



## **Annual Report for July 1, 2009-June 30, 2010 Child Protection Advisory Board**

*Report date: January 2011*

With a commitment to the well being of young people, the Archdiocese of Washington has had a written child protection policy for nearly 25 years. A key aspect of the policy is accountability and so each year, the archdiocesan Child Protection Advisory Board makes a report to the people of the archdiocese on implementation of the Child Protection Policy.

This seventh 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 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.

**Adult Education.** The program used by the Archdiocese, *Protecting God's Children for Adults*, is nationally recognized and was developed by National Catholic Risk Retention Group/Virtus. Fourteen Virtus-trained facilitators, including several who are bilingual in English and Spanish, led this year's education sessions. Between July 1, 2009 and June 30, 2010:

- 86 safe environment training sessions, including three in Spanish, were held
- 3,718 individuals, including volunteers, new employees and clergy, attended.

The Office of Religious Education encouraged the use of a quick reference guide on child safety that was developed by the creators of Virtus at the request of the office. The guide provides parents and other adults basic information for speaking with children.

**Child Education.** Safety education is provided annually to children and youth in archdiocesan schools and parish religious education programs. This annual education reinforces key safety information for young people in an age-appropriate manner. The education is provided under the direction of the Superintendent of Schools and the Director of Religious Education. During the 2009-10 school year, 16,288 Catholic school students and 21,075 children in religious education programs participated.

The primary materials used were developed by Virtus, the same company that provides adult education materials used by the archdiocese for a number of years. Lesson plans and materials are posted in a customized section on the Virtus website, allowing teachers, counselors,

principals and catechists to access and download material. 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 lessons cover essential information such as helping young people understand who is a safe adult, the difference between safe and unsafe touches and what to do if they feel uncomfortable or are inappropriately touched.

## **Fingerprinting and Background Checks**

Clergy, employees and volunteers who will have substantial contact with minors have long been required under archdiocesan policy to be fingerprinted for FBI and Maryland State criminal background checks. Since 2002, fingerprinting has been done via Live Scan equipment, which allows the archdiocese to better manage compliance. Between July 1, 2009 and June 30, 2010:

- 3,141 employees, volunteers and clergy were fingerprinted
- Two background checks were conducted on each person (FBI and Maryland State), generating 6,282 reports

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, in an effort to make fingerprinting accessible to volunteers and employees.

## **Child Abuse Allegations**

All archdiocesan personnel are required to report suspected abuse. Reporting requirements, both civil and internal, are described in the Child Protection Policy. The Office of Child Protection Services is the lead office for reporting allegations of abuse, current or past.

**Allegations against archdiocesan clergy.** Seven allegations involving conduct occurring in the past were made against six priests. Four of the clergy are deceased; one was deceased at the time the abuse was alleged to have occurred. One of the clergy could not be identified based on the information provided; the person making the allegation declined requests to provide more information. One allegation against a priest in ministry has been deemed not credible based on the information available to date despite extensive efforts to investigate. The allegation was reported to the civil authorities and the Child Protection Policy has been followed fully.

Civil lawsuits for money involving allegations against two of the deceased priests were filed in Delaware in July 2009. One, with a family member of a deceased priest, was settled; the others were pending as of this report period.

Consistent with the Child Protection Policy, 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 for those who came forward. This year, the Office of Child Protection Services offered supportive services to eight individuals who had come forward in prior years.

**Allegations against extern clergy** (*extern clergy are from another diocese but serving pastorally in this archdiocese*). No allegations were received by the archdiocese against

members of religious orders on assignment to the archdiocese. During this period, however, the pastor of the German Pastoral Mission was removed by the German Bishops' Conference following allegations in Germany that dated back a number of years. The archdiocese worked closely with the parish council to provide pastoral care to the community. This included a letter from Archbishop Wuerl to parishioners, a meeting with the parish council, the presence of staff at Masses over two weekends, the preparation of materials to assist parents in speaking to their children and support for a meeting between parishioners and representatives of the German Bishops' Conference. The archdiocese also made a public announcement of the removal of the pastor online, in the Catholic Standard and to the secular media, and informed all parishes. These announcements included contact information for reporting inappropriate conduct.

**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.

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

Between July 1, 2009 and June 30, 2010, \$358,518 was spent on implementing and complying with the Child Protection Policy. 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 \$56,454 was spent on counseling and other assistance for victims and \$200,000 was provided in settlements in lieu of future counseling expenses.

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

The Child Protection Policy Compliance System provides child protection coordinators for parishes, schools and archdiocesan agencies with real-time information on which employees and volunteers at their location are compliant with the archdiocesan Child Protection Policy and therefore eligible to work or volunteer with children. Parish coordinators are designated by pastors and trained by the Office of Child Protection Services. During the reporting period, seven trainings were held for 25 new coordinators (annual turnover is approximately 10 percent).

The compliance system has been in place for three full years, is regularly reviewed by the staff of the Office of Child Protection Services and revised as needed.

### **National Audit**

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops audits all dioceses on their compliance with the US Bishops' *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. For 2008 through 2010, all dioceses were 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, 2008 through June 30, 2009 was submitted by the archdiocese in September 2009. Based on this information and a prior on-site finding of compliance, Archdiocese of Washington was again found in compliance.

### **Communications**

In addition to regular communication with parishes and schools and significant support for the German Pastoral Mission, the archdiocese updated and expanded its resource kit for National Child Abuse Awareness Month, observed annually in April. Kits were posted online

and sent to all parishes and schools, and were promoted in the Catholic Standard. They included liturgical resources, bulletin announcements, a fact sheet on the archdiocese's Office of Child Protection Services and a series of six parent guides developed by the archdiocese. Designed to be used as bulletin inserts or as resources for parents, these guides covered a topics including safety tips, Internet safety, cyber bullying and archdiocesan child protection efforts. All materials were posted online at [www.adw.org](http://www.adw.org), under "Protecting Our Children."

A bookmark developed in 2009 for those working with children continued to be widely distributed. One side features a blessing and the other side explains what to do if you suspect child abuse.

Finally, the Catholic Standard ([www.cathstan.org](http://www.cathstan.org)) ran a number of articles on different aspects of child protection from the archdiocesan policy to cyber bullying, and began planning a child protection series to run in 2010-11.

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

Over this past year, archdiocesan staff has continued to focus on implementation of the Child Protection Policy, training of parish coordinators and reinforcing what steps adults should take if they suspect abuse. In addition, efforts to raise broad awareness of child safety have continued.

In 2011, the Child Protection Advisory Board will begin a process to review and revise the Child Protection Policy

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

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