying for abused and neglected children on Sunday, Lord said the biggest thing people can do to help children through the pandemic is to be alert.

"We always say, 'If you see something, say something,'" Lord said. "Ask questions of your family or neighbors if you have concerns."

Texas law requires that any person suspecting that a child has been abused or neglected must immediately make a report. If there is an emergency, call 911 and then call the DFPS Texas Abuse Hotline at 1-800-252-5400. Reports can also be made online at www.txabusehotline.org.

More information about Blue Sunday, including resources for churches, is available at www.bluesunday.org.

BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following children were born at Resolute Health Hospital in New Braunfels, Texas:

Braelynn Marie Luna was born April 15, 2020. She weighed 6 pounds 6 ounces. Her parents are Caleb Luna and Viviana Luna. Her grandparents are Mayra Rojas and Hugo Rojas; and John Robles and Michelle Robles.

Braxton Reed Castilleja was born April 15, 2020. He weighed 6 pounds 8 ounces. His parents are Caleb and Meagan Castilleja. His grandparents are Shawn and Cindy Cattin; and Sam and Dana Castilleja.

Julia Kay Anderson was born April 15, 2020. She weighed 6 pounds 8 ounces. Her parents are Jake and Jennafer Anderson. Her grandparents are Joseph and Elsie Yee; and Barbara Aguirre and Jeffery Anderson.

Uzziah Nickolas Jimenez was born April 16, 2020. He weighed

4 pounds 7 ounces. His parents are Dara Ashlee Jimenez and Nickolas Jimenez. His grandparents are Lisa Rice and John Anderson; and Mary Dian Jimenez.

Celest Isabelle Askew was born April 18, 2020. She weighed 8 pounds 5 ounces. Her parents are Lindsay Sanchez and Jesse Askew. Her grandparents are Gary and Cindy Parker; and Scot and Sam Askew.

August Joseph Novsek was born April 18, 2020. He weighed 6 pounds 3 ounces. His parents are Nathan and Alison Novsek. His grandparents are Dennis and Sharon Knolhoff; and Joe and Tracy Novsek.

Emma Louisa McWhirter was born April 21, 2020. She weighed 8 pounds 8 ounces. Her parents are Ryan McWhirter and Monica Jergins. Her grandparents are Ernesto Jergins and Jane Settree-Suitchik; and Jim and Janet McWhirter.

FINCH

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oil is considered an organic treatment. To make the treatment more potent add some acephate. Acephate is a systemic insecticide. Follow label instructions.

Q. When can we plant okra seed in the vegetable garden? Is there a recommended variety?

A. Now is a good time. Plant it in full sun. I like Oscar okra but almost all varieties work. Clemson Spineless is readily available but it is tall. On the seed rack at your favorite nursery look for one that is not overwhelmingly tall.

Q. We grew blue curl, larkspur and poppies as naturalized flowers in our vacant lot this spring both for the attractive blooms and to provide nectar for

the butterflies, hummingbirds and bees. Can we collect some of the seed to expand the planting?

A. Yes, collect the larkspur pods and round poppy pods when they turn brown.

The pods will eventually break open so store them in a paper sack. Harvest the tops of the blue curl after the flowers fade and the seeds appear. Put the whole top in a paper sack. Spread the seed in the new areas in the fall.

Q. We planted our tomato transplants, but we never got the cages in place. What happens if we do not have tomato cages?

A. The plants will spread out more and some of the fruit will lay on the ground where it will be more accessible to insects and rots. It is not a major problem; commercial growers do not use tomato cages.

MAY GARDENING CALENDAR

Get ready to fertilize lawn, replace winter annuals

By Calvin Finch

The permanent lawn grass of St. Augustine, Bermuda or zoysia grass should be at a growth stage that makes it efficient to fertilize it early in the month. It works best to use a slow release lawn fertilizer such as 19-5-9 where half of the nitrogen is released immediately, and the rest is released to be used by the grass during the growing season.

We wait until the lawn grass has grown enough that it has been mown twice because it indicates that the root system has recovered enough to uptake the available nutrients and the foliage is developed enough so that translocation of the nutrients will result in them being distributed throughout the plant.

Organic lawn fertilizers are 100% slow release and low-level nitrogen sources. To be effective in supporting the normal lawn spring growth spurt, they would have to be applied

earlier in the spring to give the products time to release the nitrogen. The nitrogen levels in organic lawn fertilizers are also about one-third as much as the material in manufactured products, so depending on the product, it may work best for the lawn if three times as much fertilizer is applied to the grass about March 1 rather than on May 1. If you prefer organic fertilizers, one option may be to fertilize this spring with a high nitrogen fertilizer like 19-5-9 and then use the slow release organic product beginning in early spring next year.

It is not recommended that "Weed and Feed" products be used on our lawns. In our growing conditions the time to prevent or kill weeds is different from the time to provide nutrients to the lawn grass. Now, when it is time to fertilize, the winter weeds are at the end of their life already so applying a weed killer is wasted and environmentally inappropriate. If the

product has preemergent properties, it is too late to prevent germination of the summer weeds when the fertilizer works best for the lawn.

The wildflowers performed well this spring but remember that they must be left to mature and drop their seed if they are going to bloom again next year. Resist the pressure to mow the plants down too quickly.

Your winter annuals have probably declined and need to be replaced. In the sun zinnias, cosmos, moss rose, and purslane work well. Use pentas, semperflorens begonia, whopper begonia, caladium and coleus in the shade.

Zinnia are especially useful as a brightly colored garden plant that can be used as a cut flower. They are also a favorite nectar plant for hummingbirds and butterflies. The seeds are sought after by goldfinches, cardinals and other seed eaters. Zinnias can be planted by seed or transplants.

In addition to zinnia, plant milkweed, porter weed, mistflower, lantana and salvia for the butterflies. Rely on tropical milkweed for a nectar source and Monarch egg laying site while you work on establishing native species such as antelope horn, green and swamp milkweed.

In the vegetable garden keep the tomatoes, peppers and eggplants well fertilized and watered. If you haven't planted okra yet it will still make a crop if you seed it early in May.



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Ann Kuehler and Janet Fries visiting the Football Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio.

Vacation Photo Contest

Take a vacation. Take a copy of the Herald-Zeitung. Take a photo.

It's Easy to Enter

- Take a photo of friends or family reading the Herald-Zeitung at the most recognizable landmark on your vacation. Be sure to tag us when you post it on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram at @newbraunfels.
- E-mail your photo (preferred), along with the location it was shot and the names of the people pictured, to photos@nbtzh.com or mail to 549 Landa St., New Braunfels, TX 78130.
- A panel of judges selected by the Herald-Zeitung will choose the three most memorable vacation photos submitted by Sept. 1. Winners will be announced the last Sunday of September.
- Each photo submitted entitles the Herald-Zeitung to publish the photo for promotional purposes. Photos will only run in the paper one time — no resubmissions will be published or eligible for the contest. Limit of five photos per person per year.

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