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# WITNESS FOR JUSTICE

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**All Children Are Royalty**

**M. Linda Jaramillo**

During the last several months, we've heard hundred of stories about the upcoming "Royal Wedding" of Prince William and Kate Middleton. However, April was unusually busy with such stories. News channels, network channels, and movie channels are covering the Royals minute-by-minute. There are stories about the couple and their families. Stories about Kate's diet. Stories about wedding plans, comparing them with the wedding of William's parents. Stories about who is invited and who is not. And stories about Princess Diana and the complicated life that she lived.

April seems to have a new identity. People all over the world are excited and I am not complaining about the pomp and circumstance of such a celebration that seems to bring the country together. William and Kate deserve to be honored just as all children deserve to be valued and appreciated.

However, in the midst of all this media frenzy about the wedding, we seem to have lost sight of the fact that April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. I didn't hear a peep in the national media about ways to best support children who are neglected and abused. On April 16, I did hear a tragic report about a father in Ohio who killed his wife and children, then called 911 to tell them right before he killed himself. I'm sure that many of us heard similar stories of such tragedies in other parts of the country in April.

Television advertising is very expensive so many child abuse prevention organizations can't really afford such high priced marketing. But, we honestly heard little in public service announcements about how to be aware of the neglect and abuses that happen long before a child loses his or her life. I'm sure communities were actively engaged in local prevention education activities; but, our national media needs to be more visible and supportive during a campaign of such high importance.

Rather than describe all the ways in which children are abused and neglected, I would encourage everyone to go to any Child Abuse Prevention website and find the five factors that best protect children; one is <http://www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/preventionmonth/factors.cfm>.

1) Children need to be nurtured and attached to caring adults at a very young age. It may or may not be a parent; children can and do thrive if they experience adults who let them know that they are loved, respected, guided, and protected.

2) Parents and parent figures need to expand their knowledge of child and youth development to know what to expect. As caring adults, we could all benefit from better parenting skills.

3) Raising children is one of the most demanding jobs we will ever do. We need to support parents as they improve their ability to handle every day stress and bounce back when the frustration gets to be too much (resiliency).

4) We can each be part of building a larger community that surrounds families. Good social connections are very important for children and their parents. We must be there in hard times as well as joyful times.

5) Our social support systems must provide basic resources for parents such as food, clothing, adequate housing, transportation, quality child and health care.

Every child is a Royal Member of our families, communities and nation; let's treat them as if they are -- every month -- not just in April.

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