



Annual Report from the Child Protection Advisory Board July 1, 2012-June 30, 2013

With a commitment to the wellbeing of young people, the Archdiocese of Washington has had a written Child Protection Policy for over 25 years. It was one of the first dioceses in the nation to have a written policy, to provide education on child protection and to require fingerprinting for employee background checks. The policy has become a model for dioceses nationwide and is available online at 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 dioceses on their compliance with the U.S. Bishops' Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. The auditors conduct interviews and review records and materials relating to education, background checks, compliance monitoring, reporting and healing. The archdiocese has been found in full compliance with the audit every year.

A key aspect of the Child Protection Policy is accountability. Under the policy, the Vicar General makes an annual report to the Child Protection Advisory Board and the Board, in turn, issues its own report to the parishioners. This tenth 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.

Education

The Archdiocese of Washington is committed to preventing child abuse before it occurs and to identifying and reporting child abuse once it has occurred. Archdiocesan policy mandates child abuse awareness and prevention education for all adults - clergy, volunteers and employees - who have substantial contact with children, as well as safe environment education for youth. At the heart of this longstanding policy is the understanding that by raising awareness among adults and increasing their knowledge and ability to deal with child abuse issues when they arise, and by educating children on how to be safe and stay safe, risks to child safety can be greatly reduced.

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-one (21) Virtus-trained facilitators, including several who

are bilingual in English and Spanish, led this year's education sessions. Between July 1, 2012 and June 30, 2013:

- 97 Protecting God's Children training sessions, including eleven in Spanish, were held at various locations throughout the archdiocese.
- 3,989 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 utilized. During the 2012-13 school year, 14,514 Catholic school students and 22,460 children in parish religious education programs received safe environment education.

Catholic school teachers constructed lesson plans primarily from the Virtus program. Content for lesson plans was available to them online at the Virtus website. Additional resources included *Circles of Grace*, *Creating Safe and Sacred Places* (grades 9-12), *Creating Safe and Sacred Places for Young Adolescents* (grades 5-8), *NetSmartz* and *CyberSmart*, as well as the *Child Lures Prevention Program*. All lessons were developed in compliance with the Archdiocese of Washington Child Protection Policy.

The Virtus website also has a "Catechist Tab" for safe environment training in parish religious education programs. This customized site had materials in English and Spanish that included lesson plans, a parent brochure and more. The materials also were included on a CD used for implementation of the archdiocesan Religion Curriculum Guide. The educational program and materials have been well received by teachers, catechists and counselors.

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.

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, 2012 and June 30, 2013:

- 3,177 employees, volunteers and clergy were fingerprinted
- Background checks conducted on each person included: Federal, State and non-fingerprint record check, generating a total of 9,531 reports.

In July 2012, a one year pilot project was initiated to test electronic background checks against the fingerprinting process. The results of the pilot project were assessed for accuracy and completeness of the information reported as well as the timeliness of the results.

The pilot project was conducted for one year. Over 3,000 volunteers and employees were background-checked utilizing both the fingerprinting and the electronic process. The results revealed that the electronic background reports contained not only all of the information revealed

in the fingerprint reports, but also, in some cases, more information than the fingerprinting reports revealed.

Therefore, in April 2013, based on the results of the pilot project, the Child Protection Advisory Board approved the recommendation that volunteers receive electronic background checks only. Such a change was considered to uphold just as thorough a screening, but to provide more efficient and timely results. All employees of the archdiocese who have substantial contact with children are still required to undergo an electronic background check and a fingerprint 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. Three allegations were reported. Two of these allegations of child abuse involved an archdiocesan priest who had been previously accused, removed from ministry, and is deceased. The first allegation was made by the victim, stating the alleged conduct occurred in 1963-1964. The second allegation of abuse was reported by a relative of the victim, alleging the conduct occurred between 1971-1972. A third allegation of child abuse involved an archdiocesan priest who had not been previously accused and is deceased. This third allegation was made by a relative of the victim, stating the alleged conduct occurred in the mid-1960's. Although all of the accused are deceased, the archdiocese reported the allegations to the civil authorities as required by archdiocesan policy and offered assistance with counseling and pastoral care for the victims.

Allegations against lay employees, contract workers and others in this reporting period. One allegation of child abuse was received involving a lay employee who worked in an archdiocesan school. The allegation involved conduct occurring in 2012. The archdiocesan school reported the allegation to the civil authorities, cooperated in their investigation, and provided assistance with counseling and pastoral care for the victim, under the direction of the archdiocesan Office of Child and Youth Protection. Announcements of this allegation, investigation, and the subsequent arrest were provided to the parishioners and to parents of the school children. Parents and guardians of children who were enrolled at this school were invited by an announcement at mass and by an e-mailed letter, to attend two separate meetings to have their questions and concerns addressed. At these meetings the Child Protection Policy and the associated background check process were reviewed, law enforcement experts presented material concerning child protection, and representatives from the Archdiocese of Washington Office of Catholic Schools and the Office of Child and Youth Protection were available to answer questions or concerns. Educational resource materials were available to support parents and guardians in speaking with their children about issues of safety and abuse.

Consistent with the Child Protection Policy, all of the above allegations were reported to civil authorities and the archdiocese offered its full cooperation with any investigation that might be initiated by the authorities. The archdiocese also offered assistance with counseling and pastoral care for the victims who came forward.

Financial Resources for Child Protection Efforts

Between July 1, 2012 and June 30, 2013, \$379,435 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 \$50,863 was spent on counseling and other assistance for victims and \$39,166 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 29 new coordinators.

National Audit

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) annually audits all dioceses on their compliance with the *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. The audit results for this reporting period (2012-2013) once again found the archdiocese in compliance with the USCCB *Charter*.

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 all available channels of communication such as the archdiocesan newspapers, church bulletins, priest/parish/school newsletters, archdiocesan website and social media venues.

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, cyberbullying, sexting and healthy teen relationships. The archdiocesan website also includes other important resources to help protect children and create safe environments.

Consistent with Child Protection Policy, the Secretariat for Communications offered open and timely communications to share with the community. For example, the Secretariat for

Communications developed and delivered information to share with the affected school and parish community regarding the allegation against a lay employee of an archdiocesan school, referenced above. A representative from the Secretariat for Communications attended the school meeting and was available to answer questions or concerns as they related to media.

Child Protection Policy – Newly Revised and Promulgated

The Child Protection Advisory Board finalized its work on revisions to the Child Protection Policy. These revisions were designed to clarify the policy and procedures and ensure continued best practices for child safety. The updated policy was approved by the Child Protection Advisory Board and became effective July 1, 2013. The promulgation of the updated policy was issued by letter from the Moderator of the Curia to all pastors, school principals and agency directors. The Office of Child and Youth Protection also promulgated the updated policy by letter to all archdiocesan Child Protection Compliance Coordinators and provided support and guidance to ensure full compliance with the policy. Multiple copies of the updated policy in English and Spanish were mailed to all archdiocesan parishes, schools and agencies. The policy was published online at the archdiocesan website.

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.

Looking ahead, the staff, with the support of the Child Protection Advisory Board, will continue to review the compliance process for volunteers and employees, and make recommendations for changes as appropriate.

Members of the Child Protection Advisory Board

Eileen Dombo, Ph.D., LICSW, Chair
Rev. Msgr. William English
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