

GASP efforts result in success

by Kathleen Folkerth

FAIRLAWN — Just when Fran Doll, the organizer of Grandparents Against Sex Predators (GASP), was getting impatient with what the group is trying to do, she got a message that showed her how important its work is.

Doll, a Fairlawn resident, founded the group last year after she was inspired to do something about child abductions. The group has since trained about 80 volunteers in how to be an extra team for law enforcement when a child abduction occurs.

The group also has gone to events and helped parents get their children fingerprinted.

Doll said that was one aspect of the group that she had been considering ceasing because of the difficulty in getting people to help with the project.

“A lot of us are older, and it’s been hard to get a team together in the hot weather,” she said.

On a recent Monday night, Doll said she told her husband about her discouragement. But she also said her nightly prayers and asked for guidance.

The next day, Doll went to the Battered Women’s Shelter to speak to a group of employees. It was during her presentation that an employee relayed a story of how GASP’s efforts at fingerprinting recently helped one of the center’s clients.

Doll said GASP had gone to the shelter and fingerprinted the children of the women being helped there. A couple of weeks after that, the estranged husband of one of the women took his children across state lines. The children’s fingerprints were used to help find the children, and a week and a half later, the mother was able to travel and pick them up with the help of authorities.

Doll said hearing about the incident gave her renewed hope in GASP’s mission.

“I got in the car and said to my husband, ‘You know, I’m going to have to keep going,’” she said. “It was so inspiring.”

But Doll said she is concerned about continued funding for the organization. The group is seeking donations to continue its work.

“We need funds so badly, and we’re so new I don’t think a lot of people know what we’re doing,” she said.

For more information about GASP, call (330) 247-1402 or go to www.gaspl23.org.