



Reminders:

- New Coordinator Training Saturday May 5th
- Coordinator Refresher Trainings scheduled for Tuesday April 10th & Saturday April 14th

Individual Highlights:

- Child Abuse Awareness Month 1
- Look Before You Leave 2
- Emergency Lure 3

*The Office of Victim Assistance and Safe Environment
1201 Donaldson*

*San Antonio, Texas 78228 210-734-7786 1-877-700-1888 www.archdiosasa.org
This newsletter is for VASE Coordinators-Archdiocese of San Antonio*

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

Although every year we observe the month of April for being Child Abuse Prevention Month, we should also realize that the problem of child abuse continues every day in all walks of life. In 2004, it was estimated that 872,000 children in the United States experienced some sort of child abuse or neglect. An even more painful statistic points out that in 2004 there were an estimated 1,490 child deaths associated with abuse or

neglect, and that approximately four children die daily as a result of child abuse.

Some good news is that the Archdiocese of San Antonio continues to strive to address the issue of child abuse head on. As a result of the hard work and dedication of the Victim Assistance and Safe Environment Coordinators that serve our Archdiocese, close to 100,000 children have been educated on child abuse since 2004. That is an

amazing effort and the numbers of children reached within our Archdiocese continue to grow everyday.

Take the time during the month of April to promote child abuse awareness. This can be done not only at the church level, but in schools and in our homes as well. Taking five to ten minutes of your day to talk with your children is a great way to spread the message of prevention.

For more information go to:

www.preventchildabuse.org

Summer Heat Can Mean Danger to Kids

It's almost that time of year again. Time for all of us to raid our closets and bring out the t-shirts and shorts because summer is quickly approaching! With this in mind, parents, teachers, church staff, and volunteers should be aware of how the impending summer heat can negatively affect children.

It may be all too common to see children left in cars, even if for a few brief moments, waiting for their parents who may be on a quick errand. This action

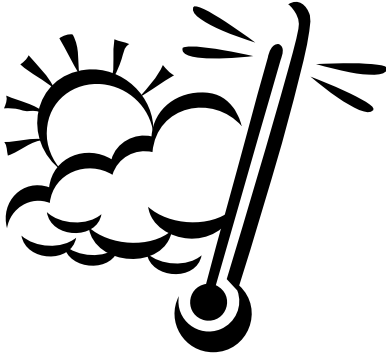
may cause a child to be placed in immediate danger, especially during the hot summer weather that we experience here in south Texas.

In response to this concern, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS) have introduced a new campaign, *Look Before You Leave*. This program promotes child safety by educating parents, caregivers, and other adults about the concerns of leaving your child behind in the car and

preventing further injuries or fatalities from occurring as a result. TDFPS reports that in 2006 the first hot car death in Texas was reported on May 16, and that three children in Texas died last summer as a result of being left behind in cars or trucks. They also reported that in 2003 Texas led the nation in hot car deaths, 10 to be exact.

See Look Before You Leave, page 2.

Look Before You Leave (Continued from page 2)



Leaving children trapped inside hot cars can cause heat exhaustion or heat stroke (this can lead to death or permanent disability). Heat stroke can lead to shock, irregular heartbeat, seizures, heart attack, & brain, liver, and kidney damage.

TDFPS reports that parents not only leave their children behind to attend to errands, but at

times parents may forget a sleeping child in the backseat of the car.

If a child under the age of seven is left alone in a car for longer than five minutes, it is considered a Class C misdemeanor. If the child sustains any injury during this time, it may result in a penalty of 6 months to 2 years in jail and a fine up to \$10,000.

Source: Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

For more information go to:

www.dfps.state.tx.us

See *Kids and Cars: How to Prevent Tragedy* page 5.

Handout Time!!



Now that it is Child Abuse Awareness Month, OVASE has handouts for all the children and youth in the Archdiocese.

These small handouts are a token from our office to allow your teachers and catechists an opportunity to complete the abuse prevention program for the school year. For children pre-k through 4th grade we have stickers. For the youth 5th grade on up we have pencils. The Office

of Victim Assistance & Safe Environment wants to remind the children and parents that the Archdiocese of San Antonio will continue to be leaders in abuse prevention education.

Please contact our office as soon as possible to let us know how many you will need. We can either have them mailed to you or we can have them ready for you to pick up



Future Trainings

For those coordinators who have served our office, as well as the Archdiocese of San Antonio since 2004, we will be holding Safe Environment Coordinator Refresher Trainings. These trainings are

mandatory, and their purpose is to keep our more seasoned coordinators abreast of all of the latest additions and changes to our Safe Environment training program and curriculum, as well as any new

paperwork or policies that have been introduced. If you have a question or concern about these trainings, please contact our office for assistance.

See **Future Trainings**, page 3.

Future Trainings (Continued From Page 2)

Any absences from this training must be approved by our director, **Steve Martinez**. There are three training dates that have been scheduled for these refresher trainings. Please select one of the following dates to attend and reserve the date by calling or emailing our office. Trainings will be held at the OVASE. The dates are as follows:

☞ **Tuesday April 9, 2007 from 6 to 8 p.m.**

☞ **Saturday April 14, 2007 from 9 to 11 a.m.**

For any incoming/new coordinators that will be joining us, we have also scheduled a Safe Environment training. This training will be held at the OVASE and the date is as follows:

☞ **Saturday May 5, 2007 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

Please contact our office if you are a new coordinator who is planning to attend this training.

Other scheduled upcoming Parish trainings are as follows:

✚ **St. Gregory's Parish: Thursday March 29, 2007 from 6 to 8 p.m.**

✚ **Resurrection of the Lord Parish: Tuesday May 8, 2007 from 7 to 9 p.m.**

If your parish is in need of assistance with Safe Environment training for volunteers/staff or parents, and you would like assistance from our office. Please contact our office for assistance.

The Emergency Lure: How Parents can Protect Children from Becoming a Victim

Hearing that a loved one has been in a life-threatening accident can affect us in so many ways. This type of news may cause us to experience a heightened sense of panic which in turn can cause a variety of physical, emotional, and mental changes.

Physically: It can cause our adrenaline levels to rise and our heart rates to increase. We may even experience stomach pain or nausea.

Emotionally: We can

develop or experience increase anxiety and nervousness followed by a sense of panic. A report of a loved one being involved in an emergency may also cause us feelings of anguish, depression, or anger. These feelings may occur almost instantaneously.

Mentally: Something of this nature may cause us not to think logically or rationally. We may also tend to 'think the worst' before getting the most accurate information concerning our loved

ones' condition or circumstances.

Take the time to imagine how a child might feel hearing that their parents or caregivers have been harmed or in some sort of an accident. Children are vulnerable to the emergency lure because they are dependent upon their parents, guardians, or other adults to take care of them on a daily basis.

See **Emergency Lure**, page 4.



Emergency Lure (Continued from page 3)

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of sound mind.

2 Timothy 1:7

Children also experience all of the same things that adults experience such as panic, physical symptoms, and lack of rational thought which makes them an even easier target for a predator.

There are ways that we can prevent children from falling prey to the Emergency Lure. It is important for families to discuss their 'plan of attack' if a member of the family is involved in an emergency.

Here are some **helpful tips** that parents can use for emergency planning with their children:

★ **Designate a specific person other than the parents to notify children at**

school/daycare if there has been an emergency involving family members. This must be a trusted person outside of the family or another family member such as grandparents, uncles/aunts, etc.

★ **Create code word or phrase with children that they would associate with emergency. The child may or may not know the person notifying them, but that person MUST know the code. For example: If someone notifies a child at school that his parents have been involved in an accident, they must say the word "APPLE" when notifying**

the child. Make sure that this code word is kept private amongst family members.

★ **Emphasize to the children that just because a person may know their name, does not mean that they know the child.**

★ **Use cell phones to contact children if possible (if both the child and parents have access to cell phones).**

★ **And remember, always remind children to TELL their parents or a trusted adult immediately if they are asked to leave or get into a car with anyone who is not their parents or guardian.**

News & Notes from the Director

If you have Time Warner Cable make sure you are catching *To Protect* on CTSA channel 15. The show is hosted by me, Steve Martinez and it covers topics concerning the safety of the community. It airs live on the 4th Monday of the month at 11:30am. It is then replayed throughout the next three week at various times. If you have any

suggestions for the show, feel free to give me a call. Our website has been renovated. All the information is up to date and it has a section where you can find all the newest forms. Thank you to all the safe environment coordinators who continue to educate the community on abuse prevention. Without you this ministry could not be

the success that it is. Last but not least, I need to give thanks to the backbone of OVASE. Nancy Garza Martinez keeps this office smiling and running. When you speak with her please give her thanks for all of her hard work.

Kids and Cars: How To Prevent Tragedy

- ★ Never leave your car keys where children can get them.
- ★ Keep car doors and trucks locked at all times, even in the garage or driveway.
- ★ Teach children not to play in or around cars.
- ★ Never leave your child unattended in a car, even if the windows are down and a wind shield shade is in place or even to run a quick errand.
- ★ Make sure all children leave the vehicle when you reach your destination.
- ★ Don't overlook sleeping infants!
- ★ Make sure that the seat belt and seat surface are not too hot before buckling up your child.
- ★ When you and your children exit the car, place a windshield shade in front and back windows to help cut down on the heat.
- ★ Make sure that kids' arms, legs, fingers, and toes are safely inside before closing doors.
- ★ Keep the rear fold-down seats closed to prevent kids from getting into the truck from inside the car.
- ★ Contact your auto dealership about getting your vehicle retrofitted with a trunk release mechanism.
- ★ Be wary of child-resistant locks – make sure they function.
- ★ If your child does get locked inside a car, get him or her out as soon as possible. If you can't get him or her out yourself, call 911 or your local emergency number immediately.

Information adapted from Kids in Cars and National Safe Kids Campaign.

LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAVE



CARS are NOT Babysitters

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
Child Care Licensing
www.lookbeforeyouleave.org

Source: Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
Child Care Licensing
www.lookbeforeyouleave.org

Our Upcoming Audit...It's Just Around the Corner!

Thanks to all coordinators who attended one of the Audit meetings held by the OVASE in the month of February. With the Audit at hand, we would like to stress the importance of everyone's continued effort to submit training reports, pastor letters, yearly schedules, and sign-in sheets. **Here is a brief summary of audit information:**

- ① Audit period is from July 1 to June 30
- ② Items to be kept at the parish for audit purposes:
 - Reporting forms
 - Sign-In sheets
 - Class Rosters: These can

be the initial registrations for each class

- Calendar of scheduled trainings
- Pastor Letter
- Exception forms (if any)
- ③ New Paperwork:
 - Revised Reporting Form- **Please use this form.**
 - Pastor Letter: Needs to be signed by pastor and turned in each audit period. One needs to be turned in now.
 - Schedule of Training: Each audit period a schedule of training must be completed and turned in to our office. It doesn't have to be 100% accurate, but tentative dates must

be provided.

- ④ CYO
 - CYO coaches will be taught at the CYO level. You no longer need to train these individuals.
 - They will receive training every year.
 - ⑤ News & Notes
 - Internet: The office will have an updated homepage. All forms are located on this page.
 - Forms: **Please use the forms that we have provided.**
 - Make sure that staff assisting in summer activities with children are trained. The children will not need to be trained unless it is for a two week period.

- Our office is available to assist **anyone who has been abused.** It doesn't have to be by clergy or Church personnel. Please refer to us when possible.

Thanks again coordinators for all of your hard work and service. Our program's continued success would not be possible without you. If anyone has any question or concerns involving the upcoming audit, please feel free to contact our office.

Office Of Victim Assistance And Safe Environment

1201 Donaldson
San Antonio, TX
78228

PHONE:
210-734-7786
1-877-700-1888

FAX:
210-738-8278

E-MAIL:
Steve Martinez, Director
smartinez@archdiososa.org

Brooke Doegey, Interim
Associate Director
doegey77@sbcglobal.net

Nancy Garza-Martinez,
Administrative Assistant
ovase@archdiososa.org



We're on the Web!

See us at:
www.archdiososa.org

Services We Provide....

The Office of Victim Assistance and Safe Environment offers immediate pastoral care for those who have been abused by clergy. We also provide education on prevention of child abuse to Archdiocesan staff, clergy, volunteers, parents and children who attend any Catholic school or parish in our Archdiocese.

If you or someone you know has been abused by clergy, please call our office at 210-734-7786 or 1-877-700-1888. **All calls are confidential.**

It is our promise that you will be treated with dignity, respect and we will listen and believe you.

If you would like information on child abuse or neglect, you may also call our office and we will be glad to send you some information on this issue our community faces.

We want to hear from you - Call for ideas!

We are in need of your ideas! This newsletter is published quarterly. If you have anything that you would like to be published in it, please send it in to our office. We are looking

for success stories, events, trainings, or kudos to those who should be recognized in helping make your parish or school a Safe Environment.

Please email your ideas to OVASE@archdiososa.org by **July 15th** for the August issue. In subject line, please put Newsletter.

OVASE
1201 Donaldson
San Antonio, Texas 78228

TO: