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

To Protect

CREATING SAFE ENVIRONMENTS: VIOLENCE PREVENTION

A new school year is just around the corner. The past few months have been filled with days of planning and preparation for educating our youth. Therefore, we must also include strategies for protecting our youth during these times of gathering whether it is back to school functions, shopping at the mall or teens reconnecting through social on-line chat networks.

Discussing the sixteen different ways a sex offender can lure a child can be a very effective tool in preventing child abuse. Discuss scenarios with kids and open up a dialogue where they feel comfortable

to discuss real life situations their friends may have experienced.

As they attend back to school functions discuss a safety plan. Safety plans can include staying aware of a child's surroundings, letting parents know where they are at all times, always stay with a friend or larger groups of kids. Most importantly if any situation makes them feel uncomfortable they should immediately speak with their parent or another adult they trust.



LATCHKEY KIDS

At what age can a child be left alone at home? This continues to be an issue that our modern society faces. It is reported that over a million of American kids go home afterschool or stay during summertime in empty houses to supervise themselves. The number of latchkey kids has increased dramatically due to , single parenting, divorce, and increase in both parents entering the work force.

Texas law does not specify an age at which a child can be left alone. It generally depends upon the following



factors: age, maturity level, amount of time the child will be alone, and accessibility of an adult in case of an emergency should be taken in to consideration.

Siblings who care for children should not be younger than twelve years of age. How many children will be in the care of a sibling and other factors should also be carefully thought out.

Always set rules and develop back-up systems so that the child is aware of what is expected by the parent.

Joseph Aguilera
Our Lady of Perpetual Help
Church & School
Named
OVASE Coordinator of the Quarter

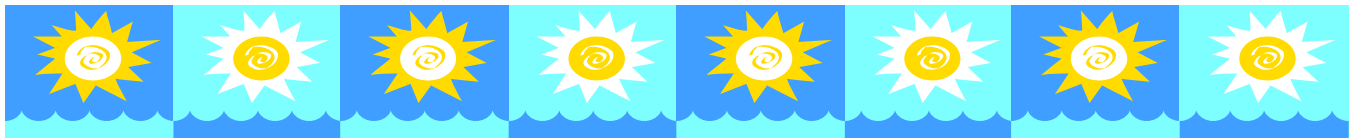
The Office of Victim Assistance & Safe Environment proudly announced Joseph Aguilera as Coordinator of the Quarter.

Mr. Aguilera has served as the Safe Environment Coordinator at Our Lady of Perpetual Help School and Church since 2004. He was one of the very first coordinators trained and has diligently lead the safe environment program educating all staff, volunteers, parents and children on child abuse prevention. He is also the school counselor.

You can always count on Aguilera to be

very compassionate and advocate for equality of all children. His expertise in Family Therapy has been an added bonus to our program.

Aguilera has brought very special gifts to this ministry including spirituality, a devoted Catholic role model, relates well with children and is a very articulate speaker. Above all he has been very consistent with training, turning in his reports and working with OVASE staff.



You Can Make a Difference

Being a good parent today is a challenge. Here are some tips created by the Virginia Coalition for Child Abuse Prevention. These tips can help create a loving relationship with children and still set and enforce the limits they need.



- When children misbehave, let them know you dislike what they did and not who they are.
- Rewarding good behavior is more effective than punishing misbehavior.
- Try to “catch” your children being good. Be generous with your praise.
- Punishment should be used to help teach children about the consequences of their behavior. Never punish in anger.
- Setting a good example is the best way to teach your children how you want them to behave.
- Physical punishment teaches a child that hitting is OK.
- Words hurt. If you tell children they are stupid or lazy, they will grow up believing that.
- Make it a habit to spend time together. Make bedtime into story time and read together, for example.

ELDER FRAUD

WHY YOU SHOULD BE CONCERNED

“There are only four kinds of people in the world—those who have been caregivers, those who currently are caregivers, those who will be caregivers and those who need caregivers.” — former first lady Rosalynn Carter . This quote emphasizes the reason all of us should be concerned about elder fraud or any other type of abuse affecting older adults in our society.

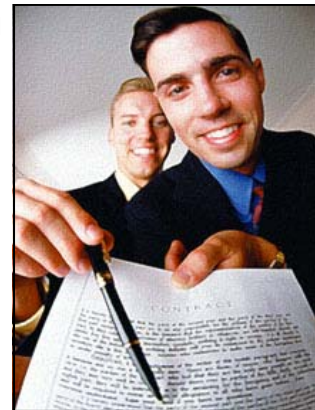
Taking advantage of the elderly is especially outrageous and something that unfortunately is happening much too often. The perpetrators are not always the perceived slick con artists who sell stuff door to door or out of car trunks, but often reputable businesses or organizations are responsible for such unscrupulous actions.

The San Antonio Express-News recently reported on a case involving a well known, long established upholstery company that had charged a 92 year old woman more than \$62,000 for drapes for five windows.

Had it not been for the woman’s daughter keeping an eye on her mother’s finances; this company would have gotten away with a huge sum of money. According to the newspaper article, “In the not too distant past, such cases were considered civil matters to be resolved via lawsuit.

Not any more. Legislation is allowing such theft cases to be prosecuted as second-degree felonies if they involve a person over 65 years which has greatly raised the stakes...”

So yes, we should all be concerned not only for our elderly parents, neighbors and friends, but for ourselves as well.



OUR ELDERS SHOULD NOT LIVE IN FEAR



According to the National Center on Elder Abuse—the true national incidence or prevalence of elder abuse is not known although various studies have attempted to estimate the size of the problem. Unfortunately the problem is largely hidden under the shroud of family secrecy. The signs of elder abuse are not recognized, leading to gross under-reporting.

In 1991, for example, researchers estimated that 2.5 million people were victims of various forms of elder abuse. This figure was adjusted in 1996, based on state reporting data to suggest that there were between 820,000 and 1,860,000 abused elders in the country each year.¹

Want to learn more about how you can help prevent Elder Abuse? The Task Force Against Elder Domestic Violence present “Impact of Aging on Domestic Violence Prevention and Intervention” is meeting on Friday, September 18 at St. Anthony de Padua Catholic Church.

For more information, contact: Concepcion Gonzales at 210- 207-7310.

1.Tatara, Toshio and Lisa Kuzmeskus, *Summaries of Statistical Data on Elder Abuse in Domestic Settings for FY 95 and FY 96* (Washington,DC: National Center on Elder Abuse, 1997).

Dangerous & Unintended Consequences of Teens Sexting

Sexting has become very popular amongst our teens across the United States. What is sexting? Sexting is a clever way to name the act of sending, receiving, or forwarding sexually explicit photos via a cell phone.

Teens will say that its no big deal and is part of their risk taking experiences. However, sexting is now leading to very serious consequences. Teens are being arrested and charged with child pornography and many of these pictures are ending up on the internet.

In recent news reports of a 15 year old girl in the state of Ohio was arrested on child pornography charges for sending nude picture of herself to a boy and the pictures ending up being forwarded to all her classmates in her high school.

He forwarded the pictures to all of her classmates. Also a 13 year old boy from Texas was also facing similar charges for having a nude picture of a fellow student on his cell phone. Later, in January three 14 year old girls were arrested in Pennsylvania for disseminating child pornography because they also sent nude pictures of themselves to their boyfriends. Their boyfriends were also arrested and charged for possessing child pornography.

Parents must speak to their adolescents about the consequences of sexting and monitor their cell phones.



Breaking the Culture of Silence

Abuse continues to hurt the most vulnerable amongst us all-our children. Recently, a 17month old boy was severely burned when cooking oil from a frying pan was poured all over his genitals. According to the report his mother and her boyfriend were the perpetrators of this cruel act. The boy also suffered second degree burns to his chest, back and head. In Honolulu an infant was thrown over an overpass the baby was hit by two vehicles and died. In New York a father bit an eyeball out of his four year old son's face.

All of these stories seem extreme and harsh. Yet, these stories are effecting our children everyday. As seen in these cases all three children were too young to speak out. Therefore, it is up to those adults around these children to get involved and speak up when a suspension of abuse occurs.

Many children are scared, ashamed or feel guilty and therefore keep silent. Most children love the people who abuse them. This causes confusion and many children hide the abuse in fear that their loved one will get in trouble.

If you suspect or are aware of child abuse of a friend or relative, contact Child Protective Services at

1-800-252-5400.



Scheduled Training



13th Sacred Heart School
Faculty Training

2nd St. Pauls Community Center-Annex
6pm OVASE Training

4th Georgie Briscoe Resource Center
10am-12pm Uvalde Deanery Meeting

29th St. Pauls Community Center-Annex
9am-4pm OVASE Coordinator
Training

3rd St. Peter Upon the Water
10am –12pm Fredericksburg Deanery
Meeting

6th Our Lady of Guadalupe in Helotes
7pm-930pm OVASE Training
(English & Spanish)



24th St. Pauls Community Center-Annex
9am-4pm OVASE Coordinator
Training

THE DIRECTOR'S CUT

With the start of the new school and catechetical year upon us, we must remember all the tasks that we must do in order to develop the Safe Environment at your location.

All staff that minister to children must be trained on abuse prevention. Training is good for 3 years. So, if you trained your staff last year, then only new staff members would need to be trained. Of course we need to know the numbers trained and the names of those trained.

Parents need to be offered a training before the children are trained. Have a date and a flyer developed so it can be handed out during registration. Parent guides have been developed by Tracie and are available on our website. Have the parent sign the back and turn in the form; this can count as parent training.

Of course the last part is to actually train the children. That responsibility falls upon the catechists or the teachers. Training should begin in October and end in April. Once again we will have a hand out for the children in October, so please start letting us know how many you will need.

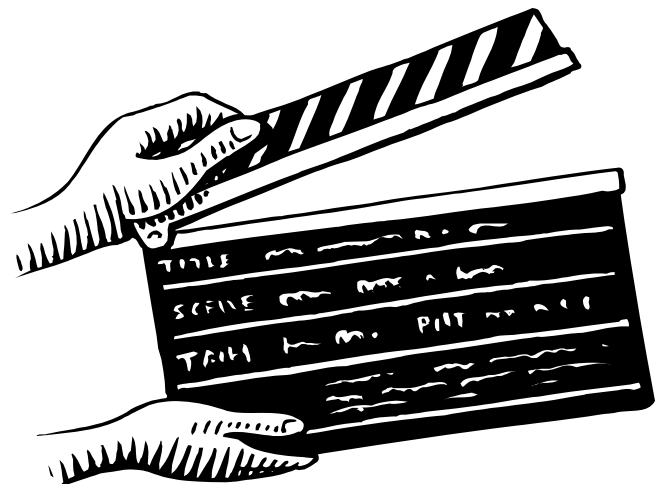
Sadly, there is paperwork that must be turned in. We had to make it a little difficult for you!! We need

a letter from the pastor acknowledging that the training is occurring at your location. We also need a calendar of training dates and any advertising done (fliers or bulletins). Lastly, we need number of those trained, and names of adults trained.

Our website has all the forms needed and additional information that can be used to train adults. Plus, we have additional resources to teach children including coloring books, comic books, and videos. Just let us know what you need and we will get it to you.

Our goal is to make this Archdiocese the safest it can be!!

-Steve Martinez





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