



## July 2007-June 2008 Annual Report Child Protection Advisory Board

**October 2008**

The Child Protection Advisory Board of the Archdiocese of Washington advises the Archbishop and his staff on child protection policies and procedures and monitors the archdiocese's compliance with its Child Protection Policy. Enclosed is this year's July 2007-June 2008 report, which summarizes archdiocesan efforts, particularly in the areas of education, prevention and healing.

### **Adult Education**

Child abuse awareness and prevention education continued to be offered to adults – clergy, volunteers and employees - who will have substantial contact with children. The program used, *Protecting God's Children for Adults*, is a nationally recognized program developed by National Catholic Risk Retention Group/Virtus.

This year, 12 new workshop leaders, including several who are bilingual in English and Spanish, were trained by a consultant to Virtus and began to lead education sessions, along with previously-trained facilitators:

- 97 safe environment training sessions, including six in Spanish, were held between July 1, 2007 and June 30, 2008
- 5,800 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 2007-08 school year:

- 18,251 Catholic school students received safe environment education
- 22,821 children in religious education programs received safe environment education.

The safe environment programs that were used for youth were introduced in 2003. The Catholic Schools Office implemented the national *Child Lures* program, and later started to integrate the concepts required under the Child Protection Policy into the schools' health and safety curriculum.

The Office of Religious Education developed age appropriate curriculum guidelines that were used by parishes.

During this report period, the Catholic Schools Office and the Office of Religious Education led a review of the current programs as well as other options. Staff from the Office of Youth Ministry/Catholic Youth Organization and Office of Child Protection Services, as well as individual principals, directors of religious education, teachers, counselors and parents, participated.

The programs were analyzed based on various criteria, including how effectively they had been implemented in large dioceses throughout the United States, their cultural sensitivity with regard to language and a cost analysis. Finalists then underwent a further review.

In June 2008, *Touching Safety*, a Virtus-created safe environment program was recommended for use in religious education and youth ministry programs and as the core curriculum for Catholic schools. Lesson plans from *Child Lures*, *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 also would be available as supplemental resources for the schools.

The Virtus program was chosen because it supports the teachings of the Catholic Church, has age-appropriate lessons, provides online lesson plans and other support for presenters, connects with the safe environment training for adults and has been used successfully in 31 other dioceses, including Miami, Trenton, Kansas City and Charlotte. Archbishop Wuerl approved the new programs for implementation in fall 2008.

### **Fingerprinting and Background Checks**

The Archdiocese of Washington has long mandated fingerprinting and background checks of clergy, employees and volunteers. Between July 1, 2007 and June 30, 2008:

- 6,536 employees, volunteers and clergy were fingerprinted
- Two background checks were conducted on each person (FBI and Maryland State), generating 13,072 reports

Fingerprinting services were offered on a regular schedule at three sites throughout the Archdiocese. Two changes were made to expedite and simplify the fingerprinting process this year:

- Requests for appointments can be made online, as of July 2007
- Fingerprints for background checks now are submitted electronically to CJIS, the state entity that processes them, with results often arriving in less than a week versus the 4-16 weeks of the past, and costing less (employees are now \$37.25 versus \$42 and volunteers, \$33.25 versus \$36).

The expedited fingerprinting process is the result of a new option offered by CJIS and the purchase of new equipment by the Archdiocese in early 2008 to take advantage of it.

## **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.** Six allegations involving past situations were made against clergy during the reporting period.

One was against a permanent deacon that dated to the 1990s. He had been removed from ministry in December 2007 following a charge involving a family member that dated back several decades, and will not be returned to ministry. He entered a guilty plea for both charges, was sentenced to 20 years, and will not be eligible for consideration for parole for five years.

This allegation was difficult for the parish community where the deacon served. Staff from several archdiocesan offices, including Child Protection Services, Parish Ministry and Social Concerns, Catholic Schools, and Communications, worked with the parish leadership to respond.

This included a letter from Archbishop Wuerl to parishioners that was read at Masses and sent home with students, a press release, and information sent to all clergy, parishes and youth ministers throughout the archdiocese. A healing Mass was held at the parish and Archbishop Wuerl celebrated a Sunday Mass for the community. Two parish meetings were held and staff have offered additional outreach.

Regarding the other five allegations, the information in one was insufficient to establish the identity of the accused. The other four allegations did not involve clergy in ministry:

- Two involved two separate, deceased priests, against whom there had been no prior allegations
- Two involved a single former priest who has not been in ministry for over 20 years, was accused in an earlier report period, entered a plea, served his sentence and is now on probation.

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

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

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

The Archdiocese spent approximately \$385,916 on implementing and complying with the Child Protection Policy from July 1, 2007-June 30, 2008. 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 \$111,794 was spent on counseling and other assistance for victims and \$230,000 was provided in settlements in lieu of future counseling expenses.

### **Child Protection Policy Compliance System**

The Child Protection Policy Compliance System, piloted in fall 2006 and implemented archdiocesan-wide in early 2007, was fully implemented during this report period. Each parish, school and agency has a compliance coordinator who has immediate online access to compliance for employees and volunteers at that location. Coordinators are designated by the pastor and the Office of Child Protection Services provides training.

This system enhances the capability of parishes and schools to monitor the compliance of their employees and volunteers, as well as identify and take action in situations where individuals may not be in compliance. It also enables the Office of Child Protection to monitor online the compliance of each location and the work of the coordinator, and to follow up on any concerns regarding a location.

### **National Audit**

The USCCB audits all dioceses on their compliance with the US Bishops' *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. An on-site audit, conducted the week of August 6, 2007, included an in-depth review of activities taken during the period September 16, 2005 through June 30, 2007. The two visiting auditors conducted interviews and reviewed records and materials in areas such as education, background checks, compliance monitoring, reporting and healing. The Archdiocese was found to be in full compliance, as it has been in all past audits.

### **Communications**

In addition to the outreach regarding the arrest of the permanent deacon, described above, the archdiocese sent parishes and schools material such as bulletin announcements and other information about the Child Protection Policy and training sessions during the year. A link to the material, "Protecting Our Children," is prominent on the home page of the website.

In early 2008, seven informational sessions were held throughout the archdiocese for parish leaders to update them on the archdiocesan Child Protection Policy and implementation efforts, and legislation related to child protection issues, and to answer questions and to solicit their feedback. Over 200 parishioners and clergy attended sessions, as well as Teresa Kettelkamp, executive director of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Office of Child and Youth Protection, and Sheila Kelly, assistant director.

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

The words of Pope Benedict XVI during his April 2008 visit to Washington, DC reinforce the importance of the efforts to protect children that are described in this report and the need to continue to implement the best possible programs: "It is important that those who have suffered be given loving

pastoral attention...Great efforts have already been made to deal honestly and fairly with this tragic situation, and to ensure that children – whom our Lord loves so deeply (cf. Mk 10:14), and who are our greatest treasure – can grow up in a safe environment. These efforts to protect children must continue...Today I encourage each of you to do what you can to foster healing and reconciliation, and to assist those who have been hurt.”

The focus of this coming year will be the successful implementation of Touching Safety, the new safe environment program for children. This includes training teachers and others and ongoing monitoring to verify the program is effective and to identify and address any challenges. In addition, the Child Protection Policy Compliance System also will continue to be evaluated and adjusted as needed.

The Child Protection Advisory Board welcomes your comments. Address to Child Protection Advisory Board, P.O. Box 29260, Washington, DC 20017-0260.

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