



Annual Report from the Child Protection Advisory Board July 1, 2011-June 30, 2012

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 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 all 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 every year.

A key aspect of the Child Protection 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 policy. This ninth 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, 2011 and June 30, 2012:

- 83 safe environment training sessions, including six in Spanish, were held at various locations throughout the Archdiocese.
- 4,246 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. During the 2011-12 school year, 15,135 Catholic school students and 22,614 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 posted on a customized section on the Virtus website under a "Teacher Tab," allowing teachers, counselors, and school administrators to access and download materials. In addition to Virtus, educators could choose 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 the *Child Lures Prevention Program*.

The Virtus website also had 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.

Since it is important that safe environment training be made available to all of our young people, special outreach was made to identify and train Virtus presenters for ethnic communities.

The educational program and materials have been well received by teachers, catechists and counselors.

Fingerprinting and Background Checks

The Archdiocese recognizes that criminal history record 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. The Archdiocese requires that they be fingerprinted for FBI and Maryland State criminal background 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, 2011 and June 30, 2012:

- 4,246 employees, volunteers and clergy were fingerprinted
- Background checks conducted on each person included: Federal, State and non-fingerprint record check, generating a total of 10,993 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 checks accessible to volunteers and employees.

In July 2012, a pilot project was initiated to test an electronic background check system and compare the information received with that obtained through the fingerprinting process. The pilot project will assess the accuracy and completeness of the information reported as well as the timeliness of the results.

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 and civil law 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 Protection Services was established 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. One allegation of child abuse was received involving an archdiocesan priest who had been previously accused, removed from ministry, and is deceased. The allegation, which was made by a relative of the victim, alleged conduct occurring in 1971-1972. Although the accused was deceased, the Archdiocese reported the allegation to the civil authorities as required by archdiocesan policy and offered assistance with counseling and pastoral care for the victim.

Allegations against lay employees, contract workers and others in this reporting period. One allegation of child abuse was received involving a former lay employee who worked in a parish. The allegation involved conduct occurring in 2001. The Archdiocese reported the allegation to the civil authorities, cooperated in their investigation and provided assistance with counseling and pastoral care for the victim.

Financial Resources for Child Protection Efforts

Between July 1, 2011 and June 30, 2012, \$369,652 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 \$42,921 was spent on counseling and other assistance for victims and \$85,000 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, eight group or individual trainings were held for 17 new coordinators. Five additional training sessions were held for coordinators requesting retraining.

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

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 (2011-2012) 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, 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 were added and updated. The parent guides were published in the *Catholic Standard* and distributed to schools in a continued effort to raise awareness. The archdiocesan website also includes other important resources to help protect children and create safe environments.

Director of the Office of Child and Youth Protection

Matthew Houle was hired as the Director of the Office of Child and Youth Protection in summer 2012 following the retirement of Marcia Zvara, who served as the first director of the office and helped to oversee the implementation of the child protection policy and procedures for nine years.

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 Child Protection Advisory Board continued work on revisions to the Child Protection Policy, with publication targeted for 2013. These revisions are being designed to clarify and simplify the policy and procedures and ensure continued best practices for 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, particularly the background check program, and make recommendations for changes as appropriate.

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