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## **For the children**

### **Candlelight walk in support of abused, neglected kids**

LANCASTER - Ashley South marched down Main Street in support of foster children and to speak out against abuse.

"It's not right to be abused or to abuse," South said.

South, 17, along with about 250 others gathered with their candles lit for the Light the Way of Hope sixth annual Job & Family Services Candlelight Walk on Thursday.

"There is abuse and people need to know there is and recognize it," South said. "It's sad, and hopefully people drive by and see us."

South spoke as part of the presentation about her past experiences with abuse and foster care.

Bonnie Barker, South's mother, joined her on the walk along with her stepfather and her sister.

"I think it's an important thing to save a child," Barker said. "If children's services didn't help us, we wouldn't be here right now."

The walk began at Fairfield County Job & Family Services on Main Street and continued to the Zane Square gazebo on the corner of Broad Street, where letters from foster

children were read as community members gathered to show support for past and present victims of child abuse and neglect.

Friends Latasha Kieffer, 16, Jessica Neal, 16, and Angela Stewart, 18, came to the walk to speak out against abuse and inform the public of the problem.

"It's basically our way of speaking out and saying it shouldn't happen," Kieffer said, who had a close family member who was abused. "It happens way more than it should."

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