

BRONX RESIDENTS JOIN WHEDCO IN PREVENT CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION WALK

On Thursday, April 2nd, in honor of Child Abuse Prevention Month, The Women's Housing and Economic Development Corporation (WHEDCo), a community based non-profit organization dedicated to building a more beautiful and prosperous Bronx, partnered with Prevent Child Abuse New York to host the 5th annual community walk-a-thon to support statewide education, advocacy and preventative programs to end child abuse and neglect.

"The Bronx has an alarmingly high rate of child abuse and neglect that simply cannot be tolerated," said Doxene Roberts, WHEDCo's Director of Family Support and Housing Services and the organizer of the Walk. "This is the fifth year that WHEDCo, Prevent Child Abuse NY and the local community have come together to raise funds, promote awareness and advocate for the protection of all children throughout the Bronx."

Over 75 South Bronx residents, more than half of which are children from WHEDCo's afterschool program, gathered in the schoolyard of PS/MS 218 to begin the one-hour walk. The children made signs to protest child abuse proclaiming, "Love Your Child" and "Little Hearts,



Big Hurts." Local organizations such as Planned Parenthood of New York, the Cardinal McCloskey Services, the Rockland Child Development Services, and the New York City Child Care Resource and Referral Consortium offered support and information before the walk. WHEDCo staffers joined South Bronx residents and kids in the walk.

Prevent Child Abuse New York is a non-profit organization. It was founded in 1980, as the Federation on Child Abuse and Neglect, by a network of county child abuse task forces with assistance from Cornell University's Family Life Development Center and start-up funding from the Robert Sterling Clark Foundation. In 1982 the agency became the New York chapter of National Committee

for the Prevention of Child Abuse. The organization's name was changed to Prevent Child Abuse New York in 1999, when the national name was changed to Prevent Child Abuse America.

Child Abuse Prevention Advocate Chris Capone helped kick off the event with a brief motivational talk, commenting on his participation Chris said: "I am a survivor of child abuse and there was one person in my life that reached out to my sister and I when we needed it most. She gave us the love and courage to keep going in life. It is my mission to be that person in the lives of neglected children by inspiring others to put a stop to child abuse. WHEDCo's Walk for Children gave us all that voice to spread the word; it gave me the voice to release

my trauma and heal my scars. Most importantly, I want people to speak up if they know or see something. If everyone turns their head, no child will be saved."

Felicah, a sophomore at Frederick Douglass Academy 3, fully supports the cause she walked for this afternoon. "A lot can change in a child's life from being abused," she said. "It can have a lot of negative effects." Bernice, a representative from Planned Parenthood, agreed. "Child abuse is infectious," she said. "When a child is abused, he or she may also become an abuser. Stopping one is stopping many." For more information about WHEDCo or to donate, please visit www.WHEDCo.org or call (718) 839-1119.