

# Children First

## In Case You Missed It

### We've Moved!

The NYSPCC has relocated its offices from William Street to 520 Eighth Avenue! We moved into a beautiful newly designed space conveniently located in Midtown and easily accessible for both our clients and staff.



### Board of Director Spotlight

The NYSPCC welcomes three new members to our Board of Directors: Lilian Yang, entrepreneur, investor, and co-founder of the family's charitable foundation, Cosmin Panait & Lilian Yang Foundation; Shane Foley, Partner at PwC and leader in the Cyber, Risk, and Regulatory consulting practice; and Mikal Finkelstein, MD, MPH, board-certified pediatrician and currently completing a doctorate in Public Health at Columbia University. We also welcomed the new Junior Society President, Christine Curran.

## The NYSPCC creates a grief counseling program for parents and caregivers for The New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS).

At the request of the Commissioner's Office at ACS, The NYSPCC developed a grief counseling program for ACS-involved parents, who are experiencing traumatic stress due to the death of a child, or other serious critical incident involving their child. These sessions would be 60-90 minutes in length and led by therapists at The NYSPCC who have extensive experience in dealing with traumatic grief and loss due to child abuse and other traumas. The NYSPCC is accepting referrals from ACS meeting the specific criteria and will reach out to the parent and explain the support services available. Sessions will be held either at The NYSPCC offices at 520 Eighth Avenue, in Manhattan, or virtually over Zoom.

## The NYSPCC receives the Robin Hood 'FUEL for 50' award.

Robin Hood, New York's largest poverty-fighting philanthropy, announced the winners of **FUEL for 50**, its new initiative to support young children's learning and development through programs focused on their caregivers. We are extremely proud to say The NYSPCC was an awardee! The fifty awardee nonprofits were selected from a pool of 355 programs supporting parents and caregivers of young children. These fifty awards—the first phase of a 3-year initiative—are Robin Hood's latest investments in a six-year commitment to make New York City a model for cultivating and scaling new approaches to supporting the development of children ages 0-3.

As an award winner, The NYSPCC will receive \$25,000 in funding, access to expert workshops and support, and opportunities for up to \$1 million in funding over the next two years. In November 2022, FUEL will award up to ten of the selected organizations \$250,000 in additional funding to test the efficacy of their programs, and—in 2023—up to three awardees will receive an additional \$1 million to scale their efforts. As New York's largest poverty-fighting philanthropy, Robin Hood uplifts organizations that support parents and caregivers of young children and shifts the narrative around what it means to support early childhood development. We commend Robin Hood for committing to this crucial initiative and are honored to be recognized for our outstanding work.



## Mary's Corner

### Boosting Parent Resiliency and Coping During These Stressful Times

By Mary L. Pulido, Ph.D.

It is a very stressful time for parents, particularly as the news cycle remains consistently dire, social media continues to showcase alarming posts, and the stock markets are on a roller coaster ride. Pair those worries with income loss and the ever-changing school regulations, and any parent can be at their wit's end. The key to surviving and thriving is to take care of yourself. As they say on the airplane, put your own oxygen mask on first, then assist your children. Too often, self-care for parents is the first thing to go when times get tough. So, here are a few tips to help you keep your calm and balance the competing priorities.

**1. Cut yourself some slack, and I mean real slack** when it comes to keeping everything uber-organized and on schedule. Realize that on some days parenting will be more challenging. If the baby won't stop crying and you are exhausted and feel like crying too, put the baby in a safe and secure place and leave the room for a few minutes. Some days your children will be handling the return to school well, and some days they won't. It's okay. We're surviving over two years of a pandemic, and everyone is doing the best they can to readjust to the new normal. **Don't berate yourself.** All parents have these moments. Children go through cranky, difficult times—it is getting you through them too that counts!

**2. Understand that your former, usual coping skills probably need a complete change or a refresh at the bare minimum.** Coping is a dynamic process that changes over time in response to changing demands and changing appraisals of the situation. Most of us just go on autopilot and use the same coping techniques over and over, but during especially stressful times, they may not be as

effective, so consider trying others. There is an actual "process" to coping that is helpful to understand, particularly now.

- Step One: Determine that an event is stressful
- Step Two: Select a coping strategy
- Step Three: Implement a specific response

If the response is effective, then stress is reduced, and you feel better. There are adaptive (positive) and maladaptive (negative) strategies that you can choose. Positive ones include exercising, talking to an uplifting friend, therapy, meditation, or a hobby you enjoy. Maladaptive ones, such as consuming alcohol or pills, smoking, or binge eating your favorite box(es) of cookies, may make you feel better in the short-term but are likely to have negative consequences in the long term.

**3. Feed your mind good news, limit the bad news.** The news these days is unusually alarming, depressing, and full of violent content. As a parent, you need to take in a dose each day to stay abreast of the latest updates but limit it to 15 minutes in the morning and/or evening. Parents have a constant diet of bad news from their phones, social media, the television, radio, or newspaper. **Turn it off.** Find shows, newscasts, or blogs that are upbeat, happy, and calming. Watch a show that makes you laugh. Have dinner with music on.

**4. Last point, have an emergency support plan.** If you think you are going to "lose it" and find yourself getting angry or frustrated with your children, reach out for help. If you think you are depressed, talk to your doctor about what may help you. The demands of parenting can be fierce and draining, but they pass. The parent-helpline at 1-800-CHILDREN is a great resource for parents. For those in New York City, this website offers free, confidential services <https://mentalhealthforall.nyc.gov/>.

## Training Needs of Youth-Serving Professionals

The NYSPCC's Training Institute offers a variety of trainings designed to build capacity and support the professional development of social service agencies and staff in preventing and responding to child abuse and neglect. To date, the Training Institute has trained over 74,000 professionals.

The last few years have exacted an enormous toll on children, families and youth-serving professionals. During this time, the Training Institute has seen a rise in requests for training and information on supporting children and families with managing stress and coping with grief and loss, as well as a rise in requests for training to support agency staff in dealing

with these same challenges. The NYSPCC has responded to meet this need. In 2021, the Training Institute provided trainings on managing secondary traumatic stress and coping with grief and loss to 1,504 professionals at agencies and conferences across the country. In September 2021, Dr. Pulido began a six-part Wellness Series for juvenile justice professionals in Albany, NY, to support them in coping and managing stress; this series will run through August 2022. In addition, the Training Institute began a monthly virtual training series in January 2022 for youth-serving professionals across the country on a variety of clinical, legal and prevention topics.



# Events With a Purpose

## The Fall Gala

The NYSPCC held its most successful Gala ever on Wednesday, November 17, 2021, raising over \$825,000 for child abuse prevention programs and services. Held at The NY Public Library's Stavros Niarchos Foundation Library, the Gala honored longtime friend and supporter of The NYSPCC, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF), and was hosted by Stephanie Ruhle, Anchor, MSNBC, Senior Correspondent, NBC News.



Stephanie Ruhle, Mary L. Pulido, Ph.D.



Lilian Yang, Cosmin Panait



Daniel Healy, Mary L. Pulido, Ph.D., Andreas Dracopoulos



Karl Wellner, Deborah Norville, Hilary Geary Ross, Wilbur Ross, Daniel Healy

## Virtual Spring Luncheon

The NYSPCC held their virtual Spring Fundraiser, "An Evening With V", on Thursday, April 29, 2021 featuring a conversation with V (formerly Eve Ensler), Playwright and Activist, and moderator Professor Melissa Harris-Perry, Ph.D. The event raised over \$190,000 for The NYSPCC's Trauma Recovery and Therapeutic Supervised Visitation Programs.



## Upcoming Events

### Spring Luncheon

April 27, 2022 at Tavern on the Green. Hosted by Judy Woodruff and featuring Guest Speaker, Audry Nafziger.

### Fall Gala

November 16, 2022 at The Rainbow Room. Hosted by Deborah Norville and honoring Maarit Glozer.

# Helping Children Heal

Throughout his childhood, Jordan's\* parents fought frequently and sometimes violently. As he grew older, his father directed some of his anger towards Jordan, inflicting intense emotional and psychological abuse. Eventually, his mother, Vanessa\*, found the strength to move out, but she soon realized that distance and a safe, new home wasn't enough to ease the pain her son felt. Vanessa brought Jordan to The NYSPCC's Trauma Recovery Program to help him heal.

Nine-year-old Jordan hadn't seen his father for more than a year when he started therapy, but the emotional wounds felt fresh. He had a tremendous fear of his father and experienced hypervigilance, suspecting danger everywhere. Not surprisingly, Jordan did not trust his therapist and refused to see her alone. To gain Jordan's trust, the therapist conducted the first few sessions with Vanessa in the therapy room. As Jordan's comfort level grew, the therapist gradually decreased the amount of time Vanessa spent in the sessions, until he felt ready to do them on his own.

Once Jordan felt safe, his therapist was better able to support him in processing his trauma experiences. In therapy, Jordan worked hard on learning coping and self-regulating skills to be able to later identify his trauma reminders. Jordan's post-traumatic memories were so painful that the smallest cues flooded him with emotions—anger, anxiety, depression,

## Crafting a trauma narrative helped Jordan make sense of his experiences and overcome the painful memories and trauma responses through utilizing healthy adaptive coping skills.

and fear, which in turn caused him to engage in self-harming behaviors and thoughts of suicide. The therapist worked collaboratively with Jordan and Vanessa to create a suicide safety plan that empowered Jordan in having a voice on how to remain safe and alive. After safety was established, Jordan was able to identify his physical and emotional responses and how they connect with his trauma reminders. With this information, he was able to utilize his learned coping and self-regulating skills specific to each response during and outside of therapy sessions. All this therapeutic work supported Jordan to be able to share his trauma story with the therapist and his mother. Crafting a trauma narrative helped Jordan make sense of his experiences and overcome the painful memories and trauma responses through utilizing healthy adaptive coping skills.

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

The therapist also conducted parent sessions with Vanessa to help her understand what was happening to her son and learn how to support his recovery. During these sessions, Vanessa and Jordan learned common language to be able to discuss Jordan's trauma experiences and his post-traumatic responses. Being able to talk about the traumatic events and Jordan's trauma responses together helped Jordan feel heard and understood. These sessions also helped Vanessa enhance her skills to better respond to her son's needs outside the therapy room, which was key to Jordan's recovery and future resilience.

Armed with coping skills and the loving support he received both at The NYSPCC and at home, Jordan's past trauma experiences lost their emotional hold. After nearly two years of therapy, Jordan's therapist confidently closed the case. She remarked that "Jordan is exceptional in that he met all of his treatment goals and saw every single one of his trauma symptoms decrease. His strength and resilience are truly remarkable."

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



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

# Safe Touches

The NYSPCC's evidence-based, research-informed Safe Touches program teaches children in Kindergarten through third grade valuable body safety tools and child sexual abuse prevention concepts using puppet skits. During the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, The NYSPCC's Training Institute adapted the workshops to a virtual format. In 2021, 154 Safe Touches workshops were facilitated virtually in 21 New York City schools for 2,718 students. Ninety-seven percent of teachers who hosted a virtual Safe Touches workshop for their students and completed an evaluation reported they would recommend Safe Touches to their colleagues. The NYSPCC has been committed to providing this essential prevention

education to students regardless of where they were learning and is excited to return in-person to classrooms this Spring!

As one of the only evidence-based child sexual abuse prevention workshops available, the interest in replicating the Safe Touches program is growing. Through a partnership with Pennsylvania State University, Safe Touches has been implemented in five counties in Pennsylvania since 2018 and has reached over 14,000 students. This summer, The NYSPCC's Training Institute will train ten more counties in Safe Touches facilitation and implementation to reach even more children across the state. Safe Touches is also expanding in New York State through a partnership with the non-profit organizations, Empowerment Collaborative of Long Island (ECLI) and the Victims Information



Jahi Gordon, Jara Rodriguez

Bureau of Suffolk (VIBS). This spring, the Training Institute is training ten of their staff members as Safe Touches facilitators to be able to reach children across Long Island with important abuse prevention education.

## The NYSPCC applies for a National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant to study the effects of our virtual and in-person Safe Touches program.

Over the past nine years the Horace Mann School has supported our Safe Touches program with \$150K of funding each year. This funding enables us to offer Safe Touches to all children in the Bronx public school system free of charge. To date, we've reached over 30,000 children in the Bronx. Building on this success, we also applied for an NIH grant with Penn State, to study the efficacy of Safe Touches in-person vs. Safe Touches virtual. The current study will use a rigorous randomized cluster design to determine the equivalence of effectiveness between two delivery modalities of Safe Touches. Study findings will inform the ongoing development of effective Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) prevention programs and policy decisions regarding the sustainable integration of such programs within school systems. Given the scope and burden of CSA, especially among elementary-aged students, it is a public health priority to disseminate effective school-based prevention programs on a wide scale.

## Focus on Advocacy

The NYSPCC has been working independently, as well as with a consortium of other advocates, on the following child protection issues:

- Working with Senator Wyden and Senator Gillibrand's team on the **Invest in Child Safety Act** to provide safety for children regarding protections to prevent internet child pornography.
- Signing on to the letter from Council Member Hevesi's office on the **Children and Families Reinvestment Act** to provide additional funds and supports for the families of New York State.
- Participated in the advisory committee to the New York State Office of Family and Children's Services on updating the **Mandated Reporter Training**, specifically on areas of implicit bias.
- Working with advocates to amend the present social services law to include additional job titles of those who must have a child abuse background check completed prior to starting employment with a child serving organization.
- Joining to support the slate of advocacy work of the District Attorneys of the State of New York.

## Special Thanks

We are grateful to the following supporters who have made gifts of \$1,000 or more since March 1, 2021\* to help support our work with NYC's children:

### \$50,000 and up

- Edith Glick Shoolman Children's Foundation
- Maarit and Thomas Glocer
- Daniel M. Healy
- Lilian Yang and Cosmin Panait Foundation
- The Speyer Family Foundation
- Stavros Niarchos Foundation
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- Matthew Turlip

\* Donations made through March 11, 2022.

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

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New York, NY 10018



## Staff Spotlight

**Allison Birkinbine** joined us as Development and Communications Coordinator. In this role, Allison will be responsible for assisting the Development Department with all administrative duties.

**Emilie Clark, LMSW** joined us as Bilingual Trauma Therapist. In this role, Emilie will support the Clinical Services department by providing therapeutic services for families participating in our Therapeutic Supervised Visitation and Trauma Recovery Programs.

**Ruth Edele** joined us as Archivist. In this role, Ruth will be responsible for the day-to-day operation and organization of archival materials.

**Emily Gordon** joined us as Bilingual Trauma Therapist. In this role, Emily will support the Clinical Services team by providing therapeutic services for families participating in our Therapeutic Supervised Visitation and Trauma Recovery Programs.

**Jahi Gordon** joined us as Child Abuse Prevention Training Specialist. In this role, Jahi will support the development, delivery, and promotion of The NYSPCC Training Institute's curricula and materials.

**Nicole Lim, Ph.D.** joined us as Assistant Director of Research and Evaluation. In this role, Nicole will be responsible for designing and implementing study protocols, managing systems for collecting and storing data and assisting in securing funding through grants.

**Jennifer Marchini** joined us as Director of Finance. In this role, Jennifer will manage all finance/accounting functions for The NYSPCC.

**Theodore Rael** joined us as Manager of Operations. In this role, Theo will manage all office-related issues including maintenance, technology and safety.

**Raydel Rijs** joined us as Program Coordinator of Clinical Services. In this role, Raydel will assist the Clinical Dept. with all administrative duties associated with clinical programs.

**Jara Rodriguez** joined us as Child Abuse Prevention Training Specialist. In this role, Jara will work to support the development, delivery and promotion of The NYSPCC Training Institute curricula and materials.

**Anne Rosenberg, LCSW**, joined us as Assistant Director of Clinical Services. In this role, Anne will support all activities of the Clinical Services Department.