GARY — A kickoff breakfast for Parenting Awareness Month in Indiana saluted those who care for "our greatest resources, our children," Indiana's First Lady Karen Pence said.

Pence was on hand to give opening remarks at a free breakfast hosted by the Indiana Parenting Institute on Friday morning. The event was held at the Centennial at 504 on Broadway in Gary, and also featured comments by Gary Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson and Gary Schools Superintendent Cheryl
Pruitt.

Remarks veered from policy to the personal as Pence and Pruitt reflected on their experiences as mothers and also the past and present goals of the Indiana Parenting Institute.

April is designated as Parenting Awareness month in Indiana, known as PAMI, and is part of the institute's Responsible Parenting Campaign. Parents are the single most important factor in a child's academic success, Pruitt said. “Parents are the first teachers.”

IPI itself “delivers evidence-based, skill-building, parenting education programs that offer practical, helpful and relevant information, instructional guidance, inspiration, encouragement and hope to today's 21st Century family relationships,” according to its website.

Its tools include parenting education, support services, public awareness initiatives and advocacy.

During the breakfast, Pence spoke of the work the First Lady's Charitable Foundation has done in the Region and other parts of the state. The efforts of IPI are particularly dear to her heart because she is the mother of three children. Parenting is “very rewarding” but also very challenging and IPI provides support and training to those who need it most. Pence shared some of her own experience, describing how the early years felt easier to her because of her training in early childhood issues. The teen years were challenging, “and we were on our knees [in prayer]” at times, she said. But her children have made her very proud of them. Children “push and push,” she said, looking for boundaries and “the boundaries are where we love them.”

Pruitt, too, shared personal experiences of being a single mother to two. She relied on help from friends, family, church and the community. “It takes all of us working together every day” to help children reach their potential, she said.
Leaving for her next appearance, Indiana First Lady Karen Pence chats with Indiana Parenting Institute President Laura Smith-Wynn.

John J. Watkins, The Times
“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”
Proverbs 22:6

April is PAMI
Parenting Awareness Month Indiana

www.indianaparentinginstitute.org
celebrate Parenting

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