



Children First

In Case You Missed It!

The NYSPCC’s Executive Director, Dr. Mary L. Pulido, has been selected as one of City & State New York’s Responsible 100 for 2022!

Each year, City & State NY puts a spotlight on 100 exceptional individuals who are putting in the time and effort to help address many of life’s challenges and to assist their most vulnerable neighbors. These business, government, nonprofit and advocacy leaders (carefully selected from hundreds of nominations) display both the idealism that change is possible, and an understanding of the dedication required to effectuate real and enduring change. Congratulations Dr. Pulido!

Board of Director Spotlight

The NYSPCC welcomes three new Board of Director members: Tom Califano, Esq.—a partner in the New York office of Sidley Austin LLP; Seth Rosensweig—a Partner at PwC where he leads an Integrated Risk Technology & Enterprise GRC practice; and Owen May—an investment banking executive and CEO of MD Global Partners, LLC., a boutique investment bank in New York.

Robin Hood Foundation awards The NYSPCC \$250,000



Robin Hood, New York’s largest poverty-fighting foundation, launched its early learning initiative FUEL for 50 in 2022 and named The NYSPCC as one of their charity partners. The \$25,000 received for this program helped support The NYSPCC’s Therapeutic Supervised Visitation Program.

We are proud to announce that Robin Hood renewed their support in 2023, naming The NYSPCC a Phase 2 Awardee! We are deeply grateful and honored to be one of only ten organizations to receive

this prestigious award in the amount of \$250,000.

The NYSPCC’s Therapeutic Supervised Visitation Program helps families involved in the child welfare system, due to histories of abuse, neglect, and domestic violence, to safely spend time together, rebuild relationships and learn parenting skills. Phase 2 of FUEL for 50 will enable us to enhance the program’s services specifically for parents and caregivers of children ages 0-3. We intend to build programmatic capacity by hiring a full-time Custodial Parent Therapist, who will provide trauma-focused care to help caregivers better respond to their children’s social and emotional needs. We will also provide families with two visits per week, instead of just one, to give parents and their young children, who are in critical stages of development, the opportunity to form more secure bonds. The award also provides technical assistance for our Research and Evaluation Department, who will conduct targeted program research to ensure our services are effective and our outcomes impactful. The data from Phase 2 will inform the development and piloting of a 0-3 curriculum module and supplemental materials for caregivers.

Upcoming NYSPCC Presentations and Abstracts

- Presenting abstract on Crisis Debriefing at the APSAC’s 30th Annual Colloquium, in May in Denver, CO.
- Presenting “Implicit Bias in Mandated Reporting in the US” at the APSAC’s 30th Annual Colloquium, in May in Denver, CO.
- Presenting “Addressing the Impact of Domestic Violence in the Visit Room: Key Considerations for Safety and Healing” at the 2023 Supervised Visitation Network’s Annual Conference in Newport Beach, CA.



Mary's Corner

Internet Crimes: The Fastest Growing Type of Child Abuse

By Mary L. Pulido, Ph.D.

Internet crimes against children is the fastest growing type of child abuse. Our most recent research study indicated that nearly nine out of ten parents want the school system to do much more to educate children about the risks of being on the internet. Parents across the United States were polled to gain a better understanding of their perception of how safe their children are while online:

According to parents with children under age 18, internet safety is not being addressed by schools—only 19% of parents surveyed indicate their children's schools provided teaching on internet safety and risks during the prior school year (2021–22), while 41% don't know if schools have addressed this topic with students and 23% say it has not been taught. Overall, 86% of parents favor having schools conduct annual sessions with children and teens about internet safety and risks.

Parents also held strong concerns about potential harms to their children related to internet use, including 53% indicating they are "extremely" or "very" concerned about their children interacting with strangers online through popular websites and apps, 45% who are deeply concerned about their children developing "screen-time" addictions, and 40% also concerned about the impact of "screen-time" on development of their children's social skills.

Some other important points include:

- 64% of parents are aware that many popular apps used by children and teens allow people and companies to track the location of their children.

- 50% are also aware of an internet crime called "sextortion" where young people are being extorted for money after sharing explicit images.

Parents who favor having schools provide annual sessions on internet safety to students also identify numerous topics they believe are important to address with students.

- Eight-in-10 parents would like schools to teach students about "the risks of sharing personal information" online (81%), "cyber bullying," (80%) and "recognizing predators" (80%).
- More than seven-in-10 parents want schools to educate students about the risks of "sextortion" (76%) and "sexting" (72%), while 69% also want students educated about the risks of providing or viewing sexual content and videos (including pornography).
- Two-thirds (66%) think knowing "how to block others from knowing your location" and "email and texting scams" are important topics to be addressed by schools with students.
- A majority of parents also would like schools to include discussions about "internet and screen time addiction" (58%) and "how to block messages from others" (51%) in an annual session on internet safety.

Our schools have an inherent responsibility to teach children about internet safety, and it's clear that parents want schools to play a bigger role in helping keep students safe. The NYSPCC's mission is to help prevent child abuse through our work with parents, teachers, children, and foster care agencies and we hope this research will emphasize the importance of teaching children how to stay safe online. The NYSPCC has added this to our public policy agenda for 2023.

For more information about keeping children safe online visit www.nyspcc.org

Identifying and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

Each year, The NYSPCC's Training Institute offers a variety of trainings designed to support the professional development of social service agencies and staff in preventing and responding to child abuse and neglect. To date, The NYSPCC has trained over 95,000 individuals globally.

The Training Institute is a provider of New York State's (NYS) identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect course for mandated reporters. This curriculum is offered in-person, virtually and through an online course to agencies across the state. Last year, the Training Institute reached 1,289 professionals with this important course.

In addition, the responsibilities of school personnel for reporting abuse in New York State has changed. With advocacy from The NYSPCC, the NYS legislature added an amendment to Education Law Article 23B in 2018. This amendment requires that all public and private schools follow a specific process for reporting child abuse perpetrated by school personnel or volunteers in an educational setting. Prior to this, public schools in New York City and private schools across the state were exempt from this process and were allowed to handle cases of child abuse perpetrated by school personnel and volunteers on their own. This resulted in the improper handling and investigation of child abuse cases. The

amendment also expanded the list of who is considered a mandated reporter in educational settings. This list now includes individuals, such as School Board Members, school bus drivers, resource officers and teacher's aides. In 2022, the Training Institute worked with private and public schools to offer this training in-person, virtually and through online courses to 1,254 school personnel.

Through its Training Institute, The NYSPCC is dedicated to ensuring that those involved in children's care and education are properly equipped with the information and tools they need to report abuse and keep children safe.

Events with a Purpose

The Fall Gala 2022

The NYSPCC held their annual Fall Gala on Wednesday, November 16, 2022, raising over \$1,020,000 for child abuse prevention and treatment services! Held at the iconic Rainbow Room at Rockefeller Center, the Gala was hosted by Deborah Norville, Anchor, Inside Edition and NYSPCC Children's Council member, and honored NYSPCC Board member and longtime child welfare advocate, Maarit Glocer, with The Strength of Our Society Award.



Deborah Norville, NYSPCC Children's Council member

Spring Luncheon 2022

The NYSPCC held their annual Spring Luncheon at Tavern on the Green on Wednesday, April 27, 2022. The Luncheon featured a conversation with Audry Nafziger, California Sex Crimes Prosecutor and Sex Assault Survivor, and was hosted by Judy Woodruff, Anchor and Managing Editor of the PBS Newshour. The event raised over \$325,000 for The NYSPCC's Trauma Recovery and Therapeutic Supervised Visitation Programs.



Audry Nafziger (left) and Judy Woodruff (right)



From left to right—Mary L. Pulido, Ph.D, Executive Director, Maarit Glocer, NYSPCC Board Member and Dan Healy, NYSPCC Board President



From left to right—Holly Kelly, NYSPCC Board Member, Judy Woodruff, Audry Nafziger and Elizabeth Mayhew, NYSPCC Board Member



From left to right—Thomas Glocer, Mariana Glocer, Maarit Glocer, NYSPCC Board Member and Walter Glocer

Upcoming Events

- **The United Airlines NYC Half**
Sunday, March 19, 2023.
- **Spring Luncheon**
Thursday, April 27, 2023 at The Pierre Hotel
Featuring FBI agents Laura Riso, M.A. and Erica Bell, LMSW, and James Marsh, Esq. on the topic of Sextortion.
- **Fall Gala**
Wednesday, November 15, 2023 at The Rainbow Room.

Helping Children Heal

Trauma Recovery Program— *Marissa's Story

The start of the COVID-19 pandemic was only one life-changing experience eight-year-old Marissa had to endure in 2020. She was also removed from her biological parents due to domestic violence exposure and parental neglect. Sadly, Marissa experienced several foster care placements, before finding a permanent home with her adult half-brother and his wife.

These traumatic experiences negatively impacted Marissa's emotional and physical well-being. She suffered from anxiety, was prone to panic attacks, and often bit her lower lip until it bled. She also lacked self-esteem, which caused her to neglect her hygiene and wear oversized clothes to hide her body.

Marissa was referred to The New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children's (The NYSPCC) Trauma Recovery Program, but was reluctant to engage in treatment. Because therapy was being conducted remotely however, she agreed to attend sessions, since she could do so from the comfort and privacy of her bedroom. Still, Marissa did not make eye contact with her NYSPCC Trauma Therapist. She spoke very little and barely responded to questions. But there was a light that shined through the cracks—Ma-



Marissa's enthusiasm and talent for drawing. The therapist focused on Marissa's artistic abilities to help her communicate. During sessions, Marissa and her therapist created children's books, containing characters with interesting back stories. Over time, the back stories became trauma histories like Marissa's, which helped her communicate about her experiences and feelings. This gradually exposed her to the painful aspects of her trauma experiences, allowing her to eventually speak of them without the need for fictional characters.

The NYSPCC Trauma Therapist also worked with Marissa's half-brother and wife, who were very committed to Marissa's recovery. They were eager to understand how domestic violence and parental neglect had affected Marissa's emotions and behaviors. They were open to guidance from the therapist

about how to communicate with Marissa and parent her in a way that would help her feel supported.

After two years of therapy, all of which took place virtually during the pandemic, Marissa's trauma symptoms were greatly reduced. Now, 10-years-old, Marissa is more cheerful and talkative. She can emotionally self-regulate and avoid panic attacks. She engages in self-care and better personal hygiene. During her last therapy session, the therapist asked Marissa to reflect on how far she has come and celebrate the completion of a really difficult process. Marissa told her therapist, "I'm glad I came to therapy. I feel so much better, and I am happy my case is closing." It's a vital stage in trauma therapy when a child gets to experience a feeling of accomplishment. The therapist remarked, "It is empowering for Marissa to not need therapy anymore. She knows how to take care of herself and is loved by supportive caregivers in a safe, stable home. She has a fresh start on life."

**Names are changed to protect our clients' identities.*

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

 www.nyspcc.org

Safe Touches

Child sexual abuse is a widespread public health problem with devastating impact. Through its evidence-based program, Safe Touches, The NYSPCC is seeking to reduce the incidence and effects of this harmful experience. Safe Touches workshops use life-size puppets to teach children in kindergarten through third grade how to identify safe and not safe touches and which adults they can trust and confide in, if they ever feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

In the Spring of 2022, NYSPCC staff were able to return to classrooms in person to deliver Safe Touches workshops. In total, 170 workshops were facilitated with 3,543 students in 28 schools. Ninety-six percent of teachers who hosted a workshop for their students in 2022 and completed an evaluation reported that they would recommend the program to their colleagues. Safe Touches is also being replicated in other cities and states through The NYSPCC's Training Institute. Last year, the Training Institute provided training to VIBES, a social services provider in Long Island, NY, and to ten providers across Pennsylvania through its ongoing partnership with Pennsylvania State University. These providers are now bringing Safe Touches workshops to students in their communities reaching more children with this vital child sexual abuse prevention education.

In November 2022, The NYSPCC received a generous grant from the New York Community Trust (NYCT) to adapt its Safe Touches curriculum for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and similar disabilities. Currently, there is no child sexual abuse prevention program designed to target children with ASD. Children with disabilities are less likely than their peers without disabilities to receive sexual abuse prevention education tailored to their unique learning needs and risk factors. The NYSPCC will work with other experts to adapt its current, evidence-based curriculum and pilot it in New York City's special education and District 75 schools. This curriculum would fill an important, unmet need to more effectively teach the most vulnerable children how to protect themselves from sexual abuse.

Research and Evaluation

The Research and Evaluation Department is presently designing and implementing evaluation of a program to support custodial parents and young children through the process of supervised visitation. Designed specifically for parents affected by complex trauma, this work will help parents respond to their children's social and emotional needs and increase family resiliency. This project was initiated after successful application to the Robin Hood Foundation's Fund for Early Learning initiative—FUEL for 50—grant program (*read more about that grant on the front page*).

The NYSPPC's program data is regularly shared with local and national audiences to promote best practice work and elevate the impact of research done. Recently, Dr. Mary Pulido presented data from the Crisis Debriefing program at APSAC (American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children) National Colloquium, highlighting her Restoring Resiliency Response (RRR) model. Assistant Director of Research Dr. Nicole Lim, presented at the International Society of Traumatic Stress Studies Conference (ISTSS) on newly collected data from the Trauma Recovery program, while Dr. Mary Pulido presented at the 37th Annual San Diego International Conference on Child and Family Maltreatment. Dr. Mary Pulido and Dr. Jacqueline Holloway also presented at the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse & Neglect (ISPCAN).

The Research Department is excited to continue working on multiple parallel initiatives, including national research work addressing the proliferation of child sexual exploitation online, participation in the New York State Initiative to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse, the APSAC Taskforce for Visitation Guidelines in the Child Welfare field, as well as continuing to evaluate agency programs and apply for grant funding.

Special Thanks

We are grateful to the following supporters who have made gifts of \$1,000 or more since March 2022* to help support our work with NYC's children:

\$50,000 and up

- The Hearst Foundations
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- Maarit and Thomas Glocer
- The New York Community Trust
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- Mark Weiss

*Donations made from March 2022 through January 2023.



April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

Visit our social media pages to see how you can support our work in April!



The NYSPCC Welcomes New Staff!

Samantha Alvarez Benowitz, LCSW
Director of Clinical Services

Maria Cucuta
Bilingual Clinical Program Coordinator

Muna Heaven, Esq.
Assistant Executive Director and Legal Counsel

Amelia Kreski, LCSW
Assistant Director of Clinical Services

Stephanie Lai, LCSW
Manager of Clinical Services

Evy Rivera
Security Officer

Gayane Sardaryan, LMSW
Trauma Therapist

Daniel Senes
Manager of Government Grants

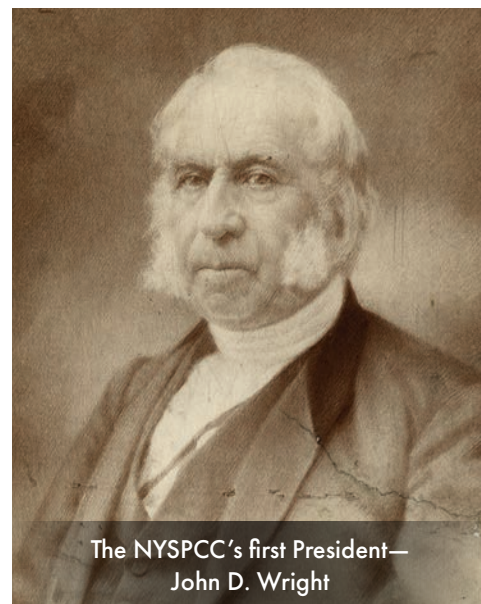
Miriam Valero, LMSW
Bilingual Trauma Therapist

Archives

The NYSPCC Archives has exciting news!

- There is now a public **Archives portal** for generating annual reports and sharing reference requests with The NYSPCC Archives.
- The agency's earliest Annual Reports have revealed some prominent NYSPCC Board members: Theodore Roosevelt, Augustus D. Juilliard, and JP Morgan.
- The Archives created a monthly newsletter called *The Spotlight*, which can be located on the **Archives portal** landing page.

The Archives Department has recently digitized historical photos of prominent NYSPCC figures such as Etta Wheeler, Henry Bergh, John D. Wright, Elbridge T. Gerry, and agency headquarter buildings.



The NYSPCC's first President—
John D. Wright