



# Children First

## In Case You Missed It

### **Executive Director, Dr. Mary L. Pulido Featured in Thrive Global and Authority Magazine**

In July, Dr. Pulido was interviewed as part of a series titled "Social Impact Heroes," which focuses on companies and organizations making an important social impact. Visit our website under 'In the News—Media Reports,' to read the full article.

### **The NYSPCC Welcomes Three New Board Members**

The NYSPCC is proud to welcome Vicky Cornell, Jodie K. Fink and Daniel M. Healy to the Board of Directors. We commend their dedication to our mission of protecting children.

### **The New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance Selected The NYSPCC to Receive \$87,291 Grant**

The NYSPCC was selected as one of the recipients to receive funding for our Therapeutic Supervised Visitation Program, which provides supervised visitation services helping noncustodial parents spend more time with their children, while improving outcomes for children.

## **The NYSPCC to receive a \$550K Grant from the Athlete Assistance Fund to Protect Child Gymnasts**

The NYSPCC is thrilled to announce that our Phase II proposal for our work to prevent child sexual abuse among gymnasts in the U.S.A., "Athletes Are Children First," has been accepted and funded in full by the Athlete Assistance Fund ([www.athleteassistancefund.org](http://www.athleteassistancefund.org)).

This \$550k grant will enable The NYSPCC to digitize our child sexual abuse prevention curriculum for children in grades K-12, including a version for parents, extending our reach exponentially. We will also be piloting a model to train coaches and staff in all gyms throughout New York State, who coach child gymnasts, teaching them our child sexual abuse prevention curriculum and connecting these gyms with local child protection experts to support them if child sexual abuse is ever suspected. This project will be carried out in 2020–2021.

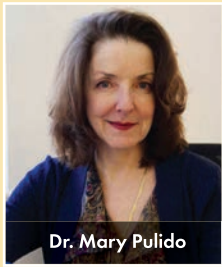
## **The NYSPCC in The New York Times**

In October, The New York Times published a feature story on The NYSPCC's Trauma Recovery Program, which received funding this year from the New York Times' Neediest Cases Fund. The New York Times is highly selective in choosing charities, and being included in their Neediest Cases Fund is an honor and a testament to our work! The fund supports a global community of people in need through organizations—like The NYSPCC—that provide direct assistance. Every dollar donated from readers—over \$300 million since the fund was established in 1911—goes directly to helping others.

In addition to The New York Times selecting The NYSPCC to be a beneficiary of the Fund, it published a story that highlights a family that has been part of our Trauma Recovery Program since 2018. The family has seen great progress and continues to make their sessions a priority, even amidst a host of difficult circumstances.



Visit [www.nyspcc.org](http://www.nyspcc.org) to read the full article.



## Mary's Corner

### Child Sexual Abuse: Grooming Techniques and Why Children Don't Tell

Published on Medium.com  
on March 3, 2019

The recently aired documentary on Michael Jackson, "Leaving Neverland," prompts me to renew my advice to parents to scrutinize those individuals who have unencumbered access to your child. Here are a few important points for parents and concerned adults to keep in mind:

Contrary to any myths surrounding "stranger danger," research estimates that approximately 40% of victims are sexually abused by a family member; another 50% are abused by someone outside the family whom they know and trust. Only about 10% of children are sexually abused by strangers.

There are many reasons why children do not disclose being sexually abused, including: threats of harm (to the child and/or the child's family), fear of being removed from the home, fear of upsetting their parents, fear of not being believed, shame or guilt. It is also not uncommon for children to "recant" the abuse due to fears about what will happen to them, their family or the perpetrator. Children may also develop a strong attachment to the perpetrator, further complicating their ability to disclose the abuse. And, as many cases that are portrayed in the media have shown, perpetrators are so convincing that parents may even doubt their own child.

"Grooming" refers to a range of behaviors that offenders use to "prepare" children for child sexual abuse. By building connections with a

child, offenders aim to lower their inhibitions or desensitize the child. Offenders usually select children who are easily available to him/her.

- The first step in grooming is the offender seeking out the child.
- The second step is forming a relationship, building trust, buying gifts, taking the child on special trips, usually with their parents' full endorsement. They often befriend the parent too.
- The third step is finding ways to touch the child as often as possible, thereby confusing the child when the touch becomes sexual in nature.
- Following this, the offender finds ways to get the child alone, such as on overnight trip, babysitting, taking the child for a daytrip etc. As the process continues, the offender may start to make the child feel guilt or blame and promote secrecy. This is done with the intent that if the child feels responsible for the behavior, they will not tell anyone about the offender. At this stage, the perpetrator may bribe the child, or in contrast, threaten the child in order to maintain secrecy.

If you have suspicions that your child, or a child you know, may be caught in this type of perilous situation, you need to take action. Remain calm and try to get the child to tell you what happened in their own words. Ask open ended questions and let them tell you as much as they can. Once you have some of the details, act. If the alleged perpetrator is a parent or caretaker of the child, the State Child Abuse Hotline must be called. Every State has one; just type Child Abuse Hotline and the name of your State into your browser. You can also call the National Child Abuse Hotline at 800-4-A-CHILD. If you believe that the perpetrator was someone outside of the home, such as a family friend, neighbor, teacher, etc., call 911. These officials are trained in responding to these types of situations. You will have taken action to protect your child, and probably other children, from the perpetrator.

## Strengthening Vulnerable Families

13-year-old Victoria\* was born in a dangerous town in Honduras. Her father disappeared not long after she was born and she and her family were at constant risk of gang violence. At the tender age of 11, Victoria was physically assaulted and her life threatened. Making the experience even more tragic was the death of her grandmother, who died of a heart attack while witnessing the brutal assault on Victoria.

Following this traumatic event, Victoria's mother, Cristina\*, moved her children to safety in the United States. Adjusting to a new life in New York City was extremely difficult for Victoria and her two older brothers. The family experienced homelessness and extreme poverty and unsurprisingly, Victoria began to develop multiple complex trauma symptoms, including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, suicidal thoughts, and aggressive and sexualized behaviors.

The stress also impacted Cristina, who responded to Victoria's misbehaviors by yelling and hitting. This physical abuse brought the family to the attention of the New York City Administration of Children's Services, who ultimately referred Victoria and Cristina to The NYSPCC. At the start of treatment, Victoria was unable to admit that she was a victim of physical assault and refused to talk about what happened to her. Her therapist began providing psycho-education, helping Victoria to understand how her feelings and behaviors were related to the assault and the other traumatic and stressful events of her life. As Victoria began to open up, she and her therapist learned what triggered the suicidal thoughts and other negative emotions. The therapist engaged Victoria in drawing and writing activities to reflect on the positive aspects of her life and her hopes for her future.

The therapist worked closely with Cristina, also, teaching her about trauma and trauma symptoms, so that she could better understand what was happening with her daughter and consequently, offer the parental support Victoria desperately needed.

Over time, the therapist has seen a significant transformation in this family. Cristina has been in better control of her anger, stopped yelling and hitting and is now giving her daughter the emotional support she desperately needs to recover. Victoria is embracing her new coping skills and as a result, her trauma symptoms have greatly decreased. Most importantly, as Victoria has learned how to cope with her feelings of anger, sadness and guilt, she is finding that life is worth living.

*\*Names have been changed to protect confidentiality.*



# Events With a Purpose

## Spring Luncheon

The 2019 Spring Luncheon was the most successful luncheon to-date, raising over \$400,000 for The NYSPCC's Trauma Recovery and Safe Touches programs. The afternoon featured Tara Westover, best-selling author of *Educated*, in conversation with Stephanie Ruhle, NBC News correspondent and anchor of MSNBC Live. Tara discussed her thoughts on and experiences with child abuse and neglect, and the importance of The NYSPCC's work to eradicate them.

A very special thanks to Elizabeth Mayhew and Valesca Guerrand-Hermès for hosting the afternoon, and all of our amazing Co-Chairs for their efforts!



Tara Westover and Stephanie Ruhle

**“[Healing victims of child abuse] goes back to a focus on sense of self,” said Westover. “That’s what has been taken away from them. We have to try to do what we can to help them rebuild that sense of their own selves; that right to take up space. Once they have that, they will see themselves.”**

— TARA WESTOVER



Board members Elizabeth Mayhew, Vicky Cornell and Valesca Guerrand-Hermès



Executive Director Dr. Mary L. Pulido



Children's Council member Kimberly Guilfoyle



Board President Karl G. Wellner with Jamee Gregory and Peter Gregory



## Under the Stars

In September, over 100 of New York City's young philanthropists gathered on the rooftop of The Standard East Village for The NYSPCC Junior Society's annual cocktail party, *Under the Stars*. This year's event raised over \$30,000 for child protection services.



## Upcoming Events

### Junior Society #GivingTuesday Happy Hour

Tuesday, December 3, 2020 | 6:00pm–8:00pm  
The Ainsworth—FiDi

On #GivingTuesday, a global day of giving back, The NYSPCC's Junior Society is hosting a holiday happy hour. All proceeds support The NYSPCC's mission of protecting children from abuse and neglect.

🔍 Visit [www.nyspcc.org/juniorsociety](http://www.nyspcc.org/juniorsociety) for more information.

Can't make it, but still want to support The NYSPCC? You can make a donation to support our work.

💰 Visit [www.nyspcc.org/juniorsociety](http://www.nyspcc.org/juniorsociety) to donate.



Tuesday

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## Save the Date

### 2020 Spring Luncheon

Tuesday, April 21, 2020  
12:00pm–2:00pm  
583 Park Avenue

Guest speaker Bradley Edwards, Esq., attorney representing multiple Epstein accusers.

### For reservations and more information:

📞 212-233-5500 ext. 229

✉️ [mgagnon@nyspcc.org](mailto:mgagnon@nyspcc.org)

# Program Spotlight

## Parenting Journey

The NYSPCC's Therapeutic Supervised Visitation Program serves families with histories of abuse, neglect, and domestic violence. Our clinical team provides them with parent coaching, therapeutic counseling and education to help them rebuild relationships, learn parenting skills and reduce the risk of future abuse or neglect.

In March 2019, The NYSPCC enhanced The Therapeutic Supervised Visitation Program by adopting Parenting Journey, an evidence-based parenting education curriculum that helps participants develop the inner strengths, life skills, and the network of resources they need to build strong, healthy families. Similar to our original parenting education curriculum, parents are required to attend a two-hour workshop every week for 12 weeks. The Parenting Journey intervention helps parents increase their self-care practices, raise awareness of past and present factors that influence their parenting styles, enhance their parenting skills, and utilize their strengths to build nurturing relationships with their children. Parents share a family-style meal, provided by The NYSPCC, during every parent group to provide nurturance and enhance a sense of community support. At the end of the 12-week cycle, each parent receives a Certificate of Completion, affirming their achievement.

During the eight months since launching Parenting Journey, the clinical team has learned that visiting parents are learning new parenting skills; becoming more aware of their strengths as parents and as individuals; and finding comfort in the camaraderie, as they can express frustrations and share accomplishments with people having a similar life experience.

## 1,440 Minutes to Make a Difference!

# #GIVING TUESDAY

Each year on **#GivingTuesday** (December 3, 2019), non-profit organizations rally their supporters for a day of maximum impact. Following the retail events of Black Friday and Cyber Monday, **#GivingTuesday** provides an opportunity for

people around the world to support what matters most to them and share that support with their social media networks.

Join us on **#GivingTuesday** to help us reach our goal of raising **\$25,000!**

\$25,000 will support our Trauma Recovery Program which accepts the most challenging and complex cases of children who have endured the horrors of physical abuse, sexual abuse and child neglect.

Please make a donation, and let your friends and families know that you support The NYSPCC through posts on all of your social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, etc.). Don't forget to tag @NYSPCC, and use the hashtags: #GivingTuesday, #EndIt, #NYSPCC, and #EndAbuse.

Thank you for your support on **#GivingTuesday** and every single day, to help us keep kids safe.

## Donor Spotlight



The women of Kappa Delta Sorority –Eta Iota Chapter at Pace University have proven themselves heroic leaders in the fight against child abuse.

In March, they hosted a Shamrock Shootout basketball tournament that generated **over \$16,000** for The NYSPCC's services! They also volunteered at our Spring Luncheon and Junior Society cocktail fundraiser, helping us raise money to ensure these events' success. And these fantastic women are not done! Looking ahead, they are hosting a week-long #GivingTuesday fundraising competition, conducting a holiday book drive for the children of The NYSPCC, and volunteering at our Food and Wine Gala.

We applaud all their amazing contributions to The NYSPCC over the years and the work they do to help abused and neglected children.

Thank you!

## The Facts about Child Abuse

- In 2018, NYC's Child Protective Services investigated 53,676 reports of abuse and neglect. Neglect is the most common type of allegation (59%), followed by physical abuse (12%).
- 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will be sexually molested before age 18.
- 90% of children are sexually abused by someone that the child knows and trusts. Only 10% are abused by strangers.
- In the United States, more than 4 children die from child abuse and neglect on a daily basis. Over 70% of these children are below the age of 3.

**The New York Society for the Prevention  
of Cruelty to Children**

161 William Street, 9th Floor  
New York, NY 10038-2607

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
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PERMIT #1534

For more information on reporting  
child abuse and neglect, please  
visit our website:



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

# Special Thanks

We are grateful to the following supporters who have made Annual Fund gifts of \$500 or more since January 1, 2019 to help support our work with NYC's children:

- Alamo Drafthouse Cinemas
- Athlete Assistance Fund
- Anthony Bavedas
- Colgate-Palmolive Company
- Mrs. Cornelia G. Corbett
- Ira W. DeCamp Foundation
- The William Stamps Farish Fund
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- Libbie F. Gerry
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