



July 2008-June 2009 Annual Report Child Protection Advisory Board

October 2009

This year marks the sixth annual report from the Child Protection Advisory Board of the Archdiocese of Washington. The report covers initiatives undertaken from July 1, 2008-June 30, 2009 to keep children safe and to bring healing to those harmed.

The report summarizes not only prevention and educational efforts, but also the response to those who have come forward with allegations.

This year included a number of successes, including another positive national audit from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, a positive state audit of the archdiocesan fingerprinting system and the implementation of a new educational curriculum for youth in Catholic schools and religious education programs.

Education

A significant focus for the archdiocese this year was education for adult and youth.

Adult Education. Child abuse awareness and prevention education is required to for all adults – clergy, volunteers and employees - who will have substantial contact with children. The program used by the Archdiocese of Washington, *Protecting God's Children for Adults*, has been well received. It is nationally recognized and was developed by National Catholic Risk Retention Group/Virtus.

Twenty Virtus-trained facilitators, including several who are bilingual in English and Spanish, led the education sessions:

- 90 safe environment workshops, including six in Spanish, were held between July 1, 2008 and June 30, 2009
- 5,400 individuals, including volunteers, new employees and clergy, attended these sessions.

Child Education. The archdiocese, under the direction of the Superintendent of Schools and the Director of Religious Education, continued to provide safe environment education for the children in archdiocesan schools and religious education programs. During the 2008-09 school year:

- 16,952 Catholic school students received safe environment education
- 22,803 children in religious education programs received safe environment education.

This year the Catholic Schools Office and the Office of Religious Education introduced new personal safety education materials in archdiocesan schools and parish programs. The materials were developed by Virtus, the company which provides adult education materials. Under the new system,

lesson plans and materials are posted in a customized section on the Virtus website. Teachers, counselors, principals and catechists can access and download the material directly using their routine login information. School staff also can access lesson plans from *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 *Child Lures Prevention Program*.

The new materials and system were well received by teachers, catechists and counselors and implementation of the new materials and system worked effectively this year. This was a result of the last year's collaborative review process with the Catholic Schools Office, Office of Religious Education and the Office of Child Protection Services. Parish catechetical leaders and principals reported that the variety of age-appropriate lesson plans enhanced the students' learning of personal safety, increased their awareness and overall promoted a safer environment in the parish and school programs.

Fingerprinting and Background Checks

The Archdiocese of Washington has long mandated fingerprinting and background checks of clergy, employees and volunteers. Since 2002, the fingerprinting of all clergy, employees and volunteers who have substantial contact with children has been centralized, allowing the archdiocese to take advantage of effective technology and to better manage compliance. Between July 1, 2008 and June 30, 2009:

- 3,979 employees, volunteers and clergy were fingerprinted
- Two background checks were conducted on each person (FBI and Maryland State), generating 7,958 reports

Electronic fingerprinting services were offered on a regular schedule at three sites, including the Archdiocesan Pastoral Center in Hyattsville and parishes in Southern Maryland and upper Montgomery County so the process would be as convenient as possible for employees and volunteers. The cost for fingerprinting a volunteer was \$33.25 and the cost for an employee was \$37.25. The volunteer cost was paid by either the parish/school location or by the volunteer. The cost for an employee was paid by the location where the employee worked.

In March 2009, the archdiocese's fingerprinting system was audited by CJIS (Criminal Justice Information System), the Maryland state entity that processes the background checks. The March 2009 audit reviewed all processes and protocols for fingerprinting. The archdiocese was found in full compliance, with no recommendations for improvement.

Child Abuse Allegations

All archdiocesan personnel are required to report suspected abuse. Reporting requirements, both civil and internal, are clearly described in the Child Protection Policy. The Office of Child Protection Services coordinates all reports of abuse, current and past.

Allegations against archdiocesan clergy. Five allegations involving conduct occurring in the past were made against three clergy: a deceased priest, a deacon no longer in ministry and a priest whose identity could not be determined. These last two allegations could not be substantiated, despite efforts by the archdiocese to do so, based on the information provided.

Allegations were reported to the authorities following the Child Protection Policy, and the archdiocese offered its full cooperation with any investigations by the authorities. The archdiocese also offered assistance with counseling and pastoral care.

A civil lawsuit for money involving two of the three allegations against the deceased priest was filed in Delaware on June 24, 2009. The archdiocese learned of the allegations from media reports of the civil suit. There was no prior contact with the Archdiocese of Washington.

The Office of Child Protection Services continues to offer supportive services to individuals who have come forward in prior years; 12 individuals received this assistance during this reporting period.

Allegations against lay employees, contract workers and others. There were no credible allegations of child abuse against lay employees or contract workers during this reporting period.

The Archdiocese of Baltimore did inform the Archdiocese of Washington that Baltimore had received an allegation involving a former Baltimore priest that dated to the 1980s. The individual, who was no longer a priest, was working as a lay person in a Montgomery County parish. His ministry was with adults; that ministry ended as soon as the allegation was received. The archdiocese worked closely with the parish to inform parishioners. A letter was read at all Masses and sent home to all school and religious education families, even though the individual had not worked with youth, and a parish meeting was held to share information, hear concerns and answer questions. Archdiocesan staff were present during the Masses. The parish meeting included the pastor, chairman of the Child Protection Advisory Board and representatives from both the archdiocesan and parish staffs.

Financial Resources for Child Protection Efforts

Approximately \$369,325 was spent on implementing and complying with the Child Protection Policy from July 1, 2008-June 30, 2009. This included salaries and benefits for the Office of Child Protection Services 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 \$72,614 was spent on counseling and other assistance for victims; \$145,000 was provided in settlements with three individuals in lieu of future counseling expenses.

Child Protection Policy Compliance System

The Child Protection Policy Compliance System is used by the Archdiocese to monitor the compliance of adults who have substantial contact with children with the Child Protection Policy. Through this system, a compliance coordinator for each parish, school and agency has immediate online access to compliance information for employees and volunteers at that location. Coordinators are designated by the pastor. The Office of Child Protection Services provides training.

During the reporting period, six group or individual trainings were held for new coordinators. In addition, training sessions were held for all 200 plus coordinators to demonstrate the changes in the use of the Virtus system, preparation for the annual audit and answers to questions and issues raised by the coordinators. Coordinators were offered any of eight sessions held in several locations throughout the archdiocese.

The Child Protection Policy Compliance System has been in place for two full years and is functioning well. Each year since its implementation we have learned more about how the system functions on an ongoing basis. For example, the annual turnover for coordinators ranges from 5-10 percent.

National Audit

The USCCB audits all dioceses on their compliance with the US Bishops' *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. For the years 2008 through 2010, all dioceses are required to submit annual fiscal year audit reports, with a third of the dioceses having follow-up on-site audits each year. Information covering the period July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008 was submitted by the archdiocese on September 19, 2008. Based on the receipt of this information and the finding of compliance for the 2007 audit, Archdiocese of Washington was again found in compliance.

Communications

In addition to regular communication with parishes and schools, this year the archdiocese developed a resource kit as part of ongoing efforts to promote the safety and well being of children and youth. The kit was distributed to all parishes and schools electronically prior to April 2009, National Child Abuse Awareness Month. It included liturgical resources, bulletin announcements, a fact sheet on the archdiocese's Office of Child Protection Services and a series of four parent guides developed by the archdiocese. Two additional guides were added to the series in June. Designed to be used as bulletin inserts or as resources for parents, these guides covered a number of topics, including top safety tips, Internet safety, cyber bullying and archdiocesan child protection efforts. All materials were posted online at www.adw.org, under "Protecting Our Children."

A special bookmark for those working with children also was created. On one side is a blessing for those who work with children. On the other side is a quick guide of what to do if one suspects child abuse. The bookmark is being distributed to principals, catechetical leaders and others, including attendees at the adult child protection workshops.

Conclusion and Direction for the Future

The Child Protection Advisory Board is well satisfied that the Archdiocese is carrying out the spirit of the Child Protection Policy (CPP). Appropriate education, screening and training in place will help prevent child abuse, as will the resource kits being distributed. The Compliance System provides a check on screening and training child-contact personnel and volunteers.

The Board is compiling a survey designed to test the execution of the Child Protection Policy throughout the Archdiocese. The last survey, done in 2005, produced information on which several modifications to the CPP were based.