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Stop It Now! NEWS

The Campaign to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse

Joan Tabachnick's 10th Anniversary at Stop It Now!

Celebrating Public Education

In this issue of the newsletter, we celebrate Joan Tabachnick's 10th anniversary as the Director of Public Education at Stop It Now!. Joan's contributions have been integral to the development of this organization. As a writer, she has drafted, edited or collaborated on all of our brochures, posters, and our website. She has been our loudest voice in authoring numerous articles and book chapters to publicize Now!'s message. Her creativity has been behind so many of our innovative programs like the Helpline and the Dialogue Project.



Joan Tabachnick

She has provided leadership and training, often several years worth, in establishing each of our five sites. Joan has been a pioneer, turning a radical idea—that sexual abuse can be prevented before a child is harmed—into a recognized part of public health science. We used this occasion of her tenth anniversary to talk with her about the past ten years.

NOW!: When you think back 12 years ago, when Stop It Now! was just beginning, what do you remember?

JT: In 1992, the Stop It Now! concept was totally new. When Fran Henry, the founder, described the vision for Stop It Now!, it just made good common sense. And no one in the United States was even thinking of a public health approach to preventing the sexual abuse of children. I also realized that if successful in our work, we could have a huge impact on the lives of children. I volunteered and consulted for two years, and then ten years ago, I was given an amazing job and challenge: a blank slate to create the building blocks needed to bring this idea into the public domain.

Today, I can say we were successful in introducing these new ways of building a prevention program. Today, we are still on the cutting edge. I think we push the envelope in every aspect of our work by focusing on how to prevent the perpetration of child sexual abuse. We explore the complexity of how this trauma affects everyone in a family – the victim, the abuser, and the people who care about them. And we offer, every day through our work and our Helpline, a way to hold these situations by balancing accountability for someone's behaviors with compassion for who they are as a whole person.

NOW!: What is most important to you about those early years?

JT: In the early years, the one, event that made a deep and lasting impression on me was going into Dannemora Prison with Fay Honey Knopp, the founder of the Safer Society Foundation and Press. I had the chance to observe a therapy group and also talk one-on-one with a man who had sexually abused many children. His name

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■ SITE NEWS

■ PHILADELPHIA

Stop It Now! Philadelphia welcomes Michael Stinson as its new Coordinator. Michael brings with him a master's degree in public health and 15 years experience in private industry. In program news, Philadelphia's community prevention project in North Philadelphia is now receiving significant funding from the city's Department of Human Services (DHS). The DHS contract calls for Now! Philadelphia to provide sexual abuse trainings to DHS staff and DHS contracted agencies. Lastly, the Philadelphia site has just been awarded a three-year grant of \$150,000 from the Children's Trust Fund.

■ GEORGIA

During the 20th Annual Symposium sponsored by Prevent Child Abuse Georgia, Stop It Now! Georgia hosted their first public dialogue. Attended by over 100 local child welfare and prevention professionals, the dialogue offered a unique opportunity to hear honest and painful stories of child sexual abuse from many different perspectives. The dialogue also offered a chance to witness the hope and the opportunities for prevention that come from adults taking full responsibility for their actions. The response from the audience was overwhelmingly positive; many attendees asked for information about how to bring this educational tool back to their own communities.

PUBLIC EDUCATION CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

was John, a handsome, educated man in his forties, and he openly shared his life with us. I was deeply disturbed by my reaction: I found that I liked him a lot.

The moment I remember clearly was when John took full responsibility for his crimes. He also said that he was not blaming others, but "Although all of the signs were there, no one bothered to ask me about them." He felt that if someone had been able to ask him, early on, about what was happening, it would have made a difference.

So I asked him what the signs were, and he began to list them. I continued, then, to do a lot more work with other sex offenders, with research, and with focus groups. We developed a full list of warning signs for those at risk to abuse. In 1992, there was a lot of information available about what to look for in children AFTER the child has been sexually abused. But there was nothing available to the general public about what to look for in adult behaviors or between adults and kids.

The brochure we developed was groundbreaking. For the first time ever, we had a tool, an easy-to-understand checklist, to focus adults on a new prevention strategy.

NOW!: What you are saying is that Stop It Now! has created a shift in the way people think about child sexual abuse. How did your work in public education contribute to that shift?

JT: It is quite incredible for me to see that people really do think differently about child sexual abuse now than they did 12 years ago. It is very moving for me to see that just a few people can make significant changes in how our culture thinks, feels, and acts.

Twelve years ago, the public was not aware of how prevalent child sexual abuse really is. Since then, a former Ms. America, Roseanne, Oprah, hockey players, and most recently, many others within the Catholic Church, have come forward to talk about their own sexual abuse. That courage has created a tide of change.

In public education, we have been able to take that growing awareness and use it to increase people's knowledge, give them the skills they need, and motivate specific actions. All of our public education work focuses on giving people a range of options to address situations that concern them in their family or in their community. We want to shift the culture to a place where anyone who cares will know how to ask questions and get involved.

NOW!: You mention the courage of survivors to talk publicly about their experiences. Where is this courage coming from?

JT: Over the years, I have had the privilege to talk with many survivors, recovering sex offenders, family members, and parents of youth with sexual behavior problems. From all of these groups, I heard the need for a clear message of hope. No one in the field ever talked about sexual abuse from a place of hope. Stop It Now!'s message, "We can prevent child sexual abuse," is hopeful. People can change when they have hope that things can be better.

This positive and hopeful approach came naturally to me, in part because of my business school background. People are most likely to change or to take a specific action if they feel the action will make their life better. In this context, you can think of social change as a form of social marketing.

Let me give you an example. If you want people to buy a shower nozzle, you don't talk about the hardware. You talk about the amazing feeling of a relaxing hot





MESSAGE FROM MAXINE STEIN, CEO

This has been a year of significant change, for me personally, and for Stop It Now! I came to this organization ready for a challenge, and I have found it. The work that we do, the communities that we engage with, and the people we speak to all show us the tremendous need for the services of Stop It Now! As one caller said when she learned about our Helpline: “Finding out about you could not have come at a better time. I had no idea what to do and this is exactly what I needed.” So now, as I am heading into my first Massachusetts winter after living in Florida for almost a decade, I ask you to join me in the challenge of building greater and broader financial support for Stop It Now!.

Our contributions to the field of child sexual abuse prevention are highly respected. We are recognized by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as a stellar public health program and an agent for positive social change within our communities. What we do makes good sense. It is simple really—but it is also hard.

I want to invite you to become a part of our prevention campaign. I want to thank you for all the support you have already offered. We want to count on you because we are striving to make our neighborhoods, our communities and our country safer for our kids. And when we have places to raise children free of sexual abuse, we will be raising adults who treat each other with greater respect, and we will foster healthier families.

Giving opportunities are available at all levels. No gift is too small or too large for Stop It Now!. Information packets, Helpline calls, trainings, newsletters, ParentTalk, our website—these are just a few of the many things we seek funding for. Please use the envelope enclosed with this newsletter.

Sometimes your financial gift to Stop It Now! can also help spread the word about our organization. We have a donor in New York who hosts a party each December for friends and colleagues. In lieu of a host gift, each guest is asked to bring a check, of any amount, payable to Stop It Now!. The collected checks become a gift to Stop It Now! and each person at that party becomes an ambassador of our work.

Others have made gifts in honor of a loved one’s birthday, an anniversary, a promotion at work or any other happy occasion in their lives. Earlier this year, we received a very touching gift from two people who were planning their wedding. Instead of buying table favors to honor their guests, they chose to make a donation to Stop It Now! and told their friends on their wedding day.

Stop It Now! is a creative place. Our programs are innovative and bold. The things we do have never been done before. Join us this holiday season in thinking creatively and by being bold. Join us in being a part of the solution. As you celebrate, imagine the safer world for children that we are creating. We welcome you, old friends and new, to embrace our work and to join our efforts on this important issue.

In the spirit of community,
Maxine Stein

THE FOUNDER’S SAFETY NET FOR CHILDREN is an opportunity to support the work of Stop It Now! with a three year commitment of \$1000 each year. This level of support goes a long way toward helping create financial stability for our organization. We thank the people listed below for their commitment at this level. If you are interested in joining this special circle of supporters, contact Maxine Stein, CEO, at (413) 268-3096.

Jeannette Atkinson
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Anonymous

PUBLIC EDUCATION CONTINUED FROM PAGE TWO

shower after a long day. You sell the feeling you know people want. People who had experienced sexual abuse told us they wanted hope that their lives could be better. So we tested whether people could be motivated to come forward and ask

for help if they believed that doing so could make their lives better. We held out the hope they asked for, and indeed, people have come forward because of our programs. It is moving to know that we have helped people improve their lives.



PROGRAM NEWS

SITE NEWS

Helpline

Expanded Hours of Operation The Helpline is now open from 9 am to **6 pm**, Monday through Friday, Eastern Standard Time. With this one extra hour of operation (5–6 pm), we responded to fifteen more callers each month since the change was made in August. Our dream is to eventually operate the Helpline during day-time hours in all time zones.

Helpline Staff Growth A warm welcome to our new Helpline Associate, Megan Shields-Stromsness. Megan has worked with youth in a variety of educational settings, and is fluent in Spanish. Most importantly, Megan brings to the work an inherent knack for “holding” and navigating the complexity of child sexual abuse situations for Helpline callers. In her own words, “Stop It Now! recognizes how truly complicated and entangling a situation involving child sexual abuse is. Instead of oversimplifying anyone’s role, Stop It Now! takes the time to acknowledge and sort out what it means to be in the shoes of the caller... Stop It Now! gives adults who call in the tools to pursue accountability and complexity simultaneously.”

New Helpline Affiliates Stop It Now! is experimenting with a new approach to expand our prevention efforts with the National Helpline. We are establishing more connections with local and statewide organizations to tie them into our National Helpline. For instance, we are currently working with the Virginia Department of Public Health and a coalition in Massachusetts led by the Massachusetts Center for Sex Offender Management. With them, we are working to establish local Helpline Resource Directories and Helpline Protocols for callers from each state.

Field Development

New Field Development Director We are delighted to announce that Sarita Hudson has joined Stop It Now! as the new Field Development Director at the national office. Sarita comes with a master’s degree in Theological Studies and over 15 years experience in coalition building and social justice organizing. In this role at Stop It Now!, she expects to create and foster a collaborative of sites and affiliates within the national organization. Her work will be specifically focused on expanding Now!’s public health model of sexual abuse prevention. Sarita says she looks forward to adding her skills and her passion to Stop It Now!’s important work.

MINNESOTA

Stop It Now! Minnesota is collaborating with the Minnesota Department of Human Services and the Minnesota Childcare Resource and Referral Network to train all licensed child care providers on preventing child sexual abuse in child care settings. Through this project, 69 of Minnesota’s 87 counties are distributing Stop It Now!’s brochure, “Do Children Sexually Abuse Other Children?” to licensed childcare providers in their county. In addition, Stop It Now! is providing 13 regional trainings to county child care licensors.

UNITED KINGDOM AND IRELAND

Stop It Now! UK and Ireland welcomed Tink Palmer as its new Central Co-ordinator. Tink has been working against sexual exploitation for the last four years, and she brings great experience in collaborating with policy makers,

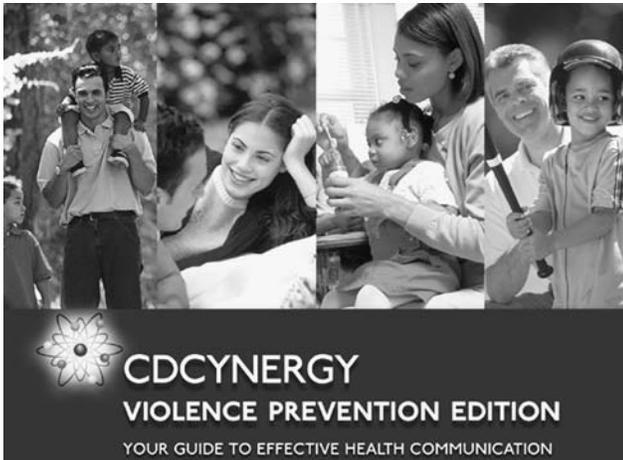
practioners, grant making bodies, and the general public. In Northern Ireland, a new site opened this fall, and at the Surrey site, there has been some innovative advertising with its “Smart Car,” painted with the Now! logo and images. The car is used on local roads and appears at public events both locally and nationally.



Innovative advertising in Surrey

CDCynergy Highlights the Success of Stop It Now!

Stop It Now! was selected as one of four field examples in the latest edition of CDCynergy, a CD-ROM developed as an interactive educational tool by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDCynergy is a series of multi-media CD-ROMs tailored to different disciplines within the field of public health. Each CD-ROM presents a step-by-step tutorial on how to implement a 6-phase process of



planning, managing and evaluating a public health communication plan. Case studies highlighting the successes and pitfalls encountered by real life public health interventions are woven throughout the tutorial.

The new edition of CDCynergy focuses on violence prevention. Stop It Now! is the only

child sexual abuse prevention organization presented as a comprehensive case study and detailed in each of the six phases. Other real life examples include programs working on youth violence, dating violence, and sexual violence between adults.

Since its inception several years ago, CDCynergy has become a valued tool for public health professionals working on the national, state and/or community level. In addition to the detailed tutorial, each CD-ROM includes a wealth of resources including a diverse media library, bibliography of key research, practical handbooks, and a complete glossary of health communication terminology.

For more information about this version of CDCynergy on violence prevention, contact Joan Tabachnick at Stop It Now!. To request a copy of the CD-ROM, contact Suzanne Hurley Zarus, Public Health Advisor at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at shurley@cdc.gov or 770-488-1103.

STOP IT NOW!

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Stop It Now! created a groundbreaking public health approach to prevent the perpetration of child sexual abuse. Its public policy, public education and research programs have protected our children by emphasizing adult and community responsibility. These programs reach out to adults who are concerned about inappropriate sexualized behavior in another adult, adolescent, or child, and to adults who are concerned about their own thoughts and behaviors.

HELPLINE: 1-888-PREVENT www.stopitnow.org

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* Organizations listed for identification purposes



IN THE PUBLIC EYE

13 Years of Stop It Now! History Preserved

Stop It Now! and the Sophia Smith Collection (SSC), an internationally recognized Archive of women's history documents, have agreed to collaborate in preserving the records of Stop It Now!'s founding and development. Stop It Now! will also add future documents to the collection on a periodic basis.

Gloria Steinem, whose personal papers are presented by the Collection in an exhibit called Agents of Social Change, said, "I am proud to be sharing an archives with Stop It Now!. The organization not only helps to keep the child from becoming a victim, but keeps the adult or older child from becoming a victimizer. It is a resource for families, activists, schools, health professionals, media and all forces of society that are necessary to stop this private violence and humiliation that is the source of so many deep, public ills."

According to Sherril Redmon, Director of the SSC, Stop It Now! is a good fit for the collection because of its "pioneering approach as a reform movement." Inclusion in the SSC places Stop It Now! among the most important organizations and individuals who have made a difference in improving women's lives.

The Sophia Smith Collection is open to the public and is free of charge. For more information about the Sophia Smith Collection, visit <http://libraries.smith.edu/ssc>.

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