



WHEREAS, Children are our most valuable resource and provide hope for the future of Gaston County. However, child abuse and neglect are a serious problem affecting every aspect of our community, and finding solutions requires input and action from everyone; and,

WHEREAS, child abuse can have long-term psychological, emotional, and physical effects that have lasting consequences for its victims; and,

WHEREAS, effective child abuse prevention strategies are created, nurtured, and implemented through strong partnerships with the Gaston County Department of Social Services, The Lighthouse Children's Advocacy Center, and local law enforcement; and,

WHEREAS, The Lighthouse Children's Advocacy Center served 439 child victims of abuse or neglect in 2022: additionally, The Department of Social Services assessed approximately 4000 families for safety while securing permanency for 124 children leaving foster care; and,

WHEREAS, The Lighthouse Children's Advocacy Center, which will be utilized by the Department of Social Services, Law Enforcement, the Gaston County District Attorney's Office and Mental Health Providers, will serve as a beacon of hope for those impacted by child abuse in our community.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Gaston County Board of Commissioners proclaims the month of April 2023 as

Child Abuse Prevention Month

and calls upon all citizens, community agencies, faith groups, medical facilities, elected leaders, and businesses to increase their participation in efforts to support families, thereby strengthening the community in which we live.

Chad Brown, Chairman

Cathy Cloninger

Kim Johnson

Allen R. Fraley

Tom Keigher

Bob Hovis, Vice-Chairman

Ronald E. Worley

To be Adopted the 25th Day of April 2023