



**Special points of interest:**

Healing Journey for Survivors

Stalking Awareness & Prevention

News from the Director

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# To Protect

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

### STALKING: KNOW IT! NAME IT! STOP IT!

One of the major barriers to protecting ourselves and the victims we work with is identifying the issue of stalking. Stalking is not an isolated problem it coincides with abuse. In fact it is a behavior that often emerges in domestic abuse/violence situations, most often if not always after the relationship has been ended by a partner. It is also known to occur before and after a sexual assault. Stalking is a predictive behavior of sexual assault. Therefore, there are steps to help create public awareness.

Stalking is defined as a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear, according to the National Center for Victims of Crime. Over 3.4 million people over

the age of 18 are stalked each year in the United States. Most often our justice system addresses the crime of stalking only after the stalker has committed an act that the stalking laws were meant to prevent. We must know it in order to name it and in order to stop it...STALKING!

The month of January has been designated as National Stalking Awareness Month. For more information or if you are a victim of stalking please contact law enforcement and get more information and resources at [www.ncvc.org](http://www.ncvc.org).



### APRIL IS CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

The month of April has been identified as Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month. This is an opportunity to raise awareness along with engaging our children, families, schools, parishes and the entire community to get involved with ending neglect and abuse of our innocent youth. The Office of Victim Assistance & Safe Environment and the Archdiocese of San Antonio acknowledge the importance of children and parents who require a supportive environment of



empowerment that helps them access the tools they need to be safe. Free educational materials will be provided to all parishes and Catholic schools for all children in order to promote awareness. Let us all reach out to our children and pray for their protection. For further information on activities to spread blue ribbon month please contact Tracie or Norma @ (210) 734-7786.

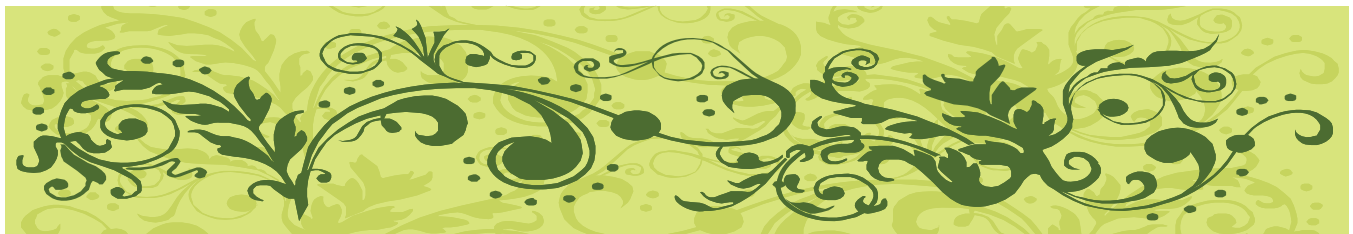
## **Richard Olivarez St Luke Church Recognized as OVASE Coordinator of the Quarter**

The Office of Victim Assistance & Safe Environment proudly announces Richard Olivarez as Coordinator of the Quarter. The Office of Victim Assistance & Safe Environment helped other coordinators complete facilitator and faith formation volunteer training at their parishes. Despite his busy schedule Mr. Olivarez has assisted OVASE with Spanish trainings.

Mr. Olivarez has served as the Safe Environment Coordinator at St. Luke Church since 2009. Although Mr. Olivarez is a new safe environment coordinator he has really gone above and beyond to make our ministry successful. He has held several safe environment trainings and has enthusiastically

Several workshop attendants have called OVASE to compliment his knowledgeable and gentle approach to teaching others about the sensitive issue of child abuse.

Mr. Olivarez also serves as youth minister, mass server coordinator, retreat



## *Child Abuse Prevention Education Begins @ Home*



As parents and volunteer who minister to children, one of the most important responsibilities we have is to keep our children safe and happy. When it comes to their personal safety, the best way to prevent child abuse is to have open, honest discussions on a regular basis. These conversations should begin in the home with mom and dad.

OVASE is inspiring change through a call to action for all parents to change the way they think about the prevention of child abuse and focus on actions that protect children right from the start so that child abuse and neglect never occur.

The Office of Victim Assistance and Safe Environment with the help of two very special OVASE coordinators Sr. Esther Lucio and Alice Ortiz of St. Lawrence who translated the Parent Handbook to Spanish. Please distribute these handbooks to all parents in your parish. There is a verification sheet on the last page where parents can sign and return to you. Coordinators should keep these signed verifications on file for audit purposes. The Parent Handbook is available in English and Spanish and can be downloaded from our website [www.archsa.org-Child Abuse Prevention](http://www.archsa.org-Child Abuse Prevention).

# Mothers Who Kill Their Children

Shocking, stunning, and upsetting is how most people feel reading this headline. However, more than 200 women kill their children in the US each year, (American Anthropological Association). Also, 3-5 children a day are killed by their biological parents. Are you still telling yourself that homicide of a child by their parent is a rare act only committed by someone who is crazy. Recently, our community has had several cases of mothers brutally murdering their children. To understand the motives or the source of their impulse to kill their loved ones lets look into several studies conducted on this subject. It seems that most of the conclusions agreed that few of the mothers suffered from real psychiatric problems. Yes, all of the women studied showed signs of being pressured and lack of social or marital support, economic difficulties, family stress, and unrealistic expectations of parenthood. This sounds like the daily lives of most mothers in America. So how do we prevent another loss of an innocent life. In every instance the mother

out cried to friends and family feelings of severe depression along with delusional-like wishes that themselves and the children be dead and free of life's tribulations. Most friends and family did not take their vaguely-put intentions seriously. It sounds just too horrible and a mother wouldn't couldn't do such a thing. They can and will! Society must quiet the denial and take an active role in recognizing actual child abuse and intervene supportively before anything else can be done.

All parents need classes in recognizing depression and child abuse prevention. They also need a place to seek assistance during crisis situations. Loved ones must listen and support mothers to seek help.



Did you remember to say "I Love You" to your teen today?



You wake up and you've overslept. The morning becomes a rushing race of where's my backpack, getting dressed, breakfast, and getting your kids to school. We can easily get lost in the routines of our daily lives. When I worked as a teacher in the schools most teens walked in upset that they had already been yelled at by a parent and the day was just beginning. Did you hug and tell your teen I Love You today? Well if the answer is no it's a

good habit to start. As soon as your kids are up the first thing they should hear and the last thing before bed should be I love you. This gives teens the message that they have a firm unconditional loving foundation to stand on when they may be facing difficult teachers, bullies, relationship issues and the list continues.

Our teens have so many issues they face daily that hearing I love you can help to eliminate feelings of isolation. Most teens express that they don't hear enough encouragement from parents. Even fathers should express their feelings and take the time to say I love you.

# Surviving the Silence and the Healing Journey

Sexual abuse is one of the most shaming types of abuse. Feelings of shame, guilt, and loss of power are affects that silence many survivors of sexual abuse of their pain. This silence when carried for a day to a week then to years becomes very damaging to a person. This silence of shame is covered up by a super achieving perfectionist or an addict of alcohol, drugs, sex either one of these persons is driven to cover up the hole in their soul. A person's ability to deceive is part of our true self's ability to survive.

Working towards acceptance of the true self can help move a person from silence to the awakening journey of healing. Of course this can be a difficult process alone. Seeking out those who can help whether it is a pastor, counselor, therapist, support

group helps the journey. During this journey the shame, guilt, and loss of power can be replaced by integrity, unity, empowerment and much more. Empowerment takes a person from victim to survivor.



*“What am I, an infant crying in the night,  
Crying for the light and with no language but a cry.”*

## Stalking Awareness & Prevention

According to the Attorney General of Texas, you have the ultimate right to defend yourself against a stalker. Everyone has the right to be free from intimidation or terrified.

A stalkers goal is to control his/her victim through aggressive behaviors and threatening the persons job, loved ones, life, etc in order to intimidate their partner. Their state of mind changes from obsessive love to obsessive hatred. A stalker follows their victim off and on sometimes getting others to act on their behalf. They like to isolate the victim from friends and family. This allows the stalker more control, the more the victim fears the more likely the stalker can get his/her needs met.

Stalkers follow victims patterns, vandalize their property, make threatening calls, texts or emails. Stalkers sometimes threaten suicide to get victims attention and sympathy.

The Texas Penal Code Section 42.072 states that the penalty of stalking is a third degree felony, unless if there is a prior conviction for stalking, in which case the penalty is upgraded to 2nd degree felony.

### What to do if you are a victim:

1. **Notify police.**
2. **Keep a diary.**
3. **File Protective Order.**
4. **Record telephone conversations.**
5. **Take pictures of stalker following you.**
6. **Keep all correspondence.**
7. **Tell Everyone around you (family, neighbors, friends, co-workers)**
8. **Do not dismiss any threat and or contact.**
9. **Develop a safety plan.**



# Scheduled Training



**14th** St. Paul Community Center-Annex

6pm-7pm Safe Environment Training

**12th** St. Paul Community Center-Annex

6pm-7pm Safe Environment Training

**30th** OVASE reports due.

**28th** St. Paul Community Center-Annex

6pm-7pm Safe Environment Training

**26th** St. Paul Community Center-Annex

6pm -7pm Safe Environment Training

## THE DIRECTOR'S CUT

Thank you to those who participated in the 08-09 Audit. We passed with flying colors. Sadly, there is no time to rest. We must begin to get ready for the 09-10 Audit.

Please make sure all reports are turned in soon. We need to know the numbers trained and the names of the adults who have been trained. If there are any problems with reporting or training, please let us know. We can't help unless we know you need the help.

We are currently working on creating a database of all those who have been trained. Norma has been imputing names into the database so we can hopefully be able to tell parishes who needs to be trained at each site. Norma has done a great job, but her only complaint is that not everyone prints their name. Please try to get those you train to print their name on the Sign-in Sheet.

Thank you to all the volunteers who make this ministry possible. It takes special people to make this ministry work, and I know that I have the best volunteers doing the best they can to help keep our Archdiocese safe.

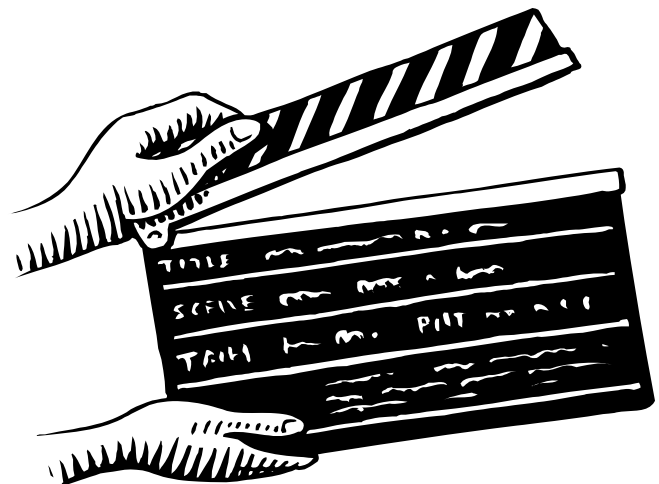
We are making a difference. All the abuse cases make the headlines, but there are success stories.

Tracie and I hear success stories all the time, so please don't give up hope. Your work is helping those in need and it is protecting our children. Never forget that.

We will begin to share success stories on the newsletter, so please keep sharing them with us. Remember to check our website for additional information on abuse prevention and look for our TV show, To Protect, on CTSA.

Thank you,

-Steve Martinez





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