THE CITY OF BRYANT, ARKANSAS

CITATION AND PROCLAMATION TO THE CITIZENS OF BRYANT, ARKANSAS

WHEREAS, in the Federal fiscal year 2022, the Arkansas Department of Family & Protective Services confirmed 4,152 victims of child abuse or neglect, including 98 in Saline County; and

WHEREAS, child abuse and neglect is a serious problem affecting every segment of our community, and finding solutions requires input and action from everyone in our community; and

WHEREAS, the effects of child abuse are both inhumane and costly, involving the mental health system, juvenile justice system, law enforcement agencies, criminal and civil courts, and health care and educational institutions; and

WHEREAS, preventing child abuse and neglect is a community epidemic that depends upon the education and involvement of citizens from every sector of the community and can be reduced by making sure each family has the support they need to raise their children in a healthy environment; and

WHEREAS, the Commission on Child Abuse and Missing Children and Court Appointed Special Advocates® (CASA) believes effective child abuse prevention programs succeed because of partnerships created among social services agencies, schools, faith communities, civic organizations, law enforcement agencies, and the business community, and all citizens should become involved in supporting families in raising their children in a safe and nurturing environment; and

WHEREAS, Court Appointed Special Advocates® – CASA volunteers – are assigned by the court to speak up for a child's best interest and be a voice for that child in the courts; every child in care deserves a CASA volunteer, but less than half the children in care have one; and

WHEREAS, Child Advocacy Centers - CACs - were formed to provide a safe, child-friendly environment where a comprehensive and coordinated approach is taken in response to allegations of child abuse; These specially-trained individuals assist and advocate for the child throughout the entire process; During the process, the CAC staff works as part of a multi-disciplinary team that includes various local and state agencies; This team meets regularly to review all open cases, beginning with the victim's initial outcry through investigation, treatment and prosecution; and

WHEREAS, the "Wear Blue" campaign is coming to our community, bringing support for advocacy for children and heightening awareness of the plight of the most vulnerable children in our community.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that I, Allen Scott, Mayor of Bryant, AR at this moment proclaim **April 11th** as ***WEAR BLUE DAY*** in recognition of Child Abuse Awareness Month and to call upon all citizens, community agencies, faith groups, medical facilities, and businesses to increase their participation in efforts to prevent child abuse and strengthen our communities and families.

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Mayor Allen E. Scott