

# Raising Awareness for Children's Mental Health

UPLIFT joined people across the nation in early May to celebrate National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day which is launched by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). According to information from the SAMHSA website, Awareness Day is an opportunity to raise awareness of children's mental health issues, promote positive youth development, resilience, recovery, and the transformation of mental health services delivery for children and youth with serious mental health needs and their families. The theme for this year's Awareness Day was

*Thriving in the Community*. A special emphasis was that high school youth who receive the services they need are more likely to have positive outcomes such as better grades and higher rates of education, and less likely to have negative outcomes such as involvement with the juvenile and criminal justice systems.

The highlight in Wyoming was the signing of the Mental Health Awareness Proclamation by Governor Dave Freudenthal, declaring May as Mental Health Awareness Month. Several families and UPLIFT staff members were present to witness this important event. There was a photo opportunity in addition to the local news channel taping the event.



In addition, Awareness Day activities were hosted through all of UPLIFT's Regional Offices across the state. In **Cheyenne** activities were held in the Frontier Mall. There were several different organizations joining UPLIFT with display tables to distribute mental health ribbons, balloons, bracelets, and information sheets on mental health issues. **A special thank you goes to Taco John's** who supported our activities by donating two \$50 gift cards that provided food for our volunteers. UPLIFT's Casper office also had a booth at the local Mall.



They had a Photovoice display (families and youth sharing their experience through words and photos), games, face painting, and tons of information.



UPLIFT's Regional Office in **Jackson** hosted a booth at the Teton County Health Fair. UPLIFT's booth had literature on mental health, balloons, bracelets, mental health ribbons, and other goodies. There was a balloon popping game for children to win bunnies (stuffed). Across from the UPLIFT booth was a pediatrician who every year has a teddy bear clinic. Children bring their stuffed animals in for the doctor to treat. The doctor puts Band-Aids on them and gives the checkups, so - - -

every bunny had a physical!

In **Buffalo**, UPLIFT staff members distributed Mental Health Awareness ribbons, bracelets, UPLIFT pamphlets, and Life Saver mints – as a way of raising awareness. These items were distributed to the Community Mental Health Center, school counselors, independent mental health professionals, the hospital, public health office, and Community Resource Center. They also hosted a table at the Health Fair.

UPLIFT Regional Office in **Riverton** held an Open House with refreshments, information on mental health, bracelets, ribbons, goodie bags for children, and balloons. They had one rule: a ribbon and cake went together – you could not have cake without taking a ribbon (just for fun).

