

Children First

In Case You Missed It

Our amazing supporter and child abuse prevention advocates, The Wolverine Foundation, has generously offered The NYSPCC a matching gift challenge of \$35,000!

The Wolverine Foundation would like to help us during this time of financial need with the hope that this motivates others in the NYSPCC network to donate as well. Please consider making a donation to help us in this exciting matching gift campaign. Any amount is appreciated! Together, we can meet the challenge and raise \$70,000 for The NYSPCC's programs and services.

[Click here to donate NOW.](#)

Thank you!

The NYSPCC Welcomes Two New Board Members

The NYSPCC is proud to welcome Tania Higgins, a long time supporter of our work, and Oerta Trepca, to the Board of Directors. Oerta is the President of the Junior Society. We commend their dedication to our mission of protecting children. To learn more about Tania and Oerta, click [here](#).

Navigating the Challenges Presented by the Coronavirus

As the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to impact our world, we hope you and your loved ones are safe and well. We are in the midst of uncertain times—the coronavirus has not only affected many physically, but most of us psychologically as well. With the rapidly changing state of the pandemic, there is an air of anxiety around us, and it can be hard to know what to do and how to cope. In times like this, parents especially can be stressed with schools shutting down, job security worries, and the financial implications of the virus. To provide some tools to help deal with the uncertainty and extra stressors, NYSPCC Executive Director, Dr. Mary Pulido, published an article, ***"Family Stress Relief During the Corona Virus Outbreak,"*** which offers advice to parents on how to keep calm while balancing competing priorities of work and family in a time of crisis. You can read Dr. Pulido's blog [here](#).

We would also like to assure you that The NYSPCC continues to provide compassionate therapeutic support for children and families affected by abuse, neglect, and domestic violence.

Because the health and safety of our families, staff, and communities remain a top priority, we have temporarily suspended all in-person clinical services. Our therapists are now providing services via a secure telemedicine website called Doxy.me and Zoom.com, which comply with all national standards to protect our clients' personal health information. The majority of our families were equipped with either smartphones, laptops or tablets, and those without these devices were able to obtain them through the NYC Board of Education. Our therapists also helped families access free internet services.

Below are the ways our therapists have navigated the COVID-19 challenges:

Trauma Recovery Program

Our therapists provide weekly Trauma-focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) treatment via video calls.

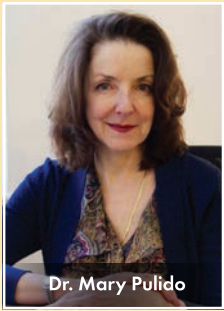
Therapeutic Supervised Visitation Program

For families enrolled in our Therapeutic Supervised Visitation Program, our therapists are conducting supervised video calls between the visiting children and visiting parents, as well as video coaching sessions with children and visiting parents separately.

Crisis Debriefing and Bereavement Program

For child welfare professionals facing COVID-19 related losses among colleagues and clients, our therapists are conducting individual and group resiliency-focused support via video sessions.

Sadly 'stay at home' doesn't mean 'safe at home', and temporary school closures result in a lack of interaction between children, their teachers and other mandated reporters in school settings. The NYSPCC realizes that we may be the only set of eyes on children during this time and we are doing everything in our power to make sure children are and remain 'safe at home'.



Dr. Mary Pulido

Mary's Corner

You Can Help Protect Children from Abuse During COVID-19

By Mary L. Pulido, Ph.D.

As April was Child Abuse Prevention Month, I would like to offer a salute to the thousands of Child Protection professionals who work tirelessly to protect children from abuse and neglect. But right now, they need our help! The fear of COVID-19, sheltering in place, the loss of employment, food insecurity, and closed schools have placed tremendous stress on families, increasing the risk to vulnerable children during the pandemic. On top of this perilous situation, teachers and education staff are the profession that make the highest number of reports to be investigated if they think a child is at risk—and they are not seeing their students anymore. With schools shuttered for the foreseeable future, Child Protective Service workers have an even more daunting responsibility, as teachers do not have their eyes on the children every day to assess their wellbeing.

To complicate matters further, the research team at The New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NYSPCC), just released the results of a national survey that indicated that the majority of Americans **are unwilling** to report child abuse if they are aware that a child is at risk. This is alarming and must change if we are to protect children. The reasons that they gave for this stance were as follows:

- First, they thought that making a report of child abuse or neglect might place the child in danger from the parent. Although it's understandable that you'd be anxious, if you think a child is being abused, making the call to the hotline or to the police is the BEST

thing you can do to help protect the child. The professionals will be alerted to protect the child and services to help will be put in place for the family.

- Second, they feared retaliation from the parent that they were reporting. If fear of possible repercussions is keeping you from making a report, then please make the report anonymously. That is a permissible option and you will have taken steps to protect the child from harm.
- The third reason was that "it's not my business" to get involved. This is SO troubling. If what you see in public is enough to cause alarm, what do you think is happening behind closed doors? Truly, keeping infants, toddlers and children safe is everyone's business.

During the pandemic, child protective services are open, operating, and on high alert. If you hear or see a child being abused, please call 911. Each state has a hotline and you can access that number [here](#). In addition, the National Child Abuse hotline number is 1-800-4-A-CHILD.

I'm urging everyone to take the steps needed to protect children. Go with your gut, as we hear all the time about other types of dangerous situations. If something is making you suspicious or uneasy, it's worth reporting. Our website www.nyspcc.org offers a guide.

We need and rely on the Child Protective Specialist workers who do this job, day in and day out. But, let's all make a pledge to get involved too. Learn the signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect and how to make a report. You may save a child's life during the pandemic.

Helping Children Heal

The NYSPCC's Trauma Recovery Program provides therapeutic counseling to help children and teens heal from physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and family violence. In 2019, more than 85% of our young clients successfully reduced their trauma symptoms, but it's not only because of the mental health care we provide. Our therapists regularly host phone calls and meetings with teachers, school administrators, case workers, attorneys, judges and other mental health professionals involved in our clients' lives to ensure that their needs are met outside the therapy room, which helps support the healing process. The following vignette illustrates the type of collateral work our therapists perform to help children heal from abuse.

The NYSPCC's Director of Clinical Services, Amy Pumo, LCSW, has been working with Melody*, a teenage girl in foster care, who

had experienced sexual abuse, physical abuse, neglect and domestic violence throughout her childhood. While attending therapy at The NYSPCC, Melody disclosed a physically abusive relationship with a boyfriend. The abusive boyfriend's behavior was negatively impacting Melody's school performance and her placement in a supportive foster home. Working together with Melody, Ms. Pumo met with the foster care case worker, the foster parent and Melody's biological father to explain how the abusive relationship was compromising Melody's safety and daily functioning. Ms. Pumo also spoke with Melody's education coordinator and the dean of her school to make them aware of her situation, so that they could respond more constructively when Melody cried in class and didn't perform well on homework and tests. Rather than responding punitively, Ms. Pumo suggested they offer strength-based support by engaging Melody

in safety planning discussions and providing her with choices, when possible. "This collateral work," Ms. Pumo says, "has been instrumental to ensuring Melody's safety and strengthening the support she needed during this difficult time. These efforts helped improve Melody's sense of trust and safety and decreased the isolation she was experiencing as a result of her abusive boyfriend's behavior." After several weeks, Melody decided to end the relationship and spoke openly with her service providers and her father about the support she needed to leave the relationship and focus on herself and her treatment.

**Names have been changed to protect confidentiality.*

Events With a Purpose

Food & Wine Gala

On November 20th, over \$620,000 was raised at the Annual Food & Wine Gala at the Metropolitan Club in NYC. Award-winning Chef Elizabeth Falkner curated the menu and Deborah Norville, Anchor of Inside Edition and member of The NYSPCC's Children's Council, hosted the evening. Vicky Cornell, co-founder of the Chris and Vicky Cornell Foundation and NYSPCC Board Member, was the recipient of the *Strength of Our Society* Award in recognition of her magnificent support and contributions to The NYSPCC to aid in our efforts to end child abuse.



Chef Elizabeth Falkner and Children's Council Member Deborah Norville



NYSPCC Board Member Vicky Cornell and NYSPCC Board President Karl G. Wellner



Former New York City and Boston Police Commissioner Bill Bratton, Legal Analyst for CBS News Rikki Klieman, Philanthropists Susan and Ben Winter

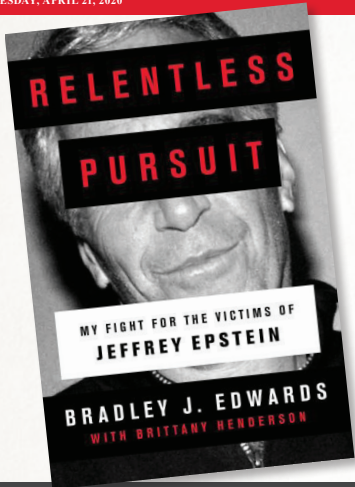


NYSPCC Executive Director Dr. Mary L. Pulido and Board President Karl G. Wellner

Spring Luncheon

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, The NYSPCC quickly pivoted from hosting an in-person luncheon to hosting a virtual luncheon via livestream. NYSPCC Executive Director, Mary L. Pulido, Ph.D., kicked off the livestream with updates on new initiatives and strategies taken by NYSPCC clinical staff during the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Pulido reinforced the importance of continuing therapy sessions with children and family members through the transition to telemedicine sessions. Dr. Pulido also stressed the importance of the support from child protection advocates and donors in order to continue safeguarding our children. The current state of emergency mandating self-isolation leaves children more vulnerable to abuse at home. Child abuse is very difficult to detect without teachers and doctors seeing children in person, and other adults no longer interacting with children because schools and activities have been canceled.


Mary was joined in the livestream by Brad Edwards, Esq. Brad is a nationally recognized attorney who specializes in providing civil representation for children, survivors of sexual abuse, and victims of violent crimes.



NYSPCC

TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2020 1:00 PM

Please join The NYSPCC for the
LIVESTREAM TALK WITH BRAD EDWARDS, ESQ.
Describing his fight for justice for the Epstein survivors.



TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2020 | 1:00 PM

RSVP

Upon registering, an email will be sent to you with livestream link & password. If you don't receive an email, please contact Thyachin@nyspcc.org.

Supporting
**THE NYSPCC TRAUMA RECOVERY
AND SUPERVISED VISITATION PROGRAMS**

DONATE NOW

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Jodie Fink		Mary Alice Sherrill

NYSPCC

For additional information,
please contact Sharon Scimeca, Chief Philanthropy & Communications Officer:
sscimeca@nyspcc.org or 212.233.5500 ext.216

www.nyspcc.org

Brad gave a riveting presentation on his fight for justice for numerous victims of Jeffrey Epstein and talked about his new book, *Relentless Pursuit: My Fight for the Victims of Jeffrey Epstein*.

If you were unable to attend the livestream, a recording is available [here](https://www.nyspcc.org/resources/dr-mary-l-pulidos-blogs/) for you to view as well as on our website, [nyspcc.org/resources/dr-mary-l-pulidos-blogs/](https://www.nyspcc.org/resources/dr-mary-l-pulidos-blogs/).

Thank You!

Steve Forrester, Esq., The NYSPCC's Director of Government Relations and Administration, will be retiring in June 2020. For over 28 years, Steve has provided key management assistance to The NYSPCC's Executive Director and has led The NYSPCC's legal programs. A tireless advocate for children, Steve was instrumental in pushing for the successful passage of the Amendment to the Education Act, which strengthened protections from child sexual abuse for all children in the New York State private school system. An excellent instructor, Steve has trained over 7,000 professionals on their legal obligation to identify and report child abuse and neglect. He also serves on the New York City Family Court Child Protection Sub-Committee of the Advisory Committee to the Administrative Judge and is a member of the Board of The New York State Children's Alliance, Inc. (NYSCA).

He regularly responds to press inquiries regarding the legislative issues involved in child protection and has authored several articles on these matters. Steve also supervised the Guardian ad Litem program (1991–2005) and Child Permanency/Custody Mediation Programs (2003–2012) for The NYSPCC.

Prior to his career at The NYSPCC, Steve served as an Assistant General Counsel for the New York City Administration for Children's Services, where he prosecuted child abuse and neglect cases and related proceedings and supervised a staff of attorneys also engaged in that work.

Everyone at The NYSPCC will miss Steve, his expertise and wonderful sense of humor and wish him well in retirement! Thank you, Steve!



Strengthening & Protecting Vulnerable Families

Families are referred to The NYSPCC's Therapeutic Supervised Visitation Program (TSVP) by judges who determine that parent-child interaction must be supervised due to histories of abuse, neglect and domestic violence. Rather than simply observing, NYSPCC therapists provide visiting parents with therapeutic counseling and parenting workshops to empower them with knowledge and skills they need to develop strong parent-child bonds and to create nurturing homes.

Because over 75% of the families referred to the TSVP have histories of domestic violence and orders of protection against the abusive partner, The NYSPCC saw a need to increase support for custodial parents. In December 2019, The NYSPCC hired a therapist who is dedicated to working with custodial parents. At intake, she provides them with a domestic violence screening, safety planning and information about local resources. Thereafter, the therapist provides the custodial parent with weekly coaching each time they bring their child in for visitation with the non-custodial parent. Sessions cover a range of relevant issues, including identifying patterns of abuse; the impact of domestic violence on children and adults; how to care for traumatized children; coping strategies for managing trauma symptoms; and supporting children during the visitation process. By providing these new support services, The NYSPCC is improving the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of custodial parents, which is essential for protecting the safety and well-being of their children.

Tales From The NYSPCC Archives

It is amazing what hidden treasures lay buried within The NYSPCC's archives. Some of those treasures are a series of documents that, when compiled, tell the harrowing story of how the Navratil children survived the sinking of the Titanic and were reunited with their mother in France. In 1912, the marriage of Michel Navratil and Marcelle Caretto, severely strained, was headed toward divorce. The French court in Nice had temporarily placed their two young children with a maternal uncle who, without authorization, returned the children to their father. Michel fled with their two children to London where he then purchased second-class steamship tickets to America, under the alias Hoffman. Tragically, he booked passage on the maiden voyage of RMS Titanic, which sailed from Southampton on Wednesday, April 10th. Five days later, in the early hours of Monday, April 15th, having collided with an iceberg, the great liner sank with a loss of 1500 lives, almost two-thirds of all who sailed. The two little boys, Michel, age 4, and Edmund, age 2, were placed by their father into Collapsible D, the last lifeboat to be launched. Michel stayed behind and went down with the Titanic. The boys were brought to New York where Mayor Gaynor requested the assistance of The NYSPCC. The services were three-fold: investigative, supervisory, and sheltering. During this period, the mother recognized her children from photos in newspapers and asked for their return to her. With housing provided by The NYSPCC, the mother arrived in New York City and was reunited with her children. For more information and any questions on the Titanic Waifs or other collections within the archive please contact The NYSPCC Archivist, **Chelsea Frank**.



Staff Spotlight

Brett Baehr, Director of Finance and Operations

Brett Baehr joined The NYSPCC in January as the Director of Finance and Operations. Prior to joining The NYSPCC, Brett served as Chief Financial Officer & Treasurer at MMBB Financial Services and as Senior Director of Finance/CFO for the Greater NY Region of the American Red Cross.

Chelsea Frank, Archivist and Prospect Research Specialist

Chelsea Frank joined The NYSPCC's Development Dept. in December as a Prospect Research Specialist while continuing her role as The NYSPCC's Archivist. Before coming to The NYSPCC, Chelsea worked for Picturae Inc. as the Archival Digitization Assistant, where she digitized and compiled over 500,000 images for The Frick Museum, The New York Explorer's Club and Yale's rare book collection.

Jessica Gusberg, Assistant Director of Clinical Services

Jessica Gusberg, LCSW, joined the NYSPCC in May as the Assistant Director of Clinical Services. Jess has been the Clinical Director at the Red Hook Community Justice Center, a project of the Center for Court Innovation since 2018. Previously, Jess worked as a Clinician at The NYSPCC.

Megan Santosusso, Director of Human Resources & Board Administration

Megan Santosusso joined The NYSPCC in January as the Director of Human Resources & Board Administration. Previously, Megan served as the Director of Development at The NYSPCC.

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

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

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



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, 2020* to help support our work with NYC's children:

- Ms. Justine Almeraris
- The Benevity Community Impact Fund
- Mr. Edward H. Burnbaum, Esq., P.C.
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- Ms. Amy Wolf

**Donations made as of May 15, 2020.*