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MISSOURI SENATE

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Sen. Jason Crowell Announces Grant to Keep Green Bear Club Running

JEFFERSON CITY— Sen. Jason Crowell (R-Cape Girardeau) announced recently that the Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) has awarded a grant for \$53,022 the Southeast Missouri Network Against Sexual Violence (SEMO-NASV), an organization which helps raise awareness and aids victims of sexual abuse in nine southeast Missouri counties. The grant will support the organization’s prevention program, the Green Bear Club, which faced the possibility of closure when funding was cut earlier this year.

The Green Bear Club received its name from a green bear puppet that is used in classrooms when explaining sexual abuse issues to young children. Later programs for older students don’t use the puppet, but instead include lessons on safe dating and accessing useful information of the Internet. The program begins in elementary schools and works with students to the college level.

“The Southeast Missouri Network Against Sexual Violence protects the children and citizens of our area from abuse and educates our students on how to stay safe,” said Sen. Crowell. “They are truly an important asset to our community and the Green Bear Club is a vital part of what they do.”

The Green Bear Club faced problems in January when funding for the program was cut by DHSS. The community was outraged by the possibility of ending the program and reached out to lawmakers for support in restoring funding.

“The grant that SEMO-NASV will receive is \$15,000 more than the organization received last year and I am happy that we were able to get that increase,” said Sen. Crowell. “This program makes a difference in the lives of children in our area and you can’t put a price tag in that sort of impact.”

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