

# To Protect

Office of Victim Assistance  
& Safe Environment



## Special points of interest:

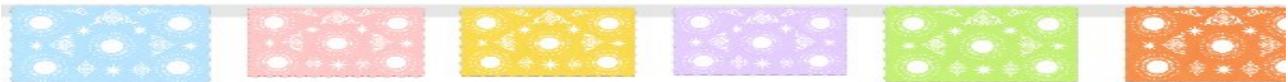
Blue Ribbon Campaign  
A Reflection of Gratitude  
Director's Cut

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## Blue Ribbon Campaign

### FIESTA MEDAL EXCHANGE & Open House

Bring your Parish or School Fiesta Medals (if any) to exchange (*not purchase*) with others and our small office staff and pick up Child Abuse Prevention

### Resources!!

135 Barilla Place, 78209

Thursday, April 4, 2019

From 11:00– 1:00pm.



(medals will be limited to 75 medals per location and will *only be available* that day, we WILL NOT hold any)

Light snacks will be provided. Please call and RSVSP.



# Social Media & Child Abuse

## Prevention by: Storie Arredondo



Social Media apps such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are turning into tools useful in the plight of reporting suspected child abuse. Not only are users posting family vacation photos, or what the family had for dinner, but they are also uploading content that police are using to protect abused children.

In 2016, the Facebook community helped rescue a child in danger in Colorado. A woman recorded a video of a child being abused by their mother and had another friend report the abuse to police. However, when the woman discovered the child was still with its mother, the woman decided to post the video to Facebook. It was shared thousands of times, copied and uploaded to YouTube. The case was forwarded to the district attorney and hours later, the mother was arrested and the child taken into protective custody.

In March of 2019, a man and woman were arrested on child abuse charges after a waitress who saw bruises on their baby's face at an Olive Garden in Kentucky posted a photo of the family on Facebook. The waitress said the couple came into the restaurant with a baby girl who appeared to have been "beaten in the face" so she took a photo of a group at a nearby table to capture the couple and the children behind them. The waitress said the man and the woman started to get suspicious and quickly paid their check to leave, so the waitress said she followed them outside, wrote down their license plate number, and called 911. When she got home, the waitress posted the photo to Facebook, asking anyone who may recognize the man. About an hour later, a 911 dispatcher for the Metropolitan Police Department in Illinois,

messed the waitress, identifying the man. Within a half hour, the police had the man's address in Tennessee and the 33 year old, along with the 20 month old's Mother, are now being held on \$200,000 bond each.

### How Can You Help?

If you see images on social media of a child being physically abused or sexually exploited, most social media apps such as Facebook, ask that you contact your local law enforcement IMMEDIATELY.

Second, report the photo or video to the app. Most apps will ask that you DON'T share, download, or comment on the content. It can be criminal to share, or send messages with photos and videos of children being sexually abused and exploited.

Locally, when making a report of suspected abuse, it is important to have as much information on hand as possible. At minimum, the following information must be included in the report:

- The name and home address of the child and the parent or other individual responsible for the care of the child
- The present location of the child
- The age of the child (or approximate age)
- Names and ages of other children in the home
- The nature and extent of injuries or sexual abuse or neglect of the child

- Any information relayed by the individual making the report of any previous possible physical or sexual abuse or neglect
- Information available to the individual reporting that might aid in establishing the cause of the injury or neglect
- The identity of the individual or individuals responsible for abuse or neglect

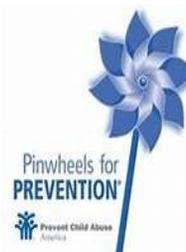
To report suspected abuse in Bexar County:

By phone: 1-800-252-5400

Online: [www.TxAbuseHotline.org](http://www.TxAbuseHotline.org)

For emergencies: call 911 immediately if you have an emergency or life-threatening situation.

Texas law says anyone who thinks a child, or person 65 years or older, or an adult with disabilities is being abused, neglected, or exploited must report it to DFPS. A person who reports abuse in good faith is immune from civil or criminal liability. DFPS keeps the name of the person making the report confidential. Anyone who does not report suspected abuse can be held liable for a misdemeanor or felony.



We all play a role when it comes to the healthy development of our nation's children.

## A Reflection of Gratitude:

SJS for Excellence.

That's how we began our heading for any and every bit of classwork we submitted. We were proud students. I loved my Catholic school. I loved my uniform, and I loved our community. I am a product of Catholic school education. From elementary to University, I attended Catholic school. Just like many of you, I nervously awaited the release of the Report on Sexual Abuse by Clergy. I waited with an uneasy dread, praying I would not find any name from any childhood priest I had encountered.

Thankfully, none were listed. I then began to think about those who DID provide a Safe Environment for us students; the community it took to protect us.

I recall singing my little lungs out in the choir loft of my Southside church during choir practice. Choir practice was held during our school day and I recall that there was always a Nun with us. We had a lay-person choir teacher and we were never left alone with them. As I was up in the choir loft, I remember looking below and watching the Priest and the Alter Servers during their practice. As always, sitting in the front row, to the left, another Nun. Ever present, ever watchful.

I had no clue, at that time, if there was a reason for the vigil the Nuns from our school kept on us, but I do recollect feeling so safe and secure. I walked into school everyday knowing I would be taken care of and protected.

This is the sense we try to establish for all of the youth within our Catholic Schools and Parishes. We want to foster a community where children and families FEEL the Safe Environment we strive for. Those of you within our communities who implement the strategies, such as ensuring everyone who works with children or vulnerable populations have current Criminal Background Checks, who ensure all are trained in VIRTUS, who provide resources on keeping children Safe; Thank You.

Thank you for working along with our Office to ensure every child feels safe and secure and grows up with as many wonderful, beautiful, Christ-filled memories as they possibly can!

Sincerely,

Storie N. Arredondo, OVASE Associate Director.



# Scheduled Training

## May 29: Virtus Updates

10:30– 12:00 , Pastoral Center

This training is for current facilitators to receive the newest updates on Virtus.

Call or email for questions and to RSVP

## THE DIRECTOR'S CUT

This has been an eventful year for the Archdiocese of San Antonio and the Office of Victim Assistance & Safe Environment. The *Report on Child Abuse by Clergy in the Archdiocese of San Antonio* was an acknowledgement and a purging of our past. No longer was the Archdiocese going to hide and keep secrets, but we are going to be transparent and forthcoming. After months of investigations and rummaging through personnel files, we were able to compile a list of 53 offending clergy. The allegations spanned from 1940 to 2019; with the oldest incident occurring in 1941 and the newest being in 2008. I have been in this office for 15 years and as we compiled these names, it was a shock and a reminder of the damage that these men had done. I was, in most cases, the first person that these survivors told about their abuse. For every priest or deacon on that list, there was a child or children who had their lives altered because of that man's deviance and selfishness.

The *Report* is also an affirmation that we must continue to fight for the protection of children. Every survivor has a story of trauma that no child deserves to experience. This is why we fight to stop abuse. Every child deserves to live abuse free. We must continue pushing forward with our ministry by educating adults and children/youth on abuse prevention.

We will be conducting a Virtus Update training in May for current facilitators. We will be going over all the newest changes available for Virtus. Make sure you call to reserve your spot for this training.

This ministry cannot succeed without your hard work and determination. Thank you so much for insuring that we are doing all we can to create an environment where everyone is safe from harm.





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