

—
CAPTA
month

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LISA PION-BERLIN, Ph.D.
President and Chief Executive Officer

December 13, 1999

Bruce Reed, Director, Domestic Policy Council
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Reed:

We are requesting a meeting on Monday, December 20th or Tuesday, December 21st to discuss vital policy and funding issues with you regarding child abuse prevention in America. I am the President and Chief Executive Officer of Parents Anonymous[®], Inc., the oldest and largest child abuse prevention organization in America. We help tens of thousands of families through our unique mutual support groups and specialized children's programs which occur in diverse communities and settings all across America. When President Clinton was the Governor of Arkansas, Mrs. Clinton served on the Board of Directors of SCAN, our Parents Anonymous[®] accredited organization serving families in Arkansas.

Funding and strong legislation at the federal level is lacking for child abuse prevention. Compared to the funding for the investigation of child abuse, foster care and adoption services which is 77 times greater than federal prevention funds under the Child Abuse Prevention & Treatment Act (CAPTA- totals in FY 2000 only \$ 71.8 million)- prevention has very limited resources. Since CAPTA's passage 25 years ago which occurred with the help of the founding mother of Parents Anonymous[®], Jolly K. whose historic testimony was covered on National network news, Parents Anonymous[®] has been expanding nationwide and trained parent leaders all over to advocate for needed policies and our program that strengthens families in partnership with their local communities. We are truly community-based and utilize tens of thousands of volunteers to make Parents Anonymous[®] a true success.

We desperately need the leadership of the White House to ensure that funding opportunities are sought to support effective prevention programs knowing the devastating impact of child abuse on the lives of children and generations to come. We would like to discuss the reauthorization of CAPTA, federal funding for child abuse prevention which is abysmally low, and our vital work to help families which we know is a priority with both the President and Mrs. Clinton. This is our 30th Anniversary and partnering with the White House to celebrate the success of parents who have turned their lives around forever would send a critical message to other parents who feel isolated and alone to reach out for help with Parents Anonymous[®]. Thank you in advance for your consideration of a meeting next week.

Sincerely,

Lisa Pion-Berlin, Ph.D.
President and Chief Executive Officer

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C O V E R

S H E E T

FAX

DATE: 12/13/99
TO: Kathy via Bruce Reed
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COMPANY:
PHONE #:
OF PAGES TO FOLLOW: ①
FROM: Lisa Pion-Berlin, Ph.D.
President and Chief Executive Officer



Per your voice message
about faxing a request to
Bruce Reed for a meeting at
The White House.

Paula

The National Organization
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www.parentsanonymous-natl.org

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PARENTS ANONYMOUS, INC. FACT SHEET

Our Mission

Founded in 1970 in California by a courageous mother and her social worker, Parents Anonymous, Inc. is dedicated to promoting mutual support and parent leadership in order to build and support strong, safe families. As the nation's oldest child abuse prevention, education, and treatment program, we celebrate our thirtieth anniversary and recommit to our vision of strengthening many more families across America.

What Makes Us Unique

The Parents Anonymous® model emphasizes shared leadership between parents and professionals. This model exemplifies the notion that by building on the strengths of families, difficulties can be overcome and child abuse and neglect can be prevented.

Acknowledged Success

When Congress re-authorized the Child Abuse Prevention & Treatment Act in 1996, a new section was added highlighting Parents Anonymous® as a benchmark community-based prevention program. In 1996, Parents Anonymous, Inc. was selected by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention as a national Model Family Strengthening Program to prevent juvenile delinquency. In 1997, the U.S. Commission on Child and Family Welfare, in their final report to Congress, identified Parents Anonymous, Inc. as the most successful program that emphasizes mutual support and parent leadership to ensure more responsive services.

Demonstrated Effectiveness

Immediate reduction in physical and emotional abuse. National research on Parents Anonymous® demonstrated a significant and immediate reduction in the frequency and severity of physical and emotional child abuse by parents who attended Parents Anonymous® groups. (Behavior Associates of Tucson, Arizona, 1976)

Most effective program for resolving parents' problems. In a national evaluation of 11 child abuse programs over a period of 40 months, Parents Anonymous® was the most significant intervention in alleviating child abuse and neglect in comparison to the other ten programs, which included individual therapy and parent education classes. (Berkeley Planning Associates, 1981)

Beneficial Children's Programs. National research on Parents Anonymous® children's programs revealed significant improvements in children's self-esteem, behavior and social interaction skills (Behavior Associates, 1983). Parents Anonymous, Inc. has created a new Children's Program that establishes principles and guidelines for the National Network.

New Research Underway. In 1999, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention will fund a new evaluation to assess the implementation and effectiveness of the Parents Anonymous® program.

Cost Effectiveness

Compared to the lifetime cost of more than \$2 million to our society for each abused child, Parents Anonymous® services effectively prevent child abuse at a cost of only \$600 per year per family. Annually, thousands of volunteers donate millions of dollars worth of services to Parents Anonymous®, making a significant contribution to families in their communities.

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 Reaching more families across America than any other child abuse prevention program, the Parents Anonymous, Inc. National Network is a lifeline for parents and children who attend hundreds of Parents Anonymous® groups annually.

 On any given week, thousands of mothers and fathers effectively address the stresses of parenting and learn to strengthen their relationships with their children in Parents Anonymous® groups across America. At the same time, their children are increasing their self esteem, improving their behavior and learning more effective social skills through Parents Anonymous® Children's Programs.

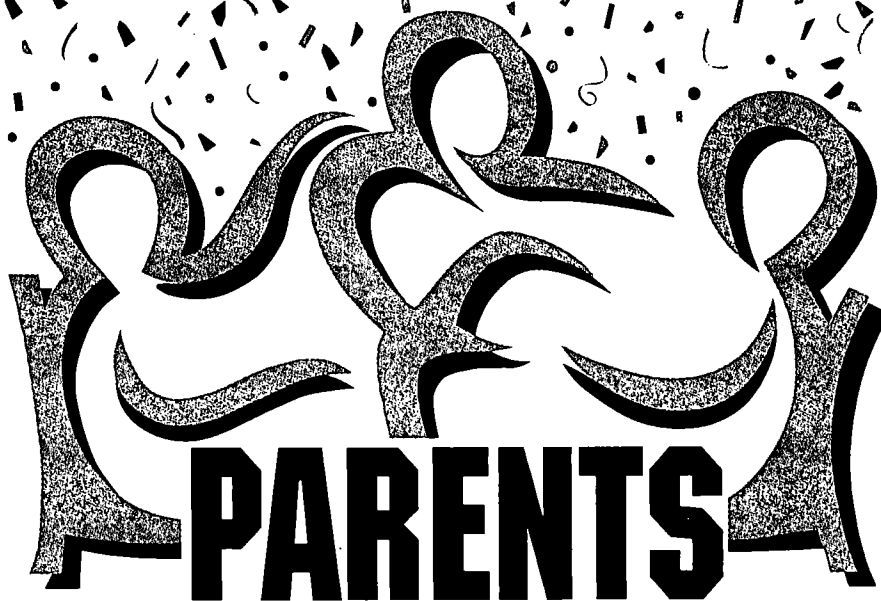
 Parents Anonymous® programs meet the diverse needs of parents, including single, teen, minority, mono-lingual, and incarcerated parents; grandparents; "at risk" youth; and adult survivors of child abuse.

 Parents Anonymous, Inc. promotes parent leadership throughout the country by enhancing the meaningful role of parents in policy decisions, program planning, implementation and evaluation in community-based organizations, federal, state and local governments to ensure effective programs that meet the needs of families.

 Parents Anonymous, Inc. delivers comprehensive technical assistance and training to achieve successful organizational and programmatic capacity building; produces newsletters, videos, brochures, technical assistance bulletins, and program materials; designs national initiatives to prevent child abuse, reform child protective services, curtail juvenile delinquency, and promote parent leadership; provides information, education, and referrals for parents and professionals; and assists parents and professionals with advocacy efforts at the local, state and federal levels that will generate better outcomes for families all across the country.

 Parents Anonymous, Inc. conducts national public awareness activities through the media to advocate for key family issues, and to reach out to parents seeking help to create safe and caring homes for their children.

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS



AnonymousSM

Strengthening Families All Across America

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PARENT LEADERSHIP SERIES



MEDIA GUIDE
FOR PARENT
LEADERS





each year ensuring the availability of Parents AnonymousSM programs in their community. Through collaborations with schools, Head Start programs, shelters, the courts, tribal councils, public health entities, social service providers, and civic organizations, Parents AnonymousSM groups build and support caring communities for parents and children so that the next generation of families can live and grow in safe, nurturing environments.

Creating Cost Savings Nationwide

Parents AnonymousSM programs effectively prevent child abuse and neglect, thereby eliminating the estimated lifetime cost of more than \$2 million to our society for each abused child. Through prevention, Parents AnonymousSM decreases child maltreatment as a risk factor that can escalate into other costly social problems such as juvenile delinquency and teen pregnancy. Investing in Parents AnonymousSM not only saves society millions of dollars, it also saves the lives of millions of America's children.

Building for the Future

As a leading expert on family strengthening, Parents Anonymous, Inc. creates innovative strategies to achieve meaningful parent leadership; conducts training and customized technical assistance for public and private agencies and communities regarding effective systems reform strategies; and shapes the direction of public policies through strategic advocacy and media efforts. Educational materials, newsletters, technical assistance bulletins, and consultation are provided to enhance practice and improve service delivery resulting in stronger families, safer communities, and more positive outcomes for children and youth. With an emphasis on capacity building, Parents Anonymous, Inc. ensures the programmatic and organizational success of Parents AnonymousSM activities throughout the United States.



Strengthening Families Across America
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 e-mail: parentsanon@nla.net



Strengthening Families in Partnership with Communities



*"My first Parents AnonymousSM group meeting replaced hopelessness with **Hope**. My second group meeting replaced helplessness with new ideas."*



Strengthening Families All Across America

ate long term positive changes in their lives. Reaching out to families in need, Parents AnonymousSM operates 24-hour hotlines to provide an immediate response to parents seeking help; raises awareness and educates the public on critical family issues and community solutions; and partners with policy makers to ensure effective services for families all across America.

Demonstrating Effectiveness and Success

National research definitively confirms the effectiveness of Parents AnonymousSM in diminishing the impact of risk factors while dramatically increasing the resiliency of parents and children resulting in the prevention of child abuse and juvenile delinquency. Through Parents AnonymousSM, parents identify and build on their strengths, increase their ability to deal with stress, expand their social support networks, and develop realistic expectations of themselves and their children. Another national study concluded that Parents AnonymousSM had a significant impact on alleviating child abuse and neglect, irrespective of other services provided including parent education classes and individual therapy. Furthermore, national research on Parents AnonymousSM children's programs revealed significant improvements in children's self-esteem, behavior, and social interaction skills. In recognition of this demonstrated effectiveness, federal law highlights Parents AnonymousSM as the benchmark for child abuse prevention and treatment programs throughout the United States. Moreover, the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention acknowledges

and promotes Parents AnonymousSM as a national Model Family Strengthening Program to prevent juvenile delinquency. The first national Bulletin in OJJDP's Family Strengthening Series was on Parents Anonymous, Inc. and highlighted the critical linkages between Parents AnonymousSM and juvenile delinquency prevention efforts.

Building Stronger, Safer Families

As the nation's premier family strengthening program, Parents AnonymousSM encourages parents to ask for help early, whatever their circumstances, to effectively break the cycle of abuse to protect today's children and strengthen tomorrow's generation of parents. Parents AnonymousSM builds upon the strengths of parents to ensure that children live and grow in safe, nurturing homes by offering families help today and hope for the future.

Responding to the Diverse Needs of Families

Parents Anonymous, Inc. is strongly committed to providing culturally responsive services that meet the diverse needs of families all across America. As a result, Parents AnonymousSM programs integrate the values, languages, and



*"Through the other Parents AnonymousSM parents, I got **Support**... I found the courage to change."*



*"Thanks to all of the **Help** I got from Parents AnonymousSM, my kids are happier and I enjoy them even more."*

strengths of local communities by joining with American Indian, Latino, African-American, Asian-American, and Caucasian families living in urban and rural areas to develop and implement neighborhood-based Parents AnonymousSM groups. To ensure the accessibility of Parents AnonymousSM programs to all community members, whether they are married, single, divorced, teen parents, grandparents, or step parents, Parents AnonymousSM groups meet in settings such as local community centers, churches, schools, housing projects, shelters, and prisons.

Parents Anonymous, Inc. has developed a new Children's Program model to be implemented nationwide by its National Network. Every Parents AnonymousSM group will have the ability to develop a quality children's program, considered an integral part of Parents AnonymousSM.

Building Community Partnerships

As a pioneer in building community partnerships, Parents Anonymous, Inc. successfully collaborates with communities, individuals, and other organizations to strengthen families. Volunteers throughout the country donate thousands of dollars worth of services

*"I now have the **Strength** to make lasting changes in my relationship with my children... I don't feel alone anymore."*

Parents Anonymous, Inc. was founded in 1970 through the extraordinary efforts of a courageous mother seeking help to create a safe and caring home for her family. Working in partnership with her social worker, they launched a national movement to bring help, support, strength, and hope to millions of families all across America. Their vision inspired thousands of parents, professionals, and community volunteers to establish Parents AnonymousSM groups throughout the United States. Currently celebrating its 30th anniversary, Parents Anonymous, Inc. remains the nation's oldest child abuse prevention organization dedicated to strengthening families through innovative strategies that promote mutual support and parent leadership.

Parents Anonymous, Inc. leads a diverse and dynamic national network of community-based Parents AnonymousSM groups throughout the United States. These weekly, ongoing Parents AnonymousSM groups are co-led by parents and professionally trained facilitators and are free of charge to participants. While the parents are meeting, their children are engaged in specialized programs to promote their healthy growth and development. Annually, thousands of parents and their children come together in Parents AnonymousSM groups to learn new skills, transform their attitudes and behaviors, and cre-



PARENTS ANONYMOUS, INC. TELEVISION APPEARANCES

A selection of television shows that featured Parents Anonymous®, its parents, and President and CEO Dr. Lisa Pion-Berlin.



1. Four parents appeared on the **The Geraldo Rivera Show** Apr. 23, 1998 with President and CEO Dr. Lisa Pion-Berlin. The syndicated show aired in 204 cities across the nation and focused entirely on Parents Anonymous®.

2. "You Spank, You Pay" was the topic for the Sept. 20, 1996 **Leeza**. It featured appearances by a parent leader and Dr. Pion-Berlin who served as an expert and offered commentary on the negative impact of corporal punishment and how parents can nurture their children.

3. KCET-TV's (PBS) **"Life & Times"** featured a Parents Anonymous® parent, her family and Dr. Pion-Berlin on a documentary about child abuse and neglect prevention.



4. NBC-TV's **Today Show** selected Parents Anonymous® as the lead segment to kick off a month-long series on parenting. Appearing in the segment "Today's Parents," on Jan. 4, 1997, were Elizabeth Hart, a parent leader from Texas, and Dr. Pion-Berlin who reinforced the message that asking for help is a sign of strength. Thousands of parents seeking help called the phone number provided at the end of the segment.

5. For Bill Rosendahl's **Week in Review** (Sept. 27, 1996), Dr. Pion-Berlin, guest expert on child abuse and neglect, answered questions from a diverse panel of professionals.

6. KTTV-TV's **Midday Sunday** (Jul. 16, 1996) with Tony Valdez featured Dr. Pion-Berlin and a parent leader who served as an inspiration for other parents who want to turn their lives around.



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Nicole
—

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MEDIAGUIDE



Shared Leadership and the Media

Parents Anonymous, Inc. was the first national family strengthening organization to identify the importance of parents speaking publicly about their life experiences, to provide direction to these efforts and to make a significant commitment to shaping the agenda for change. In the early 1970s, Parents AnonymousSM parents were the first in the country to speak out about the prevention of child abuse from the perspective of parents working to overcome difficulties in their lives.

In 1973, when Jolly K., the founding parent of Parents AnonymousSM, appeared before the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Children and Youth to share her personal experiences, the extensive media coverage generated by her powerful testimony reached every corner of the nation. Jolly's moving story helped ensure passage of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) in 1974 and put a human face to a complex social issue. CAPTA was the first federal law that focused on the solution to abuse and neglect. It established a federal leadership role in promoting community-based prevention efforts such as Parents AnonymousSM. This important legislation was reauthorized in 1996, once again with the strong support of Parents AnonymousSM parents, volunteers, and staff.

Parents Anonymous, Inc. promotes the voice of parents through print and broadcast media to advocate for policies and practices that strengthen and support families, and to reach out to other parents seeking help in creating safe and caring homes for their

children. The powerful message found in the successful life stories of parents who have changed their lives through Parents AnonymousSM is also a critical aspect of all Parents Anonymous, Inc. training and public speaking activities.

The expertise of parents, combined with that of professionals, is a dynamic example of the Parents AnonymousSM principle of shared leadership. Parents who have demonstrated their ability to resolve personal issues and concerns provide a valuable resource for the media. Parents Anonymous, Inc. is frequently contacted by the national media and policy-makers who are seeking expert information from both parents and professionals. The power of parents speaking from their own experience is unequaled as a mechanism for demonstrating the success of Parents AnonymousSM programs.

**The power of
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success of Parents
AnonymousSM.**

Parents AnonymousSM is enriched nationwide by the commitment and dedication of parents who found help and support and who are now "giving back" to others. Through the courage and tenacity of Parents AnonymousSM parents who speak out through the media, thousands of human service professionals, policymakers and other community members throughout the country have gained valuable insight into the broad range of issues affecting families. Their personal stories of strength and success not only offer hope and inspiration, but provide insight and expertise to help shape programs and policies affecting families across the country.

*This bulletin will
help you to:*

- Evaluate and successfully utilize media opportunities
- Identify, partner with, and support parent leaders
- Utilize shared leadership strategies
- Develop effective media skills to achieve results

Media Policy

Parents AnonymousSM organizations should always work with local media to promote local Parents AnonymousSM programs. To provide a clear, consistent and accurate national voice, all contacts from national media—including national outlets that are locally based or media outside the local area—should be referred to Parents Anonymous, Inc. immediately. Also, notify Parents Anonymous, Inc. within 24 hours of the media contact. In no event should local Parents AnonymousSM organizations provide any information to the national media unless specifically requested to do so by Parents Anonymous, Inc.

SPECIAL MARS AND VENUS SECTION! John Gray on Parenting and Passion

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The day I hurt my child

The beginning of the end came on an ordinary summer day. I was home with my three daughters; my husband was at work. I'd been having trouble with Emily, my eldest, who was five years old. She was still wetting her bed, a habit I hoped she'd break before she started kindergarten in the fall. On this morning, I wanted to try a holistic remedy, a pill a friend had recommended, and I was optimistic we would finally get this problem under control.

But the pill was huge, and Emily refused to take it. I tried everything. I coaxed. I pleaded. I opened the capsule and stirred the contents into apple sauce. Nothing worked. She kept clamping her mouth shut, squirming away. Then I snapped. I grabbed her, held her down, yanked her head back, shoved the pill in her mouth, and started pouring water down her throat. All the while, Emily was crying and choking and begging, "Please, Mommy, don't. I love you, Mommy." Looking back, the incident seems like an out-of-body experience—me, Normal Julie, looking down on Crazy, Out-of-Control Julie. I didn't stop until Emily had swallowed the pill.

That's why I found myself anxiously waiting for a meeting of Parents Anonymous to begin. All I'd ever wanted was to be a good mother—I didn't even believe in

I didn't even believe in spanking. Suddenly my daughters were cringing whenever I lifted my hand. How, I wondered, did I get here—and how would I ever stop? **AS TOLD TO NANCY KALISH**

spanking—yet I was about to confess to my husband, Paul, and a roomful of strangers that I had abused my children. I had to end this nightmare, and this was the only way I knew to do it.

The nightmare began on November 11,

1994, when my third child, Hayley, was born. I had suffered through bouts of depression after giving birth to both Emily and Lauren, my middle daughter, then two and a half years old, but this time, the black mood just wouldn't move on.

Paul and I were going through a difficult time. We were struggling financially, living in a cold, moldy old house in a small California town. Emily had begun wetting her bed almost every night since the baby was born. And Hayley had developed a severe respiratory infection when she was three months old that put her in the hospital. For eight days, I spent practically every minute with her. Although Paul took a little time off, he soon had to return to his job as a medical supplies salesman.

Fortunately, I had one good friend, Joanne, who saw me through the ordeal. We had met at a breast-feeding clinic and quickly found that we shared the same ideas about parenting, about staying at home and devoting ourselves to our kids. Joanne sat with me through long nights, comforted me as I watched Hayley struggle for breath in her hospital crib, and brought magazines to distract me from my anxieties.

She was also there for me when I brought Hayley home from the hospital and when I came down with an awful case of the flu. She listened patiently as I browbeat myself for being a terrible mother (continued)

My little girl was afraid of what I'd do—and so was I.



YOU'VE CROSSED THE LINE TO ABUSE WHEN...

What mom hasn't lost it once or twice? Exhaustion, overextension, or a preschooler's obnoxious comment can occasionally transform any mom from Dr. Jekyll to Ms. Hyde. But how do you know when you've gone too far? Chris Monaco, Ph.D., director of the National Child Abuse Hotline, offers the following warning signs that can indicate it's time to get help.

1. You leave marks on your child's body when you discipline her.
2. Your only form of discipline is spanking.
3. Your child winces whenever you come near.
4. You have thoughts of harming her.
5. You give her lots of timeouts just to get her away from you.
6. You criticize or embarrass her with phrases like "You're so stupid."
7. You have fantasies of leaving your child.
8. Your child is displaying acts of aggression.
9. You push your child to the floor. —Molly MacDermot

I hurt my child

(continued)

who was unable to care for my children properly, keeping them in a moldy house that the pediatrician said may have contributed to Hayley's illness.

All winter I had felt as if I was spinning from one crisis to another, unable to get a handle on my life. Then spring brought surprisingly good news. Paul's brother generously loaned us the cash to move to a small house in a rural community nearby, and Paul was working so much—sometimes as many as 60 hours a week—that we would have plenty of money. Even though that meant he wouldn't be around as much as I would have liked, I'd have Joanne and her brood to keep us company.

Soon after we moved, however, Joanne told me her husband had gotten a new job; she would be moving 1,000 miles away to North Dakota. I was crushed. I loved the new house, but neither the kids nor I had any friends in the area. When my car died, I couldn't even take Emily and Lauren to their playgroup. Every morning, I'd watch Paul drive off to work and feel more and more isolated.

DEPRESSION TURNED TO VIOLENCE

With a barren summer looming, I started zoning out. The kids wanted me to play with them, but I rarely had enough energy. I'd do a minimal amount of housework, then sit in the living room for hours on end, sleeping or doing nothing.

Emily and Lauren knew something was wrong, and they struggled to get my attention. When I didn't respond, they misbehaved; they knew just how to push my buttons. I'd always been so careful to avoid spanking them. Although I'd been beaten only once as a child, I had seen my father whip my older sisters frequently. He ruled our family with fear. I couldn't bear the thought that my children would see me as we had seen him.

But as my world began to shrink, my sense of doom deepened, and I could no longer control my frustration. I would explode suddenly and begin yelling, screaming, and sometimes spanking. I didn't want to, but I literally didn't know what else to do.

After each episode, I was ashamed and remorseful and promised myself it would never happen again. I'd stick to it for a while. I'd overlook behaviors my girls had been severely punished for before. One minute I'd be a happy, wonderful, nice

mommy, and the next I'd be a depressed, horrible mommy. They never knew whom to expect, and frankly, neither did I. It got to the point where they would cringe whenever I lifted my hand, even if I was just reaching up to get something out of a kitchen cabinet.

Things were the worst with Emily. We were similar in personality and frequently butted heads. She was excited about starting kindergarten, although she still had several boring months to wait. She became more difficult with each passing day. My husband kept telling me that I wasn't tough enough on her. I now know that he meant I should have been more consistent with Emily, but at the time, I thought being tougher meant being meaner. I felt unable to control my daughters, and force seemed the only way to maintain order.

One day I really lost it. Emily talked back to me, and I spanked her hard—so hard she fell to the floor. Then I kicked her. Luckily, something stopped me there. I watched in amazement and horror as my daughter ran to her room crying, and I burst into tears myself. Inside, I was screaming: That's not me! That wasn't me! I was terrified that whoever it was would do it again.

NO ONE WOULD HELP ME

Less than two weeks later it happened again—I almost drowned Emily trying to get her to take that huge pill. I had finally crossed a line that horrified me. Hysterical, I called a child abuse hot line I found in the phone book. I thought, if I can do *this* to my daughter, what might I do next? The woman who answered said she could send a social worker out to see me, but that what I'd done was probably an isolated incident. I didn't sound like a child abuser, she said, and desperate to believe her, I hung up the phone. Still, I knew something was very wrong. I tried a few other numbers, with no luck. One hot line operator said she could help me only if my child had been sexually molested. The other numbers had been disconnected.

Over time, I became increasingly depressed. One day I was driving into town with all three kids in the car. Emily and Lauren were bouncing around; I couldn't hear myself think. I saw a truck coming toward me in the opposite lane and had an almost overwhelming impulse to drive head-on into it. After that, I couldn't get the thought of killing myself out of my head. What if I wasn't able to hold myself back the next time? What was I capable of? I didn't know. (continued)

WHERE TO TURN WHEN YOU NEED HELP

HOT LINES

Parents Anonymous: 909-621-6184
(or visit the Web site at:

www.parentsanonymous-natl.org)
This organization has more than 2,000 branches nationwide that provide a nonjudgmental place for parents to share their frustrations and learn better child-rearing skills.

The program (including childcare during meetings) is free.

Childhelp USA: 800-4-A-CHILD
The national 24-hour hot line is staffed by trained counselors who can help with a range of problems, from "How do I stop his crying?" to "I think I'm going to harm my baby."

WEB SITES

National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information:
www.calib.com/nccanch
National Council on Child Abuse and Family Violence:
www.nccafv.org

American Academy of Pediatrics:
www.aap.org
National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse: www.childabuse.org
Shaken Baby Syndrome Prevention Plus:
www.sbsplus.com

BOOKS

Positive Parenting from A to Z,
by Karen Renshaw Joslin
Change Your Child's Behavior by
Changing Yours, by Barbara

Chernofsky and Diane Gage
How to Talk So Kids Will Listen/How to
Listen So Kids Will Talk, by Adele Faber
and Elaine Mazlish —M.M.

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growing strong and healthy nails; and vie for
the chance to win over \$30 worth of free
Sally Hansen products!

I hurt my child

(continued)

But I knew I had to get help or I could die.

I remembered that a friend's mother
was a drug- and alcohol-recovery therapist.
With nowhere else to turn, I called her. She
listened as I sobbed out my story, and sug-
gested I call the Children's Bureau, an orga-
nization that does at-home counseling for
families in crisis. The woman who answered
the phone told me there was a waiting list
for the service. In the meantime, she rec-
ommended a support group run by Parents
Anonymous.

The next meeting was an interminably
long two days away, but just knowing I
was finally going to get help made me feel
better. Paul volunteered to attend the
meeting with me, which made me a little
nervous. He knew I had a problem, but
he didn't know just how big that problem
had grown. I was afraid he would leave
me when he found out.

LEARNING TO BE A GOOD PARENT

By the time we arrived at Parents
Anonymous, I was determined to get it
all out in the open, no matter what the
consequences. When my turn to talk
came, I blurted out the entire shameful
story. I could see that Paul was stunned,
not only by what I had done to the kids
but also by my thoughts of suicide. His
own mother had died of a suspicious over-
dose of pills. But Paul squeezed my hand
to show his support, and this gave me the
strength to continue.

The rest of the group was not surprised
by my revelations. Many of them had done
similar or more serious things. Many of the
women sat there alone, without supportive

husbands like mine. And I actually thought,
Well, it could be a lot worse. The group
leader told me I had done something really
positive for myself and my family by coming
to PA. For the first time in months, I didn't
feel like a horrible mother. I felt a little hope,
and I wept in relief.

My life started to turn around that
night more than two years ago, but it's
been a long, tough road back. There have
been many meetings since. I began indi-
vidual therapy and discovered that my
depression is an illness, for which I now
take medication. Most important, though,
I learned how to be a different kind of
parent. I really didn't know how to dis-
cipline my children without yelling and
hitting. Now I take away their privileges
and use time-outs. When I can't handle
the pressure, I take a time-out myself. I
tell the kids I'm going into the bedroom
for five minutes alone, and when I come
out we'll play a game. And sometimes
when Emily starts getting upset about
something, she'll give *herself* a time-out
in her room until she calms down.

Paul has stood by me every step of the
way and has used the PA techniques to
become a better parent himself. We go
to marriage counseling once a month,
and I no longer fear he's going to leave
if I screw up. We're together for the long
haul, and it's safe to talk to him about
things that are bothering me before they
blow up.

I still have difficult times. I still raise
my voice. But most of the time, I feel con-
fident and in control. While I realize I'll
never be a perfect mom, I'm finally the
good mom I've always wanted to be. Best
of all, Emily, Lauren, and Hayley are
happy. When they look at me, I no longer
see fear in their eyes. I see respect. ...

HOW TO CONTROL YOUR ANGER

These exercises, sup-
plied by Lisa Pion-Berlin,
Ph.D., president and CEO
of Parents Anonymous,
can pull you back from
that dangerous blow-
your-stack point:

First, learn the cues
that signal you're about to
lose it. Does your voice
reach an abnormally high
pitch? Does your child's
expression move from
defiance to fear?

When you recognize
the cue, retreat to your
room or take a quick

walk—even if it's to pick
up the paper from the
stoop or circle the yard.
If your kids are little and
need constant supervi-
sion, you can still walk to
the other side of the room
to put on the radio or
water the plants.

Call a friend for a com-
fort chat or a hot line
(see page 82) for advice.

Let go. Sometimes the
fight isn't worth the cost.
Give her another cookie.
Let her paint her lips
purple this one time.

To gain perspective,
pretend you're
looking at yourself
through a one-way
mirror. This should give
you the clarity to calm
down a bit.

Rail at the behavior,
not the child. Instead
of saying, "You're driving
me crazy, you're making
me late for work!" try,
"This crying has to stop
because it's making
us late." The depersonal-
ization will be good for
both of you. —M.M.



Art from the East
Pasadena museum
celebrates art and
culture of Asia.

page D4

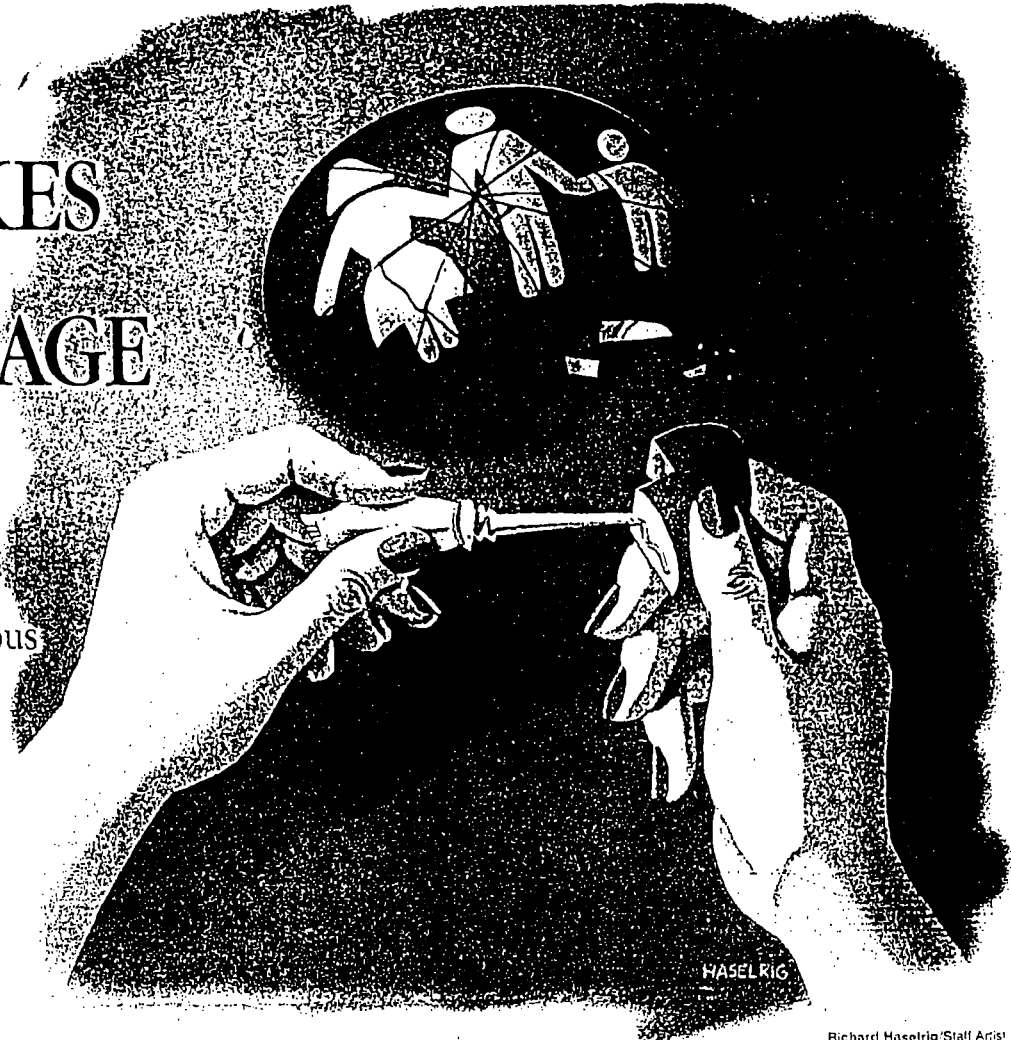
LifeStyle

IT TAKES A VILLAGE

Parents Anonymous

helps parents

help children



Richard Haselrig/Staff Artist

By Suzanne Sproul
Staff Writer

For three decades, Parents Anonymous Inc. has helped parents deal with their children. It's an accomplishment group members feel is worthy of sharing with others.

The nation's oldest and largest child abuse prevention, education and treatment program, the organization has a network of 1,200 community groups throughout the United States, including an office in Claremont.

"It is in these non-punitive and accepting environments that parents can identify and build on their strengths, decrease their feelings of social isolation by expanding social support networks and develop realistic expectations of themselves and their children," said Dr. Lisa Pion-Berlin, Parents Anonymous Inc. president and chief executive officer.

Parents Anonymous works on the grass-roots level, using parents and trained facilitators to help mothers and fathers deal with the anger, disappointment and frustration involved in the relationships with their children. The aim is to strengthen families and stop child abuse or prevent it from happening.

But the organization shouldn't be viewed only in clinical terms, said Yolanda Williams, director of Parents Anonymous of California Inc. from the Claremont office.

"We want the public to be aware that we exist and have done so for the past 30 years. And we don't want to be perceived as a place where only abusive

situations are dealt with," she said. "If you as a parent need support of any kind, come and work with us. We're here to help. Share your joys with us as well as your challenges."

The group offers 24-hour hotlines.

All services are free. As the name implies, individuals use only their first names. Anonymity helps open the line of communication.

"We don't want people to feel embarrassed or ashamed to ask for help. Again, we do not exist solely for parents who find themselves in unfortunate situations. Any parent anywhere can come to group and talk with other parents. The goal is helping each other," she said.

In fact, the four principles of the organization are the belief in parental leadership, mutual support, shared leadership and the need for personal growth.

While parents meet, children can participate in programs where they, too, can improve their self-esteem, behavior patterns and social skills.

"The prevention of child abuse starts in the womb; it starts early in life," Williams said. "We at Parents Anonymous want parents to know that we understand how difficult parenting can be. This thing we call parenting is challenging but it also is, and can be, very rewarding."

"We want people to realize it's OK to make mistakes, everyone does, but what is not OK is to not do something to correct them when problems happen."

Parents Anonymous Inc. can be reached by calling (911) 611-1111.

A father
gets help

See D2

Comments on Parents Anonymous

• "I think Parents Anonymous is good for parents for many reasons. . . . Before my mom was in Parents Anonymous me and my mom weren't the best of friends. But now since she's joined, our lives have been better. I love my mom and I'm glad she's in Parents Anonymous." — a Parents Anonymous child

• "Before I joined Parents Anonymous my children used to cringe whenever I lifted my arm, even to just pick something up. Now they don't. . . . they're not afraid of me anymore." — Julie C., Parents Anonymous from California

• "At Parents Anonymous I have found the support I need as a person, a woman, wife and mother, as it is very difficult to be a mother. I encourage other parents to attend Parents Anonymous to learn better parenting and teach your children new behaviors. What is important is for us to change as individuals in order to better cope with and understand other problems that come up and need to be resolved." — Paula, Parents Anonymous from California

• "Parents Anonymous is where mommy goes to be a better parent." — Parents Anonymous child.

Father gets help with managing family from Parents Anonymous

Suzanne Sproul
Staff Writer

Joe is raising three children on his own and finding it more than challenging.

"It was easier to communicate with them when they were little, but it got much harder as they got older and I found I needed help," he said.

All three children spent various amounts of time in Department of Children's Services programs, until Joe took complete custody of them. That meant shouldering the role of both mother and father, breadwinner, disciplinarian, etc., to three children all younger than 6.

The family struggled to adjust to each other with some success and setbacks, until tensions reached a critical juncture during an argument that got physical. Joe's oldest son pushed him and the father pushed back. That happened about two years ago.

"He hurt himself and I hurt him. I knew right then and there that I couldn't react this way. Something in my gut told me I needed to take responsibility and I started looking for help," he said.

Joe turned to Parents Anonymous Inc. He needed direction and support in dealing with his two sons, now 7 and 10, and daughter, 6. He now is a parent leader with a group that meets weekly in Pomona.

As part of the organization's tenets, individuals use only their first names. That seems to lessen the stigma for mothers and fathers who realize they have lost control in their fami-

lies and need help.

"I knew that as he (the oldest child) was growing up, the way I was communicating with him wasn't working," Joe said. "I also realized that the only thing that I'm going to get fast in this world is at McDonald's or Jack in the Box. Being a father is something I have to work at and that was a real surprise to me, to learn that I'm 40 and still growing."

He said his goal was to progress and create a positive parental relationship with his children. "I found myself scrambling to learn to be a dad and to be able to talk to them."

He found something at Parents Anonymous.

During the weekly meetings, Joe met other parents grappling with similar problems. He felt and welcomed the ongoing mutual support. He learned the goal is to create solutions and options and to take responsibility as a parent.

What he didn't find was a magic cure-all. One doesn't exist, he said.

"I've seen slow growth in communication. It's been more of a three steps up and one step back kind of thing. We've made progress, though."

"When things were wrong there were a multitude of factors involved. I knew our life wasn't healthy for them and I wasn't doing my best for them. What I was showing the children was that their options were limited. I'm teaching them now that that's not the case."

"To be honest, I think I'm doing a pretty darn good job. All this has shown me that I, too, can grow."

Warning signs

Parenting is an ongoing, lifetime commitment. There are no easy answers and individuals must determine the right balance of love and discipline for their family. But sometimes a parent can go too far. The following are some of the warning signs, targeted by the National Child Abuse Hotline, that could mean you're in trouble and you should ask for help.

- Discipline has its place but if you leave physical marks on your child there is a problem. Spanking shouldn't be the only form of handling matters.

- If your child winces when you come near her, she is afraid and you need to examine why.

- If your child is overly aggressive you need to find out why.

- If you think about harming or leaving your child, seek immediate help.

Regu

By Stuart
Knight Ridder

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Involvement in music may give parents edge with kids

By Margaret Sagarese
Associated Press

Summer is here. For adolescents that means concerts galore. As if the price tag of concert tickets wasn't unnerving enough, parents have other worries. Are concerts safe? Will there be drugs? Should a 10-year-old be allowed to go?

old's fascination with Marilyn Manson could warrant a closer look.

One of the best ways for parents to understand what the music means to a young teen is to attend a rock concert together. Parents can tag along with a proteen and a friend. With an older adolescent, they might not be welcome in the next seat, but

stand during performances because the crowd often pushes toward the stage or turns into a writhing mosh pit. Those near the front risk being crushed. Buying tickets to seated concerts is safer.

Many fans want to gather outside stadiums and wait for the tour buses to arrive. Parents should take special care here

Parents group buoyed by column

By Monica Rodriguez
Daily Bulletin

Parents Anonymous groups around the country, including one based in Claremont, are gearing up for a flood of phone calls today.

The calls are expected to come from parents who may be in a situation similar to the one "Impatient in Pa." is facing.

"Impatient" is a single mother of a 3-year-old who wrote to columnist Ann Landers about the stress she faces as a parent.

In today's column, "Impatient" says she loves her daughter but yells at and frequently spansks her. She fears the situation will escalate if she doesn't get help soon.

Landers responds by recommending "Impatient" seek the assistance of Parents Anonymous.

"When I read the letter, I saw it was very typical of how many parents who come to us feel," said Teresa Rafael, vice president of programs for Parents Anonymous.

Organization officials were notified they would be named in the column and have scheduled extra people to handle the telephone lines.

They've even converted a New Jersey Parents Anonymous group's line into a toll-free number. The group wants to be able to take calls from around the country and offer parents a referral to an office near them, Rafael said.

The organization's toll free number is 1-800-843-5437.

It will be in operation for about a week. Locally, interested parents can call the Clare-

Related story

● Ann Landers recommends Parents Anonymous to a struggling young mother who fears that her impatient nature will eventually drive her to abuse her 3-year-old daughter. **Page B9**

mont office at (909) 621-6184.

The organization was founded in 1970 when a group of mothers began meeting to talk about the pressures and challenges involved in rearing children.

Parents Anonymous Inc. has since grown and is now open to mothers, fathers, teen parents, single parents – even grandparents – who are interested in becoming better parents.

It is not just for those who are potentially abusive or have already abused their children, Rafael said.

"We focus on strengthening families," she said. "Parents Anonymous is essentially for anyone in a parenting role who's feeling some stress and needs information."

The group also serves to build a sense of community among parents. They take on the responsibility of helping others with the help of professional facilitators, Rafael said.

Patty Encino, 30, of Pomona, faces challenges similar to those faced by "Impatient". About two years ago, after years of searching, she finally hooked up with the Claremont parents group.

"They were like my savior," Encino said.

See **PARENTS/A4**



Marc Campos/for the Daily Bulletin
Patty Encino and her children Manuel, 2, Crystal, 11, Lovette, 6, and Junior, 5 gather on their patio in Pomona on Wednesday afternoon. Patty says she has been helped by Parents Anonymous.

Parents/from A1

"They were there. They supported me. ... I know nobody is there to judge me. Thank God for those meetings."

Encino, who has four children under 11, says she was verbally and physically abusive. Her eldest child was skittish and often covered her head for fear that she would be hit.

Things began to change after she joined the support group.

"I don't use profanity anymore," Encino said. "Before every other word was 'you're a this or a that.'"

"Calling them stupid and (saying) to get your ass over here ... those are ugly words when you listen to them," Encino said.

Encino said the group has helped her become a better parent and a better person. She can now communicate with her children and discipline them without striking them or screaming.

Encino feels better about herself. She helps other parents deal with problems similar to her own, and her 11-year-old daughter's grades at school are improving as well.

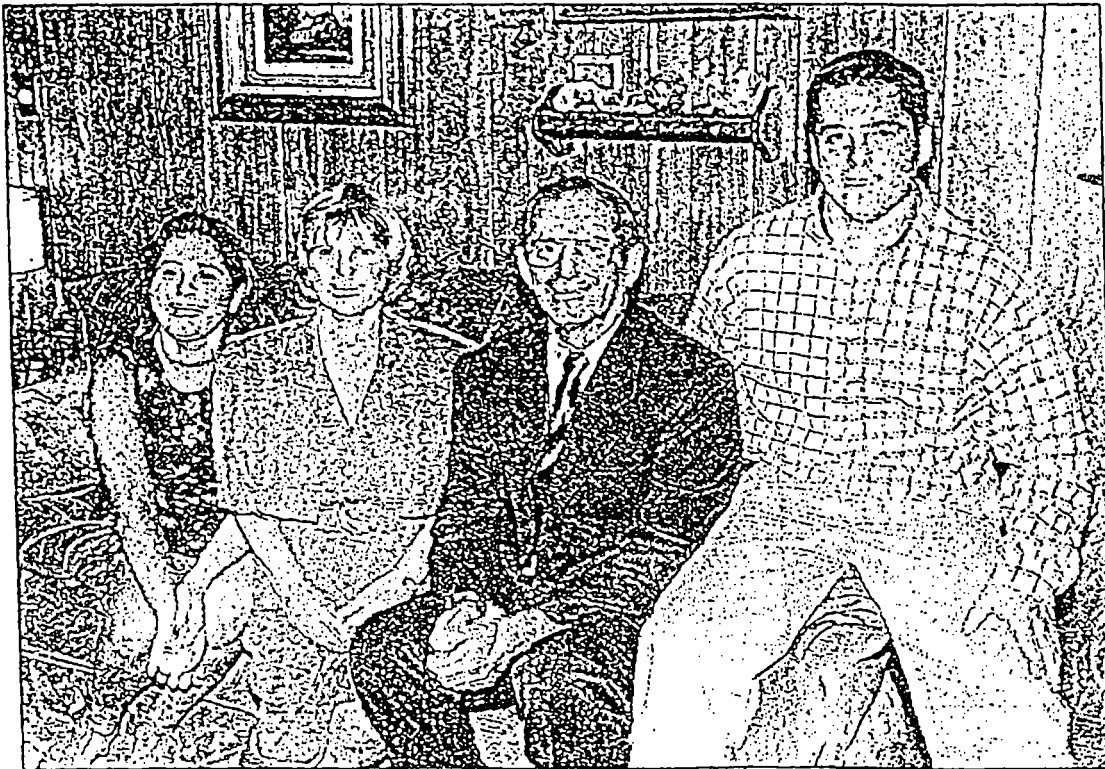
The San Bernardino County Department of Social Services often refers parents who have had their children taken away to the group.

Parents "can see their mistakes and don't end up in the situation they were in again," said Rodric Morris, a spokesman for the county agency.

Profile

Once a parent seeking help; Freddie Gardner
now national board chairman of Parents Anonymous

Full Circle



Advocate staff photo by John H. Williams

Freddie Gardner, second from right, sought help from Parents Anonymous 12 years ago, and now he is its national board chairman. With him are his wife, Virginia, and children Melanie and Michael.

By GEORGE MORRIS
Advocate staff writer

In 1981, Freddie Gardner admits, he had to be dragged kicking and screaming to a Parents Anonymous meeting. But it was either go or lose his family.

Today, he is the organization's national board chairman — the first in its 26-year history to have originally come to PA seeking its help.

Gardner, a Greenwell Springs resident, assumed the post Oct. 1.

Parents Anonymous provides child abuse prevention, education and treatment programs through more than 2,000 support groups throughout the country. Gardner had been on the board for five years, having already served four years on the Louisiana Council on Child Abuse board of directors.

"He is one of the most exceptional parents I have ever met," said Lisa Pion-Berlin, president and chief executive officer of Parents Anonymous. "He handles teenagers better than anybody I know."

She wouldn't have said that 12 years ago. Looking back, neither would Gardner.

In the fourth year of his second marriage, he had an 18-year-old daughter from his first marriage. His wife had an 11-year-old son, and together they had 3-year-old twins. Gardner's relationship with his stepson, Shane, was not going well.

Gardner expected Shane to do better in school, to be more athletic,

□ See GARDNER, Page 10H

Gardner

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1H

to keep his room neat. Gardner, with 31 years in the Army Reserves and National Guard, said he expected his children to respond to orders the way soldiers did.

Those expectations weren't being met.

"I guess it was either the way I was raised or my own makeup," Gardner said. "I expected and demanded, basically, perfection from anyone who was associated with me."

"He's not that type — never has been, never will be. I couldn't handle it, so all my frustrations I took out on him, physically and verbally or emotionally."

"One afternoon ... I just lost it."

Someone saw that incident, which Gardner describes as "more severe than a spanking but less severe than a beating." Gardner doesn't know who it was, but that person called authorities and reported it.

"About 9 o'clock, 9:30, I looked up, and it looked like NYPD in my front yard," Gardner said. "Half the East Baton Rouge Sheriff's Department was at my house."

Sheriff's deputies talked separately to Gardner, his wife Virginia and Shane, then left. About two hours later, a deputy called and said they were not pressing charges but suggested Gardner seek some parenting help.

Gardner wasn't interested.

"Being the male with a male ego, I never do anything wrong," Gardner said. "Everything calmed down in two or three nights."

"My wife came home one afternoon and said, 'OK, now you've calmed down, and I've calmed down. Here is the ultimatum: We either do something, or me and these kids are gone.'"

Gardner didn't want that, but he never agreed to any of her suggestions. One day, she brought home a Parents Anonymous brochure. When Gardner asked what it was about, she told him that people at meetings would tell them how to be better parents.

Wrong answer.

"I blew up," Gardner said. "I said, 'Let me tell you one blankety-blank thing right now. There ain't nobody on the face of the Earth going to sit down and tell me how to raise my kids.'"

"She said, 'Well, I'm going to tell you now — we're going, and we're going tonight!'"

They went, and Gardner was surprised by what he encountered. He had expected a social worker telling parents what they were doing wrong and what they had to change. There was a parenting professional there, but he said his role was to facilitate discussion.

Parents began talking about what had happened in their families the previous week. They asked others what they had done in similar situations. The Gardners observed silently for about an hour before Virginia spoke.

"She didn't talk very long, and she looked at me and said, 'You don't have anything to say?'" Gardner said. "And all of a sudden, all of it just came out — everything."

"The biggest surprise I had was that no one sitting around the table criticized me, put me down, nothing. They accepted what I said, whether it was right, wrong or indifferent."

Finally, the facilitator offered Gardner a suggestion.

"He said, 'Take the word expectations out of your vocabulary, especially with kids; because the more you expect, the more you will be disappointed,'" Gardner said. "You set ground rules, and they're like two fences ... and they stay between those two fences. Don't expect them to stay right down the middle."

"Since then, that's what Virginia and I have done at the house with kids. We've established pretty wide — a whole lot wider than I am — guidelines. They'll bump the fences every once in a while."

Gardner said it took him about six months before he began feeling comfortable with this new parenting style. But it seemed to be working. His relationship with his stepson and children had improved.

His feelings were confirmed a few years later, when his daughter, Melanie, invited him to her second-grade class on a day when parents talked about their vocations.

"My daughter introduced me as her dad and her best friend," Gardner said.

"He has changed a lot," Virginia Gardner said. "He's learned a lot more patience with the kids. Things change, and he wasn't used to change."

"It's made a big difference with the twins compared to what it was with Shane, and it's made a big difference with Shane. They have a good relationship. ... He's also learned — we both have — that if someone is not just like you, you accept them for what they are."

The Gardners continued to attend PA meetings, but now they were helping other parents. Virginia was invited to join the Louisiana Council on Child Abuse board of directors. When her term expired in 1986,

Gardner took her place.

On Parents Anonymous' national board, Gardner has led workshops on how to work with parents, using his experience as an example.

"He is a good teacher and a good listener," Pion-Berlin said. "He learned most of his skills by being supported and supporting other people through Parents Anonymous."

As board chairman, Gardner said his goal is to influence private and government donations to Parents Anonymous and to influence child abuse legislation.

One of Parents Anonymous' biggest obstacles is parents' fear of admitting they're having problems dealing with their children.

"It's not acceptable in our society today to have a problem as a parent," Pion-Berlin said. "We're supposed to be born as parents. We're supposed to be excellent at it. In the grocery store, if somebody yells at a kid, everybody turns around."

"Everybody yells at their kids. Everybody is having a tough time. What we try to do is acknowledge it. We don't accept the behavior people have done that is harmful to their children, but we accept them for wanting to change that."

"People are looking for help, and the only way we're going to prevent the problem is making it OK to ask for help. Asking for help is a sign of strength."

Where You Can Turn

BY CARLA KOEHL

AVID "TELE-PARENTS" WILL TELL YOU THAT THERE'S nothing like a phone jack and 16 megabytes of RAM for navigating the mysteries, hurdles and hassles of life with an infant or toddler. If only you had Netscape and a 28.8 modem—or at least speed-dial—they'll say, you'd be surfing and dialing your way to parental bliss with all the child-rearing info that's available by PC and phone. Are they batty? No. Just a little excited.

There are now more places than ever to phone for help when mothers and fathers feel parentally challenged. And the explosion of parenting Web sites and newsgroups that's taken place on the Internet over the last five years is connecting families from household to household the way the telephone did for the first time in 1876. Only this time the advance in communications isn't just overcoming distance and isolation. It's conquering stigmas.

Kate Ripley was nursing her newborn in her cabin half an hour outside Fairbanks,



Online support: Rory and Kate

Alaska, when she found an online breast-feeding newsgroup. "I was really lonely," she says. "It was a huge relief." Now that Rory's 9 months, the baby books are hinting that he's eating too often. Ripley's group (misc.kids.breastfeeding) says otherwise. "You don't just want to have someone validate everything you think," she says. "But it's such a variety of voices, you can cull." Even in Los Angeles, where there's no such thing as a remote location, actor Brian Markinson logs on whenever he and his wife are stumped about their 9-month-old. "It's another resource," he says, "rather than call a doctor and feel like you're being a pain."

Technological alarmists, of course, take delight in warning that millions of modem-happy moms and dads will do nothing but produce millions of antisocial, monitor-gazing kids. A reliance on dial-tone parenting, they insist, keeps families, friends and neighbors from trading advice the old-fashioned way: in person. But a glance at all the live, wired interaction out there suggests that, so far, the alarmists are wrong.

On the Net

Usenet

alt.parenting and misc.kids
Great places to start on the Usenet—the Internet's collection of newsgroups—for discussions on hundreds of topics from teething and breast-feeding to pets and snoring. Also, rec.arts.books.children is a 24-hour-a-day book group on children's literature.

Childbirth.Org

<http://www.childbirth.org>
Top discussion forums here, and a home page that gets right to the point on tough issues, including "Pregnancy & HIV," "Having Your First Baby Over 35" and "Complications."

Family.com

<http://www.family.com>
Disney's new site has been criticized for being more upscale than helpful. But their bulletin boards and chat rooms are filled with the voices of intelligent, caring parents. They must be doing something right.

ParentTalk Newsletter

<http://www.tnpc.com/parentalk/index.html>
Clearly written articles by physicians and psychologists. What this site lacks in graphic creativity, it makes up for in sheer mass of information.

ParenthoodWeb

<http://parenthoodweb.com>
Pediatricians and psychiatrists respond (in due time) to your e-mail. Meanwhile, they've posted their stock answers to anything-but-stock questions, including "Did we make a mistake by having a child?"

Parenting Q&A

<http://www.parenting-qa.com/>
This site calls itself the only one on the Web "solely devoted to providing parents with answers to their most pressing questions." It does answer questions faster than most other sites we tried. But it also offers essays on touchy subjects like spirituality, and suggests reading lists for kids, games for rainy days.

ParentSoup

<http://www.parentsoup.com/>
Excellent discussion forums address everything from step-parenting and disciplining closely spaced siblings to premature babies and children with attention deficit disorder.

Zero to Three

<http://www.zerotothree.org>
The Washington, D.C.-based child-advocacy group has just launched its Web site. On it: a wealth of research and information on physical, cognitive and social development of infants and toddlers.

On the Phone

Child Care Aware

800-424-2246
Operators refer parents anywhere in the country to licensed and accredited child-care centers in their area. They'll also send, at no charge, an information packet on how to choose quality child care. Coordinated by the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies. Weekdays, 9 a.m.–5 p.m. CST.

ChildHelp National Hotline

800-4-A-CHILD
Twenty-four-hour advice and referrals for children and adults with questions or in crisis. Staffers with graduate degrees in counseling field calls on issues ranging from child-abuse prevention to whether it's normal for a 3-year-old girl to try urinating while standing up. (Yes, says a hotline counselor, it is.)

Gerber Information Line

800-443-7237
Tipper Gore's recorded welcome message jolts you from thoughts of strained peas on this 24-hour consumer-info line (she reminds callers that doctors recommend having babies sleep on their backs). Moms, dads, grandparents—not nurses—work the phones, advising

callers on nonmedical essentials like diapering, sleeping and "lots and lots of questions about food," says one operator.

National Parent Information Network

800-583-4135
NPIN boasts the largest parenting database in the country. Researchers hunt down referrals, abstracts and answers—and send them free of charge—to hundreds of callers every month. Trouble with toilet training, the merits of co-op playgroups vs. private preschools, baby bowel movements: absolutely nothing is out of bounds here. Weekdays, 8 a.m.–5 p.m. CST.

Parents Anonymous

909-621-6184 (not toll-free)
The national office in Claremont, Calif., refers parents to 45 state and regional affiliates, which offer support groups, counseling, referrals. Weekdays, 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m. PST.

Single Parents Association

800-704-2102
This line, which has just gone national, helps parents find support groups and resources in their communities, fields questions on parenting skills and reminds single parents that they're not alone. Weekdays, 9 a.m.–6 p.m. CST.

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December 15, 1999

The Honorable Donna E. Shalala
Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S. W.
Washington, D. C. 20201

Dear Secretary Shalala:

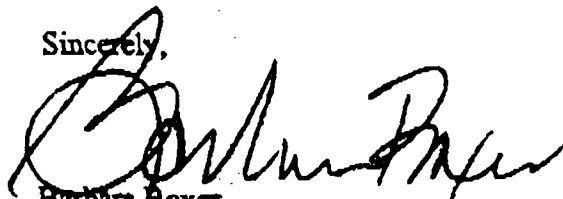
Parents Anonymous, Inc. has served families across the Nation for over 30 years and has been a leading organization in the fight to prevent child abuse and neglect. Congress has supported Parents Anonymous for four of the past six years, and this organization was identified in the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 1996 as an effective model of community programs.

The Senate Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations subcommittee has included report language recommending that your agency utilize its discretionary funds to assist Parents Anonymous, Inc. This assistance helps Parents Anonymous to maintain and expand a national network of support and self help programs to strengthen families and to prevent child abuse and neglect.

As a supporter of the goals and purpose of this organization, I am hopeful that your department will continue to provide \$1 million for Parents Anonymous, Inc. through section 105(a)(2) of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act: Mutual Support Program for FY 2000 based on the Committee's Report language.

Please contact Dana Lewis on my staff at (202)224-3553 if I can provide you with further information. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,


Barbara Boxer
U. S. Senator
☐ 1700 MONTGOMERY STREET
SUITE 240
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(415) 407-0100

☐ 312 NORTH SPRING STREET
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☐ 600 "B" STREET
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PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

The Honorable Donna Shalala
Secretary of Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Madam Shalala:

For the past six years, the Senate Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Subcommittee has included report language urging your agency to utilize discretionary funds to assist Parents Anonymous, Inc. in maintaining and expanding a national network of mutual support and self help programs to strengthen families in partnership with their communities to prevent and treat child abuse and neglect. Congress continues to support the exemplary work of Parents Anonymous because of their proven effective community-based model which is the only program highlighted in the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 1996 (CAPTA). For more than 30 years, Parents Anonymous has served families all across America which has changed the lives of children for more than a generation.

We are asking you to continue the \$ 1 million (previously bid out for the past two years to carry out section 105(a)(2) of CAPTA: Mutual Support Program) for FY 2000 based on the Committee's Report 106-166 which states: "The Committee recognizes the work of Parents Anonymous, the oldest and largest child abuse prevention organization. Through funding from the Child Abuse Prevention Act, Parents Anonymous works in community-based settings to help at-risk parents develop good coping skills. The Committee notes that continued funding of Parents Anonymous will strengthen families and their communities in the fight against child abuse."

I am hopeful that we can work together to ensure that Parents Anonymous' vital child abuse prevention efforts will be continued so that some of the many cries for help by families in my state and throughout the country can be answered.

Thank you again for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

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OJJDP

Shay Bilchik, Administrator

April 1999

JUVENILE JUSTICE BULLETIN

Parents AnonymousSM: Strengthening Families



Teresa Rafael, M.S.W., and Lisa Pion-Berlin, Ph.D.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) is dedicated to preventing and reversing trends of increased delinquency and violence among adolescents. These trends have alarmed the public during the past decade and challenged the juvenile justice system. It is widely accepted that increases in delinquency and violence over the past decade are rooted in a number of interrelated social problems—child abuse and neglect, alcohol and drug abuse, youth conflict and aggression, and early sexual involvement—that may originate within the family structure. The focus of OJJDP's Family Strengthening Series is to provide assistance to ongoing efforts across the country to strengthen the family unit by discussing the effectiveness of family intervention programs and providing resources to families and communities.

Parents Anonymous, Inc., the oldest national child abuse prevention organization, is dedicated to strengthening families through innovative strategies that promote mutual support and parent leadership. Founded in 1970 through the joint efforts of a courageous parent who sought help in providing a safe and caring home for her children and a social worker who believed that parents are their own best agents of change, Parents Anonymous, Inc., currently leads a dynamic national network of affiliated community-based groups with weekly

meetings for parents and children. Each year, approximately 100,000¹ parents and their children come together in Parents AnonymousSM groups to learn new skills, transform their attitudes and behaviors, and create long-term positive changes in their lives. These weekly groups are led by parents and professionally trained facilitators and are free of charge to participants. While the parents are meeting, their children are usually engaged in specialized programs to promote healthy growth and development, and free child-care is provided in sites in which these programs are unavailable. Many State and local Parents AnonymousSM programs operate 24-hour telephone helplines to provide an immediate response to parents seeking help. Parents AnonymousSM also raises awareness and educates the public on critical issues and community solutions and joins with community, State, and Federal policymakers to promote effective services for families across America.

Parents or adults in parenting roles (e.g., grandparents, aunts, uncles, foster parents, stepparents, or older siblings) who are concerned about their parenting abilities and seeking support, information, and training are welcome at Parents AnonymousSM groups, whatever the age of their children or their current

¹ Based on information provided by the national network.

From the Administrator

Problems arising within the family may lead to problem behaviors with adverse consequences for children and communities. Strengthening families is a fundamental principle of OJJDP's Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders, and this Bulletin provides information about a program that enhances the capability of families to help their children.

Parents Anonymous, Inc., leads a network of affiliated community-based groups that hold weekly meetings led by parents and professionally trained facilitators. This Bulletin describes how the organization works to strengthen families by promoting parent leadership, mutual support, shared leadership, and personal growth. Programs that support positive development are also offered for children.

The Bulletin tells the story of the creation of Parents AnonymousSM by a concerned mother and her social worker, summarizes its structure, and describes key program components. A typical weekly meeting is detailed and examples of Parents AnonymousSM programs are provided.

OJJDP has been partnering with Parents Anonymous, Inc., since 1994 to promote shared leadership and mutual support in ethnically and culturally diverse settings across the Nation. After reading this Bulletin, you will also appreciate their contribution to those worthy goals.

Shay Bilchik
Administrator



PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT ACT OF 1996

MODIFY 105(a)(2) :

- (2) **MUTUAL SUPPORT PROGRAMS.** – THE SECRETARY SHALL AWARD A GRANT TO PARENTS ANONYMOUS, INC. TO ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN A NATIONAL NETWORK OF PARENTS ANONYMOUS MUTUAL SUPPORT AND SHARED LEADERSHIP GROUPS; ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN A NATIONAL HELPLINE; CONDUCT A NATIONAL PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN; MAINTAIN A NATIONAL DATABASE AND ENGAGE IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES, AS A MEANS OF STRENGTHENING FAMILIES IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THEIR COMMUNITIES.

AUTHORIZATION—THERE ARE AUTHORIZED TO BE APPROPRIATED TO CARRY OUT THIS SECTION –

- (1) \$ 2,000,000 FOR FISCAL YEAR 2001
- (2) \$ 4,000,000 FOR FISCAL YEAR 2002
- (3) \$ 6,000,000 FOR FISCAL YEAR 2003 AND
- (4) \$ 8,000,000 FOR FISCAL YEAR 2004.

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Calendar No. 290

106TH CONGRESS }
1st Session }

SENATE

{ REPORT
106-166

DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATION BILL, 2000

SEPTEMBER 29, 1999.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. SPECTER, from the Committee on Appropriations,
submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany S. 1650]

The Committee on Appropriations reports the bill (S. 1650) making appropriations for Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes, reports favorably thereon and recommends that the bill do pass.

Amount of budget authority

Total bill as reported to Senate	\$324,157,991,000
Amount of adjusted appropriations, 1999	300,627,424,000
Budget estimates, 2000	325,069,040,000
The bill as reported to the Senate:	
Over the adjusted appropriations for 1999	+ 23,530,567,000
Under the budget estimates for 2000	- 911,049,000

treating victims of child abuse. The program coordinates housing, police, and medical facilities in a single, nonthreatening environment. The Committee understands that if the facility were expanded, it could meet the needs of additional numbers of children.

The Committee is aware of the Hale County School System's efforts to deliver hypertension services, child abuse prevention counseling, and abstinence and healthy lifestyle education to residents of Hale County, AL.

The Committee recognizes the work of Parents Anonymous, the oldest and largest child abuse prevention organization. Through funding from the Child Abuse Prevention Act, Parents Anonymous works in community-based settings to help at-risk parents develop good coping skills. The Committee notes that continued funding of Parents Anonymous will strengthen families and their communities in the fight against child abuse.

The Committee is also aware of the efforts of other parent self-help organizations that are working to prevent child abuse. The Committee recognizes that Child Abuse Prevention Act funds would allow these organizations to help more families in crisis.

The Committee has supported Family Place in Louisville, Kentucky as a family-centered model for treating victims of child abuse. The Committee recognizes that the funding provided by the Department in fiscal year 1999 was not sufficient to fully support Family Place's protocols. Additional funding would allow the demonstration to be conducted in a scientific and statistically valid way so it can be determined if this program should be replicated nationally.

The Committee applauds the success of the Healthy Families Home Visiting Program in Alaska for its success in preventing child abuse. The Committee has learned that Alaska has one of the highest rates of child abuse in the nation. The Healthy Families Home Visiting Program is supported by the State of Alaska, in cooperation with the Bristol Bay Native Association and the Rural Alaska Community Action program. The Committee believes that incidences of child abuse could be lowered dramatically if the Department were to provide additional funds to this program. The Committee believes that funding for the Better Beginnings project in Alaska would help further address the serious child abuse problem in the State.

The Committee is aware of the efforts of the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi's early childhood development center in assisting low-income children. Recognizing that parents are the child's first teachers, the center will focus on ways to help parents interact positively with their children. The Committee recognizes the value of the center in reducing child abuse by teaching parents good coping skills. Strategies to reduce child abuse include parenting classes, family nights, and home visits.

The Committee is aware that respite services can prevent more costly out-of-home placements by providing planned and emergency relief to primary caregivers of individuals with disabilities. Respite services can prevent child abuse by allowing parents the opportunity to receive periods of relief from the enormous burden of caring for their disabled children. A national resource center like ARCH has helped many families find the respite services they

105TH CONGRESS }
2d Session

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

{ REPORT
105-825

MAKING OMNIBUS CONSOLIDATED AND
EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIA-
TIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 1999

CONFERENCE REPORT

TO ACCOMPANY

H.R. 4328



OCTOBER 19, 1998.—Ordered to be printed

for that purpose. The basic law requires that not less than four percent of the appropriation be used for such activities. Finally, the agreement includes \$10,000,000 for the Secretary to carry out research, demonstration and evaluation projects in fiscal year 2000.

SOCIAL SERVICES BLOCK GRANT

The conference agreement includes \$1,909,000,000 as proposed by the Senate instead of \$2,299,000,000 as proposed by the House. The agreement modifies a provision included in both bills that limits the ability of States to transfer TANF funds to the Social Services Block Grant. The transfer percentage allowed in fiscal years 1999 and 2000 will be 10 percent.

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICES PROGRAMS

(INCLUDING RESCISSIONS)

The conference agreement appropriates \$6,137,087,000, instead of \$5,946,820,000 as proposed by the House and \$6,113,784,000 as proposed by the Senate. In addition, the agreement rescinds \$21,000,000 from permanent appropriations as proposed by both the House and Senate.

The agreement does not include an advance appropriation of \$1,365,000,000 for Head Start for fiscal year 2000 proposed by the Senate. All Head Start funds in the conference agreement are fiscal year 1999 appropriations.

The agreement appropriates \$105,000,000 from the Violent Crime Reduction Trust Fund as proposed by the House instead of \$101,000,000 as proposed by the Senate.

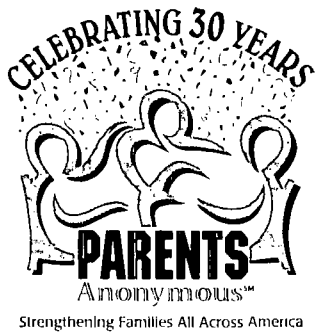
The agreement includes language proposed by the Senate providing that \$10,000,000 shall be available for establishing Individual Development Accounts, contingent upon the enactment of authorizing legislation. The House had no similar provision. Also included is an additional citation to the Social Security Act as proposed by the Senate.

Within the amount provided for child abuse discretionary activities, \$1,000,000 is available for carrying out activities authorized by section 105(a)(2) of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act and \$2,000,000 is provided to fund a child abuse prevention resource center for the Southeastern region of the United States to be coordinated by the children's trust fund of Alabama.

Sufficient funds are included to enable the Department to give full and fair consideration to a proposal under the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act for a national network to increase the safety of children. The Public Children Services Association of Ohio would be especially suited as a model for such a network.

Sufficient funds are available within the runaway and homeless youth activities to fund the Center County Youth Services of State College and Three Rivers Youth of Pittsburgh at the fiscal year 1998 funding level.

The conference agreement concurs with the Senate report language calling for a pilot study to carefully examine information systems issues confronting States as a result of welfare reform, such as data collection and reporting requirements, case management systems, and the integration of multiple systems.



OTHER CAPTA CHANGES:

GRANTS TO STATES FOR CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT PREVENTION AND TREATMENT PROGRAMS

UNDER 106 (a)

INSERT

- (9) DEVELOPING AND ENHANCING THE CAPACITY OF COMMUNITY-BASED **PARENTS ANONYMOUS** ORGANIZATIONS TO INTEGRATE SHARED LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES BETWEEN PARENTS AND PROFESSIONALS TO PREVENT AND TREAT CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT AT THE NEIGHBORHOOD LEVEL.

UNDER 206 (a)(3)(A)

INSERT NEW:

- (ii) PARENTS ANONYMOUS MUTUAL SUPPORT GROUPS AND PARENT LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES;

UNDER 209 (3)

MODIFY (i) AND (ii):

- (i) Parent education; (move the rest to ii)
- (ii) PARENTS ANONYMOUS MUTUAL SUPPORT GROUPS AND PARENT LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES; TOGETHER WITH ... AND SERVICES TO FACILITATE;

THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION

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INNOVATIONS

Summer 1999

Parents Anonymous, Inc. - Strengthening Families All Across America

Vol. III, No. 2

Most parent leaders ever!

National Leadership Conference a Success

Nearly 400 people from 29 states traveled by train, plane, bus, and car to the 1999 Parents AnonymousSM National Leadership Conference, "Celebrating the Strengths of Families and Communities: A Shared Vision for Our Future," held in Arlington, Virginia, Feb. 3-6, 1999.

Parents Anonymous, Inc. was able to raise funds to support all participants including 200 parent leaders, staff, and facilitators from Parents AnonymousSM organizations throughout the country. Given our commitment to shared leadership parent leaders, program staff, board members, executive directors, volunteers, and national staff improved their knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Several plenary sessions were led by noted leaders in the field of child abuse prevention and juvenile delinquency prevention. Commissioner Patricia Montoya of the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services shared "Vital Issues in Child Abuse Prevention" (see page 4) at the opening plenary session.

Susan Notkin, Director of the Children's Program, Edna McConnell Clark Foundation spoke at Friday's breakfast plenary about their "Community Partnerships to Protect Children," which she leads as the largest CPS reform effort in four select communities in the United States.

Shay Bilchik, Administrator Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention spoke on "Strengthening Families to Prevent Juvenile Delinquency" and the vital work of Parents AnonymousSM.

Thursday was a busy day as participants visited more than 113 congressional leaders. Said one parent leader of her experience, "I was very nervous but my representative was wonderful and seemed really interested in my story! I will never forget this day! It was awesome!!"

Friday and Saturday were filled with 27 skill-building workshops, arranged within specialized training tracks for parent leaders, program staff and volunteers, and executive directors and board members. Participants reported a feeling of enthusiasm and the acquisition of real tools for revitalizing existing Parents AnonymousSM groups and establishing new ones.

Ron Culberson, Saturday morning's plenary speaker, had participants rolling in the aisles with his presentation of "Life is Too Important to be Taken Seriously: How to Find Balance in Life." One participant remarked, "Ron Culberson has to be the best speaker I have ever heard. He should be at every conference."

In addition to plenary sessions, workshops, and other conference-related events, many conference-goers also managed to do some sightseeing in Washington, D.C. including a special tour of the Holocaust Memorial Museum, led by Susan Berlin, Lisa Pion-Berlin's mother.



**FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO
DR. LISA PION-BERLIN**

The 1999 National Leadership Conference provided the perfect opportunity to kick off the 30th anniversary of Parents Anonymous, Inc. Our strong commitment to shared leadership was demonstrated by the underwriting of nearly 400 parent leaders, facilitators, volunteers and program staff who attended our four-day conference. The learning and sharing that are the essence of Parents AnonymousSM was exemplified through the workshops, networking, plenary sessions and congressional advocacy activities of our participants. The energy and enthusiasm of the participants will be taken back to their local communities to strengthen and expand Parents AnonymousSM, so that more parents can be reached through our vital program.

In keeping with the theme of our conference "A Shared Vision for Our Future," I would like to set the course for our growth and development by offering free training and technical assistance to community-based organizations who wish to start Parents AnonymousSM groups.

Parents may read the article in *Redbook* magazine or see a local news program on Parents AnonymousSM and want to get the help they need immediately.

(continued on page 12)

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS

PARENTS
AnonymousSM

Strengthening Families All Across America

Inside this issue:

1999 Awards	2
Child Abuse Prevention Month Activities	4
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Protecting Children	8

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The Parent Networker



Summer 1999

By parents, for parents

Employer Support of Parents AnonymousSM Beneficial to All

by Sue Smith, MO

The contributions of Parents AnonymousSM parent leaders are vital to the success of Parents AnonymousSM programs and add to the well-being and safety of local communities. Parent leaders throughout the country depend upon the support of their employers and, in return, become positive representatives of their companies' commitment to the families in their own communities. Sue Smith, a member of the National Parent Leadership Team, tells how her employer supports her work with Parents AnonymousSM.

When I have a Parents AnonymousSM-related activity, I know I can count on my employer for support.

I work for the Family Resource Center in St. Louis, MO, a treatment center for child abuse and neglect prevention. The Center offers a variety of services including family and parental counseling, therapeutic pre-school, intensive family preservation services and group therapy.

They just embraced my involvement with Parents AnonymousSM in any way they could, right from the start.

I found out about Parents AnonymousSM through the St. Louis

Neighborhood Network. Parents Anonymous, Inc. was holding a facilitator training and I decided to attend. They were only expecting 25 people but more than 100 showed up for the training.

After the presentation, the St. Louis Neighborhood Network began asking parents if they would like to join a Parents AnonymousSM group. Within one month, we had a group started.

As a Parents AnonymousSM parent leader I've learned a lot as far as disciplining my children, and I have more confidence than I've ever had. I have also learned how to *truly* have fun with my kids. In the group I feel

and trainings and make presentations about Parents AnonymousSM, like the one I gave recently for Children's Trust Fund of Missouri.

Thanks in large part to the Family Resource Center, I was able to attend the Parents Anonymous, Inc. National Conference in Washington, DC. The Center allowed me to take the necessary time off.

Even my work as a member of the National Parent Leadership Team is encouraged.

My work with Parents AnonymousSM would not be possible without the support of my colleagues Greg Echele, Loren Ripley, Catherine Coyle, and Pam Moussette.

I would encourage all those who employ Parents AnonymousSM parent leaders and volunteers to support the work that these individuals do.

supported, **not** judged.

The group was especially helpful in supporting me during the pregnancy of my 17-year-old daughter. I was re-living my own teenage experience so it was particularly difficult. Both the Parents AnonymousSM group and my family were absolutely wonderful.

The Family Resource Center allows me to take the time I need to serve as a parent leader for Parents AnonymousSM. In fact, my starting date at Family Resource Center was spent at a planning meeting in Washington, DC held by Parents Anonymous, Inc.

Even though my job as a family support worker keeps me busy, I am still able to make time for Parents AnonymousSM activities. I attend media events, information sessions,

I would encourage all those who employ Parents AnonymousSM parent leaders and volunteers to support the work that these individuals do. By doing so, the organization is making a great contribution to its community by improving the lives of families and, most importantly, helping to prevent child abuse.

Catherine Coyle, Family Treatment Supervisor, Family Resource Center, St. Louis, MO:

“I think Parents AnonymousSM has given Sue a lot of opportunities to expand her knowledge base and grow as a parent and as an employee.”

“Our support of Parents AnonymousSM is a message to other employees that we support and appreciate Sue's efforts in helping parents.”

Inside:

2 1999 Award Winners

3 “Imagine”

4 1999 National Leadership Conference

6 Group Tips

7 OOBLECK

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The Parent Networker



By parents, for parents

SUMMER, 1996

Learning to be a father

by Al Gore, Vice President of the United States and father of four

How does a man learn to be a father? I believe, if he is lucky, he learns from three sources: from his own father, from his children and from other fathers.

My father's dedication to the public good made a deep impression on me. He led many fights for what he believed. As a child, I watched him pass the first Medicare bill ever to win approval in the Senate. As a college student, I was intensely proud of his courageous decision to fight for civil rights and against the Vietnam war, even though it virtually guaranteed his re-election defeat. By standing up for what he believed was right, my father taught me that principles are more important than winning elections.

And by growing up and working on a farm in Carthage, Tennessee, I learned what it means to be a good steward of the earth. On long walks through the woods and along the Caney Forest River, by growing crops and raising animals, my father showed me what it means to respect the environment that sustains us. His influence is still with me today in my work to protect and preserve the environment.

Most importantly, however, my father taught me to love unconditionally. Seeing his respect and admiration for my mother, and the partnership that they formed, I learned the meaning of a strong and loving marriage. My father and mother always made time for each other, and for my sister and me. He had high expectations of his children, but my father never pushed either my sister or me to follow any particular career path. In fact, my father's greatest advice to me has been to follow my dreams

and work hard at whatever I do. His energy and enthusiasm for life, even at the age of 88, continue to amaze me.

I know I didn't realize what I was learning at the time, but these lessons from my father are reinforced daily in my life with my own children.

The lessons I'm learning from my children are very much in the moment. The times that are most crucial to them don't necessarily fit easily into a busy parent's schedule. As parents we may

But our children may be even more anxious to have us there after losing a close game, on a long weekend bike ride, or for a serious talk about a friend in distress. At times like these, I learn more about them as individuals and about the experiences that outrage or inspire them, their feelings about themselves, their friends and the troubling issues that all of our children face these days.

Tipper and I have learned that if we are open to learning from our children, we will be amused, worried, exhausted, delighted, frustrated, filled with pride and greatly humbled. Each of our four children—three girls and one boy—has helped us understand our roles as parents in different ways. I try to spend the proverbial "quality time" regularly with each of them alone, as well as quality time together as a family. But "quantity time" also is important. I've learned to take my cues from them, and I've learned that I can't necessarily plan or predict when I will be needed most.

A question we often don't consider is how we can support other men in their attempts to be good fathers. I believe fathers can provide invaluable information and support when they reach out to each other.

Two years ago, my wife Tipper and I hosted an annual family reunion conference on fatherhood and reconnecting men in the lives of children. What came out of the conference was a national program called "Father to Father" which helps men reach out to each other to become better fathers. Many of the country's leading fatherhood or-

continued on page 8



Learning from his children: Vice President Gore with his wife, Tipper (seated left) and their children (clockwise) Sarah, Karenna, Albert and Kristin.

be determined not to miss milestones in our children's lives, such as their first steps, their first words, their first day in school. Later, it's the departure for the senior prom and starting a first job.