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**Office of Victim Assistance & Safe Environment  
Archdiocese of San Antonio**

*To Protect*

**APRIL IS CHILD ABUSE AWARENESS MONTH**

The month of April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. During this time the Archdiocese of San Antonio will raise awareness about child abuse and encourage the entire community to educate children and support all those who have suffered abuse.

In 1974, the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act established the need to ensure safety and welfare of children. It was in 1982 that the first week of June was designated as the first National Child Abuse Prevention Week. This assisted Congress in committing to identify and implement solutions to child abuse.

The following year, April was proclaimed the first National Child Abuse Prevention Month.

Today's efforts focus on building public will for child abuse prevention and strengthen and support families that include enhancing parenting skills.

Please join the Office of Victim Assistance in this initiative to strengthen our community to keep children safe, provide the support families need to stay together, and raise children and youth to be happy, secure and stable adults.



**INTRODUCING FAMILY TIME**

Parents and guardians can become involved with their children and open better dialogue by setting time aside to share stories, play games and create special moments that focus solely on family members working together. Family time can include a prayer that can reinforce that God is with the family and the family's faith.



In today's society it is very easy to get caught up in our daily activities of work, housework, school activities,

etc. At times we find ourselves wondering how we don't seem to have time for the children in our lives. The answer is simple, make time. Even it is one hour a week, announce to the family that it will be consistent so that everyone will realize that the day and time are set for family. After time the children will look forward to this time. Let all members of the family take turns choosing what they would like to do during this time.

# Cortez Named Coordinator of the Quarter!

Mr. Eugenio Cortez of St. Michael Church has been selected as the Office of Victim assistance & Safe Environment Coordinator of the Quarter. He has been a very active parishioner at St. Michael since 1980. He is also serves as the youth minister and pastoral council president.

Although Mr. Cortez has only recently begun training volunteers, parents, and children he as outstandingly taken an initiative of reorganizing the Safe Environment program at St. Michael. Mr. Cortez has gone out of his way to learn the safe

environment training and has completed all reports in a timely matter. His number of attendants at all trainings has been amazingly high.

Mr. Cortez is a very effective leader in our community and we are very proud to recognize all his efforts on building a safer community for all our children and empowering youth through out the Archdiocese.



## BLUE RIBBON EDUCATION

Child Abuse continues to impact the lives of our most precious children daily. Since, the late 1890s the very famous story of Mary Ellen McCormick was shared with the world that she was severely beaten and abused by her parents. Now, almost two hundred years later we continue to have children who are hurting just as Mary Ellen McCormick. Every single day there is a story of a child who has suffered abuse by the hand of their own parents. A book was recently written by Dr. Bruce Perry called *The Boy Who Was Raised As A Dog*. His story made national news in 1997 and in 2005 the story of Danielle a 6 year old girl only weighing 46 pounds and could not speak, walk, or show any type of affection, continue to affect our society. These children are just a few stories of the millions of children yearly who are affected by child abuse. Blue Ribbon Month will be recognizing the issue of Child Abuse in the month of April. Please speak to your friends, family and children of child abuse and how we can prevent this violence from affecting our loved ones and all those children who need our help.



### **How Can I Get Involved?**

- Report any suspected or known child abuse to authorities.
  - Place a banner or ribbon on your door at home, vehicle and on your clothes to show your support for Blue Ribbon Month.
  - Start a code Adam program in your workplace.
  - Volunteer for a group that raises child abuse awareness and advocates for children.
- \*CASA  
\*National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
- Receive Amber Alerts as text messages on your wireless device.



# Blue Ribbon Order Form



In Support of April as Child Abuse Awareness Month, the Office of Victim Assistance & Safe Environment will be handing blue ribbons out for all the children and youth in the Archdiocese. These ribbons are part of responsibility of child abuse awareness and prevention and helps to make all of us provide a safe environment. Please help us by completing the order form below with the number of youth enrolled in your programs. We can either have them mailed to you or we can have them ready for you to pick up. Please contact Norma @ 210-734-7786 or [ovase@archsa.org](mailto:ovase@archsa.org).

Parish: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Ribbons: \_\_\_\_\_

Pick Up \_\_\_\_\_ or Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Office of Victim Assistance & Safe Environment

1201 Donaldson, Annex Building

San Antonio, TX 78228

(210) 734-7786 or 1-877-700-1888

[ovase@archsa.org](mailto:ovase@archsa.org)

# Journey toward Healing

## MARIA GORETTI NETWORK

The Maria Goretti Network was founded in 2004 by Catholic survivors of sexual abuse. It does not matter if the abuse was physical, sexual, emotional, spiritual or mental. The MGN is for all victims of abuse.

Victims are encouraged to come forward and tell someone what happened. Too many victims keep what happened to them inside, never telling anyone. This trauma that victims keep inside often leads to guilt, shame, low self-esteem, depression, sexual dysfunction, alcohol or drug abuse, an inability to form lasting relationships.

If you have experienced severe trauma including rape, incest, kidnapping, child molestation or

physical abuse, you are encouraged to attend the next scheduled Maria Goretti Network meeting. The group is committed to work for healing of individuals through prayer and support of others on the same journey.

Next meeting:

**Monday, April 20 7:00 p.m.**

**St. Benedict  
Catholic Church**

**4535 Lord Road**

**San Antonio, Texas  
78220**



# Elder Abuse is a Crime

By Virginia Valenzuela

"Every year an estimated 2.1 million older Americans are victims of physical, psychological, or other forms of abuse and neglect. For every case of elder abuse and neglect reported to authorities, experts estimate that there may be as many as 5 cases not reported. Research suggests elders who have been abused tend to die earlier than those who are not abused, even in the absence of chronic conditions or life threatening disease."

*Elder Abuse and Neglect in Search of Solutions*



### Tips on Avoiding Elder Abuse

- ✓ If living with another, have your own phone. Send and open your own mail.
- ✓ Consider direct deposit for any regular monthly income.
- ✓ Be thoroughly familiar with your financial status and know how to handle your assets.

- ✓ Find an attorney who can advise you of legal options in the event of a disability.
- ✓ Make a will and carefully consider all revisions before finalizing them.
- ✓ If an adult relative, particularly one who leads a troubled life, wants to live with you, think it over carefully. Be especially careful if the individual has a history of violent behavior, drug or alcohol abuse.
- ✓ Be careful when asked to sign anything. Have someone you trust review the document if you are unsure of the contents.
- ✓ Be wary about deeding or willing your house or other assets to anyone who promises to keep you out of a nursing home or take care of you at home if you become disabled.
- ✓ When you need help, ask a trusted friend, attorney, family member, or physician for assistance.

**If you are a victim of elder abuse or suspect abuse of a friend or relative, contact Adult Protective Services at 1-800-797-3260.**

From the New Mexico Medicaid Fraud & Elder Abuse Division

# Scheduled Training

## April 2009

**1st** St. Pauls Community Center-Annex  
6pm OVASE Training

**15th** St. Pauls Community Center-Annex  
6pm OVASE Training

**22nd** Our Lady of Guadalupe 7-930pm  
Volunteer Training  
(English & Spanish)

## **29th** St. Pauls Community Center-Annex

6pm OVASE Training

## May 2009

**13th** St. Pauls Community Center-Annex  
6pm OVASE Training

**27th** St. Pauls Community Center-Annex  
6pm OVASE Training

## June 2009

**15th** Our Lady of Guadalupe-Helotes Hall  
7-930pm OVASE Volunteer Training



## THE DIRECTOR'S CUT

The time has come for Parish Audits. We knew that sooner or later they were coming and now they are here. We will begin by mailing each pastor a self evaluation on the Safe Environment Program. The evaluations will cover Criminal Background Checks and the adult and child Safe Environment Training. From the self evaluations, the pastor will know where improvements need to be made.

Once those are mailed and completed, auditors will begin the on-site visits. The first wave of audits will begin with parishes that have a Catholic School. We want to address the areas where there is a larger congregation of children.

Though this may sound stressful, all that is required is appropriate paperwork and documentation of training sessions, background checks, and numbers trained. If you believe that this may be a problem, do not hesitate to give us a call or email. **Remember we are here to help.**

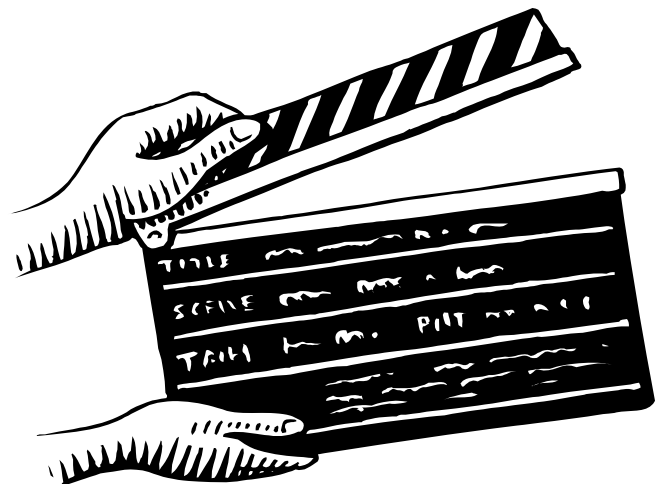
On a non-work related issue; I am the proud father of a new baby girl! Her name is Samantha and she is absolutely perfect. That now takes me to three; my twin 4 year old boys and my infant girl. I plan to have a good night sleep sometime in the year 2040.

With Spring in the air, we are only a month or two

away from the end of the school. So, please make sure that all reports are turned in as soon as possible. If no training has been conducted, please let us know what the plan is for next year.

Have a safe and blessed Easter!!

-Steve Martinez





## Office of Victim Assistance & Safe Environment

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