Spotlight on Safe Environment

2021 Issue 7

Safe Environment : Victim Assistance

The position of victim assistance coordinator was established in the "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People" in 2002, by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, in response to the sexual abuse crisis. Victim assistance programs are meant to show the church cares about abuse victims and transparency is a priority. Mary Beth Hanus has been the Victim Assistance Director in the Archdiocese of Omaha for the past 17 years. In those 17 years, Mary Beth has been instrumental in creating an environment where victims feel that they are heard and supported. She advocates for the mental health needs that help them overcome the trauma caused by abuse. Mary Beth has extensive background in working with victims of abuse and neglect. Before coming to the Archdiocese, she was on staff at Children's Hospital as a clinical social worker helping families and children through a variety of crises with an expertise in dealing with child sexual abuse cases. She also was a forensic interviewer with Project Harmony. As a child forensic interviewer, she gained valuable experience in helping victims express what had happened to them without retraumatizing them. We are blessed to have such an accomplished professional in our Archdiocese.

After alerting authorities, contact Mary Beth Hanus at 402-827-3794 or mbhanus@archomaha.org if you have been abused or are aware of abuse that is occurring or has occurred by anyone acting in the name of the church.

Did you know?

Many dioceses across the U.S. have published Clergy abuse lists. The Archdiocese of Omaha's list can be found at; archomaha.org under the Victim Assistance Tab. The list is updated quarterly.

Safe Environment training attendees are saying:

"Although the trainers' real life stories were sad, we learned a lot about what our children deal with and how important it is that we protect them and advocate for them."

Sacred Heart, Norfolk

"I thought I knew what to expect today, but I was wrong. This had new information and was way more useful than I thought it would be. I wish that all of the public schools and different sports clubs would implement this."

St. Stephen the Martyr, Omaha

Safe Environment Champion:

Terri Bush, and All Saints School

Terri is the principal at All Saints School which is part of the CUES system. She leads a group of very dedicated teachers and staff that strive every day to create a safe environment for the children in their charge.

In the past month, Terri became one of our newest trainers for the adult *Circle of Care* abuse training program.

We thank Terr and her amazing staff for all they do to keep kids safe.

Safe Environment Coordinators

Most parishes and schools in the Archdiocese have a Safe Environment coordinator. This person can assist you in many ways. For example, finding out when your certification expires, updating your username and/or password for the Catholic Mutual account and helping locate trainings.

Check it out:

Women's *"The Way"* Healing Retreat

The Victim Assistance Ministries of the three Catholic dioceses in Nebraska have combined resources to offer a three day women's healing retreat. The retreat is for those who have suffered abuse of any kind and at any age. Past participants found it to be a profoundly healing experience. The retreat will be held July 23rd—25th, 2021 in Schuyler, Nebraska at the St. Benedict Center.

You are encouraged to contact Mary Beth Hanus, Director of the Victim Assistance & Outreach office to visit about the retreat and potential other healing resources.

402-827-3798 or mbhanus@archomaha.org

Circle of Grace Corner:

Circle of Grace starts in kindergarten with the lesson that we hope will stay with the children through out their lives.

Where is your *Circle of Grace*:

Raise your hands above your head

Bring your arms slowly down

Extend your arms in front of you and then behind you

Embrace all the space around you

Then reach down to your feet

Know that God is in this space with you

Check out the Circle of Grace meditation site https://vimeo.com/207836764 for a demonstration of this important concept and help your child remember God is always with them.

Blessing from our Circle of Grace to yours!

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EQUIPPING DISCIPLES
LIVING MERCY

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