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PRESS RELEASE

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Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Campaign Aims to Raise Awareness of Abuse of People with Disabilities in Missouri

JEFFERSON CITY, MO/March 7, 2018 -- March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month and the Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council (MODDC) and the Arc of Missouri have launched a statewide campaign entitled "It's Happening, and We Can Stop It" that highlights the abuse, neglect and exploitation of adults with Intellectual and Developmental (I/DD) disabilities.

Adults with I/DD are being verbally, physically, emotionally and sexually abused; neglected in many ways; and financially exploited. The abuse, neglect, and exploitation is prevalent and pervasive. It happens in many ways, and it happens repeatedly to victims with all types of disabilities.

"Most people in our society refuse to believe that anyone would even consider abusing, neglecting or exploiting a person with an intellectual or developmental disability. But adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities are being verbally, fiscally, physically, and sexually abused. It's happening in every metropolitan city and in every small town in Missouri. And we can stop it", said Dolores Sparks, Program Coordinator for the MODDC. "Since 2016, the MODDC and the Arc of Missouri have co-sponsored the 'It's Happening' campaign designed to raise awareness of this problem. And because March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, we're ramping up the campaign with TV, radio, outdoor and digital initiatives in hopes that people will report such abuse."

The campaign, created by mkelly+ (www.mkellyplus.com) and Films for Humanity (www.filmsforhumanity.com) includes a website (www.andwecanstopit.org), Facebook page (www.facebook.com/andwecanstopit), TV, radio, outdoor and digital initiatives as well as a series of short films depicting real life stories of abuse, which can be viewed at www.andwecanstopit.org/real-stories

"Our goal with this campaign is two-fold. First, we want to raise awareness. Second, and most importantly, we want to get people to report suspected abuse, neglect and exploitation by calling

the Adult Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation Hotline at (800) 392-0210”, said Ed Thomas, President of the Arc of Missouri.

About the MODDC

The Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council is a federally funded, 23-member, consumer-driven Council appointed by the Governor. Its Council mandate is to plan, advocate for, and give advice concerning programs and services for persons with developmental disabilities that will increase their opportunities for independence, productivity, and integration into communities. To learn more, visit www.moddcouncil.org

About the Arc of Missouri

The Arc of Missouri’s mission is to assist people with developmental disabilities and their families in achieving the opportunity to realize their hopes and dreams. To learn more, visit www.arcofmissouri.org

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