

# Children First

Our mission is to respond to the complex needs of abused and neglected children, and those involved in their care, by providing best practice counseling, legal, and educational services. Through research, communications and training initiatives, we work to expand these programs to prevent abuse and help more children heal.



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## Time for a #MeToo Movement for Child Sexual Abuse Victims

**By Mary L. Pulido, Ph.D.**

Executive Director, The New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

The torrent of recent sexual assault allegations made by women against powerful men grows every day. Harvey Weinstein, Dustin Hoffman, Matt Lauer, Al Franken, Russell Simons... I'm having trouble keeping up with the news. The brave women who came forward should be commended. Many of them were in positions of prestige and power themselves. And, virtually all of them noted how very difficult it was to disclose the assaults, harassment and degradation that they endured.

It finally seems like the public at large has had enough. The "tipping point" has been reached whereby it's NOT okay for this assaultive behavior to continue. Perpetrators are being outed, fired, prosecuted and held accountable.

Now, let's consider children who were sexually assaulted. They too must be supported when they have the courage to come forward and confront their perpetrator. They deserve their own #MeToo movement.

My hope is that this public outrage now funnels into action to pass the Child Victims Act—a piece of legislation that would increase time limits for child sexual abuse prosecution in New York. It is long overdue. The New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and The American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children—New York are staunch advocates, as we work each day with children and families devastated by this crime. Numerous versions of this bill have failed to pass each year. A current version would increase the time for commencing a civil action against the perpetrator until the victim reaches 50 years of age (the current statute of limitation is 23 years of age) and the time for commencing a criminal proceeding until the victim turns 28. The Child Victims Act needs to be passed now.

*Children are taught from a very early age to obey their parents and other adults in their life.*

This can include their parent's boyfriend or girlfriend, their neighbors, teachers, coaches, priests, rabbis and family friends. The fact is that in close to 90 percent of child sexual abuse cases, family members and trusted adults are the perpetrators. It's not strangers that are molesting children, it is people they know and trust. Imagine the confusion, anguish and fear that this breach of trust can cause for a child. This is a very complicated dynamic.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

## Letter from the Executive Director



Dr. Mary Pulido

Dear Friends:

I value updating you on our activities, and also thanking you for the wonderful ways you support our work. I am happy to let you know that in 2017, we served 22% more children than in 2016—our impact grew from 5,730 children to 6,971 children. Because of your generosity, we were able to provide them with evidence-based programs that prevent child abuse, strengthen families, and help children to heal. In 2018, we continue to move forward on many exciting fronts!

The NYSPCC has been working with The American Professional Society of the Abuse of Children (APSAC) to advocate for the passage of the Child Victims Act, which would extend the statute of limitations until the victim is 50 for civil litigation and 28 for criminal proceedings. The legislation has stalled in Albany, but in my role as President of APSAC NY, I will continue to fight for the rights of child sexual abuse victims.

The impact of our child sexual abuse prevention program, Safe Touches, continues to grow. The NYSPCC has a new office location in the Bronx. Horace Mann School, our key partner for Safe Touches Bronx, has generously donated office space for our clinicians and educators providing services to children in the Bronx public school system. It is located on the beautiful Horace Mann School campus.

The NYSPCC has hosted Safe Touches workshops regionally and around the country. Most recently, in February, I hosted a workshop at the International Conference on Child and Family Maltreatment in San Diego, CA. The session, entitled, “Safe Touches: A Rigorous Evaluation of a Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Program” was very well-received by the 55 professionals in attendance. In fact, two professionals, one from Fort Bragg, Texas and another from Norway, spoke to me after the workshop to express interest in our Safe Touches workshop.

April was National Child Abuse Prevention (CAP) Month, a time to emphasize that it’s everyone’s responsibility to keep children safe—a mission that you help champion. We kicked off our 2018 events during CAP Month with the Spring Luncheon on April 17th. We welcomed as our featured guest Olympic gymnast McKayla Maroney, who won a team gold medal and a silver medal on vault in the 2012 Olympics. Now, six years later, she’s redefining herself as an advocate for victims of child sexual abuse. We were honored that she chose The NYSPCC’s Spring Luncheon to make her first public appearance since the trial of disgraced Olympic doctor, Larry Nassar. McKayla spoke about her traumatic experience, her path to healing and how we can channel our outrage into action by holding abusers accountable.

Our upcoming events promise to be just as inspiring. Please mark your calendars!

- Thursday, May 10, 2018: Our Junior Committee will host their May Soirée, Bubbly & Bowling, at FISHBOWL, from 7:00-10:00pm.
- Tuesday, November 6, 2018: The NYSPCC will host its 2018 Food & Wine Gala Dinner at The Metropolitan Club featuring a one-of-a-kind menu by Chef Costas Spiliadis.

The proceeds from these events will support Safe Touches and our Trauma Recovery Program. I hope to see you there!

You are a vital part of The NYSPCC’s efforts to keep children safe. Our programs provide hope and healing to vulnerable children, and your support of our mission makes that possible. Thank you!

Warm regards,



Mary L. Pulido, Ph.D.  
Executive Director



“Like” The NYSPCC on Facebook!  
[www.facebook.com/NYSPCC](http://www.facebook.com/NYSPCC)

### National Child Abuse Prevention (CAP) Month

Throughout the month of April, we recognized the importance of families and communities working together to prevent child abuse.



*The NYSPCC staff wearing blue during National Wear Blue Day, a day dedicated to celebrating child abuse prevention efforts.*

Stay Connected



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## David Stack's 16 Years as President Celebrated Karl G. Wellner elected as new President of the Board of Directors

After 16 years as President of the Board of the Directors of The NYSPCC, David R. Stack, a partner at the law firm McLaughlin & Stern, has passed the torch to Karl Wellner. David joined the Board of Directors in 1989. He is succeeded by Karl G. Wellner, Chairman and CEO of Papamarkou Wellner Asset Management.

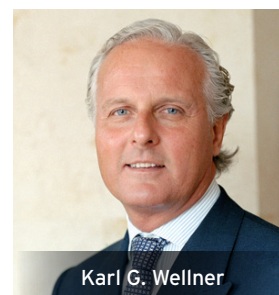
"It has been an honor and a privilege for me to serve The NYSPCC, supporting the important work they do to protect children from abuse and neglect," said Mr. Stack. "Having served alongside Karl for so many years, I know The Society will remain strong and steadfast in its life-saving mission under his stewardship."

Wellner, a native of Sweden and a graduate of the Stockholm School of Economics, is Chairman of the Swedish American Chamber of Commerce and Trustee of several philanthropic organizations. He was previously a Vice President of The NYSPCC Board, a position he held since 2011. He was first elected to the Board in 2005 and is a Chairman of its annual Food & Wine Gala fundraising event. He also serves on the Executive, Finance, Governance and Development & Communications Committees. Wellner's wife, journalist Deborah Norville, is also a long-time supporter of The NYSPCC. She's been a member of The NYSPCC's Children's Council since 2012, and most recently, she hosted the 2017 Food & Wine Gala.

"Everyone involved with The NYSPCC firmly believes that child abuse is preventable. We need education, resources, training and laws to protect those who are most vulnerable. I pledge to continue fighting to prevent child abuse and help the healing process for those who've been victims," said Mr. Wellner.



David R. Stack



Karl G. Wellner

## Program Spotlight

### Going the extra mile to help children recover from abuse

The NYSPCC's Trauma Recovery Program provides a safe, supportive environment that enables children to recover from physical abuse, sexual abuse, severe neglect and other traumatic events. What makes the program unique is how we collaborate with multiple system responders to ensure that the needs of our young clients are understood and met in all aspects of their lives, not just in the therapy room.



Artwork created by children recovering from trauma.

Kirin's\* family moved from Pakistan to New York when she was eight years old. A year later, while still adjusting to a new country, Kirin's father began to physically and sexually abuse her and her older sister, Janna. Janna told their mother that their father was touching them, but her mother did not believe her. Janna's friends at school encouraged her to call the police, which she did, and an investigation ensued. The authorities confirmed the father's abuse and determined that their mother, Fatima, failed to protect them. Kirin and Janna were placed in separate foster care homes.

Kirin's foster care agency referred her to The NYSPCC's Trauma Recovery Program, where she began attending weekly therapy sessions. At the start of treatment Kirin reported being depressed and crying uncontrollably nearly every day. She endured migraines, lack of sleep, and exhaustion. Kirin expressed anger and shame that she and her sister couldn't stop the

abuse from happening and sadness over being separated from her sister and mother. Over the next few months, the clinician introduced Kirin to new coping skills to help manage her symptoms, and worked on helping her understand that she was not responsible for the abuse and subsequent removal. Slowly, Kirin began to re-build a positive sense of self and was able to reduce many of her trauma symptoms.

Soon after her children were removed, Kirin's mother, Fatima, began to understand the seriousness of her husband's abuse. Since she desperately wanted to reunite with her daughters, she cooperated with the demands being placed on her by the foster care agency and the Family Court. However, after a year of completing her requirements, Fatima was still restricted to only spending time with her daughters in a supervised setting at the foster care agency. From family therapy sessions, The NYSPCC clinician determined that the family was ready to reunify and advocated with key players involved in the court case to move reunification forward. As a result of our clinician's written reports for court and conversations with Kirin's lawyer, the Judge determined that Fatima was no longer a threat to her daughters' safety and ordered a trial discharge. During the trial discharge period, our clinician conducted more family therapy sessions to help Kirin feel secure that her mother would keep her safe, which led to a further reduction in her trauma symptoms. Eventually, Kirin was returned to her mother. An order of protection against Kirin's father still remained, providing safety for Kirin and her sister as they reconnected with their mother and each other. By the end of her treatment, Kirin saw significant improvements. She was no longer depressed; she was sleeping better; and felt supported by, and connected with her mother and sister. Most importantly, she was no longer blaming herself for the sexual abuse she endured by her father.

*\* Please note that names are changed to protect our clients' identities.*



## Signature Events

### 2017 Food & Wine Gala

On November 7, 2017, The NYSPCC held its annual Food & Wine Gala at the Metropolitan Club, featuring guest speakers Nina and Tim Zagat, and a menu by Chef Michael Ferraro. The night raised over \$700,000 for the agency's Trauma Recovery program.



Nina and Tim Zagat



Karl G. Wellner, Deborah Norville, Chef Michael Ferraro, Dr. Mary L. Pulido, Commissioner David Hansell, and David R. Stack



Chef Michael Ferraro and Maarit Gloer



Elbridge T. Gerry, Kitty Gerry, Ellen Breed and family



Holly M. Kelly, Russ Coniglio, and Elizabeth Mayhew



Amanda and Neil Friedman



Hilary Geary Ross

### Family Holiday Party

Every December, The NYSPCC hosts a toy drive and holiday party for the children and families who visit the agency for therapeutic services. On December 11, 2017, the families were treated to a Winter Wonderland, featuring delicious food, arts & crafts, and a clown show. Due to the overwhelming generosity of compassionate donors, we were able to delight every child with gifts.



Mother & daughter at the Winter Wonderland Celebration

MAY  
**10**  
SAVE  
THE  
DATE

## 2018 Junior Committee May Soirée

Thursday, May 10, 2018  
FISHBOWL at Dream Midtown

FOR RESERVATIONS AND FOR  
MORE INFORMATION

212.233.5500 ext. 221

[www.nyspcc.org/maysoiree](http://www.nyspcc.org/maysoiree)

NOVEMBER  
**6**  
SAVE  
THE  
DATE

## 2018 Food & Wine Gala

Tuesday, November 6, 2018  
The Metropolitan Club

FOR RESERVATIONS AND FOR  
MORE INFORMATION

212.233.5500 ext. 240

[info@nyspcc.org](mailto:info@nyspcc.org)

## In the Community

The NYSPCC is fortunate to have dedicated friends throughout New York City and the surrounding areas who care about children and take action to help support our work. The projects they coordinate not only raise essential funding for our programs, but also help raise awareness about child protection—especially in our own neighborhoods.



This past December, artist Stephanie Charczenko held a photo exhibit fundraiser for the agency, displaying and selling original pieces. Proceeds from the evening were donated to The NYSPCC and our child abuse prevention programs.

## Corporate Spotlight

The NYSPCC is proud of our corporate friends and partners who help us improve the lives of New York City's most vulnerable children.

If your company is driven to help, please contact The NYSPCC to explore ways your company can support the families and children we serve.



In March, volunteers from NASDAQ painted a fun and colorful mural in The NYSPCC's conference room.

## Time for a #MeToo Movement for Child Sexual Abuse Victims

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

There are interesting parallels between child sexual abuse and the current cases in the news. Most child sexual abuse perpetrators are master manipulators. They can often convince anyone, even at times professionals, that they do not have a problem. At times, the perpetrators are so convincing that parents may even doubt their own child. Perpetrators may also be very good at giving excuses, such as being intoxicated or claiming that the child “came on” to them.

Children who are sexually abused can experience a myriad of problems including depression, anxiety, anger and aggression, post-traumatic stress disorder, low self-esteem, dissociation, sexually transmitted diseases, substance abuse and self-injurious behaviors. Unaddressed, these symptoms can continue into adulthood, impacting their physical and mental health.

Many adults who were molested as children have confided that they only wish that they had known whom to go to, whom to tell, to stop the abuse. Instead, shamed, afraid, and embarrassed, they suffered in silence until they were old enough to get away from the abuse—one woman told me that she did not disclose the abuse due to her fears until after the perpetrator had died. The obstacles to disclosure can be overwhelming. That's why the current law in New York State to prosecute these cases, requiring disclosure by age 23, needs to be eliminated.

Survivors of child sexual abuse, whatever their age, deserve the right to hold their perpetrators accountable. Bringing them to justice will also protect other children from this horrific abuse.

For more information on keeping your children safe visit [www.NYSPCC.org](http://www.NYSPCC.org).

## 2017 Impact

**Look at what we accomplished together in 2017!**

.....  
We served 6,971 children and 3,149 parents, caregivers, and professionals  
.....

The **Safe Touches child sexual abuse prevention program** reached 6,341 children  
.....

The **Trauma Recovery Program** cared for 96 children  
.....

The **Therapeutic Supervised Visitation Program** served 90 families, including 134 children and 184 adults  
.....

The **Training Institute** trained 2,317 professionals on preventing child sexual abuse, identifying and reporting abuse and neglect, and managing secondary traumatic stress.



## Special Thanks

We are grateful to the following supporters who have made Annual Fund gifts of \$500 or more since November 1, 2017 to help support our work with NYC's children:

- Douglas and Elena Atkin
- Joy H. Compton
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- Edith Glick Shoolman Children's Foundation
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## Partners in Protection

We're grateful for our corporate partners who share our passion for preventing abuse and helping children heal.



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ReedSmith



Lemonade™

