



## **Annual Report from the Child Protection Advisory Board July 1, 2013-June 30, 2014**

The Archdiocese of Washington continues to work diligently to be a leader in child protection. It has had a written Child Protection Policy for over 26 years and continues to conduct rigorous background checks on individuals who have substantial contact with children. The archdiocese led the way in child protection by being one of the first to implement a written policy, provide education on child safety and require fingerprinting of employees. Today critical and relevant information regarding the Child Protection Policy and more is available online at [www.adw.org](http://www.adw.org).

An archdiocesan Child Protection Advisory Board of lay experts (including at least one victim-survivor) monitors the archdiocese's outreach and compliance with the Child Protection Policy. In addition, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops audits the Archdiocese of Washington on its compliance with the U.S. Bishops' Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. The auditors, from a third-party independent organization, conduct interviews with archdiocesan staff and review records relating to education, background checks, compliance monitoring, reporting and healing. The archdiocese has been found in full compliance with the audit every year, including this reporting year of 2013-2014.

One of the most vital parts of the Child Protection Policy is accountability. Each year the archdiocesan Director of the Office of Child and Youth Protection compiles a report for the Vicar General to present to the Child Protection Advisory Board. The Child Protection Advisory Board reviews the annual report, recommends modifications if required, then approves and circulates the annual report. This eleventh annual report covers prevention and education efforts, as well as the archdiocese's response to those who have come forward with allegations over the report period. This report once again establishes that the Office of Child and Youth Protection's primary goal is to work with the community to educate and promote child safety.

### **Education**

The Archdiocese of Washington embraces its opportunity to teach those in its communities that all children deserve to be safe and protected in all environments – home, school, religious institutions, and communities. The Archdiocesan child protection policy mandates child abuse awareness and prevention education to all adults who have substantial

contact with children or vulnerable adults, as well as safe environment education for all youth. By raising awareness among adults the Archdiocese gives them the knowledge and tools to deal with child abuse issues should they occur; and by educating children on “how to be safe” the Archdiocese enhances the ability of children to protect themselves, and encourages an environment that allows them to freely communicate any potential problem.

**Adult Education.** The program used by the Archdiocese of Washington, *Protecting God’s Children for Adults*, is nationally recognized and was developed by National Catholic Risk Retention Group/Virtus. Twenty-two (22) Virtus-trained facilitators, including several who are bilingual in English and Spanish, led this year’s education sessions. Between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014:

- 105 Protecting God’s Children training sessions, including seven in Spanish, were held at various locations throughout the archdiocese.
- 4,228 individuals, including volunteers, new employees and clergy, were trained.

**Child Education.** The archdiocese, under the direction of the Superintendent of Schools and the Director of Catechesis, continued to provide safe environment education for the children in archdiocesan Catholic schools and parish religious education programs. The Catholic Schools Office and the Office of Catechesis used materials developed by Virtus, the same company that provides the adult education materials. Other educational materials were also available. During the 2013-14 school year:

- 14,468 Catholic school students and 21,787 children in parish religious education programs received safe environment education.

## **Fingerprinting and Background Checks**

The archdiocese recognizes that background checks are a critical element in ensuring the safety of children and helping to protect them from inappropriate actions or behaviors of others. All clergy, employees and volunteers who will have substantial contact with minors while working or volunteering are required to undergo state and federal criminal history record checks before they begin working or volunteering with minors.

Since 2002, fingerprinting has been done through state-of-the art scanning via Live Scan equipment at three archdiocesan locations, with a fourth location added in 2012. Between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014:

- 1,330 employees, religious, seminarians and clergy were fingerprinted
- Electronic background checks were conducted on employees, clergy, and volunteers including: federal, state and county record checks, generating a total of 4,140 reports.

Fingerprinting services were offered on a regular schedule at four sites, including the Archdiocesan Pastoral Center in Hyattsville and parishes in Southern Maryland and upper Montgomery County, in an effort to make background check sites more accessible.

Based on a pilot project that concluded in April 2013, the Child Protection Advisory Board approved the recommendation that volunteers receive electronic background checks instead of fingerprinting. Such a change was considered to uphold just as thorough a screening,

but to provide more efficient and timely results. In compliance with local regulations, all employees, religious, seminarians and clergy of the archdiocese who have substantial contact with children are still required to undergo both an electronic background check and a fingerprint background check. On September 30, 2013, the new policy went into full effect. Currently, all volunteers must complete an electronic background check and employees, religious, seminarians and clergy must complete both fingerprinting and an electronic background check.

### **Child Abuse Allegations**

The archdiocese is committed to working with civil authorities to protect children by preventing child abuse and neglect, reporting alleged incidents of abuse or neglect, cooperating in investigations of allegations, as well as advising victims of their right to report independently and supporting their exercise of that right. Archdiocesan policy requires all archdiocesan personnel to report any suspected abuse to the civil authorities. Reporting requirements, both civil and internal, are described in the Archdiocese of Washington's Child Protection Policy, which is published in writing and available online.

The Office of Child and Youth Protection continues to assist in these reporting obligations. Staff can be contacted by telephone, email or fax 24 hours a day, to receive allegations of suspected abuse, current or past, and to report such allegations to civil authorities.

#### **Allegations against archdiocesan clergy in this reporting period.**

Four allegations of past abuse by clergy were reported in 2013-2014. Three of the priests were deceased, and one priest has not served as a priest ministering in the Archdiocese of Washington since 2002. Two of these allegations of child abuse involved archdiocesan priests who had not been previously accused and are deceased. The first allegation was made by the victim, stating the alleged conduct occurred between 1974-1978. The second allegation of abuse was also reported by the victim, alleging the conduct occurred between 1979-1981. A third allegation of child abuse involved an archdiocesan deacon who had not been previously accused and is deceased. This third allegation was made by the victim, stating the alleged conduct occurred from 1982-1985. The fourth allegation of child abuse was reported by the victim and involved an archdiocesan priest who left the archdiocese when he joined a foreign religious order in 2002. The victim stated the abuse occurred from 1999-2000. The archdiocese reported the allegation to the local authorities and the superiors of the religious order. Investigations were conducted in both locations. No criminal charges were brought against the priest. The archdiocese reported all of the above allegations to the civil authorities as required by archdiocesan policy and offered assistance with counseling and pastoral care for the victim regardless of whether the priest was living or deceased.

#### **Allegations against lay employees, contract workers and others in this reporting period.**

There were no allegations of abuse made against any lay employees, contract workers or other individuals this year.

### **Financial Resources for Child Protection Efforts**

Between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014, \$333,866.34 was spent on implementing and complying with the Child Protection Policy. This included salaries and benefits for the Office of Child and Youth Protection and the Office of Employee and Volunteer Services, materials, training stipends, fingerprinting and other equipment purchases and maintenance, and professional fees for the training program. An additional \$49,972.70 was spent on counseling and other assistance for victims and \$50,000.00 was provided in settlements in lieu of future counseling expenses.

### **Child Protection Policy Compliance**

To ensure that all clergy, employees and volunteers who have substantial contact with children are in compliance with archdiocesan child protection requirements, the archdiocese requires each parish and school to designate a child protection compliance coordinator. The coordinator maintains compliance records for the parish/school location so only those who are fully compliant may work or volunteer with children. Coordinators have immediate online access to compliance information for their location. During the reporting period, four group or individual trainings were held for 50 new coordinators.

This process for monitoring compliance has been in place for seven years and is periodically reviewed and adjusted when appropriate.

### **Communications**

The Secretariat for Communications maintained regular contact with parishes and schools on child protection matters. Information about the archdiocesan policies and procedures outlined in the Child Protection Policy continued to be disseminated utilizing various channels of communication such as the archdiocesan newspapers, church bulletins, priest/parish/school newsletters, and the archdiocesan website.

On the archdiocesan website under the Child Protection tab, several resources are available, including parent resources about the archdiocesan Child Protection Policy, safety tips for parents, as well as information about internet safety, cyber bullying, sexting, a “kid’s guide” to bullying, and healthy teen relationships. The archdiocesan website also includes other important resources to help protect children and create safe environments.

### **Conclusion and Direction for the Future**

Over this past year, the archdiocesan staff continued to focus on implementation of the policy, training of compliance coordinators and helping to ensure that school and parish leaders know what steps to take if they suspect abuse. In addition, the archdiocese continued its efforts to raise broad awareness of child safety.

The Office of Child and Youth Protection focuses on two essential factors in protecting all of God’s children: education and empowerment. The office continues to introduce proactive measures which will educate the community and therefore empower individuals to keep children safe. The office is working on three new projects:

1. One exciting new project is the production of a supplemental training video series which will be located on the Archdiocese of Washington’s

website to provide quick and immediate information on child abuse awareness to individuals.

2. Additionally, the office continues to be in constant communication with schools and parishes to ensure the Child Protection Policies and protocols are being implemented properly.
3. Finally, the Office of Child and Youth Protection was able to upgrade the Virtus “Protecting God’s Children” training for adults, and its roll-out is anticipated to be very successful in the coming year. The innovative videos and written materials address new challenges facing both children and adults on a daily basis, such as cyber bullying and sexting.

This year is off to a great start with new ventures and the Office of Child and Youth Protection Team continues to take pride in ensuring the Archdiocese of Washington remains safe for children and vulnerable adults under its care.

### **National Audit**

For this reporting period (2013-2014), the Archdiocese of Washington was once again found in compliance with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, enacted by the U.S. bishops in 2002. The archdiocese has been found in compliance every year since the audits were initiated.

### **Members of the Child Protection Advisory Board:**

Eileen Dombo, Ph.D., LICSW, Chair  
Rev. Msgr. William English  
Susan Gibbs  
Anne Hoffman, LCSW-C  
J. Thomas Manger  
Michael Nugent