

Touched by tragedy, Dracut grandfather works to stop shaken-baby deaths

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Updated: 05/18/2014 03:37:43 PM EDT



The Infant Cap program works to educate parents and caregivers of newborns about normal infant crying and the dangers of shaking a baby. COURTESY PHOTO

DRACUT -- When Bob Logan's 6-month-old grandson, Devin, died of a severe brain injury in 2005 as a result of being shaken in a fit of rage by the baby's father, it would have been easy for Logan to remain angry for life and do nothing.

Instead, he turned his tragedy into a mission to prevent other babies from suffering the same fate.

"I have an opportunity to help reach people, directly and indirectly, who may not know that it's not OK to shake a baby," Logan said from his Bridle Path Road home.

Logan is achieving that goal through A Child's Light Inc., a nonprofit education and advocacy group.

The group's mission is to prevent the abuse and neglect of children, whether physical, sexual, educational or emotional.

"I firmly believe that abusive head trauma/shaken-baby syndrome is a purely preventable form of child abuse," Logan said.

On June 16, 2006, Devin's biological father, 20-year-old Andrew Roberts, was arrested for the baby's death. The charge was second-degree murder. Roberts pleaded guilty on May 24, 2007, and became known as Inmate 79057 in the New Hampshire State Prison system. He was sentenced to 15 year in prison. He won't be released until July 12, 2022.

"I do not believe there was intent to harm Devin, but the rage he exhibited is despicable," Logan said. "I do not believe a child who is the victim of abusive head trauma/shaken-baby syndrome is intentionally harmed. I believe AHT/SBS is the result of an act of frustration and a lack of education.

AHT/SBS is a purely preventable form of child abuse."

While it is too late for his grandson, Logan said, "Devin is the inspiration for the work that we do and the reason we formed A Child's Light."

The Infant Cap program and The Period of Purple, which is used by the National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome in Utah, uses the infant knit caps as a symbol to educate parents and caregivers of newborns about normal infant crying and the dangers of shaking a baby.

Purple is an acronym for: Peak of crying, Unexpected crying, Resists soothing, Pain-like face, Long lasting, and Evening. The word means that crying has a beginning and an end.

"Frustration with a crying infant is the number-one trigger for the shaking and abuse of infants. New parents need to understand that just because the infant is crying; it does not necessarily mean something is wrong," Logan said.

Logan has collected about 650 knit caps made by 120 individuals, businesses and organizations, who have put their knitting needles to the task of trying to save babies.

The groups that have been donating infant caps, include: Aunt Margaret's Yarn & Gift Shop in North Chelmsford; Aldersgate United Methodist Church Knitting Ministry in Chelmsford; Elizabeth Seton Crochet and Knitting Group in Bedford, N.H.; Knitting Connection at Dracut Public Library; Stitching Up The World in Candia, N.H.; A Knitter's Garden in Chester, N.H.; and the Lowell Senior Center.

Aunt Margaret's Yarn & Gift Shop and A Knitter's Garden are offering a 10 percent product discount to individuals who are helping knit or crochet the purple caps.

Logan praised Judy Breitmaier, owner of Aunt Margaret's Yarn & Gift Shop, who has recruited over 35 people. Breitmaier has also contacted many of her suppliers who in turn donated yarn for the Infant Cap program.

New Hampshire currently has 80 percent of the birthing hospitals in the state implementing the Period of Purple Crying program, educating parents about the dangers of Shaken Baby Syndrome. Logan is trying to make inroads with hospitals in Massachusetts.

"If through our efforts we help save one child from being abused, I'll be very happy," Logan said.

For more information about A Child's Light Inc. and its Sept. 6 fundraiser at Lenzi's restaurant in Dracut, go to info@childslight.org.

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