

Children's Mental Health Week May 6 - May 12th, 2018

Getting Your Mayor to Issue a Proclamation

Children's Mental Health Week provides a great opportunity to make the public more aware of children's mental health needs and provide some much needed education. I, Cindi Keele, have been arranging mayoral and gubernatorial proclamations since the Bond Administration. I don't know everything, but am pleased to share what I do.

A mayoral proclamation is a cheap, easy activity. Mayors love to be the good guy and anything involving children is a sure winner public relations wise.

In many cases, issuing a proclamation will become an annual event for your current and those who will follow. This affords you and your group a fresh chance to increase awareness and get a little education out there where it might do some good. It can become a nice tool in your ongoing efforts to rid your community of ignorance and its favorite child, stigma.

Securing a proclamation signing can require nothing more than providing your mayor's staff with some wording and showing up to receive the proclamation certificate (please take children along). We hope you will go a tad further, but that's up to you and your group.

I'll outline the process in easy to follow steps.

1. Craft your proclamation language. See NAMI sample. I like to add some facts to mine, making it more educational. Please be certain your facts and statistics are current and correct.
2. Call your mayor's office. You will most likely talk with the mayor's secretary, staff assistant. If your city/town is small you may get his honor/her honor on the phone. Do the ask.

If it makes you more comfortable, you can send a letter requesting the proclamation, wait a week and follow up with a call or personal visit to town hall. In this case, state you are calling to make sure they received your request. Has a decision been made as to date and time? You get my drift.

3. Pat yourself on the back. You have a proclamation ceremony to attend with as many friends, relatives and children as you can muster. Remember, there's strength in numbers. Numbers send a message that you're not the only one/group concerned about this issue.

Now that you have a proclamation ceremony date there are things you can do that will Make the good news (and education) travel faster and farther.

Use Your Local Newspaper

Considering issuing a press release to your local newspaper. I've included two samples in this kit; #1 announcing the event, #2 reporting on the event. If your newspaper did not "cover" your proclamation and take a picture, you can do this yourself. Send it your picture and report to local newspapers. Please include a note indicating who is in the pictures. "Mayor Gary Goodguy is pictured here presenting a proclamation decalring the week of **May 6-12, 2018** in Anytown, MO to Bill and Susan Jones of NAMI Anytown. Be sure to submit this as soon as possible about the event. News gets stale, and you don't want yours growing mold. Like old bread, it will get thrown out.

Other Media

Do you have a radio station that likes to cover local events. Do they have a call in or other format live or recorded talk show? You could pitch your event to the radio station. Facts on **CMH Week, 2018** and child mental health related facts are easily found on Google and I have included a fact sheet in this packet. Have them in your hand when you are interviewed or appear as the "guest" on a live show. If you are not comfortable with facts and figures, your own family's story reduces stigma and is always appealing to listeners.

You could even get a story about your event on TV. If a parent or an adult who had a mental health need start in childhood is willing to disclose, this may be interest a television news director or producer. If fact, personal, lived experience stories told by the person who lived them will appeal to any media and make an impact on stigma. As a general rule of thumb, I do not ask young people to disclose publicly due to the risk of bullying. It's a tough world and my bias is toward protection. Consumers who developed their mental health issue young is always a good, safe choice. NAMI has several qualified speakers among their In Our Own Voice program speakers.

Who Should Attend the Signing?

Once you have your date and time secured, arrange for folks to attend the signing. You will want to arrange to have children present if at all possible. Other possible attendees could be your NAMI affiliate president, parent support leaders, advocates for children, a legislator, your local mental health facility director, the list goes on.

Tips

Remember to take lots of pictures, especially if children were present. Children love posting these pictures on their home refrigerator or on their Facebook page. While you're at it, why not go to the NAMI Missouri Facebook page and send us your photo? These momentos are important and can help build a child's confidence. ("I met the mayor").

May, 2018 marks the marks the 27th anniversary of Children's Mental Health Week!

A Proclamation for Children's Mental Health Week

May 6 through 12, 2018

WHEREAS, healthy children and youth are fundamental to the future of _____; and

WHEREAS, mental health is a vital component of proper growth and development for all children; and

WHEREAS, half of all cases of lifetime mental illness occur before age 14: 75% by age 24, and

WHEREAS, recovery is real. Early detection and treatment promotes healthy adulthood and prevents disability; and

WHEREAS, many children do not receive the help they need because of stigma and other barriers to early detection and adequate mental health care; and

WHEREAS, local agencies and organizations including NAMI Missouri, Families-4-Families , _____ and the Missouri Department of Mental Health are committed to promoting mental health among children, youth and their families; and

WHEREAS, it is important that all Missourians come together to celebrate a time dedicated to the promotion of public education about children's mental health.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Mayor _____ , do hereby proclaim the week of **May 6th through May 12th, 2018** to be

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

in _____ and encourage all citizens, agencies and organizations committed to meeting the mental health needs of children and youth to unite and increase public understanding of the mental health needs of children.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Seal of _____, MO on this ___ day of May, 2018.

This is a SAMPLE press release to announce a local proclamation signing ceremony with your mayor. Please plagiarize and edit freely. This is a commonly used format. I you have letterhead stationery, please use it. If you don't, include your contact information at the top of the page.

YOUR LETTERHEAD

April 21, 2018

For Immediate Release

contact: Ms. Cynthia Keele
573 634-7727

Announcing Children's Mental Health Week in Jefferson City

Mayor Struempf to issue proclamation Monday Night

Mayor Patrick C. Struempf will issue a special proclamation designating the week of May 6 through May 12, 2018 as Children's Mental Health Week in the City of Jefferson at Monday night's meeting of the City Council.

Children's Mental Health Week (CMHW) is a special time when parents, kids, professionals and child advocates plan and participate in events and celebrations to call attention to the mental health needs of children and youth across the nation. May 2018 marks its **twenty-seventh year**.

Half of all adult mental health disorders begin before the age of fourteen. We know mental health is essential to overall health and well-being. Addressing mental health needs early makes a positive, lifelong difference on overall health, income and employment.

These conditions are common. About one in five American children have a mental health need and far too few ever receive the mental health care and services they need. Without early identification and effective interventions, childhood onset disorders can persist and lead to a downward spiral of school failure, poor employment opportunities and poverty in adulthood.

Jefferson City Children's Mental Health Week sponsors, NAMI, Families for Families and the Cole County Community Mental Health Center invite members of the public to join them at the proclamation signing ceremony on Monday night May 7, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. at the Cole County Municipal Building.

SAMPLE . Please revise for your mayoral proclamation or create your own. This is a post event release.

**For more information call
Cynthia Keele (573) 634-7727**

For Immediate Release

In a ceremony at the _____ Building this week Mayor _____ proclaimed May 6st through 12th Children’s Mental Health Week in _____. He was joined by _____, _____, _____ and her two children _____ and _____.

The first week of May, 2018 marks the 27th anniversary of Children’s Mental Health Week (CMHW). CMHW is a nationwide event promoted by various mental health organizations such as NAMI, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Missouri Department of Mental Health. Their goal is to focus attention on mental health needs of children and the importance of early detection and treatment.

According to Cynthia Keele, executive director of NAMI, “Childhood onset mental health disorders are very common. We stress early diagnosis and treatment because it can make a huge difference for the child now and into adulthood. Half of all mental health disorders in adults began in childhood and far too many never received the help that would have made a difference”.

“We want to thank Mayor _____ for helping us call attention to this important issue”. commented Ms. _____. “Childhood onset mental health conditions are real and they are highly treatable. No child should suffer needlessly,” she added.

Only of fraction the children or adolescents with mental health needs of those get the help they need. For more information call the NAMI Missouri HELPLine at 1 800 374-2138.