

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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Child Neglect: Recognize It and Take Action!

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

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

Many children die each year from child neglect. The media normally reports on child abuse fatalities so child abuse is clearer in the public's mind. Child neglect is extremely dangerous too. Here is the difference between abuse and neglect. Child abuse occurs when a parent intentionally takes action to harm to a child such as beating, kicking – or sexual abuse. Child neglect occurs when there is a LACK of action by a parent or caretaker to keep a child safe from harm.

A neglectful parent is not fulfilling the child's basic needs for health and safety. A neglected child may not have enough food to eat, not be receiving proper medical care when they're sick, or, not be attending school on a regular basis. Sometimes, a young child will be left home alone or in a locked car, both precarious situations. You will look at the child and realize that they don't have the parental care they need to thrive.

It's important to note that child neglect can occur without deliberate intent on the part of the parent. For instance, the child may not have food or be left alone due a parent's severe depression or other mental illness. A young parent may simply not know how to care for an infant and not feed the baby properly or get the proper medical attention if the baby is sick. But if this lack of action is liable to harm the child, it should be reported. The child's life could be in danger. Reporting the case can get the child and the parents the help that they need.

Sadly, you should also be aware that in some instances, a child can experience both neglect and abuse. For example, children without adequate food, supervision, not attending school, may also experience physical or sexual abuse. I just read a very moving memoir, *Etched in Sand* by Regina Calcaterra. It is an account of how she and her four siblings basically raised themselves – as their alcoholic, depressed, and often abusive mother, left them alone for weeks at a time. Regina and her young siblings found refuge by sleeping in cars and abandoned houses. They figured out how to steal food from the local stores so that the youngest ones would have milk and food to eat. These children experienced horrific neglect – and unfortunately – often abuse as well. What amazes me is that no one noticed that these children were abandoned! No one intervened – no one helped them. And, this occurred on Long Island, right here in New York, not in some isolated area of the country.

After enduring this tragic lifestyle into her teens, Regina eventually told the authorities with the hope that all of them would be rescued. Regina ended up in foster care and although it too was dire at times, she persevered. She graduated college, then law school, and has held many important positions in her career. She was truly fortunate. Many neglected children simply don't have the ability to forge ahead with so much working against them. That's why you need to take action if you believe a child is at risk.

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Dear Friends,

Happy Spring! April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. It's also the time that we devote to educating the public that it's everyone's responsibility to safeguard children from abuse and neglect.

And this April is particularly special – In April of 1875, The NYSPCC was incorporated as the world's first child protection agency. For 140 years, The NYSPCC has been at the forefront of the child welfare movement. We continue to be leaders and innovators in healing children and strengthening families in New York City and beyond. We look forward to celebrating our past while we work towards a brighter future for all children. You can read more in our Program Spotlight.

I am pleased to share with you some of our recent accomplishments. The NYSPCC, in partnership with the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children – New York (APSAC-NY), initiated an advocacy campaign to amend a New York State Education Law. Current law requires that public school principals forward reports of child abuse committed by school employees or volunteers to appropriate law enforcement authorities. However, this law applies only to children in New York State public and charter schools. As a result, more than 425,000 children attending private schools in New York State are not covered under the current law. An op-ed that I wrote was published in the *The Albany Times-Union* highlighting this double standard that leaves too many children at risk for child sexual abuse. I hope that it will increase public awareness and generate pressure to amend the law to extend protections to all children in New York State.

An article on our NIH-funded research of the Safe Touches child sexual abuse prevention workshop for children has been accepted for publication in the August issue of the *American Journal of Public Health*. The article details the results of the study, which showed statistically significant gains in knowledge of safety concepts by children who participated in The NYSPCC's workshop as compared to their peers who did not. We are proud to have this important research highlighted in such an esteemed journal.

And I hope to see you this year at our upcoming events:

- Tuesday, April 21, 2015: Annual Spring Luncheon featuring a conversation with Regina Calcaterra, New York Times best-selling author of *Etched in Sand*.
- Wednesday, May 6, 2015: Junior Committee Spring Benefit at Tao Downtown.
- Monday, November 16, 2015: Gala Wine Dinner featuring Chef Emma Bengtsson of Aquavit.

Finally, it is with much sadness that I convey the passing of our beloved Board member Betsy Bartlett. She was an inspirational leader at The NYSPCC and she will be missed.

Thank you for your continued belief in our mission, and for helping to keep children safe.

Warm regards,

Mary L. Pulido, Ph.D.,
Executive Director

From our Archives



The NYSPCC has pursued its mission with vigor continuously since its inception in 1875. We have been there to protect children in some of the great tragedies of our time. In 1912, The NYSPCC was called upon to rescue two young survivors of the Titanic disaster, pictured at left.

The story began with the estranged marriage of Michel Nacratil and Marcelle Caretto. They were headed for divorce when Marcelle permitted Michel to take their two sons for a trip. Eager to keep his children, he fled and booked tickets on the Titanic under an alias. On April 15th, the ship sank, having collided with an iceberg. Michel handed his children into the last lifeboat before he died. Newspapers picked up the story of the orphans, dubbed the "Titanic Waifs", with many articles looking for answers, and hopefully relatives.

The Mayor requested the assistance of The NYSPCC, and our services were three-fold: investigative, supervisory, and sheltering. The NYSPCC assumed responsibility for custody of the children, while pursuing an investigation into the identification of the children. When news reached Marcelle about the Titanic orphans, she wondered if they might be her boys. They were her sons, Michel, 4 and Edmond, 2. She arrived in New York where they were cared for by the Society, until their return to France.

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Child Neglect: Recognize It and Take Action!

Steps to Take

So, what are the steps in making a report? The NYSPCC recommends that all parents and concerned adults learn the basic steps and take action when necessary.

- If you witness a child being abused or neglected call 911. The police are trained to respond to these sensitive calls, and in doing so you may save a child's life.
- Every state has a hotline number you can call to make a report if you suspect a child is at risk. Just type the name of your state and child abuse hotline in your web browser and the number will come up. The National Council on Child Abuse and Family Violence has a list for each state.
- You can also call Childhelp, the national child abuse hotline at 1-800-4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453)

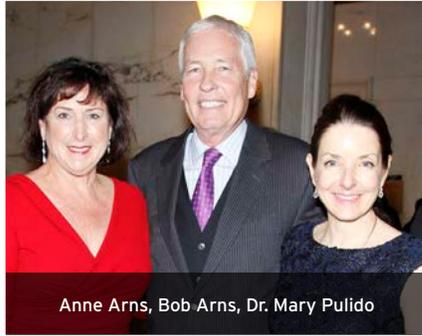
When you make a report, the police or the state hotline will request information on what you have suspicions about or witnessed. You should mention the age and whereabouts of the child, the person who is perpetrating the abuse or neglect and the nature of the child's injuries or condition. The official will ask for your name and number, but you can choose to remain anonymous. Even if you are not certain about all of the specifics, MAKE THE CALL. It's then up to the investigators to follow a course of action.

Yes, taking action will probably make you anxious – that's understandable as it is such an important undertaking. Yet, you will rest easier knowing that due to your intervention, the child and his or her parent(s) can get help and attention. Remember, child abuse and neglect is preventable. Everyone must be part of the solution; let the solution start with you.

Special Events

2014 Fall Benefit: Gala Wine Dinner

On Monday, November 17th, The NYSPCC hosted its Gala Wine Dinner at the exquisite Metropolitan Club, honoring Anne and Bob Arns of Napa Valley's Tournesol. The celebration, attended by a record almost 300 supporters, began with a cocktail reception and amazing tasting tables of wine. The dinner featured excellent wine pairings from Tournesol, as well as a delicious meal designed by acclaimed Chef Anita Lo of Annisa, and author of *Cooking Without Borders*. The evening was hosted by Inside Edition's Deborah Norville and author Jay McInerney served as "Sommelier of the Evening." This festive event raised over \$550,000 for the agency. Thank you to our Dinner Chair Joan Granlund, Co-Chairs Lou Buglioli, Amanda and Neil Friedman, Maarit and Thomas H. Glocer, Penny Grant, M.D., Valesca Guerrand-Hermès, Kimberly Guilfoyle, Tania Higgins, Deborah Norville and Karl Wellner, M. David and Mary Alice Sherrill, and our friends and supporters who made it such a memorable night for The NYSPCC!



Anne Arns, Bob Arns, Dr. Mary Pulido



Anne Hearst McInerney, Karl Wellner, Deborah Norville, Jay McInerney



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Lorenzo Lorenzotti, Valesca Guerrand-Hermès



Joan Granlund, Austin Scarlett



Dr. Mary Pulido, Chef Anita Lo, Deborah Norville

In Memoriam, Elizabeth E. Bartlett



A dedicated member of our Board of Directors for over 36 years, Betsy's wisdom, compassion and concern for the safety and well-being of children were an inspiration to all at The NYSPCC.

We are grateful to all who have made gifts thus far in her memory:

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph A. Califano, Jr.
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NOVEMBER

16

SAVE THE DATE
2015 Gala Wine Dinner

Featuring Chef Emma Bengtsson of Aquavit.

Monday, November 16, 2015 | The Metropolitan Club

For reservations and more information:

📞 212.233.5500 ext. 216 | ✉ info@nyspcc.org



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www.facebook.com/NYSPCC

Special Events

Children's Holiday Party

NYSPCC staff and families celebrated the festive holiday season at our Children's Holiday Party on December 11th, 2014. The children were thrilled to participate in face painting and balloon twirling by Valerie Smalls and her wonderful team. A special thanks to the Junior Committee, who raised the funds to hire our children's entertainment.

The families also participated in seasonal crafts and enjoyed delicious food donated by Dante's Catering. At the end of the evening, children were treated to bags chock full of gifts generously donated by our loyal Toy Drive donors. Thanks to the Downtown Conference Center for generously hosting the event, to Jenny Gorman for donating her services as the evening's photographer, and for everyone who helped make it a wonderful night for our families.



Special Thanks!

We are grateful to the following supporters who have made Annual Fund gifts of \$500 or more since November 1, 2014 to help support our work with NYC's children:

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Thank you to the following donors and volunteers who helped make our 2014 Children's Holiday Party such a special occasion for the children in our programs!

- Anissa Arroyo
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