

UPCOMING: Highlighting the fight against abuse

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[Brian Hughes | Crestview News Bulletin](#)

The staff at the Crestview office of Families First Network spent part of their Wednesday afternoon blowing up 164 blue balloons and placing pinwheels by its sign facing State Road 85.

The balloons represent each of the children who died in Florida in 2008 due to abuse, explained team supervisor Jeanna McBride.

The pinwheels express hope that "winds of change" will see far fewer such needless losses in 2009, McBride said.

The most common cause of death among the 164 children was what McBride termed a "roll-over death." Because many families do not have the financial resources to afford a crib or bassinet, adults will take an infant to bed with them. They can then roll over onto the child and suffocate it in the night.

The second and third most common causes of preventable child deaths are drowning and "heat entrapment," also called heat exhaustion.

The latter often happens when negligent parents leave a child locked in a closed car when they run into a store "for just a minute."

To help combat such examples of child abuse, Families First is collecting cans for recycling and will use the money to buy cribs and bassinets for needy families.

Families First is also distributing brochures with information about child abuse and how to prevent and report it.

For more information, contact the Crestview office at (850) 689-7782, or stop by the office at 299 Main St.

