



Collections

Paternos back anti-abuse program at state colleges



Sue Paterno paid most of pilot effort's costs.



GALLERY: Sue Paterno paid most of pilot effort's...

By Susan Snyder, Inquirer Staff Writer

POSTED: April 10, 2015

For a while after she found the tablet on which her husband had been writing in the days before his death, Sue Paterno could not bring herself to read it or even touch it.

Then she did. And, she believes, the legendary Pennsylvania State University coach was sending a message.

"Maybe the silver lining in this is that some good can come of this," Joe Paterno wrote in his journal in January 2012, about two months after his onetime assistant Jerry Sandusky was charged with sexually assaulting young boys and Joe Paterno was fired.

Those words became the seed for Sue Paterno's effort to prevent child sexual abuse on college campuses. On Thursday, the fruits of that effort will be shared with the Board of Governors of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education.

"I thought we had to do something," Paterno said this week, noting that colleges often host minors for camps and other programs. "It's a monumental problem out there none of us were aware of, and we are slowly becoming aware of."

She joined with Stop It Now!, a nonprofit child sex abuse prevention group founded in 1992, which was looking to conduct a comprehensive pilot version of a training program geared toward colleges. Paterno paid nearly the entire \$220,000 for the two-year program at the system's 14 schools: West Chester, Cheyney, Bloomsburg, California, Clarion, East Stroudsburg, Edinboro, Indiana, Kutztown, Lock Haven, Mansfield, Millersville, Shippensburg, and Slippery Rock.

About 150 faculty members, students, athletic officials, public safety workers, administrators, and others were trained and then dispatched

0 1 0 @
 Like Tweet +1



YouTube Advertisers

YouTube Video Advertising
 Watch it Work for Your Business. Try YouTube Video Ads Today.

We Recommend

Paterno's family makes his will public
 June 16, 2012

PSU gives Joe Paterno's kin \$5.5M
 April 20, 2012

Penn State releases details of Paterno's final contract
 April 20, 2012

Paternos continue push to restore coach's standing
 February 13, 2013



to train others - about 2,000 people in all.

Called "Circles of Safety for Higher Education," the program teaches participants to recognize warning signs, brainstorm where on campus problems could occur, role play, and nurture the "courage," "commitment," and "comfort" to deal with potential instances of abuse, said Deborah Donovan Rice, the project's director.

"We talk about people in the training becoming heroes in the lives of the children," she said.

An evaluation of the program by the Prevention Innovations Research Center at the University of New Hampshire, hired by Stop It Now!, suggested that the training helped participants become more aware of abuse warning signs and potential abusers.

The evaluation also said participants developed "greater certainty" of their ability to intervene or prevent such situations.

Victoria Sanders, an assistant vice chancellor in the state system, praised the program for "pretty quick results in terms of attitude and understanding of what child sexual abuse is and how to recognize it."

She said about 300,000 minors come onto the 14 campuses annually for camps and other events.

Penn State was not asked to be part of the pilot program, said Scott Paterno, the coach's son, because its organizers were looking for a more diverse system and because the university already was involved in its own reform efforts.

He said he contacted Stop It Now! after reading that Mallory Hagan, Miss America 2013, had worked with the organization to highlight child sexual abuse awareness. The state system was chosen in part at the urging of Marie Conley, a Harrisburg-area consultant who works with the Paternos and is on the state system's board of governors.

Scott Paterno, who knew Sandusky as a child, said he grew up thinking a child sexual predator could never thrive in State College, a seeming utopia. "We didn't think it could happen here, and it did," he said. "How many other communities are living under the same belief?"

The Paternos say they hope the program will expand to colleges nationwide.

"I am thrilled," Sue Paterno said of the early results, "but I don't want it to end here."

ssnyder@phillynews.com 215-854-4693 @ssnyderinq www.inquirer.com/campusinq



You May Like

Sponsored Links by Taboola

Difficult Decisions Now Easier Thanks To IBM Tradeoff Analytics

IBM

You NEED To See These 20 Pictures of Kobe Bryant With Wife Vanessa Bryant Through the Years

Rant Sports

Tour Naomi Judd's Nashville Home

ULIVE

Learn About the Signs and Symptoms of Ankylosing Spondylitis

Livestrong for Healthline

19 Female Celebrities Who Don't Show Their Age

POPHitz

This Outspoken "Shark" Investor Reveals Brilliant Mortgage Payoff Tip

Bills.com

More From The Web

More From Philly.com

- **Unbelievable: One-Third Of WrestleMania VI Competitors Now Dead** (ThePostGame)
- **You NEED To See These 20 Pictures of Kobe Bryant With Wife Vanessa Bryant Through the Years** (Rant Sports)
- **Tour Naomi Judd's Nashville Home** (ULIVE)