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their schools, their friends and regular lives, all through no fault of their own as a circumstance of being abused.

In an effort to create more awareness for the victims of child abuse, D'Angelo, along with CASA Board Member Melissa Ekeberg and Division of Family and Children Services in Towns and Union Supervisor Kelly Usher, met with Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris and Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley on Wednesday, March 30.

Everyone gathered around a display of 205 blue pinwheels, a whimsical yet real reminder of the 205 abused children that Enotah CASA advocated for in 2015. The purpose of the meeting was to sign a proclamation declaring April 2016 as "Child Abuse Prevention Month."

"Children are key to Union County's future success,

prosperity and quality of life," read the proclamation. "While children are our most valuable resource, they are also our most vulnerable. Children have a right to be safe and an opportunity to thrive, learn and grow in an environment that fosters healthy development.

"Child abuse and neglect can be prevented by supporting and strengthening Union County's families, thus preventing the far-reaching effects of maltreatment and providing the opportunity for children to develop healthy, trusting family bonds, and consequently, building the foundations of community.

"Effectively intervening in the lives of children threatened by abuse is a shared responsibility, and Union County's citizens must come together so that the voices of our children are heard by all. We all must ensure that our

communities are extending helping hands to children and families in need.

"Effective child abuse prevention strategies succeed because of partnerships created among citizens, human service agencies, schools, faith communities, health care providers, civic organizations, law enforcement agencies and the business community.

"By providing a safe and nurturing environment for our children, free of violence, abuse and neglect, we can ensure that Union County's children will grow to their full potential as the next generation of leaders, helping to secure the future of this county, state and nation."

Anyone suspecting child abuse or neglect can call 1-855-GA-CHILD, which is a 24/7 hotline for people to report any kind of potential abuse or neglect, according to Usher.

"Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) for Children is a network of

community-based programs that recruit, train and support citizen-volunteers to advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children in courtrooms and communities," according to enotahcasa.org. "Volunteer advocates – empowered directly by the

Enotah Juvenile Court – offer judges the critical information they need to ensure that each child's rights and needs are being attended to while in foster care.

"Volunteers stay with children until they are placed in loving, permanent homes. For

many abused children, a CASA volunteer is the only constant adult presence in their lives."

Also joining Enotah CASA that day were members of S.A.F.E., Inc., who were there advocating for sexual assault awareness.

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to the recovery of life-saving and life-enhancing organs and tissue for transplantation therapy. With more than 5,590 men, women, and children in Georgia awaiting organ transplants, Union County outperforms the rest of the state when it comes to answering, "yes" to donation at the Blairsville Department of Driver Services.

According to Jenkins, there are four categories that reflect the percentage of people that allow organ donation; excellent, good, making progress, and needs improvement. Union County "consistently" has an excellent rating of 50-to-51 percent, besting the overall state rate of 41 percent.

"This means that out of the entire number of people that conduct business in the Blairsville DDS, over half of them say yes to donation," Jenkins said. "Your county has always met or surpassed the (state average) because

you have a lot of great people here."

The statistics show that the need for organ, eye, and tissue donation grows daily as a new patient is added to the national waiting list for an organ transplant every 10 minutes. Meanwhile, the critical donor shortage remains a public health crisis as an average of 22 people die daily due to the lack of available organs.

"We are very grateful and want to let the people of Union County know that your graciousness has saved the lives of a lot of people," Jenkins said. "We are very proud to come here and to me, it was a trip well worth it."

More than 4.7 million Georgians have already registered their decision to give the gift of life at www.donatelifegeorgia.org or when getting or renewing their driver's license or state identification card at a DDS office.

"Union County supports the life-saving mission of LifeLink of Georgia," said Commissioner Paris in his proclamation. "Donating life through organ, eye, or tissue donation is the ultimate act of generosity and kindness we Union County citizens can perform."

For those remaining on the fence regarding their decision to donate organs, please consider these facts: one organ donor can save up to eight lives and one tissue donor can enhance the lives of dozens more.

You can join Georgia's donor registry at any time by visiting the website listed earlier in this article. When joining Georgia's donor registry, you are making and documenting a decision that only you can change.

In addition to designating your wishes on your driver's license, visiting the statewide registry is encouraged so your specific wishes can be documented. By creating a profile on the site, your designation can be modified at any time.

Blairsville Cruisers host Cruise-In on the Square



Have you been to the Blairsville Square lately? It's really quite beautiful! There are great restaurants in which to eat, fine stores in which to shop and beginning this Saturday (and every third Saturday through October), a terrific car show to attend! The

Blairsville Cruisers invite you to enjoy their second car show this month, the "Cruise-In On The Square", Saturday, April 16th, from 4 p.m. to dusk. As has been the case at past shows around the historic Blairsville Courthouse, music will be provided in case you feel the need to cut a rug, scrumptious food will be available for purchase at our wonderful local restaurants (all within walking distance), and tickets for a 50/50 drawing and raffle prizes will be sold.

If that isn't enough, for a donation of \$5 per ticket (or

5 tickets for \$20) the Blairsville Cruisers will provide you with an awesome opportunity to take home a fabulous 2002 Silver Mustang GT Convertible (or \$3,000 cash; winner's choice), for which all proceeds benefit local children's charities! Whether you are participating by bringing your classic ride (there is no registration fee) or simply attending as a spectator, the Blairsville Cruisers and their many treasured car club sponsors look forward to seeing you around the Courthouse Square this Saturday for an afternoon of fun!

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