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Stop It Now! NEWS

The Campaign to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse

Message from Pamela McMahon, Chair of the Board of Directors

Transition to New Leadership at Stop It Now!

Welcome to a special edition of our newsletter marking the transition to new leadership on pages two and three. We also celebrate two tremendous successes: a Congressional Briefing, found on page five and an Op Ed in The Washington Post, reported on the back page.



Pamela McMahon

As far as transitions go, we all know it is difficult to leave behind the comfort of what we know and face the unknown. Yet, transitions are essential to the growth and life of an organization. During my leadership of the board of directors, Stop It Now! has experienced many changes; I am confident that our future is bright with possibility.

Supporters of Stop It Now! must be proud of our accomplishments to date, including nudging the research community with questions about modifiable risk factors for perpetration of child sexual abuse, advocating for the public health approach to primary prevention, and anchoring prevention programs in public health science. Now, under the direction of our new President and Chief Executive Officer, Maxine Stein, there are exciting new paths to pursue. Maxine brings a national perspective and enthusiasm to Stop It Now!. She is experienced in developing coalitions, stabilizing funding, and growing programs. At Stop It Now!, these skills will lead to a thoughtful expansion of sites, the exploration of child sexual abuse as it relates to other forms of violence, and the development of more creative child sexual abuse prevention programs. The Board and I look forward to a dynamic new era under Maxine's leadership.

At the same time, we bid Fran Henry goodbye with the utmost respect. As the founder of Stop It Now!, Fran revolutionized the field of child sexual abuse prevention. She tirelessly advocated for the public health approach to primary prevention and forced program developers and researchers to take her ideas seriously. The concepts she began discussing long ago were foreign to many, but today, the fruits of her labor have taken hold. Our society, accustomed to punishing abusers and thinking of them only as impervious to help, now embraces programs with her philosophy at their core. Fran refused to be silenced until we acknowledged that we were failing our children by our tenacious belief that abusers are not amenable to change, and that sexual abuse could not be prevented *before* it occurred. As a culture and as a field, we are indebted to Fran Henry's work and vision. We know she will long continue to be a friend and supporter of Stop It Now!



▪ SITE NEWS

▪ PHILADELPHIA

Stop It Now! Philadelphia, funded by the Ms. Foundation, has joined with other organizations in Philadelphia to create the North Philadelphia Community Council for Family Violence Prevention. The purpose of the Council is "... to empower community partners and residents to proactively address the issues of family violence through prevention, education, outreach and referrals to individuals and families from North Philadelphia and surrounding communities." The launch of the council was officially announced in an April press conference.

▪ MINNESOTA

Stop It Now! Minnesota conducted a public dialogue to a standing room only crowd at the 111th Annual Training Conference for the Minnesota Social Service Association. The panel of presenters included two survivors, a recovering sex offender and a treatment provider from Stop It Now! sponsoring agency Project Pathfinder. Stop It Now! Minnesota is also beginning a market research project with The Watson Group, a social-marketing research firm. The goal is to gather information specific to Minnesota and add to the knowledge base of what works to prevent child sexual abuse.

Letter from Fran Henry

Dear Reader and Supporter,

Please take a moment with me and recall where the field of child sexual abuse prevention was in the early 1990s when I founded Stop It Now!. Most people still thought that sexual abusers were the strangers lurking in playgrounds and parks. People taught programs in schools to help children assume rights to their own bodies and to be vocal about unwanted touch, but prevention stopped there. The only work funded by the public sector was in child protection and criminal justice—after the harm had been done.

Stop It Now! grew with the insights gathered from many fine people, including, always, a strong and capable staff. Together we forged a social change agenda based on the then radical idea that adults, not children, are responsible for preventing child sexual abuse. With the powerful tools of public health and the daring collaboration of abuse survivors and recovering sex offenders, we began to see citizens motivated to change their behaviors. We did not know twelve years ago if people who had committed crimes against children would call the helpline. They have. Twelve years ago, we did not know if people would say they feared they had a sexual behavior problem. They do. For twelve years, we have engaged in public advocacy, research and public education, and we have helped to build a field of prevention where there was none before.

Yet, there is [still] so much work to be done. And, though it may not make sense at first, it is for exactly the sake of that work that I am leaving Stop It Now! at this time. Please know that I have not made this decision lightly. After several years of careful assessment, I have come to believe that the kinds of skills and experience that I brought to launch, and initially grow, Stop It Now! are not the same ones that are needed now to achieve the organization's next level of success. The Board of Directors and I have worked on the transition for three years, and I am thrilled at the outcome. I believe that Maxine Stein is an excellent choice as the new leader of Stop It Now!, and I look forward to seeing the organization advance under her direction.

I thank you, readers and supporters, for your caring and consideration of Stop It Now!'s ideas. I thank the people who have joined the Founder's Safety Net for Children and every other person who has sent us a check to pay for prevention. I thank the foundations that have given us generous grants and provided seed capital for our ideas. I thank the Expert Panelists and others who have provided intellectual capital.

I am especially indebted to the sponsors of each of our Stop It Now! sites, where the heart of our work is done: the Joseph J. Peters Institute in Philadelphia; the Lucy Faithfull Foundation in the United Kingdom and Ireland; Project



Fran Henry, left, J. Edward Hill, center, and Maxine Stein, right, at the Congressional Briefing

Message from Maxine Stein

A New Era for Stop It Now!

I am honored to write as the incoming President and CEO of Stop It Now!. I have come to this organization because I think its work is groundbreaking and courageous. I believe passionately in the essential work of preventing child sexual abuse and protecting our communities by encouraging healthy, and extraordinary, dialogue about difficult issues. Most importantly, I believe that Stop It Now! is truly making a difference.

On the most basic level, Stop It Now!’s model of prevention makes good sense to me. We turn to the most responsible agents of social change - adults - and give them language and resources to break the cycle of abuse before it happens. We encourage and support people who seek help because they feel at risk to abuse and who are willing to do the work necessary to change their behaviors. And we hold everyone accountable for their actions.

I am indebted to Fran Henry for her pioneering work, and I feel so fortunate to be joining the team that she leaves behind: a committed Board, the Expert Panel members, and a brilliant staff. To this strong and solid foundation, I offer my 25 experience in non-profit management, my belief and skills in building coalitions and relationships, my ability to articulate a message and a mission, and my strategies to strengthen funding. I expect my most recent experience as the Executive Director of the National Ovarian Cancer Coalition and my past experience working with adult survivors of child sexual abuse in New Hampshire to serve me well in leading Stop It Now! towards national and international growth. As we become a stronger and louder voice in the public health arena, our impact will reach farther than we can now imagine.

I thank you all, in advance, for your support. I look forward to working together with the Stop It Now! community on a continued journey of social change that keeps children safe, heals families, and gives hope to all who want to end the tragedy of child sexual abuse.



THE FOUNDER’S SAFETY NET FOR CHILDREN, a giving circle started last year, welcomes those who wish to pledge at least \$1,000 for each of the next three years. We are pleased to report that every Board member of Stop It Now! has joined with multi-year commitments. Current members of the Founder’s Safety Net are:

Jeannette Atkinson
Jean Beard
Alan Berkowitz
Linda Bowen
Steven Brown

Lisa Chasan-Taber
Sarah Creighton
Robert Falconer
F. Felix Foundation
William Ferguson

William Ford
Joan & Wil Hastings
Fran Henry
Ellen Kaufman
Larry Kressley

Jenny Ladd
Sally Levering
Pamela McMahan
Timothy McNally
James Mercy

N.J. Pierce
Barbara Tabachnick
Anonymous

LETTER FROM FRAN HENRY CONTINUED FROM PAGE TWO

Pathfinder in Minnesota; Prevent Child Abuse Georgia in Georgia; and the Safer Society Program and Press in Vermont. Vermont holds a special place in my heart as it was the flagship program, encouraged by my mentor, Fay Honey Knopp, who died in August 1995, one month before the program was launched in Governor Dean’s office. I thank the hard-working staff at the Division of Violence Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. I thank the many individuals who I do not have space to name but who have provided advice and guidance when we confronted the many obstacles on our way.

Finally, I thank the members of the Board of Directors, past and present, and the amazing staff of Stop It Now!, both nationally and at each of the sites, who have shown me how the truths embedded in our ideas can be lived out in society. I started Stop It Now! as a struggling survivor of child sexual abuse with a vision for change. I leave a thriving organization poised to work with others to make the sexual abuse of children a relic of the past.



Helping Families Before Sexual Abuse Happens

Through thousands of helpline calls, we have heard families struggling with the warning signs of possible child sexual abuse, but they have nothing to report and no access to resources. The situations they describe are not innocent sexual exploration nor clear sexual abuse. Until now, we have not been able to clearly demonstrate how frequently we receive these calls.

Beginning in 2004, we added new categories to collect data from our helpline to identify the populations we reach using public health principles. We now categorize our calls into the three levels of public health prevention: **Indicated**, **Selected**, and **Universal**. When talking with callers, we use the terms red, yellow, and green light, which is language adapted from the work of Dr. Toni Cavanaugh Johnson.

Indicated prevention (Red light calls) are situations in which there is evidence that child sexual abuse has been perpetrated. The focus here is on making a report and getting help and treatment for all involved to prevent further perpetration.

Selected prevention (Yellow light calls) are situations in which there are concerns but no evidence. Together with callers, we identify the *risk factors* in the situation and help the caller add in *protective factors* to prevent abuse *before* it is perpetrated and to ensure the safety of all involved.

Universal prevention (Green light calls) are situations where people request information. In these calls, helpline staff provide education to the general population to provide tools to ensure that the people they love do not enter risky situations.

As a result of our new record-keeping, we learned that 60% of people call about situations where there is the opportunity to prevent sexual abuse before it is perpetrated. These are Stop It Now!'s ideal calls because we have reached families before a child is harmed.

by Amanda Horowitz

CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFING CONTINUED FROM PAGE FIVE

Fran Henry, Founder of Stop It Now!. The panel presentations were followed by a lively question and answer period.

Stop It Now! solicited and received wide professional support for the Congressional briefing. Fifty-two organizations including the American Psychological Association, American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children, Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers, Child Welfare League of America, Institute for Community Peace, National Call to Action, National Children's Alliance, Prevent Child Abuse America, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, Generation Five, and others, endorsed the briefing by signing on as supporters. The overwhelming, broad-based support for the content of this Congressional briefing that was expressed by both legislative and federal offices, and the non-profit world, indicates not only understanding of the need for primary prevention of sexual abuse, but a commitment to change: together with the criminal justice and child protective systems, the public health system can be utilized as a powerful "front-end" prevention force to prevent and end child sexual abuse.

Video cassettes and audio tapes from the briefing are available. If you would like to receive a copy, please contact Alisa Klein, Stop It Now!'s Director of Public Policy, at aklein@stopitnow.org or (413)268-3096, Ext. 18.

by Alisa Klein

■ GEORGIA

Stop It Now! Georgia launched their primary prevention campaign in April, coinciding with Child Abuse Prevention Month. In May, they sponsored a round table discussion with Georgia Juvenile Court judges to help them understand their role in prevention, and they presented a workshop with other Stop It Now! sites at the Third National Sexual Violence Prevention Conference, sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Los Angeles.

■ UNITED KINGDOM AND IRELAND

Stop It Now! UK and Ireland hosted a conference in May entitled – *Meeting the Challenge: Child Sexual Abuse a Public Health Issue?*. The meeting was held at the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons to encourage health professionals to become aware of what the medical community can do to prevent child sexual abuse and featured Stop It Now! expert panel member, Mark Rosenberg, MD, as a keynote speaker. In administrative news, John Brownlow, central coordinator for Stop it Now! UK and Ireland since 2001, has been selected for a new role with the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. John leaves behind a prosperous program for a new coordinator to oversee.

by Michael Pease



Congressional Briefing Educates Legislative Staff

On April 23, Stop It Now!, together with the American Public Health Association and the American Medical Association, held the first-ever Congressional briefing on the public health prevention of child sexual abuse on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. The meeting was co-sponsored by the Senate offices of Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA) and Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA). More than one hundred people attended the event. Legislative staff from both the



Dr. Walter Tsou



William Ford

House and Senate, as well as staff from federal agencies such as the U.S. Surgeon General's office and the Department of Health and Human Services spent over one and a half hours learning more about public health strategies that prevent child abuse before it occurs, including the prevention of perpetration. Staff from diverse organizations also attended the briefing, including the American Prosecutor's Research Institute, the Child Welfare League of America, the American

Psychological Association, and many others. Journalists from National Public Radio, Children and Youth Funding Report, and Psychiatric News, covered the event.

The briefing panel was composed of national experts who presented information on the importance of responding to child sexual abuse with primary prevention strategies and who encouraged policymakers to provide the field of public health with the tools it needs to prevent child sexual abuse before it is perpetrated. Panelists included **Dr. Walter Tsou**, the President-Elect of the American Public Health Association who also served as the briefing moderator; **Dr. Rodney Hammond**, Director of the Division of Violence Prevention of the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; **William Ford**, Co-Founder of Mustard Seed Forensic Services; **Dr. J. Edward Hill**, Trustee of the American Medical Association, Chair of the AMA's National Advisory Council on Violence and Abuse and member of the Executive Committee of the National Call to Action: A Movement to End Child Abuse and Neglect; and

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STOP IT NOW!

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President and CEO

Stop It Now!'s mission is to prevent sexual abuse before it happens. Our public education, public policy and research programs call on abusers, people at risk to abuse, and the family and friends who know them to act on behalf of the children in their lives. Our national, toll-free helpline provides hundreds of callers every year with little known information and resources. Through our innovative public health methods, we motivate adults to protect children.

EXPERT PANEL

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Vermont Human Rights Commission

Judith Becker, PhD
University of Arizona

Suzanne Brown
Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs

Robert Burakoff
Robert Burakoff Consulting Services

Gail Burns-Smith
Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc.

Ed Carter
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* Organizations listed for identification purposes



STOP IT NOW! IN THE NEWS

Expert Panel member **Mark Rosenberg, MD**, and **Fran Henry, President of Stop It Now!**, were the authors of an editorial in the *The Washington Post* on March 23rd. Titled "Stop Abuse Before It Starts," the piece informed readers of how much public health strategies can contribute to preventing child sexual abuse, and can be found at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A16410-2004Mar22.html>.

Stop It Now! staff presented workshops at the following places in in April, May and June: the **Trauma Research Education and Training Institute**; the annual conference of the **Massachusetts Adolescent Sex Offender Coalition (MASOC)** and the **Massachusetts Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (MATSA)**; a discussion forum sponsored by the **Massachusetts Coalition for Sex Offender Management (MCSOM)** and the **Massachusetts Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Partnership (MCSAPP)**; the **Wellesley Centers for Women 2004 International Research and Action Conference**; the **National Sexual Violence Prevention Conference** sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; the **Association for Sexual Abuse Prevention—National Children's Advocacy Center Conference**; the **International Online Child Sexual Victimization Symposium** sponsored by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

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We are interested in your comments and suggestions. Please e-mail or write to us at:

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