
C O V E R

S H E E T

FAX

DATE: April 6, 2000

TO: **Heather Howard, Associate Director, Domestic Policy Council**FAX #: **202-456-2878**

COMPANY: The White House

PHONE #: 202-456-7263

OF PAGES TO FOLLOW:

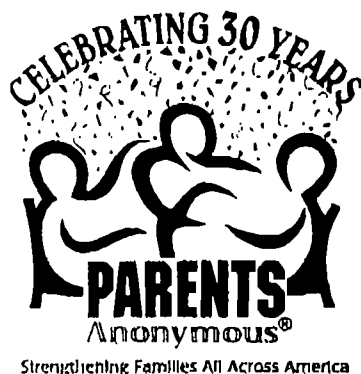
FROM: **Stephanie Graham, Senior Communications Associate**

NOTES:

Following please find a fact sheet on Parents Anonymous, Inc. A letter confirming the Wednesday, April 12 appointment with Dr. Lisa Pion-Berlin will arrive shortly with a packet of Parents Anonymous, Inc. information.

I look forward to talking with you next week to confirm Dr. Pion-Berlin's appointment.

Stephanie Graham
E-mail pasgraham9@juno.com
909-621-6184, ext. 217



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.

• • • • •

 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.

~~4888-936-4039~~

Invite her to
be a task force?



palpb@juno.com
04/19/2000 10:47:30 AM

Record Type: Record

To: Ann O'Leary/OPD/EOP, Heather H. Howard/OPD/EOP

cc:

Subject: Follow up on White House Conference and Thank You

I have sent this twice to the wrong email address-- sorry this is so late!!

Dear Ann & Heather:

Thank you for the wonderful meeting we had last week. The discussion was thought provoking and helpful. We are very glad the bid is out at least for \$ 500,000 to create a National Network of Parent Self-Help & Mutual Support Groups from the Children's Bureau. We appreciate your continued interest and feel good about the excellent grant we will write, our 30 year track record, and our proven results.

The two ideas you raised for possible areas of involvement I would like to address:

1. The upcoming White House Conference which has gotten a lot of press in the past few days and we would love to participate. The following paragraphs describe our work:

Given that teens are navigating serious risks and opportunities in their lives and setting patterns for their behavior later in life, there is never a greater need for strong, caring parents who can help them make sound decisions now and learn how to manage their lives well for the future. For parents of teens, the help and support found at Parents Anonymous® makes a critical difference in the lives of the parents and the teens. Weekly Parents Anonymous® groups, led by parents and professionally trained facilitators, are free of charge to participants. Anyone in a parenting role is welcomed at Parents Anonymous®, whatever the age of their child or the issues they are facing. All of the 700 community-based Parents Anonymous® groups throughout the country welcome parents of teens at their meetings. In addition, some Parents Anonymous® groups were developed specifically to serve parents of teens. Their outreach, meeting location and facilitator were all designed to best meet the needs of parents of teens. Our targeted outreach to parents of teens addresses the fact that many "parenting programs" focus on parents of newborns or young children and do not address the unique problems parents of teens face. In Parents ANonymous groups, parents of teens

focus on unique issues of discipline, drug abuse prevention, peer pressure, sexuality issues, identity and school performance issues, and parent-youth conflicts of a specific nature. Research demonstrates the importance of strengthening parents to ensure good school performance; reduced drug problems; more stable emotional development and the prevention of delinquency-- ie Parents Anonymous does make a difference. An independent Panel at OJJDP identified Parents Anonymous as an effective National Family Strengthening model to prevent delinquency and the US Commssion on Child and Family Welfare highlighted Parents Anonymous as the leader in meaningful parent leadership to enhancing service delivery systems.

Parenting a teen can be a significant challenge given the tremendous changes taking place. Parents of teen find their voice and play key leadership roles in Parents Anonymous. When parents of teens participate in Parents Anonymous®, they develop a community-based network of other parents, the facilitator and other resources to assist them in helping their children through this challenging period. The emphasis on parent leadership provides an avenue for gaining confidence and strength in negotiating and enforcing reasonable rules in a caring manner. The mutual support foundation at Parents Anonymous® helps parents learn from each other and help each other through tough times between group meetings. All parents attending Parents Anonymous® are encouraged to grow and change in positive ways as their children grow and change.

Secondly, a taskforce on a National Parent Helpline-- since we just completed a technology plan including the costs and timeline for getting this off the ground we would love to participate in a special work group to address the need, purpose and funding for such an endeavor!!! We started the first such a line in 1970 and as I told you could not keep pace with the demand so we were forced to close it down in 1992. But we are ready to carry forward with this vital need knowing the tremendous demand that will be created. Parens feel very alone and have no where to turn.

Furthermore, I can arrange anytime for you to meet with real Parents Anonymous Parents who can share their life affirming stories. If there is any other relevant efforts going on with this Adminsitration, we would be glad to be involved. We will be in touch regarding a specific event to get a video taped message from Mrs. Clinton would be terrific!!

I will send both of you a poster of the original artwork we had commissioned to commemorate the tremendous courage and tenacity of the thousands of Parents Anonymous parents who changed their lives forever over the past thirty years and saved another generation from the pain and suffering of child abuse.

Dr. Lisa Pion-Berlin
President & Chief Executive Officer
Parents Anonymous, Inc.
675 W. Foothill, Suite 220
Claremont, CA 91711 (909) 621-6184 x 207
Dr. Lisa Pion-Berlin
President & Chief Executive Officer

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4/12

Parents Anonymous

Dr. Pison-Berlin
Ann O'Leary

receiving only about same \$ as the first got CAPTA grant

OJJDP bid at national outcome study on P.A.

- support from WH relative to appropriations
long term relationship of Clintons

want to be sole source

→ Want standards - PA - nationally accredited organization

1800 help # - OJJDP earmark asked PA to explore
"immediate response system"

do they target teens?
teen parents

cost estimate - 1.5 million to set up
costly to keep up database of services

30th Anniversary - painting unveiling
"asking for help is a sign of strength"

CAPE won't make a difference - police depts won't use
the Byrne grant \$ for community based
child abuse prevention.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth and Families

Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, As Amended

October 3, 1996



National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect

neglect through collaborative analysis of current recruitment, selection, and training programs and development of model programs for dissemination and replication nationally; and

(C) for the establishment of resource centers for the purpose of providing information and training to professionals working in the field of child abuse and neglect.

(2) **MUTUAL SUPPORT PROGRAMS.**—The Secretary may award grants to private nonprofit organizations (such as Parents Anonymous) to establish or maintain a national network of mutual support and self-help programs as a means of strengthening families in partnership with their communities.

(3) **OTHER INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary may award grants to public and private nonprofit agencies that demonstrate innovation in responding to reports of child abuse and neglect including programs of collaborative partnerships between the State child protective services agency, community social service agencies and family support programs, schools, churches and synagogues, and other community agencies to allow for the establishment of a triage system that—

(i) accepts, screens and assesses reports received to determine which such reports require an intensive intervention and which require voluntary referral to another agency, program or project;

(ii) provides, either directly or through referral, a variety of community-linked services to assist families in preventing child abuse and neglect; and

(iii) provides further investigation and intensive intervention where the child's safety is in jeopardy.

(B) **KINSHIP CARE.**—The Secretary may award grants to public and private nonprofit entities in not more than 10 States to assist such entities in developing or implementing procedures using adult relatives as the preferred placement for children removed from their home, where such relatives are determined to be capable of providing a safe nurturing environment for the child and where such relatives comply with the State child protection standards.

(C) **PROMOTION OF SAFE, FAMILY-FRIENDLY PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS FOR VISITATION AND EXCHANGE.**—The Secretary may award grants to entities to assist such entities in establishing and operating safe, family-friendly physical environments—

(8) shall demonstrate an implementation plan to ensure the continued leadership of parents in the on-going planning, implementation, and evaluation of such community based, prevention-focused, family resource and support programs.

SEC. 208. NATIONAL NETWORK FOR COMMUNITY-BASED FAMILY RESOURCE PROGRAMS. [42 U.S.C. 5116g]

The Secretary may allocate such sums as may be necessary from the amount provided under the State allotment to support the activities of the lead entity in the State—

- (1) to create, operate and maintain a peer review process;
- (2) to create, operate and maintain an information clearinghouse;
- (3) to fund a yearly symposium on State system change efforts that result from the operation of the Statewide networks of community-based, prevention-focused, family resource and support programs;
- (4) to create, operate and maintain a computerized communication system between lead entities; and
- (5) to fund State-to-State technical assistance through bi-annual conferences.

SEC. 209. DEFINITIONS. [42 U.S.C. 5116h]

For purposes of this title:

- (1) **CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES.**—The term "children with disabilities" has the same meaning given such term in section 602(a)(2) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
- (2) **COMMUNITY REFERRAL SERVICES.**—The term "community referral services" means services provided under contract or through interagency agreements to assist families in obtaining needed information, mutual support and community resources, including respite care services, health and mental health services, employability development and job training, and other social services, including early developmental screening of children, through help lines or other methods.
- (3) **FAMILY RESOURCE AND SUPPORT PROGRAM.**—The term "family resource and support program" means a community-based, prevention-focused entity that—
 - (A) provides, through direct service, the core services required under this title, including—

(i) parent education, support and leadership services, together with services characterized by relationships between parents and professionals that are based on equality and respect, and designed to assist parents in acquiring parenting skills, learning about child development, and responding appropriately to the behavior of their children;

(ii) services to facilitate the ability of parents to serve as resources to one another (such as through mutual support and parent self-help groups);

(iii) outreach services provided through voluntary home visits and other methods to assist parents in becoming aware of and able to participate in family resources and support program activities;

(iv) community and social services to assist families in obtaining community resources; and

(v) follow-up services;

(B) provides, or arranges for the provision of, other core services through contracts or agreements with other local agencies, including all forms of respite care services; and

(C) provides access to optional services, directly or by contract, purchase of service, or interagency agreement, including—

(i) child care, early childhood development and early intervention services;

(ii) referral to self-sufficiency and life management skills training;

(iii) referral to education services, such as scholastic tutoring, literacy training, and General Educational Degree services;

(iv) referral to services providing job readiness skills;

(v) child abuse and neglect prevention activities;

(vi) referral to services that families with children with disabilities or special needs may require;

(vii) community and social service referral, including early developmental screening of children;

(viii) peer counseling;

(ix) referral for substance abuse counseling and treatment; and

(x) help line services.

(4) **OUTREACH SERVICES.**—The term "outreach services" means services provided to assist consumers, through voluntary home



Strengthening Families All Across America

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

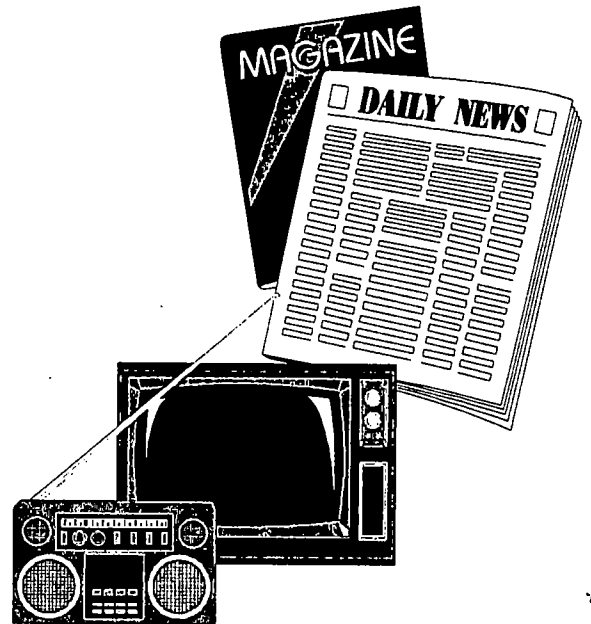


MEDIA GUIDE FOR PARENT LEADERS





MEDIA GUIDE FOR PARENT LEADERS



PARENT LEADERSHIP & THE MEDIA

Parents Anonymous, Inc. was the first national family strengthening organization to identify the importance of parents speaking publicly about their life experiences. Since 1970, Parents AnonymousSM parents have been speaking out about the prevention of child abuse from the perspective of parents working to overcome difficulties in their own lives. They give courage and hope to other parents needing help.

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 media coverage generated by her powerful testimony reached every corner of the nation. Jolly's moving story put a human face on a complex social issue and helped ensure passage of key legislation that focused on the solution to child abuse and neglect.

The expertise of parents combined with that of professionals (like Jolly K. and her social worker), is an example of the Parents AnonymousSM principle of shared leadership. Together, parents and professionals work together to share responsibility, expertise and leadership roles.

Parents who have improved their lives through Parents AnonymousSM provide a valuable resource for the media—newspapers, magazines, radio and television. The power of parents speaking from their own experience is unequaled as a way to demonstrate the success of Parents AnonymousSM and to help other parents.

Many Parents AnonymousSM parents who found help and support are now ready to "give back" to others. Parents' personal stories of strength and success offer inspiration and inform thousands of human service professionals, policymakers and other community members throughout the country of the many issues affecting families. Parents also provide insight that helps shape programs and policies affecting families across the country.

If you feel you are ready to share your story of hope and strength, let Parents AnonymousSM staff know. They will work with you when media opportunities come up and will assist you before, during and after the media interview, whether it is for TV, radio, a magazine or a newspaper. The helpful hints in this booklet will also help you prepare for an interview with the media.

"I needed to decide how much I felt comfortable sharing so that my message would encourage other parents to ask for help but would still fit into the goals of the CNN Presents television show."

Mickey, Parent Leader



"I realized while preparing for a live TV interview on The Today Show that I had to focus my thoughts and practice what I wanted to say—and still, I knew they could ask me anything."

Elizabeth, Parent Leader



THINGS TO THINK ABOUT BEFORE BEING INTERVIEWED BY THE MEDIA

You may be approached by a Parents AnonymousSM staff member to find out if you are interested in being interviewed by the media (newspaper, magazine, radio or TV). Before agreeing to do a media interview, there are things that are important to consider.

Are you ready to do a media interview? Your personal growth and life situation will help you determine if you are ready to speak publicly about sensitive personal issues. You will also need to think about how you will handle the attention you may receive after your story is made public. If your life is fairly stable—yet the feelings and memories of the challenges that brought you to Parents AnonymousSM are fresh in your mind—you may be in a good point in your life to consider doing an interview. This balance between the passion of your struggle and the wisdom of hindsight is a valuable combination.

However, if this is a hard time for you, you may not want to do an interview right now.

How much (or how little) do you want your name, face, or voice to be used? This will establish what form of media is best for you. In a newspaper interview, you and the Parents AnonymousSM staff person can explain to a reporter that a fake name must be used or only your first name (if you don't want your full name mentioned). A radio station can mention only your first name, but your voice may be recognized. On TV there are several ways to disguise the identity of guests or you may wish to appear as you are. Descriptive captions may appear on the TV screen under your face. Discuss your caption in advance; you may not want to be introduced or referred to as a "Child Abuser" or any other negative words. All of these issues need to be discussed with the Parents AnonymousSM staff person and the media professional who is interviewing you **BEFORE** the interview is conducted.

DO I WANT TO BE INTERVIEWED?

There are many things to consider before agreeing to do a media interview. Think about the questions below before you make your final decision. You may wish to write your answers here.

What do you want to say about yourself in a media interview?

How do you feel about how things are going in your life right now?

How does your family feel about you doing media interviews?

Is it OK with family members to talk about them in an interview?

What effect may your public exposure have on your family members, especially your children? You may be ready to share your life story as a way to reach out to help other parents, but it is important to remember how your actions affect your family. You should consult with family members before making this decision, and ask your children for permission to talk about them publicly. Parents, children, friends, co-workers and school mates will likely hear or read the story. You may receive support and encouragement from family and friends, or may find that your interview has upset them. You may want to focus on your individual story without giving information about others in your family. This will protect the privacy of other family members.

Once you decide that you are willing to do media interviews, notify Parents AnonymousSM staff. They will offer both help and support. You will need information about how the media works and general guidelines about being interviewed. This information and preparation will help ensure that your media experience is a positive one.



INTERVIEWEE BILL OF RIGHTS

In all media interviews you have the right:

1. To know who is interviewing you and whom he or she represents.
2. To have total agreement by both parties of the ground rules; no matter how hastily arranged.
3. To be treated courteously. The questions can be tough, but the reporter's demeanor should not be abusive.
4. To be free from physical threat or distractions from such things as television lights too close or microphones shoved in your face.
5. To know the general content, subject or thrust of the interview so you have time to research the appropriate information.
6. To know if there are other guests appearing with you on a talk or panel show and what the nature of their role will be.
7. To make your own audio or videotape of the interview, or be able to obtain a complete tape from the station.
8. To make sure that no material is recorded on audio or videotape unless you are told you are being recorded. The "pre-interview discussions," talk between commercials or after show chit-chat cannot be used on the air unless you approve.
9. To have an accurate on-air introduction that will put the interview in the proper perspective.
10. In the film or tape editing, to have the basic message and flavor of your answers come through.

"Facing the News Media,"

Gary Beals Advertising and Public Relations Agency, 1993

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE INTERVIEW

Once you know the topic of the interview, a Parents AnonymousSM staff person will be available to go over possible questions and answers. Also, you need to decide just how much personal information you are willing to share.

Prepare, prepare, prepare. With the help of the Parents AnonymousSM staff person, you will practice sample questions and some possible answers (right). If you want to add an important point, don't be afraid to add your thoughts to a question the interviewer is asking.

Anticipate difficult questions and come prepared with responses. It is OK to respond that this is something you do not wish to discuss. If you don't know the answer to a question, it is OK to say so or to refer to the Parents AnonymousSM staff person.

Always assume anything said to a representative of the media is "on the record." It is the job of any media representative to "flush out" a story. By being likable, friendly and interested in what is said, interviewers may create a false sense of security, causing you to reveal confidential information. Remember that the reporter is a microphone to the world and anything said may end up being publicized.

Be aware that the story, or the headlines or promotions for it, may be portrayed in a more dramatic way than expected. News organizations make a profit by producing stories that attract audiences and advertisers and it is often the sensational story that does this best.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Talk about your personal experiences and try to keep your responses simple, positive and short (under one minute each).

"How did you get help through Parents AnonymousSM?"

- Be positive.
- Be brief.

Possible Answer: "I was able to deal with my emotional issues in a safe environment where other Parents AnonymousSM parents supported me so I could stop hitting my kids (or other negative behavior) and I could learn ways to nurture them."

"I assume that you also have serious parenting problems."

- Set the record straight. Politely correct information if the interviewer is wrong.
- Make a positive statement about the changes that have occurred in your life.

Possible Answer: "My involvement with Parents AnonymousSM began when I decided I wanted to learn to be a better parent, and I realized I had to change myself."

"What would you say to encourage other parents to join a Parents AnonymousSM group?"

- Think about what brought you to Parents AnonymousSM.
- Focus on the positive.

Possible Answer: "My message to other parents is 'don't be afraid.' Parents AnonymousSM is there for you. You are not alone. If I did it, then anybody can. In Parents AnonymousSM, we believe that asking for help is a sign of strength."

MORE ON NEXT PAGE

DURING THE INTERVIEW

If you speak from the heart, the interview will go well. It's OK to be nervous. Even the most experienced person can get nervous before an interview. Remember, you will not be alone. A Parents AnonymousSM staff person will accompany you to all media activities and will be available to provide the reporter with other information about Parents AnonymousSM. This is another example of the Parents AnonymousSM principle of shared leadership. Your interview will encourage parents to ask for help and let professionals know about the success of Parents AnonymousSM.

Remember these important points:

1. Focus on your own positive growth and change.
2. Talk about why you came to Parents AnonymousSM, how you changed your life through Parents AnonymousSM, and how your children have been helped.
3. Emphasize that asking for help is a sign of strength.

Choose words carefully. Say "Parents AnonymousSM group" rather than "PA," and say "my Parents AnonymousSM group" rather than "my group." Avoid slang, flippant remarks, and angry responses. Help others hear the important message you want to share. Don't feel the need to volunteer information just to fill in uncomfortable silences.

Stay positive! Remember that Parents AnonymousSM is interested in helping parents make wise and healthy choices for themselves and their children. Therefore, it is more important to emphasize the exciting success of parents attending Parents AnonymousSM and the hope Parents AnonymousSM offers other parents in need.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS, CONTINUED

"What skills have you learned to be a better parent?"

- Be specific.
- Use "I" statements: "I believe that . . ." "I have experienced."

Possible Answer: "I am more confident as a parent. I now know what discipline works and what does not. I can communicate better with my kids because I am not yelling at them."

"How have your children benefitted from Parents AnonymousSM?"

- Talk with your children so you know how they feel about Parents AnonymousSM.

Possible Answer: "I have noticed that my children are happier and are doing better in school. The focus of my parenting is now helping them to learn and grow."

"Is your behavior toward your children your parents' fault?"

- Focus on your experience.
- Give a positive answer.

Possible Answer: "I take responsibility for my behavior. Through Parents AnonymousSM I have been able to deal with these problems and change the course of my life and that of my family forever. I also know that I have helped the next generation of my family prevent these problems from repeating."

Before the interview is over, try to make some helpful suggestions for parents in the audience. For example, you might say:

"Don't be afraid. I was there. I got help and you can too. Call (our Parents AnonymousSM phone number)."

"If you need help improving your parenting skills call (our Parents AnonymousSM phone number). Remember, it is a sign of strength to ask for help."

"Support a friend by telling them about Parents AnonymousSM."

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Telling your story takes a lot of courage. You may feel tired, excited, successful or even unsure about how you came across. It is natural to have a lot of different feelings after a media interview. Give yourself a chance to think about the interview then, after reading or watching it, you may have entirely different feelings.

Take time to discuss how you felt about the experience with the Parents AnonymousSM staff person. They are there to talk about any concerns you may have and to provide emotional support. This talk should take place as soon as possible following the interview. Should you have more questions, thoughts, or concerns later, be sure to call the Parents AnonymousSM staff person. Their ongoing support will help to ensure that you are comfortable in your new role as spokesperson.

If a member of the media calls you directly as a result of your interview, refer them to the Parents AnonymousSM staff person. By allowing the staff person to talk with the reporter, you will not feel pressured to give an interview if you do not want to. The Parents AnonymousSM staff person will call you back, discuss the interview opportunity with you, and then you can decide

INTERVIEW TIPS FOR TELEVISION

- Don't be surprised if things are unorganized when you reach the station. The glamour and calm of TV appears on the screen and definitely not backstage; don't let it "throw" you.
- Be aware of your body language. Communicate comfort and confidence by sitting forward in the chair with both feet on the floor.
- Show warmth by smiling at appropriate times.
- Look directly at the interviewer; the camera will find you.
- Use your hands. If you are comfortable with hand gestures, make them occasionally. If not, rest your hands in your lap and change hand positions every few minutes.
- Wear attractive, yet comfortable clothing on camera. You may be sitting one hour or longer.
- Avoid wearing clothes with small patterns for TV interviews because they don't show up well.
- Avoid wearing all white, all black or all red. Softer colors are your best bet.
- Avoid wearing big necklaces, pins or other jewelry because they get in the way.
- Apply bolder makeup to help you look best under the bright lights.
- Don't use notes or bring papers for TV interviews.
- Avoid using the expressions "uh" and "you know."
- Talk slowly and stop and think before answering.
- Assume you are always on camera.
- Most importantly, be yourself!

if it is right for you. **Parents AnonymousSM parents should always attend media interviews with a Parents AnonymousSM staff person; never engage in a media activity alone.** Shared leadership benefits everyone and provides the needed support to you, the parent leader.

Your story is one of hope, help, strength, and support. For this reason, Parents AnonymousSM parents and staff have been sought out over the years. Through these efforts, you reach hundreds, thousands, and sometimes millions of other parents who may need to begin to change their lives. Because of your important personal message, they are able to ask for help now. You will also grow as a parent leader through valuable media interviews which allow you to practice telling your story, to demonstrate your success, and to reach out to others.

By sharing your expertise and life experiences with others, you are sharing a valuable gift and are helping to make your community a better place. You can speak with confidence because you are the best expert regarding your personal experiences. We at Parents AnonymousSM celebrate and respect your courage, care and concern for others.



REAL EXPERIENCES

"I joined a Parents AnonymousSM group 15 years ago and now serve as the Chair of the Board of Directors of Parents Anonymous, Inc. One of my greatest pleasures is 'giving back' some of the help I received. Several years ago, my entire family and I made a conscious decision to share our story in our local newspaper. We were so proud when many people who didn't even know us called to ask where they could find a Parents AnonymousSM group. I knew I had succeeded when strangers stopped me on the street to tell me that my honesty and openness inspired them to reach out for help."

**Freddie Gardner, Parent Leader &
Chair, Board of Directors, Parents Anonymous, Inc.**

"On The Geraldo Rivera Show, the whole hour was devoted to us and to the wonderful work Parents AnonymousSM is doing to help families all across the country. I found myself revealing the severity of abuse I have inflicted on my children. I decided to let it all out that day and talked about how close I came to killing my son. It was scary, but also very cleansing. I was afraid that the audience would hate us, but in fact they were kind and I felt a lot of them identified us as four courageous women sitting on that stage. We received hundreds of calls after the show aired, once again proving to all of us how powerful the media is, how important it is to tell our story, and how many parents are seeking help in changing their lives."

Mickey, Parent Leader

"When I learned that more than 1,000 parents from all across the country called Parents AnonymousSM in response to my Today Show television appearance, I thought of my husband's loving and supportive words: 'If it serves to reach one person, if it helps one parent find a Parents AnonymousSM group, if it heals the relationship of one family, it will all be worth it.'"

"I know that many of the parents who called wound up attending Parents AnonymousSM groups in their communities, and will benefit because my family and I had the courage to change our lives and to share our story with others."

Elizabeth, Parent Leader

PARENTS ANONYMOUS, INC.

Parents Anonymous, Inc. was founded in 1970 through the extraordinary efforts of a courageous mother seeking help for her abuse problems. In partnership with her social worker, Jolly K. launched a national movement to bring help, support, strength, and hope to millions of families all across America. As the nation's oldest child abuse prevention program dedicated to strengthening families, Parents Anonymous, Inc. leads a diverse and dynamic national network of hundreds of community-based Parents AnonymousSM programs supported by the efforts of thousands of committed volunteers.

Free weekly, on-going Parents AnonymousSM groups are co-led by parent group leaders and professionally trained facilitators. Also, a specialized children's program is provided. Parents AnonymousSM groups are conducted in English or the language of the families in attendance and provide a safe, supportive setting for parents to come together to learn new skills, transform their attitudes and behaviors, and create long-term positive changes in their lives. Additionally, Parents AnonymousSM groups foster the development of leadership skills among participants.

National research has definitively confirmed the effectiveness of Parents AnonymousSM in diminishing the risk factors while increasing the resiliency of families, resulting in the prevention of child abuse and the promotion of positive parenting strategies. Parent participants 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.

Want to start a Parents AnonymousSM group or want more information? Call 909-621-6184 or visit our web site, www.parentsanonymous-natl.org

This Media Guide for Parents is provided by Parents Anonymous, Inc., Copyright © 1999. Written by: Lisa Pion-Berlin, Ph.D., President and Chief Executive Officer; Teresa Rafael, M.S.W., Vice President of Programs. Edited by Stephanie Graham, Director of Communications; Barbara Meltzer, Media Consultant. Reviewed by the National Parent Leadership Team.

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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

One Mother's Search Leads to Help for Hundreds of Thousands of Parents

The story of Jolly K., the founding parent of Parents AnonymousSM, is one that has provided hope and inspiration to thousands of parents throughout the country. In 1970, Jolly was searching for help in providing a safe and caring home for her two daughters and was particularly worried about her behavior toward her 6-year-old daughter. After many fruitless attempts to locate help in changing her behavior, Jolly was finally assigned to the caseload of Leonard Lieber, a clinical social worker at a California State mental health clinic. Jolly and Leonard met in traditional therapy sessions for several months. When Jolly expressed frustration about her lack of progress, Leonard encouraged Jolly to suggest alternative solutions. Jolly realized that if she could meet with other parents with similar problems, they could explore solutions together.

She and Leonard met with other mothers with whom he was working and who were also seeking to improve their parenting abilities—Jolly led the discussion and Leonard served as a resource and facilitator. At the end of 2 hours, the parents attending this first meeting felt encouraged and hopeful and decided to continue meeting under the following guidelines:

- ◆ They would make a commitment to stop behaviors they deemed unacceptable or abusive.
- ◆ They would exchange telephone numbers and be available to each other day or night, especially in times of crisis.
- ◆ They would meet in donated space and would welcome, free of charge, any other parents who wanted to attend.

In Redondo Beach, CA, they placed the first advertisement in a local newspaper, "For Moms Who Lose Their Cool With Their Kids, Call" This gave birth to a national movement that has helped millions of parents and children all across America. Through their courage and tenacity, the parents in the first Parents AnonymousSM group demonstrated that, by helping each other, they could find the strength to become the parents they wanted to be. Jolly and Leonard began to speak to community groups and the media. They and others told the story of the significant positive changes that were taking place in families when parents participated in Parents AnonymousSM groups.

circumstances. Groups are ongoing and open ended; parents can join at any time and participate as long as they wish. Group participation is not restricted by age, educational level, income, problems experienced by the parents or children, or any other specific criteria. Because the groups are community based, participants mirror the ethnic, geographical, and cultural nature of their neighborhoods.

Parents AnonymousSM responds to the diverse needs of families (married or single parents, stepparents, teenage parents, and divorced parents) by providing group meetings in neighborhood family centers, churches, clinics, schools, housing projects, prisons, homeless shelters, and Head Start centers. In addition, group members discuss parenting concerns in English, Spanish, French, and several Southeast-Asian and American Indian languages. A Parents AnonymousSM group can become a valuable resource for any parent, regardless of culture or language, who is having difficulty providing a safe and caring home.

Organizational Structure

The National Network

Parents Anonymous, Inc., the national organization, is a private, nonprofit agency located in Claremont, CA. Through a variety

of strategies and mechanisms, the organization provides training, technical assistance, materials, national media exposure, advocacy, national networking opportunities, and coordination of Parents AnonymousSM programs at State and regional levels. Through local, city, county, and State partnerships, Parents Anonymous, Inc., selects, monitors, and assists a dynamic national network of organizations that share responsibility for promoting, maintaining, developing, and expanding programs in local areas.

These organizations provide volunteer management (including recruitment, screening, training, recognition, and evaluation), promote parent leadership, develop community-based groups, provide outreach to parents, and form close links with other resources and organizations in their communities. With regard to shared leadership, parents work with professionals in planning, implementing, and evaluating program services through prescriptive leadership roles. In addition, Parents Anonymous, Inc., is integrally involved in major national system reform initiatives addressing the need for change in the child protective services system and in other child welfare arenas. Through consultation, training, and technical assistance to local communities and public child welfare systems, Parents Anonymous, Inc., helps others understand and incorporate sound principles into their

work with families and children to ensure responsive service planning, implementation, oversight, and evaluation.

National Parent Leadership Activities

In 1995, Parents Anonymous, Inc., developed the diverse National Parent Leadership Team, consisting of parents who demonstrated leadership in their local groups and organizations and who expressed an interest in expanding their leadership role. The leadership team provides training for professionals and other parents; participates in public education, outreach, and advocacy activities; and serves as the editorial board for *The Parent Networker* newsletter. The team advises Parents Anonymous, Inc., regarding program and organization issues that affect families and works with local, State, and national media to ensure that the voices of parents are heard on issues that are related to families and children. Based on the success of the national team, several State or local Parents AnonymousSM organizations have developed parent leadership teams to accomplish similar goals locally.

Program Components

The Parent Group Leader

Based on the principle of shared leadership, each group must have a parent



leader who, in addition to being a group member, also serves as a cofacilitator of the group and promotes leadership among all group members. Other parent leadership activities may be shared so that multiple parents have the opportunity to practice and strengthen their leadership skills, which allows parents to give back to others and increase their self-esteem.

The Professionally Trained Facilitator

Each Parents AnonymousSM group has a professionally trained facilitator who meets with the group each week and is available to the parent leader and other group members between meetings. The facilitator commits to working with the group for a minimum of 1 year and may be a volunteer given release time by his or her employer or paid a stipend. Facilitators bring a variety of skills and talents to their work with Parents AnonymousSM. They are primarily practicing professionals with expertise in social work, counseling, healthcare, mental health, teaching, or related fields. They possess personal characteristics that embody the principles of Parents AnonymousSM. They are knowledgeable about child abuse, juvenile delinquency, group dynamics, family systems, child development, and local community resources. Above all, they must be capable of working with parents in the unique Parents AnonymousSM model of shared leadership and be flexible and accepting.

In addition, the facilitators are mandated to report child abuse and must be comfortable doing so to protect the safety of children in a way that continues to promote the strength of parents.

When it is necessary to report child abuse, it is important for facilitators to focus on the parent's role in protecting his or her child, encourage the parent to self-report, and involve the parent with child protective services in any other way possible. This helps ensure that the parent continues to be responsible for the child's safety and well-being, even if it is necessary for the parent to ask for help from child protective services in fulfilling that role.

The facilitator is an integral part of the group. He or she serves as a role model, provides links to other community resources, and helps create a sense of safety and positive growth in the group. The nature of the facilitator's role differs

significantly from the traditional role of human service professionals, in that it is based on a true partnership with parents and is designed to promote individual parent leadership and strengthen the functioning of the group.

Community-Based Volunteer Support

Volunteers make up the core support for programs by facilitating groups, operating children's programs, providing childcare, and answering telephone response lines. Moreover, volunteers provide their skill and expertise on boards of directors, fund-raising committees, and public relations campaigns. Their valuable assistance contributes to the cost effectiveness of the program and a high level of community ownership, supports local replication of the model, and ensures that parents and their children have access to Parents AnonymousSM programs. Through volunteering, community members are given a vehicle with which to respond to the needs of their neighbors and to invest in strengthening families and children. Approximately 30,000 volunteers across the country donate an estimated \$10 million worth of services annually.

Specialized Children's Programs

According to an annual database survey given to all Parents AnonymousSM affiliates, specialized Parents AnonymousSM children's programs help approximately 22,000 children and youth

The Parents AnonymousSM Principles

Parents AnonymousSM programs are based on the following four guiding principles:

- ◆ **Parent Leadership.** Parents recognize and take responsibility for their problems, develop their own solutions, and serve as role models for other parents.
- ◆ **Mutual Support.** Help is reciprocal, in that parents give and receive support from each other, creating a strong sense of community.
- ◆ **Shared Leadership.** Parents and professionals build successful partnerships to share responsibility, expertise, and leadership roles.
- ◆ **Personal Growth.** Parents make significant long-term positive change through identifying their options, exploring their feelings, and acting on their decisions in an atmosphere of belonging, trust, and acceptance in which healthy interactions are modeled.



gain problem-solving skills, increase their positive social interaction skills, and learn to better understand and manage their emotions. These activities lead to greater self-esteem and more positive interactions with others. Some programs also emphasize building other skills. In Oregon, for example, the programs teach drug and alcohol refusal skills to youth to prepare them to resist peer pressure. Because the children's programs are held in conjunction with the parent groups, the need for childcare is not a barrier to parental attendance. As noted before, sites without specialized programs offer free childcare.

Public Awareness and Outreach

Parents Anonymous, Inc., and its national network conduct public awareness activities and reach out to potential parent participants through news and feature coverage in local and national media; distribution of brochures, pamphlets, newsletters, and fliers; production and distribution of informational videos; and training programs for professionals in healthcare, social services, education, and other disciplines to encourage their referrals of parents. Parents reach out to other parents through public speaking, newspaper articles, and media interviews; share their successes; and encourage others to join or support Parents AnonymousSM programs across the country.

Parents AnonymousSM Helplines

Parents Anonymous, Inc., and its national network provide telephone helplines for parents seeking information and referral to local groups. These toll-free telephone services provide a necessary lifeline for parents seeking help. Annually, Parents AnonymousSM provides immediate support and referrals to approximately 90,000 parents through Parents AnonymousSM helplines.

Participant Profile

Parents AnonymousSM is a viable resource for thousands of mothers and fathers—33 percent of the program participants are male, and 67 percent are female (see figure). Parents AnonymousSM reaches out to families of color in local communities, including those on reservations, with an almost even split between Caucasian parents (51 percent) and all other groups combined (49 percent). The percentage of people of color in Parents AnonymousSM

groups far exceeds the racial/ethnic breakdown of the general U.S. population. Twenty-one percent of the participants are African-American, 22 percent are Hispanic, 5 percent are American Indian, and 1 percent are Asian/Pacific Islander. Parents AnonymousSM programs integrate the values, languages, and strengths of local communities with a strong commitment to providing culturally responsive services that meet the diverse needs of the Nation's families. This commitment is demonstrated by the wide range of populations served and locations of groups. Twenty-six percent of all Parents AnonymousSM groups serve specialized populations of parents, while 74 percent reach out to all parents in their target community.

Parents join Parents AnonymousSM groups for multiple reasons:

- ◆ They are seeking help because they want to change their behavior toward their children. This can range from parents who are feeling too much stress to parents who have harmed their children or fear they might harm them.

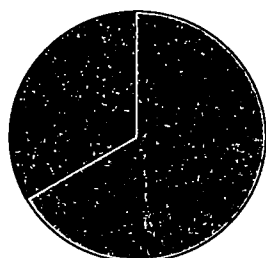
- ◆ A family member, friend, social worker, teacher, healthcare provider, daycare worker, religious leader, or other individual encouraged them to attend.
- ◆ They want help, information, and support in managing specific behavioral, health, or other issues facing their family.
- ◆ They are mandated by a court order or child protective services agreement to attend.

The Parents AnonymousSM Group Model

To reduce the blame and shame parents sometimes experience, Parents AnonymousSM offers help through support systems with other parents. Parents AnonymousSM group members determine the content of each meeting, usually through formal agenda building at the beginning of each session, although multiple strategies may be employed. Thus, the topics discussed on any given day relate specifically to the needs and interests of the group members present. This allows

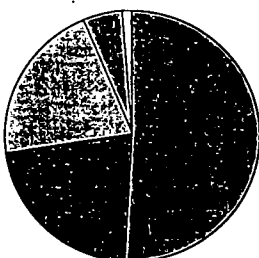
Breakdown of Participants

Parents AnonymousSM Participants



Female—67%
Male—33%

Percentage of People of Color



Caucasian—51%
Hispanic—22%
African-American—21%
American Indian—5%
Asian/Pacific Islander—1%

A Typical Parents AnonymousSM Meeting

It is sometimes easiest to understand a program when given an example to review. Below is an example of what a newcomer may experience when attending his or her first Parents AnonymousSM group meeting.

When Karen starts to feel overwhelmed with her role as a parent, she knows that she needs help. A trusted friend tells her about Parents AnonymousSM programs and Karen decides to attend a meeting. She leaves her two children in the care of a well-trained children's program worker and, after getting them settled, joins seven other parents and a facilitator to begin the 2-hour group meeting. No forms are handed out, no one insists that personal information be provided, and no fee is required to participate. The group meeting begins when one parent, the parent group leader, reads from an opening statement: "This Parents AnonymousSM group is part of a national network of parents who support and encourage positive change and growth in family relationships. Any concerns will be discussed in a caring and supportive manner. Confidentiality and anonymity are to be respected, except when the health or safety of a family member is at risk."

Group members indicate the amount of time they need to discuss the issues they want to cover during the next 2 hours. All newcomers are invited to participate but also are assured that they may just listen. As parents talk about their individual situations, Karen gains an understanding of who they are, what brought them to Parents AnonymousSM, and what goals they hope to achieve. For example:

- ◆ Susan is a 19-year-old single mom with a 10-month-old baby. The baby's father is no longer involved in her life, and Susan is learning how to provide a safe and caring home for herself and her new baby. She has no immediate family members in the area and has little support or relief from the constant stress she feels. With the information and support she gains from the group, Susan feels more confident and has an extended network of other parents she can call during the week if she is unsure of herself or feels at the end of her rope.

She has even enrolled in a nearby nursing school to pursue her dream of working in the medical field.

- ◆ Alishia and Robert, the only couple in the group, have three children; the oldest one, a 15-year-old, seems to have become a different person. Her normally sunny disposition and helpful nature have disappeared, and she is often surly, insolent, and angry. Susan has helped them understand the emotional changes teens experience, as she is only a few years away from being that same age. Alishia and Robert are learning to set limits while remaining empathetic with their daughter. Life at home has become much better for the entire family.
- ◆ Manuel is the father of two children, ages 6 and 10. He and his wife recently divorced, and Manuel realized he had a habit of leaving the job of parenting to his wife. Now that the children are with him on weekends, he must create a new relationship with them and help them deal with the pain and grief of the divorce. He wants to become a strong and competent parent even though he has limited time with his children. He knows they are angry and confused, and he also realizes how much he loves them and how important they are to him.
- ◆ Barbara is an outpatient in a drug-abuse treatment program. She participated in a Parents AnonymousSM group during the 4-week, inpatient portion of the treatment program and joined this community group when she returned to her own neighborhood. As she gained a new awareness of her life beyond her use of drugs, she realized that her addiction had seriously impaired her ability to be a safe and caring parent to her children. She is determined to learn all she can in order to be the best parent she can be.
- ◆ Samantha is in the group because she lost control one day and struck her 11-year-old son, leaving a mark on his arm. His school counselor contacted child protective services (CPS), and when the CPS worker visited the home to assess the situation, she realized that this parent could benefit from the program and asked the judge to mandate that Samantha attend. Each week, for 3 months, Samantha asked the facilitator to sign an attendance form, which she gave to her social worker to demonstrate

her compliance with the court order. After the mandated period was completed, she continued to attend and recently celebrated her second anniversary as a member.

- ◆ Randy attends because his oldest son was convicted of a misdemeanor. His son's probation worker stressed the importance of strong, positive parenting skills in helping the youth avoid future problems and recommended the program. Randy attends the group, and although his wife works evenings and is unable to participate, she supports Randy's involvement and learns from him. Thus far, their son has improved in his schoolwork and made new friends who are a more positive influence on him. Best of all, he is now a healthy role model for his two younger brothers. Randy has attended the group for a year and is the parent group leader.
- ◆ Maria is the group facilitator. She is a social worker, and her agency provides release time for her to meet with the group each week. Maria became a facilitator 2 years ago and finds it the most rewarding professional role she has ever held. She works closely with the parent group leader and encourages leadership among all the parents in the group. She serves as a resource to the parents during group meetings, and helps build links with other community services.

After listening to the discussion for an hour or so, Karen decides to share her concerns and finds that the group is supportive and has valuable information to share—some from their own experience and some learned in other settings. Several parents recommend resources they have found to be useful, and the facilitator encourages her to talk further with the parents who seem to be the most helpful to her.

At the end of the meeting, a list is passed around with names and telephone numbers on it, although providing this information is not mandatory. Susan tells Karen she'll call her to find out more about a suggestion Karen made—a method that helped her children get to sleep when they were the age of Susan's child.

As Karen leaves, she recognizes that her sense of helplessness has been replaced with hope, and fear with pride of accomplishment.

for valuable discussion because members often can share their own expertise in particular areas with other members seeking assistance. The group model capitalizes on the learning style of adults—adults learn best when they perceive they need to know about a topic, and adult learning is reinforced when a new skill can be practiced immediately and ongoing support and feedback are available to promote long-term change.

At Parents AnonymousSM meetings, parents discuss communication, discipline, child development, parental roles, effective strategies for helping children achieve independence and self-control, methods for successfully dealing with the everyday stresses of parenting, and any other issues that affect their parenting behavior. Parents AnonymousSM is equally as appropriate for parents who are under stress and need information and support as for parents who have experienced difficulties requiring professional intervention from child protective services or courts. Because all aspects of parents' lives may affect their relationship with their children, all relevant topics are open for discussion. To reinforce and solidify their new skills, parents practice new behaviors at home and discuss the results at the meeting each week. Attitudes dramatically change and form the basis for integrating new knowledge and skills, helping parents to successfully foster the healthy growth and development of their children.



Parents are given an opportunity to experience the safety and caring of the group, to be trusted and to know others who are trustworthy, and to take charge of their lives and their families while knowing that the group members will be available to help them as needed. Parents find an environment where they can talk about their serious concerns and specific events and behaviors that may be problematic. In this setting, new behaviors are exchanged and incorporated into daily life. Through the mutual support of the group, parents grow stronger by developing new self-images that are positive, capable, and responsible.

Through interactions with their peers, parents identify their options, examine their attitudes toward childrearing, and learn positive ways of relating to their children. Group members and the facilitator also exchange telephone numbers; this offers 24-hour support to parents when they experience a crisis or stress. The strong peer connections parents build within the group often are reinforced through telephone calls and other personal contacts outside the group. The foundation of the group is reciprocity—In addition to receiving help from the group, every parent has the opportunity to offer help to other group members and become a leader. Parents who reach out and provide help thus benefit as much as or more than the parents who receive their assistance.

When necessary, courts mandate parents to attend parenting classes; Parents AnonymousSM is one resource. The mutual support environment of a Parents AnonymousSM group has been proven effective in reducing resistance and breaking through denial of the need for personal change.

Becoming a parent is a major developmental transition for anyone. In an ideal world, all young people would grow up in nurturing, supportive homes with positive role models who would fully prepare them to be loving and responsible parents to their own children. Unfortunately, reality for many is very different. Many parents are still struggling to reconcile issues related to their own development and may be so overwhelmed with their own needs and fears that they are unable to focus as much as necessary on meeting their children's needs. If a parent's self-image is still that of a child who needs approval, support, and acceptance, it is unlikely that information about positive

parenting techniques will elicit significant change. If anything, parents may feel rage, grief, and loss about their childhoods as they learn more about what is necessary for the well-being of children. Parents with many unmet needs may not be motivated to attend a parenting class. They may need to understand the benefits to their own lives in order to participate.

Parents AnonymousSM addresses these issues by providing a safe and supportive place in which parents can unload excess emotional baggage from their life experiences so that they can focus on their role as parents and the joys and responsibilities inherent in that role. Once that transition takes place, parents are often ready and eager for help and support as they work to become more effective caregivers. Furthermore, many parents find Parents AnonymousSM a valuable resource following participation in structured, time-limited parent education classes.

Barriers to Change

Much is known about risk factors facing parents and children and about ways to develop the protective factors that can overcome the impact of risk factors. However, risk factors often present a barrier to obtaining support and taking advantage of educational opportunities. For example, the following challenges—often faced by families involved in public child welfare systems and the courts—also can be barriers to seeking and using the help that is available:

- ◆ Social and emotional isolation.
- ◆ Lack of assurance about what is "normal," perhaps leading to harsh self-judgment, self-protectiveness, or fear of speaking out.
- ◆ Family rules about keeping secrets and lack of trust in others.
- ◆ Lack of resources.
- ◆ High stress and frequent crisis situations.
- ◆ Lack of awareness of options for change, and lack of hope in the possibility of change.
- ◆ Exposure to people who inappropriately use power and control, which leads to a sense of helplessness and lack of trust in authority figures.
- ◆ Unmet needs from one's own childhood.

All Parents AnonymousSM programs are confidential unless the health or

safety of a child is at risk. Based on State law, Parents AnonymousSM facilitators are required to report suspected child abuse and neglect. It is the policy of Parents AnonymousSM that parents are always made aware of the reporting requirements when they attend their first Parents AnonymousSM group. In those situations serious enough to warrant a report, concerns are initially discussed with the parent involved, who is encouraged and supported in making a self-report. If he or she is unwilling or unable to do so, the facilitator will make the report and will continue to provide support to the parent. Suspected situations of child abuse and neglect may be identified when:

- ◆ A parent discloses a particular concern about his or her behavior.
- ◆ An emerging pattern of behavior leads to concern about a parent's ability to cope in a healthy way with the stresses of parenthood.
- ◆ A child in childcare exhibits signs of or verbally reports abuse or neglect.

The need to make a report provides an opportunity to promote the parent's role, responsibilities, and power in managing his or her interaction with the child by keeping the parent involved in the process as much as possible. The child's safety is always the primary concern, but parents are encouraged to participate in the report, including making a self-report when appropriate.

Positive Outcomes for Families

One goal of Parents AnonymousSM is to prevent or end juvenile delinquency and child abuse problems in families. To reach this goal, parents learn that it is a sign of strength to ask for help. They learn to use appropriate community resources and to build supportive, positive peer relationships for themselves and their children. They learn to establish reciprocal relationships, which helps them maintain positive peer associations and avoid overburdening the friends and family members who make up their personal support system. Parents gain a sense of their own power and use it to improve their ability to care for their children, avoid violent reactions to their children, protect them from violence inflicted by other adults, and use parenting practices that promote healthy outcomes for their children.

Benefits of Having a Parents AnonymousSM Group in Your Community

- ◆ Families will have free, immediate access to ongoing, long-term support and education based on their own identified need for help.
- ◆ Parents will learn new communication skills, discipline techniques, and effective parenting strategies.
- ◆ Parents, as their own agents of change, will develop a personal support system through a network of parents who assist each other with everyday needs.
- ◆ Parents will be in charge of their own growth and development and can participate for as long as they find it useful.
- ◆ Parents will have an opportunity to develop their leadership abilities and become stronger leaders in their homes and in the community.
- ◆ Children will have access to a program that is structured to develop self-esteem, teach cooperative play, and build confidence.
- ◆ Professionals in the fields of juvenile justice, health, education, and social service will gain an excellent, cost-effective ongoing resource for families with whom they work.
- ◆ Professionals who facilitate groups will gain training and experience in working in true partnership with families through the Parents AnonymousSM model of shared leadership.
- ◆ Communities will create effective programs for families in need, and volunteers will benefit from the opportunity to support and strengthen families through their efforts.
- ◆ Program participants, volunteers, and staff will have the opportunity to join with thousands of their peers across the country by participating in the national network and benefiting from training, materials, consultation, and numerous other activities designed to strengthen their community programs.

Demonstrated Effectiveness of Parents AnonymousSM

Research suggests that Parents AnonymousSM is a promising approach to strengthening families and preventing child abuse and neglect, although only a small number of studies have been conducted. Behavior Associates (1976) administered a one-time survey to 613 program participants and asked them a range of questions about their self-esteem, feelings about parenthood and children, satisfaction derived from parenthood, knowledge of child development, social contacts and use of community resources, frequency and severity of abuse, perceived benefits of membership in the program, and background characteristics.

Participants reported improved parenting behavior, an immediate reduction in physical abuse, a positive change in physical and verbal interactions with their children, improved self-esteem, increased social contacts, more help-

seeking behavior, and greater use of community facilities for childcare. Also, it was found that participants' expectations of children's behavior became more developmentally appropriate. The findings suggest that these positive results are more pronounced as time spent in the program increases.

A second study found that Parents AnonymousSM is a key element in service delivery plans for parents (Cohn, 1979). This study used data collected from case managers who were asked a variety of questions about their clients when they began and terminated services. Case managers were asked to rate their clients on a variety of parental attitudes, situations, and behaviors thought to be causally related to child abuse and neglect (e.g., parental stress, having a sense of the child as a person, appropriate behavior toward the child, and knowledge of child development). At service termination, case manager reports indicated that parents who participated in Parents AnonymousSM were more likely to improve on these measures than those who

Two Examples of Parents AnonymousSM Programs

Juanita Chávez, M.S.W., A.C.S.W.

Parents AnonymousSM Serving Hispanic Families in East Los Angeles

The majority of people who live in East Los Angeles are Mexican, and theirs is one of the oldest Mexican communities in the United States. Residents include recent immigrants (documented and undocumented) and members of families who have been in this country for two, three, four, or more generations. Many families settled in this area long ago and remained here, often with several generations living in the same community. In addition to the Mexican and Salvadoran residents residing in the immediate area, Salvadoran residents from downtown Los Angeles also use the culturally relevant services in East Los Angeles.

Some immigrant parents do not understand the laws regarding child protection and may become involved with child welfare agencies or law enforcement officials regarding their treatment of their children, particularly around the use of disciplinary practices. This creates resentment and a sense that their role as parents is being undermined by outside influences. Because some immigrants are undocumented, there is the additional fear that the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) will deport them if they become involved with public social service agencies or law enforcement.

Poverty is another issue facing many families in East Los Angeles. Parents who are undocumented immigrants often must work in jobs that pay less than the minimum wage. In many families, including those of immigrants and long-term residents, both parents are wage earners, but the family income remains at or below the poverty level. It is not unusual for older children to have jobs to help support their families. To stretch their resources, several generations often live together in one house.

Parents Anonymous, Inc., has joined with a social service agency located in East Los Angeles to provide a Parents AnonymousSM program there. Most of the agency's employees are bilingual and bicultural, and many are intimately familiar with the community.

The agency initially provided parent education classes, and staff members observed that some parents attended several sequential series of classes. After talking with them, the staff realized that these parents were using the classes to meet their long-term needs for support and continued growth as they made critical changes in their lives. Parents reported they preferred not to repeat parent education classes, because of the structure and fixed curriculum, but it was their only option for involvement with others.

In response to the needs of families in the community, a Spanish-speaking Parents AnonymousSM group was developed and based at the affiliated

social service agency, which is located near public transportation and has ample room for both the parent group and the children's program. The children's program is provided by agency staff. Parents Anonymous, Inc., provides training, program materials, outreach and referral, and ongoing support for the program.

Other agency staff refer parents they work with to the Parents AnonymousSM program. In addition, the agency uses culturally appropriate outreach and recruitment materials and distributes them in schools and the community. All materials clearly state that the Parents AnonymousSM program is conducted in Spanish.

Parents AnonymousSM Serving American Indian Families in Montana

Montana has seven reservations that are home to several different Indian tribes. Unemployment on these reservations is as high as 89 percent, with the result that most families live below the poverty level. To pursue greater job opportunities, parents often have to leave the reservation and their extended family, so the cost of remaining close to family members can be very high. Inadequate housing is another major issue facing many families. Sometimes, several generations of one family live in a small house that may not have indoor

Continued on next page

did not participate. The researchers did caution that parents may self-select into this self-help service (the study was not able to study the effects of motivation), but also suggest that the nature of the service helps parents resolve important problems.

OJJDP and Parents Anonymous, Inc., have recognized the need to conduct an updated, rigorous evaluation of the program. In 1999, OJJDP will sponsor a national evaluation of Parents AnonymousSM and build on the findings of past research. Important advances in evaluating

Parents AnonymousSM will include collecting information from multiple sources, conducting postprogram followups on participants, and using a comparison group.

Additional Relevant Research

Research on mutual assistance-shared leadership groups such as Parents AnonymousSM has revealed that such groups are a more effective intervention strategy than pure self-help or traditional therapy. For example, Yoak and

Chesler (1985) found that mutual assistance groups with shared leadership enjoyed greater longevity than groups led by a single individual, either a professional or a parent member. Borkman (1990), one of the major theorists and researchers in the area of mutual assistance groups, stated that increased access to and availability of self-help groups are important to promote for the public, especially for ethnic/racial minority groups and the economically disadvantaged.

plumbing, electricity, or other conveniences that are common outside the reservation. Given the high level of stress, it is not unusual for families to move from house to house because of intrafamilial conflicts. In addition, as in the general population, issues regarding substance abuse cause stress in the American Indian community.

This Parents AnonymousSM program began when a social worker, acting as a community organizer, identified key leaders in the community and invited them to a 2-day conference to develop responses to the needs of families on Montana reservations. She worked closely with tribal chiefs and elders and used her own familial contacts and those of her colleagues to build stronger connections between attendees. Because of her age and life experience, the community organizer is a respected elder, and this increases her credibility. Thus, development of the Parents AnonymousSM program gained significant benefit from the support of elders, chiefs, and tribal councils. More than 250 participants attended the conference and agreed to work together to create additional programs to help strengthen families.

Tribal councils are significantly involved in the development of local Parents AnonymousSM groups in Montana. For example, they help identify locations that will be most inviting for parents. By their involvement, they sanction Parents AnonymousSM groups in their communities. Other (mostly government) agencies that are working with

American Indian families are excellent referral sources. Parents AnonymousSM also helps families use other services. Because of these close relationships, staff cooperate with each other and with families to help coordinate available services and to ensure that Parents AnonymousSM continues to be recognized as a vital community resource.

On one reservation, a healthcare clinic sponsors the Parents AnonymousSM group through the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The group meets in a local Catholic church, but the facilitators are employees of the clinic. The program also provides meals for both parents and children. This use of the traditional "breaking of the bread" is an excellent strategy to recruit and retain families.

For American Indian families in Montana, cultural norms regarding elders as leaders sometimes create discomfort regarding formal identification of parent group members as parent leaders. Therefore, the Parents AnonymousSM model is implemented with a change in title for the parent group leader; while maintaining a high commitment to the principle of parent leadership, parent leaders may use the title "parent helper" instead.

The high level of poverty makes it hard to recruit volunteers for the program. Many members of the community are so focused on meeting their basic needs that they have little time or energy to commit to volunteer work. Mostly, agency staff and tribal council staff facilitate each group. Moreover, paid staff provide childcare and limited transportation to group meetings and to other family-oriented cultural events on the reservations.

Among the American Indian families living on reservations in Montana, cultural norms dictate a reluctance to seem too intrusive to another person by maintaining direct eye contact. To encourage parents to attend, and to lessen the need for constant eye contact, American Indian groups in Montana incorporate many creative activities into their meetings. For example, a group on the Blackfoot Reservation quilts and sews together while they discuss their children and families. This activity gives parents something to look at, lessens eye contact, and thereby avoids feelings of intrusiveness.

Also, as many people know each other so well, they are often already aware of the primary issues each family is facing and may know each other's family members. For example, a parent may make a brief statement, sometimes using only the first name of a child, "Georgie." Another parent may acknowledge they understand what the first parent is thinking and support them by saying, "Ah, that Georgie." Still another parent might join in the conversation and say, "My Michael is doing the same thing." Each member of the group may be fully aware of the concerns felt by the other parents. Then, a fourth parent might say, "When my child had this problem, this is what I did" Because the group meets in a very small community where people know a lot about each other's lives, they do not need to say much to each other to share their feelings and information.

Parents AnonymousSM and OJJDP: A Vital Partnership

Parents Anonymous, Inc., and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) began working together in 1994 to advance the Parents AnonymousSM model of shared leadership and mutual support in ethnically and culturally diverse settings throughout the country because strengthening families is the first principle of OJJDP's *Comprehensive Strategy for Serious,*

Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders (Wilson and Howell, 1993). Parents AnonymousSM has become a valuable partner in working toward that goal. The OJJDP publication *Family Life, Delinquency, and Crime: A Policymaker's Guide* (Wright and Wright, 1995) focuses on the following points:

- ◆ Positive parenting practices appear to act as buffers by preventing delinquent behavior and assisting adolescents involved in such behavior to avoid continued delinquency.

- ◆ Children raised in supportive, affectionate, and accepting homes are less likely to become deviant.
- ◆ Children who are rejected by their parents, grow up in homes with considerable conflict, are abused, or are inadequately supervised are at greatest risk of becoming delinquents.
- ◆ Children's behavior has a role in this dynamic, in that children who are troublesome are more likely to be rejected by parents, creating an escalating cycle that may lead to delinquency.



- ◆ The presence of a capable mother who is self-confident and affectionate and who has leadership skills provides a buffer against delinquency.

Research demonstrates that strengthening families is an essential component in the effort to prevent juvenile delinquency. By supporting the expansion of Parents AnonymousSM, OJJDP has helped ensure that many more families have access to this promising program. Through its partnership with OJJDP, Parents AnonymousSM has made important progress toward reducing the risk of juvenile delinquency by:

- ◆ Developing new groups that focus on serving families of color, and developing more than 40 new programs in the Parents AnonymousSM national network in such diverse settings as Head Start centers and prisons that focus on strengthening families and children.
- ◆ Providing intensive public awareness and outreach to thousands of parents, professionals, and volunteers through national and local print and electronic media.
- ◆ Conducting site visits, focus groups, written surveys, and intensive telephone interviews with successful programs serving families of color to identify the best practices for developing groups in diverse settings and publishing and disseminating a new manual, *Strategies for Best Practice*, that incorporates those findings.
- ◆ Increasing the ethnic and cultural diversity of the National Parent Leadership Team membership to ensure a stronger voice for parents who represent a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences.

- ◆ Creating a families-of-color task force consisting of parent and professional representatives from the national network who meet regularly to assist with planning, implementing, and evaluating programs and materials for families of color.

- ◆ Producing and distributing new publications such as a media bulletin and a program bulletin and publishing relevant articles in *Innovations* and *The Parent Networker*, newsletters distributed to thousands of parents, professionals, policymakers, and advocates throughout the country.

- ◆ Convening two Parents AnonymousSM national leadership conferences, an executive directors' meeting, and two regional conferences (in Georgia and Arizona)—all offering an intensive focus on promoting, maintaining, developing, and expanding Parents AnonymousSM programs.

- ◆ Developing closer working relationships with Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) programs and with local courts working with children and families.

In 1996, the University of Utah selected Parents AnonymousSM as a model family strengthening program to prevent juvenile delinquency. The program was highlighted through workshops and a plenary presentation at two national Strengthening America's Families conferences at which community representatives were encouraged to develop new local programs. In addition, Parents AnonymousSM is a member of OJJDP's National Training and Technical Assistance Center and a resource for sites participating in OJJDP initiatives.

Conclusion

Parents Anonymous, Inc., was created to provide training, technical assistance, and consultation to States, communities, agencies, and individuals with an interest in replicating the Parents AnonymousSM model in their local communities. Professionals who seek effective models for strengthening families and who believe in the power of parents to be their own agents for change have become involved in local programs. Thousands of these professionals have gained significant benefit from their work with parents, transforming their beliefs, perspectives, and direct practice methods of strengthening families by being more responsive and supportive to parents. These professionals regard their involvement in Parents AnonymousSM as one of their most challenging and rewarding experiences. Today, Parents Anonymous, Inc., continues to lead a dynamic national network of programs that was built on one mother's legacy and that reaches out to parents across America.

For Further Information

For further information, contact Parents Anonymous, Inc., 675 West Foothill Boulevard, Suite 220, Claremont, CA 91711, 909-621-6184, 909-625-6304 (fax), Parentsanon@MSN.com (e-mail), www.parentsanonymous-natl.org.

The following publications and resources are available for free (individual copies):

- ◆ *Innovations*. The Parents AnonymousSM organizational newsletter distributed throughout the national network and to other professionals, organizations, policymakers, and parents.
- ◆ *The Parent Networker*. A newsletter published twice each year by and for parents that is distributed to all parents participating in Parents AnonymousSM groups.
- ◆ *Strengthening Families in Partnership With Communities*. A general information brochure that provides an overview of Parents AnonymousSM principles and the program model (1997).

The following publications are available for \$15 each:

- ◆ *Parent Leadership: A Voice for Change*. A media bulletin designed for parents, professionals, and community volunteers who want to use the media and public speaking opportunities as a means to reach out to other parents, educate the community, and help shape policies affecting families and children (1997).
- ◆ *Parents Anonymous: The Model for Effective Parent Education*. A program bulletin to help professionals, volunteers, and parents use the program in the best way possible (1997).

The following publications are provided only to recognized Parents AnonymousSM programs:

- ◆ *I Am a Parents AnonymousSM Parent*. A handbook given to all parents who attend Parents AnonymousSM groups (1998).
- ◆ *Manual for Group Facilitators*. A manual used in training group facilitators that provides an indepth discussion of the program model, the roles of the facilitator and parent group leader, issues of group development, and clinical issues that may arise in a group (1993).

- ◆ *The Parent Group Leader*. A brief introduction to the role of the parent group leader (1993).
- ◆ *Strategies for Best Practice*. A useful manual for developing Parents AnonymousSM groups; it highlights strategies that respond to the unique strengths and needs of individual communities (1997).
- ◆ *Strengthening America's Families*. A video that captures the success stories of several Parents AnonymousSM families who have demonstrated enormous courage and tenacity to change their lives (1996).

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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

**The power of
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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.

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.

"I needed to decide how much I felt comfortable sharing so that my message would encourage other parents to ask for help but would still fit into the goals of CNN Presents."

Mickey, Parents AnonymousSM
National Parent Leadership
Team Member



"I realized while preparing for a live interview on 'The Today Show' that I had to focus my thoughts and practice what I wanted to say—and still, I knew they could ask me anything."

Elizabeth, Parent Leader



Identifying Parent Leaders

Talking with the media is an excellent opportunity for parents to build leadership skills, and the invitation to participate in this activity should be offered to many different parents. Organizations planning to partner with parent leaders to reach out to other parents, promote policies that support families, and increase public awareness about key issues, should strategically work with parents participating in local programs to ensure that they are aware of the possibilities for media outreach. Parents should be encouraged to identify issues of relevance to their expertise, experience and personal interests.

It is important to have multiple parent leaders who are prepared to speak publicly in order to effectively portray the many issues facing families. For example, parents managing concerns related to divorce and single parenting, recovering from substance abuse and any of the myriad other issues facing families will all have different but equally valuable perspectives.

In addition, having numerous parent leaders who want to speak publicly helps avoid over-working any one parent, allows many parents to experience the benefits of public speaking and helps ensure that parents who speak publicly will have experiences that are relevant to the particular topic under discussion. Periodic surveys of program participants regarding their interest in media outreach is an excellent strategy for recruiting parent leaders for this role. This encourages a broader number of parents to participate in such activities, resulting in more diverse ethnic, cultural and gender representation.

Issues to Consider

Before taking on this public role, there are issues that are important for both parents and professionals to consider. A parent's personal growth and life situation play a critical role in determining readiness to speak publicly about sensitive personal issues and to manage the attention resulting from media exposure. Parents who have achieved stability in their lives—yet remain emotionally connected to the issues that led them to use specific social services—are very effective public speakers. This balance between the passion of their struggle and the wisdom of hindsight is a valuable combination.

However, parents who are in the midst of crises or are still trying to manage stressful issues may be putting themselves and their families under even greater stress. It is essential for program staff and parent leaders to discuss the parents' current circumstances, the present family situation and how media exposure might impact them before deciding to talk with the media.

Talk with parent leaders about...

- **The level of public exposure they are comfortable with concerning the use of their name, face, voice and personal story.** This will establish what form of media is best for the parent. Parents may be comfortable talking with a newspaper reporter, but may have more serious concerns if the presentation is to a local or national TV station in which their face is exposed to anyone turning on the television. Specific details, such as descriptive 'labels' that might be used to describe parents or their role, should be discussed in advance. Often, for example, a descriptive caption will appear on a screen under a talk show guest's face. Parents may not want to be introduced or referred to as a "Child Abuser." Once parents decide on the extent of their exposure in a particular medium, it is important for the Parents AnonymousSM professional to clearly negotiate and agree upon this with the media decision makers ahead of time.

- *The effect their public exposure may have on children, parents, siblings and other significant individuals.* Parents may be ready to share their life stories in reaching out to help other parents, but it is important to remember that the consequences of such exposure may affect themselves and their families. Parents should consult with family members before making this decision, and ask their children for permission to talk about them publicly. Parents, children, friends, colleagues and school mates will likely hear or read the story. Parents may receive support and encouragement from family and friends, or may find that their real life story has created division and resistance. A valuable guideline for parents is to focus comments on their individual stories with minimal information about others in the family, and with care not to infringe upon the right to privacy of other family members.

Parents may be ready to share their life stories ... but it is important to remember that the consequences of such exposure may affect themselves and their families.

- *The topics that are a good fit for their personal experiences and their level of comfort in disclosing specific details about their lives.* Parents may decide to publicize only specific aspects of their life stories. They may believe that specific audiences or types of parents will receive the most benefit from their information and choose to participate in media opportunities that will directly impact that group. Parents should always remember that they make the final decision about what and how much to say.

Once a parent decides to take on a public role, program staff should offer ample preparation, orientation and support. Parents will need information about how the media works and general guidelines about public speaking. This advance preparation can help parents develop the skills necessary for managing media appearances. Working together as a team will help to ensure success.

Strategic Media Relations

Working with the media is a two-way street. Sometimes the media will initiate contact. Other times the organization will initiate media activities in order to inform the community about important issues and to reach out to parents who may benefit from programs and services. Press releases, press conferences, letters and calls to editors can all result in opportunities to tell the successful benefits of the program to others. When determining the best course of action, consider the following:

- *Choose the media that best fits your story.* Detailed information may be best served by the print media; a dramatic visual opportunity, like sharing a personal story, may be better suited to television.
- *Put yourself in their place.* Successful dealings with the media require that we look at issues from the point of view of the media, not our own. In other words, we must ask ourselves: Does the issue have emotional appeal? Will the audience find it interesting? It is up to you to "package" the information correctly, making it as attractive and useful to the media as you can.
- *Analyze your targeted audience.* Who is your audience and what outlets reach them? Be sure to consider print and electronic media targeted to specific cultural audiences, such as a Spanish-language radio station for outreach to Latino families.
- *How timely is the story?* Is it immediate, responding, for example, to a public policy issue that calls for quick action? Or does your story have a shelf-life? Can you piggyback your story to breaking news? If it is a story about Parents AnonymousSM programs in general and the benefits that can be achieved when parents participate, is it one that could be effective anytime?

Avenues for Speaking Out

- *News and magazine programs on television and radio.*
- *News feature stories, advice columns and letters to the editor in newspapers and magazines.*
- *Testimony before a legislative or other policy-making body.*
- *Training for professionals or other parent leaders.*
- *Speeches at public meetings such as United Way rallies and Child Abuse Prevention Month events.*
- *Workshops or presentations at professional conferences.*
- *Participation in focus groups and teleconferences.*
- *Use of electronic communication such as the Internet or World Wide Web.*
- *Placement of ads on billboards and in public transit systems.*
- *Articles in newsletters, like Parents Anonymous, Inc.'s The Parent Networker, or in newsletters by other family-oriented organizations.*

Often Asked Questions

❖ How did you learn about Parents AnonymousSM?

❖ What is unique about the Parents AnonymousSM program?

❖ How and why is Parents AnonymousSM effective in improving parent/child relationships?

❖ How long has Parents AnonymousSM been in existence?

❖ How did you decide to get involved in the program?

❖ What would you say to other parents who feel they are losing control and may need help?

❖ What happens in a Parents AnonymousSM group?

❖ What if a member is hurting their child and the group finds out?

❖ What is the Parents AnonymousSM Children's Program?

❖ How can I find Parents AnonymousSM if I am a parent and want to attend a group?

❖ How can I volunteer my time or donate to Parents AnonymousSM?

- **Build relationships with key gatekeepers.** It is important for the organization's staff to build relationships with local media. For example, the editorial page editor at your local newspaper and the assignment editor at your local television or radio station are valuable contacts for getting the word out about your programs.

Good media relations can be enhanced by doing the following:

- Ask a media professional to serve in an advisory capacity to your organization.
- Respond immediately and assertively to insensitive or inaccurate media coverage of child and family issues.
- Commend editors and reporters when stories about child abuse and other family issues are thoughtful and educational.
- Offer to be a resource on local issues related to preventing child abuse and neglect, and strengthening families.
- Never, never lie to the media. A "temporary" lie will be permanently remembered by your interviewer.
- Always give the media something—a Parents AnonymousSM brochure, statistics, general information about child abuse and neglect, or a parent's personal story with the positive outcome.

When the media calls

Organizations often receive calls from representatives of the media seeking contact with a parent leader for a story or article they are working on. When such requests are received, the staff member should first explore:

- The main purpose of the news or feature story.
- The role of the parent leader and the level of disclosure required.

- The key issues to be raised.
- The size and focus of the audience to be addressed.
- The format and scope of the opportunity (panel discussion, question/answer, etc.).
- Other individuals and/or organizations that may be involved or interviewed.
- The need for staff to participate, debate or answer questions on broader program issues.
- The reporter's deadline as well as her name, affiliation and telephone number where she can be reached within the hour.

Based on the responses to these issues, the staff person will determine whether the proposal is a good fit for the organization. If so, the next step is to identify parent leaders who may want to participate and have expertise in the topic being addressed. Cooperation, candor and responsiveness are the best tools to use when cultivating relationships with media.

Organizations can present themselves and parent leaders most effectively by designating a primary contact person for their organization who will respond to media inquiries consistently, accurately and in a timely fashion.

Pre-Interview Negotiations

Discuss and set forth the degree of privacy required. Privacy limitations should be



addressed prior to agreeing to an interview because some of these ground rules may be unacceptable to various representatives of the media and may prohibit reaching agreement. For all types of media, it is often possible to negotiate the use of a pseudonym or first name only identity. Staff should involve the parent leader in these discussions. In any event, it is important to ensure that privacy is protected to the extent that is acceptable to the parent, while always remaining aware that working with the media automatically involves some loss of privacy.

Negotiate for tangible support in the form of reimbursement for travel, child care, lost wages and other costs, as well as for stipends in recognition of the time and expertise the parent is providing. Financial support is important in helping to ensure that parents are able to participate in media activities. Guidelines should be established for reimbursing expenses and paying stipends depending on the situation.

Set the ground rules for the interview. State at the beginning of a media interaction that it is OK to ask the parent any reasonable question, excluding any areas the parent has specifically identified as off limits. It is equally OK for the parent to politely decline to answer any particular question. Be sure to clearly understand the topic of the story and the intended use of the program perspective. These ground rules can help reduce the awkwardness and discomfort some parents and media people may feel around each other as they discuss very serious personal issues.

Pre-Interview Preparations: Working Together

Prepare, prepare, prepare. The parent leader and staff person should rehearse by asking each other impromptu questions before the interview. Have the parent leader think through the message to be communicated and the extent to which he/she is willing to share personal information.

It is always important to answer questions in complete sentences that can stand alone and are not misleading. However, realize that once something is said there is often no control over the media's use of the informa-

tion and, to some degree, the context in which the information is shared. For example, a sound byte on radio or TV news may not give the full perspective of a statement because it has been taken out of the broader context. The use of quotations, in either print or electronic media, can create varied meanings, depending upon the story topic and the way in which the quotations are used. The best defense against being misquoted is to plan the message ahead of time and rehearse possible responses to anticipated questions (see page 4).

Define key messages to be sure that, even in a limited time frame, there is the opportunity to say the most important things.

Anticipate difficult questions and come prepared with responses. It is OK to respond that this is not an area to be discussed or it is one for which there is no answer at this time. If the answer to a question is unknown, it is perfectly acceptable to say so or to refer to someone else. If interviewing for print, offer to find out the information and get back to the reporter.

Always assume anything said to a representative of the media is "on the record." It is the job of any media representative to "flush out" a story. By being likable, friendly and interested in what is said, interviewers may create a false sense of security, causing parent leaders to reveal confidential information. Always remember that the reporter is a microphone to the world. And anything said may end up being publicized.

Be aware that the story, or the headlines or promotionals for it, may be portrayed in a more dramatic way than expected. News organizations make a profit by producing stories that attract audiences and advertisers and it is often the sensational story that does this best.

During the Interview

Accompany parents to all media activities and be available to provide the organizational perspective. The best outcomes are achieved when parents speak from their

Interviewee Bill of Rights

In all media interviews you have the right:

1. To know who is interviewing you and whom he or she represents.
2. To have total agreement by both parties of the ground rules, no matter how hastily arranged.
3. To be treated courteously. The questions can be tough, but the reporter's demeanor should not be abusive.
4. Not to be physically threatened or impaired by such things as television lights too close or microphones shoved in your face.
5. To know the general content, subject or thrust of the interview so you have time to research the appropriate information.
6. To know if there are other guests appearing with you on a talk or panel show and what the nature of their role will be.
7. To make your own audio or videotape of the interview, or be able to obtain a complete tape from the station.
8. To make sure that no material is recorded on audio or videotape unless you are told you are being recorded. The "pre-interview discussions," talk between commercials or after show chit-chat cannot be used on the air unless you approve.
9. To have an accurate on-air introduction that will put the interview in the proper perspective.
10. In the film or tape editing, to have the basic intent and flavor of your answers come through.

experience about their own progress, and professionals speak about the Parents AnonymousSM program and general parent and child issues. This use of the shared leadership approach successfully reaches out to parents who may wish to seek assistance, and encourages professionals to make referrals and become more familiar with Parents AnonymousSM as an important resource in their community.

Say what is most important, first. By simply responding to questions, there may not be an opportunity to convey the message that is most important. So either volunteer the information, or fit it into a response as soon as possible. For example, if the goal is to say there are ten weekly Parents AnonymousSM groups located in the local community, and the question is never asked, the information might be folded into a response as follows:

Question: Why did you join Parents AnonymousSM?

Answer: "I joined to gain support and skills to improve my parenting ability. It was easy to find a Parents AnonymousSM group because there are ten different groups that

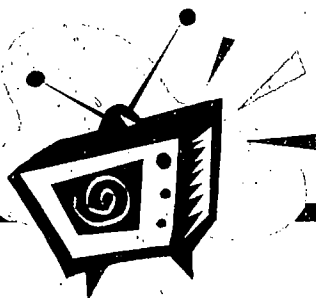
meet weekly in our community. We hope other parents with similar needs will call Parents AnonymousSM and attend one of our groups."

Choose words carefully. Avoid the use of connotations, jargon, slang, flippant remarks, and hostile responses. Help others hear the important message you want to share by avoiding and helping parent leaders avoid anger or defense-provoking language and tones. It is often hard to feel comfortable speaking with or hearing from parents when the parent's anger and frustration at policies or past experiences surface, creating an adversarial atmosphere. However, when parents speak passionately about issues of personal importance to them, it can be very effective.

Speak to what is specifically known. Don't feel the need to volunteer information just to fill in uncomfortable silences. This is a strategy interviewers often use to elicit additional information. Along those same lines, do not feel the need to answer hypothetical questions some interviewers pose to elicit comments that fit their story or are designed to address another situation.

Maintain a focus on the positive message to be delivered. Sometimes an audience member or even the interviewer will want to focus on a single controversial issue, such as the pros and cons of spanking, religious education for children, or welfare costs. An entire interview can be lost debating these issues. Remember that Parents AnonymousSM is interested in helping parents make wise and healthy choices for themselves and their children. Therefore, it is more important to emphasize the exciting success of parents attending Parents AnonymousSM and the hope Parents AnonymousSM offers other parents in need. And in reality, it is unlikely any single discussion will change someone else's perspective, so these debates can be an unproductive use of your time.

Share only the information that is open to editing and interpretation by others. There is a great potential to lose control of the message as it is edited to fit space or time constraints of the news. Even the most sup-



Dressing for the Small Screen

- ❖ **Wear attractive, yet comfortable clothing on camera.** You may be sitting one hour or longer.
- ❖ **Avoid wearing clothes with small patterns.** Tiny checks, herringbone and other detailed line patterns cause an undesirable flashing effect on television called a "moire effect."
- ❖ **Avoid wearing all white, all black or all red.** Mid-range colors are your best bet. Under the bright lights in the studio, white or highly reflective surfaces can cause distracting "hot spots" on the screen.
- ❖ **Avoid wearing decorative accessories such as large necklaces, pins or other jewelry.** Such items may cause distracting glares, interfere with the use of microphones that clip on your jacket or blouse, or, worst of all, distract from your message.
- ❖ **Apply bolder makeup.** In order to have a normal, healthy appearance in which facial features are distinct and enhanced, makeup for television is a little more exaggerated than regular daytime wear. If possible, you may want to consult with the studio's makeup department before a taping.

portive and helpful media representatives can make errors rushing to meet tight deadlines.

Include a call to action. In educating and informing the general public or policy makers or in reaching out to other parents, the effort always should include a call to action. After describing the impact of the issue, on parents and/or on the broader community, ask your audience to take action. Describe the action and list the benefit of acting. This may involve seeking passage of particular legislation or policies, for example. Or, ask parents to examine their parenting skills and to ask for help if they wish to have support and assistance in becoming the best parents they can be. In addition, all community members can be invited to contribute their volunteer time and other resources to support critical programs in their community.

After the Interview

Be available for parents immediately following the media event. This will not only provide important emotional support, it will allow for debriefing and discussion of any successes or concerns resulting from the media event. This debriefing should take place as soon as possible following the experience, and follow-up contact should continue for at least three to four weeks afterward. This ongoing support is important, and when parents are new to this role, it may need to occur more frequently and over a longer period of time.

Staff persons will want to track the impact of the media event to measure its effectiveness in reaching the intended audiences.

- Did parents contact your organization after the interview was printed or aired?
- Did new parents join your Parents AnonymousSM group(s)?
- Did professionals refer parents to Parents AnonymousSM?
- Did organizations request training to host a Parents AnonymousSM group as a result of the media activity?

Tracking responses to these questions can help you decide which media opportunities will achieve the results you want.

As part of your follow-up activities, send the media representative a brief thank you note and include additional information if necessary. Also, remind print media reporters to include the "SM" each time they mention Parents AnonymousSM in their article

The Parents AnonymousSM story is one of hope, help, strength, and support. For this reason, Parents AnonymousSM parents and staff have been diligently sought out over the years. When engaging in public awareness, it is important to acknowledge the grim realities of child abuse and neglect, but not without stressing that Parents AnonymousSM offers hope. Leave the audience with the assurance that individuals can successfully change their lives. Remind them that it is a sign of strength to ask for help.

Parents who have the courage to share their expertise and life experiences are giving a valuable gift to others, and are helping to make their community a better place. Parents can speak with confidence because they are the greatest experts regarding their personal experiences. We at Parents AnonymousSM celebrate and respect their courage, care and concern for others.



On-camera Interview Tips



- *Don't be surprised if things are unorganized when you reach the station. The glamour and calm of TV appears on the screen and definitely not backstage; don't let it "throw" you.*
- *Be aware of your body language. Communicate comfort and confidence by sitting forward in the chair with both feet on the floor. Do not try to "retreat" from the situation by sitting back in the chair.*
- *Exude warmth by smiling at appropriate times.*
- *Look directly at the interviewer; the camera will find you.*
- *Use your hands. If you are comfortable with hand gestures, make them occasionally. If not, rest your hands in your lap and change hand positions every few minutes.*
- *Don't use notes or bring papers on camera.*
- *Speak clearly and avoid jargon. Avoid using the expressions "uh" and "you know." If you tend to speak rapidly, speak and move slightly more slowly than you normally do. Pause and think before answering.*
- *Use "Parents AnonymousSM" repeatedly. Instead of saying "we," "our," or "I," say "Parents AnonymousSM."*
- *Never refer to Parents AnonymousSM as "PA."*
- *Assume you are always on camera.*
- *Most importantly, be yourself!*

"I joined a Parents AnonymousSM group 12 years ago and now serve as the Chair of the Board of Directors of Parents Anonymous, Inc. One of my greatest pleasures is 'giving back' some of the help I received. Several years ago, my entire family and I made a conscious decision to share our story in our local newspaper. We were so proud when many people who didn't even know us called to ask where they could find a Parents AnonymousSM group. I knew I had succeeded when strangers stopped me on the street to tell me that my honesty and openness inspired them to reach out for help."

Freddie Gardner
Parent Leader &
Chair, Board of Directors,
Parents Anonymous, Inc.

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Differences Between Print & Broadcast Media

NEWSPAPERS

- Tend to carry hard news stories, where the five "Ws" (what, when, where, why and how) are in the first paragraph (the "lead").
- Reporter tries to take an "objective," third person stance.
- Deadlines are tight—usually less than a week.
- Conduct more investigative journalism.

Generally, newspaper reporters like to be called early in the week and early in the morning, but ask your contacts about the best time to reach them.

MAGAZINES

- Tend to carry soft news ("happy news"), human interest stories and service pieces.
- Lead opens the story with a person, an anecdote, a set scene or (rarely) dialogue. The five "Ws" are spread out throughout the article.
- More literary approach to subject, usually the reporter takes a point of view.
- Deadlines are longer—from one to three months.

Since editorial deadlines for magazines are usually two to three months in advance of publication date, a news release is not always the most effective way to pitch a story idea. A letter or brief phone call is better.

TELEVISION

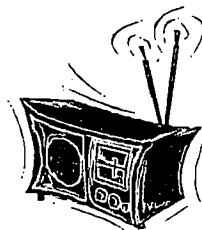
- Good visuals and sound are vital elements for broadcast media.
- Time is critical—air time is divided into short segments for various different topics.
- Deadlines are very short—usually one or two days.
- Stories are presented in conversational language.

When you're working with television, think visually. Whenever possible, send photos to assignment editors at TV stations, so they will know your story is visually appealing.

RADIO

- Sounds of an event are important for radio.
- Time is critical—air time is divided into short segments for various different topics.
- Deadlines are short—usually one to two days.
- Stories are presented in conversational language.

When scheduling interviews, keep in mind that radio interviews can often be taped over the phone.



Parents Anonymous, Inc.

Parents Anonymous, Inc. was founded in 1970 through the extraordinary efforts of a courageous mother seeking help for her abuse problems. Working in partnership with her social worker, Jolly K. launched a national movement to bring help, support, strength, and hope to millions of families all across America. As the nation's oldest child abuse prevention program dedicated to strengthening families, Parents Anonymous, Inc. leads a diverse and dynamic national network of hundreds of community-based Parents AnonymousSM programs supported by the efforts of thousands of committed volunteers to strengthen families in partnership with their community. Free weekly on-going Parents AnonymousSM groups are co-led by parents and professionally trained facilitators. Free child care is provided and, depending upon the group, meetings are conducted in English or the languages spoken by the families. Groups provide a safe, supportive setting for parents to come together to learn new skills, transform their attitudes and behaviors, and create long-term positive changes in their lives. Additionally, Parents AnonymousSM groups foster the development of leadership skills among participants.

National research has definitively confirmed the effectiveness of Parents AnonymousSM in diminishing the risk factors while increasing the resiliency of families, resulting in the prevention of child abuse and the promotion of positive parenting strategies. Parent participants 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.

Interested in starting a Parents AnonymousSM group or want more information? Call (909) 621-6184 or visit our web site, www.parentsanonymous-natl.org

Parents Anonymous: The Model For Effective Parent Education

This bulletin will assist professionals who work with families, particularly those in the fields of child welfare, juvenile justice, health and education, to better understand the tremendous success of the Parents Anonymous model in helping to strengthen parents so they can provide safe and caring homes for their children. Each week, 25,000 parents and children participate in 2,300 Parents Anonymous groups that meet in diverse communities throughout the country. National research has demonstrated the effectiveness of Parents Anonymous groups as community-based resources for parents who need education and support in order to create positive long-term change for their families.

All parents have the capacity for positive change and a critical factor in their change process is the opportunity to learn and practice new skills in a supportive environment. The Parents Anonymous model embodies philosophically and programmatically the most important dynamics of

mutual support and adult learning as applied to parent education. In this bulletin, we will discuss some of these dynamics to provide insight into the tremendous success achieved by parents participating in Parents Anonymous groups throughout the country.

Professionals working with families in many different arenas are involved in helping parents respond to numerous problems and concerns. Often, when additional help is needed, the first resource to which a parent is referred will be a parenting class. Most communities offer such classes. They are time-limited, provide a structured agenda and are a useful resource for many parents. However, adults learn in unique ways and parents under stress have specific learning needs. A brief, skill-building class will not provide parents who have serious concerns with the best context or enough time to deal with their underlying emotional issues, learn through trial and error and achieve lasting behav-

Our Mission:

Parents Anonymous, Inc. is a national organization that promotes mutual support and parent leadership in order to build and support strong, safe families.

Parents in Parents Anonymous groups participate in discussions related to communication, discipline, child development, parental roles, effective strategies for helping children achieve independence and self control, and methods for successfully managing the every day stresses of parenting.



ioral changes to become nurturing parents.

Professionals, members of the courts, friends and family members can support parents by encouraging them to attend Parents Anonymous groups in their local community whenever help is needed. In addition to learning extensive new skills to enhance their parenting ability, group members provide critical on-going support to each other in making significant, long-term changes. When necessary, courts mandate parents to attend parenting classes. Parents Anonymous is an excellent resource for parents who are mandated to seek help. The mutual support environment of a Parents Anonymous group has been proven effective in reducing resistance and breaking through denial of the need for change.

Since 1970, Parents Anonymous has provided effective community based parent education and support groups that promote positive growth in the lives of families and help provide the skills and tools parents need in order to change their lives. Parents Anonymous groups with a strength-based model of shared leadership and mutual support are open to any parent whatever the age of their children or their current circumstances. Parents Anonymous groups are on-going and open-ended, so parents can join at any time and participate as long as neces-

sary. Parents in Parents Anonymous groups discuss communication, discipline, child development, parental roles, effective strategies for helping children achieve independence and self control, methods for successfully dealing with the every day stresses of parenting and any other issues that impact their parenting behavior. To reinforce and solidify their new skills, parents in a Parents Anonymous group practice new behaviors at home and discuss the results at the group each week. New experiences and information are based on parents' real life examples as well as those of others in the group. Attitudes dramatically change and form the basis for integrating new knowledge and skills, so parents learn to successfully foster the healthy growth and development of their children.

Parents learn through multiple avenues and Parents Anonymous helps parents learn in a holistic way. For example, we know that learning is both cognitive and affective. In other words, we learn cognitively, or intellectually, as in memorizing strategies for coping with stress. We also learn affectively, or through our emotions, as in learning what it actually feels like to maintain self-control in a high-stress situation. Most parent education models focus on cognitive learning and supply parents with large amounts of valuable information and suggested parenting meth-

ods. However, parents must also learn affectively in order to fully utilize new skills and create long-term change in their behavior. How can parents who don't trust others become trustworthy themselves? How can parents who have never known a sense of security and safety ensure their children's safety and well-being? Through Parents Anonymous, parents have an opportunity to experience the safety and caring of the group, to be trusted and to know others who are trustworthy, to take charge of their lives and their families while knowing that the group members will be available to support them as needed. In this setting, new behaviors are learned and incorporated into daily life. Through the mutual support of the Parents Anonymous group, parents grow stronger by developing new self-images that are positive, capable and responsible.

Creating An Effective Environment for Change

Becoming a parent is a major developmental transition for anyone. In an ideal world, all young people would grow up fully prepared to be loving and responsible parents to their own children, based on their own childhood experiences, the positive role models in their lives and the long term support and help of their family and friends. Unfortunately, the reality

of many lives is very different. We believe most parents love their children and want to provide caring homes for them. However, when many adults become parents, they are still struggling to reconcile issues related to their own development. Parents may be so overwhelmed with their own unmet needs that they are unable to focus as much as necessary on meeting their children's needs. If the self-image of a parent is still that of being a child to their own parent, needing approval and support and acceptance, it is unlikely that information about positive parenting techniques will elicit significant change. If anything, parents may feel anger, grief and loss about their own childhoods as they learn more about what is necessary for the well-being of children. Parents with many unmet needs of their own may not be motivated to attend a parenting class so they can learn how to help their children. They may need to understand the benefits to their own lives in order to participate.

Sometimes parents must have a safe and supportive place to 'unload excess baggage' from their own life experiences so their self-image can become more focused on their role as parents of their children and the joys and responsibilities inherent in that role. Once that transition takes place, parents are often ready and eager for help and support as they work to

"I've been to parenting classes before, but when I found Parents Anonymous, I finally got the information and support I needed. Now, my kids are happier and I'm a better parent."

— Mickey, Parents Anonymous parent, Oregon

"We cannot teach another person directly; we can only facilitate his learning."

— Carl R. Rogers

become more effective care-givers. Sometimes, a referral to structured parent education classes may be worse than ineffective. If the parent attends the class and does not gain the expertise and help which he or she is seeking, the parent is likely to come away from the experience with a sense of failure and a reluctance to make future attempts to change.

Barriers to Change

Much is known about risk factors facing parents and children throughout our country and about developing resiliency to overcome the impact of these factors. While education and support increase resiliency, the risk factors often present a barrier to gaining support and taking advantage of educational opportunities. For example, the following challenges, often faced by families involved in public child welfare systems and the courts, are also barriers to seeking and using the help that is available:

- ✓ Social and emotional isolation
- ✓ Lack of assurance about what is 'normal,' perhaps leading to harsh self-judgment, self-protectiveness, or fear of speaking out
- ✓ Family rules about keeping secrets and lack of trust in others
- ✓ Lack of resources

- ✓ High stress and frequent crisis situations
- ✓ Lack of awareness of options for change and lack of hope in the possibility of change
- ✓ Exposure to inappropriate emotional expressions and misdirected targets, for example, blaming those in authority when hoped for results are not achieved
- ✓ Unmet needs from one's own childhood

Parents in Parents Anonymous groups all across America are successfully transcending these barriers, changing their lives and giving their children a family life that will positively impact, not only their own childhood development, but their ability to model healthy parenting styles for their children. In many Native American Parents Anonymous groups, group members believe their positive changes will impact their families for at least the next seven generations. We believe they are right.

Essential Components of Mutual Support and Adult Learning

Multiple levels of learning are essential in order to create long-term behavioral change. At first, new information is heard and understood.

Parenting skills and behaviors are discussed and the rationale for their use is explained. This takes place in Parents Anonymous groups and in almost any parent education program and is always valuable. Second, these new skills and behaviors are put into practice in the parent's daily life. This helps parents identify the more subtle issues involved in any new behavior and usually leads to the need for clarification and additional information. In a Parents Anonymous group, parents have the opportunity to learn and practice new behaviors and to share the results with other group members each week in order to refine their skills.

Third, a new skill or behavior becomes fully incorporated into the parent's repertoire and the learner becomes the teacher as the parent shares the information with other parents who then begin to practice in their own families. The strong focus on mutual support and parent leadership in a Parents Anonymous group ensures that all parents have opportunities to give help as well as to get help. Help within the group is reciprocal, so on any given week in a Parents Anonymous group, a parent might hear some information for the first time, de-brief their experiences in trying out other new skills at home, and help other parents learn skills they have already mastered. By reach-

ing out and helping others, parents develop competencies which shape their own personal change. The act of helping others creates a sense of success and validation and impacts the helper dramatically. The opportunity to help others is one of the most enriching aspects of the Parents Anonymous group model. The resulting growth in confidence, individual leadership, self-esteem and feelings of competency helps pave the way for overcoming the challenges parents face when they make lasting, positive changes in their lives.

There are three critical components for effective parent education. These components - the parent, the group and the facilitator - are all key aspects of the Parents Anonymous model of mutual support and shared leadership. Adults have a unique style of

National research confirms the effectiveness of Parents Anonymous to diminish 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 Anonymous, parents develop personal competencies, increase their ability to deal with stress, reduce their social isolation, enhance their self-esteem, and significantly expand their knowledge of child development. In comparison to other intervention strategies, a national study found that Parents Anonymous had a more significant impact on alleviating child abuse and neglect than parent education classes and individual therapy. Furthermore, national research on Parents Anonymous children's programs revealed significant improvements in children's self-esteem, behavior and social interaction skills.

"Conventional parent education, which brings helpful child-rearing information to many middle-class parents, is often quite irrelevant to socially isolated and otherwise seriously disadvantaged parents. The mother who needs the most help with parenting is unlikely to find the information offered by most parenting classes very useful."

Within Our Reach
by Lisbeth Schorr

Parents Anonymous was selected as a "Model Family Strengthening Program to Prevent Juvenile Delinquency" in an extensive national survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.



learning that relates to emotional and intellectual development and the need for support. The literature on adult learning styles and mutual support provides significant insights into the strategies that most effectively help parents learn new behaviors. The discussion that follows will set forth a framework for understanding the intersection of the principles of mutual support and adult learning through a presentation of the effective strategies that are the foundation of the Parents Anonymous group model. Given that the issue of parenting and protecting children is such a critical one, it is imperative that any resources utilized by parents incorporate effective strategies that lead to long-term, significant behavioral change.



Parents are the essential element in this discussion. All parent education endeavors must fully respect and respond to the needs of parents and their families. In the Parents Anonymous model of shared leadership, parents help lead groups, plan new program development, volunteer on telephone hotlines, serve on boards and are full partners in all aspects of planning, implementing and evaluating programs. The parent's role in directing their own learning is evident

in Parents Anonymous as highlighted below:

■ **Parents determine their own learning goals and participate actively in the learning process.**

Parents attending a Parents Anonymous group set their own goals for the changes they need to make in order to have the kind of home they envision for themselves and their children. Each parent may have different individual goals, but the basic goal of Parent Anonymous is that all children have safe, caring homes and that their parents provide the most positive family experience they can. Because there are no curriculum goals or specified learning levels within a given period of time, the participants in Parents Anonymous not only set their own goals but they set their own time line and benchmarks for achieving those goals.

Parents attending Parents Anonymous groups are aware of their need to learn new behaviors, and to change the way they and their families are functioning. Even those parents who begin to attend through a court order or other mandate generally report that within a few weeks they value their involvement in the group and continue to attend, beyond the period of time initially required of them. Because a Parents Anonymous group responds

to the individual interests of each parent at any given group meeting, parents always have an opportunity to focus the attention of the group on the area of greatest need and interest to them at that time. This allows the parents to take advantage of "teachable moments" to access critical information and help when they most need it.

■ **Parents share the responsibility for planning and operating the group and therefore have a feeling of commitment to it.**

Parents attending a Parents Anonymous group commonly set the agenda at the beginning of each meeting and all participants share in planning. In addition, parents take on multiple roles to maintain the operation of the Parents Anonymous group, such as parent group leader, time keeper, record keeper, greeter for new members, as well as multiple tasks that are often shared among the members of the group. Standard phrases within Parents Anonymous such as "the parents own the group" or "trust the group" create a sense of community and ownership.

■ **The learning process is related to and makes use of the experience of each parent.**

Because the life experience of the participants is most often the topic under

discussion in a Parents Anonymous group, the learning process is not only related to but is based on the experience of the learners. Therefore, group members receive validation and encouragement as they share with and learn from each other. Parents give each other supportive feedback and learn from each other's experiences.

■ **Parents have a sense of progress toward their goals.**

Members of a Parents Anonymous group share their goals with one another—as well as their hopes and dreams—and grow to genuinely care about the progress made by others.

Parents join Parents Anonymous groups for multiple reasons...

- ▲ They are seeking help because they want to change their behavior toward their children. This can range from parents who are feeling too much stress to parents who have harmed or fear they might harm their children.
- ▲ They are mandated by a court order or a Child Protective Services agreement to attend.
- ▲ A family member or a friend encouraged them to attend.
- ▲ A social worker, teacher, health care provider, day care worker, religious leader or other individual encouraged them to attend.
- ▲ They want help, information and support in managing specific behavioral, health or other issues facing their family.

"I realized I had a problem and, at Parents Anonymous, I was able to gain the strength I needed to grow and change."
—Elizabeth, Parents Anonymous parent, Texas

The Parents Anonymous group provides a safe opportunity in a non-judgmental setting for parents to experiment with different styles, receive feedback about their communication and interactions with others, and discuss the outcomes of their behavioral changes.



When parents feel discouraged, other members of the group remind them of the positive steps they have taken. Parents celebrate each other's progress and encourage continued success.

■ ***The environment is characterized by mutual trust and respect, mutual helpfulness, freedom of expression, physical comfort and acceptance of differences.***

Mutual trust and respect, mutual support, freedom of expression and acceptance of differences are integral to the Parents Anonymous model. These concepts are modeled each week as parents have opportunities to discuss issues and concerns with each other and with the facilitator, and as they learn that they can express their fears, rage and other feelings without shame or a fear of blame. Parents know they are always accepted and supported, even when their behaviors are not acceptable. Trust is an important aspect of all Parents Anonymous groups and confidentiality is carefully guarded by the members, the parent group leader and the facilitator. Parents Anonymous groups meet in settings that are private and comfortable, and parents have the freedom to create as much physical comfort as possible within the group.



Groups are highly effective instruments for helping parents change and grow. The adult education literature is very clear regarding the significant value of a group and gives insight into the tremendous success of Parents Anonymous groups in supporting parents as they create significant positive changes that lead to safe and caring families for children and youth. The following aspects of a group are critical components for successful parent growth and change.

■ ***The group provides an opportunity for parents to practice changed behavior without threat or punishment.***

When individuals change behavior, they often face resistance in many arenas because new behavior forces a restructuring of personal interactions. New behaviors around communication, interpersonal relationships, use of self and use of power in interactions may require many attempts before the right fit is achieved for each individual. The Parents Anonymous group provides a safe opportunity in a non-judgmental setting for parents to experiment with different styles, receive feedback about their communication and interactions with others, and debrief the outcomes of their

behavioral changes. Thus, parents are able to have mirrored back for them their own words and behaviors, and to self-evaluate their approach and the results they are achieving. The role modeling and the opportunities to practice positive and clear communication techniques in the group help parents develop and use those skills in their daily lives. In addition, parents learn healthy methods for managing conflict as the dynamics in the group provide insights into successful strategies as well as demonstrating that conflict can be a positive force for change.

■ ***Parents have a means for measuring progress toward their goals.***

In a Parents Anonymous group, parents identify behaviors they want to develop, practice them both in and outside of the group, and use the group for feedback and help. Parents Anonymous group members help each other acknowledge the times they were able to follow their plan, when their strategies were successful, and when they were able to develop new plans and strategies to respond positively to emerging issues.

■ ***The attraction of the group is greater than the discomfort of the change.***

Parents participating in Parents

Anonymous groups often take personal risks by sharing information with the group, and by taking a stand

Parents Anonymous Groups:

- ▲ Have at least one facilitator who is professionally trained in the Parents Anonymous Principles
- ▲ Have at least one parent group member in an acknowledged leadership role, and all other parent group members are encouraged to take on leadership roles
- ▲ Meet weekly at a designated time, in a location that is safe and accessible

In a Parents Anonymous Group:

- ▲ Parents provide nonjudgmental support to each other
- ▲ Information shared by and among group members remains confidential within the group unless abuse and/or neglect of children is suspected and necessitates a report in accordance with state laws
- ▲ Parents determine what information they share with the group
- ▲ No fee is charged for parents or children to attend a group meeting
- ▲ Parents determine the content of each meeting and shape the agenda to fit their specific needs on any given week
- ▲ Between weekly meetings, the group leader and facilitator are available for consultation to all group members as are members to each other
- ▲ Parents participate in Parents Anonymous groups for any length of time they determine to be most useful to them
- ▲ All parent members receive an *I Am A Parents Anonymous Parent* handbook, available in Spanish and English, which defines the expectations of the group, discusses parenting issues and provides an on-going resource.

"CASA volunteers and staff throughout the country recognize Parents Anonymous as a valuable resource for strengthening families and protecting children."

— Michael Piraino, CEO, National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association (CASA)



on issues that are important to them. Parents who have experienced a loss of control with their children while participating in a Parents Anonymous program will often call the facilitator to report their loss of control or will share this information at a group meeting, depending upon the seriousness of the event. Sometimes such disclosures necessitate a report to child protective services. Parents find that the acceptance, closeness and mutual-ity they experience in the group allows them to reveal behaviors they would otherwise try to hide. Group interaction is focused on positive change, and the support of the group in this area helps parents cope with the difficulties they may experience as they make important changes in their lives

■ *Those who want to change and those who are supporting their changes, have a strong sense of belonging to the same group.*

Even though the facilitator and the parents have different roles within the Parents Anonymous group, there is a clear sense of belonging to the same group and sharing a broad commitment to the well-being of the group and to each individual member. The Parents Anonymous model of mutual support and shared leadership promotes an egalitarian atmosphere where the wisdom and expertise of each member is valued.

III. THE FACILITATOR

One unique aspect of the Parents Anonymous group model—and a critical factor in the success of the group—is the practice of shared leadership. Each Parents Anonymous group is co-led by a professionally trained facilitator and a parent group member. The facilitator is usually a member of one of the helping professions (e.g. counseling, social work, education, health, etc.) who is trained to work closely with parent leaders to facilitate the group. The characteristics of the facilitator significantly impact the success of the Parents Anonymous group. The adult education literature discusses the personal characteristics of a successful leader in a learning environment and this profile is descriptive of the facilitator as defined in the Parents Anonymous model.

■ *Has the capacity for empathetic understanding*

The Parents Anonymous facilitator must be the group's role model for unbiased acceptance and understanding of the sometimes very complex issues facing parents who attend the group. It is not the role of the facilitator to be either overly sympathetic or

harsh in demanding that a parent make immediate changes. It is the role, however, for the facilitator to express understanding of the parents' concerns and the belief that they can make positive changes. The empathetic understanding modeled by the facilitator becomes a standard by which all group members interact with one another. It is a key component of the acceptance and respect on which the Parents Anonymous program is based.

■ *Is willing to become immersed in the activities of the group as a fully functioning member and take interpersonal risks.*

The Parents Anonymous facilitator does not seek the support of the group in their own parenting issues, but connects to group members on an interpersonal basis. In a Parents Anonymous group, all participants—including the facilitator—are usually on a first name basis and share appropriate information about their personal lives.

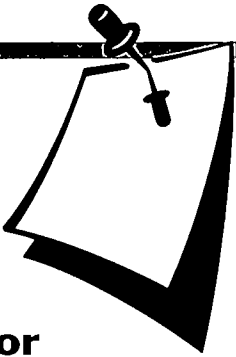
The Parents Anonymous facilitator must be willing and able to use their "whole self" in their work with the group. If the facilitator is not open, honest and clear in his or her communication, it will impact all of those aspects of the group. The Parents Anonymous facilitator must be will-

ing to risk the discomfort of anger and conflict, the difficulty of hearing painful information and stories, and the willingness to sometimes use their own personal examples as learning opportunities for the group members. This commitment from the facilitator strengthens and models the commitment that all group members make to each other and to the group as a whole.

■ *Is flexible, able to tolerate emotional stress and emotional ambiguity, to model shared leadership and to promote leadership in individual parents.*

Significant personal change seldom occurs on a linear path, taking many curves and detours as it moves forward. This means that some weeks the Parents Anonymous group members may be progressing well; and other weeks individual members may be facing significant difficulty. Some parents will seem to have lost gains previously made in managing their behavior and their lives. At times it is painful to hear some of the events occurring in parent's lives. The facilitator must provide support when painful and stressful situations arise in the group and he or she must be willing to respect the emotional challenges that members experience in their journey.

To locate the Parents Anonymous programs in your community, check your local telephone directory listings for Parents Anonymous or call Parents Anonymous, Inc. at (909) 621-6184.



For Additional Information:

*Understanding and
Facilitating Adult Learning:
A Comprehensive Analysis of
Principles and Effective
Practices*, by Stephen
Brookfield, Jossey-Bass,
Inc., San Francisco, 1986.

*The Modern Practice of
Adult Education: From
Pedagogy to Andragogy*, by
Malcolm S. Knowles,
Prentice Hall Regents,
Englewood Cliffs, NJ,
1980.

*Within Our Reach: Breaking
the Cycle of Disadvantage*,
by Lisbeth B. Schorr,
Doubleday, New York, 1988.

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Parents Anonymous group facilitators know that in order to grow and change parents must learn to identify and use their own wisdom and strengths. Facilitators help create a mutual support environment where parents share their expertise with each other. The role of the professional is to encourage discussion among parents and to add critical information to the discussion when it is needed, but with the caveat that it is always best this information comes from a parent. Thus, the facilitator's role might involve active participation during one portion of the meeting and little participation during other portions. It is this ability of the facilitator to "fill in the gaps," rather than take the lead, that encourages parents to develop their own abilities and strengths. Above all, the facilitator is a partner to parents, not a teacher.

Parents Anonymous: Vital Strategy for Successful Outcomes

In summary, the Parents Anonymous group is a highly effective model for parent education for hundreds of thousands of parents throughout the country. With parents already experiencing high levels of stress—and possibly crisis—it becomes critical to select the best strategy for helping them gain the support and information they need—Parents Anonymous.

Parents Anonymous, Inc.

Parents Anonymous, Inc. was founded in 1970 through the extraordinary efforts of a courageous mother seeking help for her abuse problems. 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. As the nation's oldest and largest child abuse prevention program dedicated to strengthening families, Parents Anonymous, Inc. leads a diverse and dynamic national network of 2,300 community-based Parents Anonymous programs supported by the efforts of 30,000 committed volunteers.

National research demonstrates the effectiveness of the Parents Anonymous mutual support groups for parents and specialized programs for children in ensuring positive outcomes for families. These weekly, on-going groups are co-led by parents and professionally trained facilitators and are free of charge to participants. Annually, 100,000 parents and their children come together in Parents Anonymous groups to learn new skills, transform their attitudes and behaviors, and create long-term positive changes in their lives.

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. Through partnerships with parents, professionals and agencies, Parents Anonymous, Inc. builds and supports caring communities for parents and children to ensure safe and nurturing homes for all families.



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.



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 devouring 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 rough 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.

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 Net-scape 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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LISA PION-BERLIN, PH.D.
PRESIDENT AND
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



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

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 Anonymous® 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 Anonymous® groups throughout the United States. These weekly, ongoing Parents Anonymous® groups are co-led by parents and professionally trained facilitators and are free of charge to participants. While the parents are meeting, their children participate in Parents Anonymous® Children's Programs to promote their healthy growth and development. Annually, thousands of parents and their children come together in Parents Anonymous® groups to learn new skills, transform their attitudes

Strengthening Families All Across America

and behaviors, and create long term positive changes in their lives. Reaching out to families in need, Parents Anonymous® 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 Anonymous® 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 Anonymous®, 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. One national study concluded that Parents Anonymous® 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 Anonymous® 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 Anonymous® 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

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

and promotes Parents Anonymous® 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 Anonymous® and juvenile delinquency prevention efforts.

Building Stronger, Safer Families

As the nation's premier family strengthening program, Parents Anonymous® encourages parents to ask for help early, whatever their circumstances, to effectively protect today's children and strengthen tomorrow's generation of parents. Parents Anonymous® 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 Anonymous® programs integrate the values, languages, and strengths of local communities by joining with American Indian, Latino, African-American, Asian-American, Caucasian and



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

other families living in urban and rural areas to develop and implement neighborhood-based Parents Anonymous® groups. To ensure the accessibility of Parents Anonymous® programs to all community members, whether they are married, single, divorced, teen parents, grandparents, or step parents, Parents Anonymous® groups meet in settings such as local community centers, churches, schools, housing projects, shelters, and prisons.

In addition, Parents Anonymous, Inc. provides a quality Children's Program model that is implemented nationwide by its National Network. The Parents Anonymous® Children's Program seeks to improve the emotional growth and social development of children and youth by creating an environment where children can develop healthy social skills, build self-esteem, and take a break from daily life stresses.

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 each year ensuring the availability of Parents Anonymous® 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 Anonymous® 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 Anonymous® 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 Anonymous® 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 Anonymous® 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 Anonymous® activities throughout the United States.



CELEBRATING 30 YEARS
30 PARENTS
Anonymous
Strengthening Families All Across America

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PARENTS Anonymous, Inc.

Strengthening
Families in
Partnership with
Communities



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

INNOVATIONS

Winter 2000

Parents Anonymous, Inc.— Strengthening Families All Across America

Vol. IV, No. 1

Parents Anonymous® Programs Expand in Diverse Communities

The demand for Parents Anonymous® programs in communities throughout the country continues to grow. State-wide and community-based organizations, public agencies, professional staff, community volunteers and parents are joining with Parents Anonymous, Inc. to ensure that families in their areas have access to quality Parents Anonymous® programs.

Parents Anonymous, Inc., the country's oldest national child abuse prevention organization dedicated to strengthening families through parent leadership, mutual support and shared leadership, is committed to making Parents Anonymous® groups available to families all across America. To accomplish this goal, activities are underway to develop new Parents Anonymous® programs in communities

where no Parents Anonymous® groups currently exist and to expand and strengthen established Parents Anonymous® programs.

For example, Parents Anonymous, Inc. received an e-mail message from a staff member in the Department of Youth Services for the Commonwealth

Parents Anonymous, Inc. is committed to making Parents Anonymous® groups available to families all across America.

of the Northern Mariana Islands (C.N.M.I.) seeking assistance in developing a Parents Anonymous® program in Saipan, the largest island and the center of Commonwealth activities. Thus began numerous contacts, resulting in almost a full week of training and consultation in Saipan in September 1999 with a diverse

group of community representatives.

Social workers, educators, counselors, parents who are potential group members, representatives of the faith community, and business and government leaders all came together to plan and implement a new Parents Anonymous® program for the families and children on Saipan. Representatives from the near-by island of Rota participated in the training and plan to establish a Parents Anonymous® group there as soon as possible.

The Northern Mariana Islands mark the dividing line between the Pacific Ocean and the Philippine Sea and stretch 400 miles northward from Guam. The area is a U.S. Commonwealth and the residents are U.S. citizens. Funds received by the C.N.M.I. Department of Youth Services from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice, provided support for the efforts of Parents Anonymous, Inc. and local staff and community



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

As we think about the New Millennium, I would like to reflect briefly on the past, examine the present, and call us to action about the future with regard to our work in the field of child abuse and neglect. As we think of the past, present, and future, I raise these questions for each of us—staff, parent leaders, and volunteers—to ask ourselves: Can we do better? How do we begin? Are we willing to challenge ourselves with new ideas, strategies and partnerships? Can we shape the direction of the future by how we partner with families and communities to address strengthening families?

When we consider the psychological, economic and social costs of maltreatment and the impact on future generations, we need to make a solid commitment to ensure real and positive outcomes for families struggling to seek help before or after problems have arisen by effectively partnering with them in their local communities. We as staff cannot achieve these vital goals alone. Without parents as significant partners, we are bound to create limited and unresponsive services which are not directed to any real outcomes. We at Parents Anonymous®, believe our success hinges on our ability

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CELEBRATING 30 YEARS



Strengthening Families All Across America

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New Children's Program to Benefit Children & Youth of All Ages

Parents Anonymous, Inc. introduced the new Parents Anonymous® Children's Program this fall with the release of a state of the art, extensive training manual—*The Parents Anonymous® Children's Program: Enhancing the Growth and Development of Children and Youth*—an intensive two-day training for representatives of the National Network, and a commitment to ensuring that every Parents Anonymous® group includes a Parents Anonymous® Children's Program where children can blossom in a safe, predictable environment.

"The development and implementation of the Parents Anonymous® Children's Program has been a long-term dream for Parents Anonymous, Inc.," stated Teresa Rafael, Vice President of Programs for Parents Anonymous, Inc.

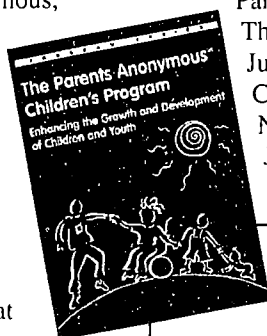
The Parents Anonymous® Children's Program combines the best in child development theory and practice to create a program that is beneficial to children and youth of all ages. Many of the critical aspects that make the Parents Anonymous® program so successful for parents are also modeled in the Parents Anonymous® Children's Program. Both the Parents Anonymous® group and the Children's Program are based on the same four Parents Anonymous® principles, ensuring common purposes and goals for parents who attend Parents Anonymous® groups with their children and who participate in the Parents Anonymous® Children's Program.

The mission of the Children's Program is to enhance the emotional growth and social development of children and youth of all ages by creating an environment where children can achieve the following goals:

- Develop healthy social skills resulting in the ability to
 - express appropriate emotions
 - increase understanding and tolerance of others
 - enhance interpersonal skills
 - develop coping and problem-solving skills
 - improve self-control
- Increase competencies and build self-esteem and self-confidence resulting in positive behavior changes.
- Gain respite from daily life stresses and have the opportunity to develop resiliency to face these stresses.

To help ensure the successful implementation of the Parents Anonymous® Children's Program, Parents Anonymous, Inc. is providing support to nine accredited Parents Anonymous® organizations throughout the country to develop Parents Anonymous® Children's Programs in conjunction with new or existing Parents Anonymous® groups.

The funded programs include: Juneau, Alaska; Arizona; Canton, Ohio; Maryland; New Hampshire; New Jersey; Pennsylvania; South Carolina and Utah.



In addition, more than 65 staff members, volunteers and parents representing Parents Anonymous® organizations across the country attended an interactive, two-day training on the Parents Anonymous® Children's Program in October 1999. National Parent Leadership Team members participated in the Children's Program Working Group that assisted in designing the program and selected Team members served as co-trainers. Attendees gained the necessary skills and abilities for developing and implementing the Children's Program in conjunction with Parents Anonymous® groups. The new Parents Anonymous® Children's Program will become an important component in all future training provided by Parents Anonymous, Inc. for new Parents Anonymous® program development.

"This has been a wonderful year developing the Parents Anonymous® Children's Program," stated Sheri Rosen, Director of Training and Technical Assistance and the principal author of the Children's Program manual, "I am looking forward to helping Parents Anonymous® organizations roll out the Children's Program this year and witnessing the benefits for children and families throughout the country."

The Children's Program is Based on the Parents Anonymous® Principles

Mutual Support - Children give and get support from one another. Children's Program Workers assist children in building healthy peer interaction skills by modeling and helping children practice positive ways of interacting, problem solving and supporting one another.

Shared Leadership - Parents share leadership of the Children's Program by developing policies and procedures for the Children's Program during their Parents Anonymous® group. Within the Children's Program, children and Children's Program Workers share in developing rituals, routines and ground rules for their group and in developing solutions to group problems.

Leadership - With the help of their parents and the Children's Program Workers, children increase their leadership ability by learning to make choices, feeling confident in their decisions and, as they get older, becoming leaders within the group. Older children are helped to understand that they are responsible for their own actions and the consequences of their behavior, learn to develop their own solutions and serve as role models for others.

Personal Growth and Change - The Children's Program supports children's personal growth and change by providing a safe, accepting environment where children can explore their feelings, practice new ways of interacting and change their behaviors in an atmosphere of belonging, trust and acceptance in which healthy interactions are modeled.

Expansion in Diverse Communities continued from page 1

members who came together to develop the Parents Anonymous® program. Beginning with a community meeting that filled to capacity at 100 attendees, the community members on Saipan displayed strong enthusiasm and support for the planned Parents Anonymous® program.

Representative Heinz Hofschneider, the chair of the Commonwealth's legislature's Appropriations Committee, gave welcoming remarks at the meeting. First Lady Sophie Tenorio, the wife of Governor Pedro Tenorio, attended the meeting and she and her husband hosted Parents Anonymous® representatives for dinner that evening.

In the following two days almost 40 people were trained as Parents Anonymous® facilitators and parent group leaders. A steering committee (photo above) was developed to conduct final planning and implementation of the new Parents Anonymous® groups and the first group began meeting in December. The entire community has come together in support of the new Parents Anonymous® program with Governor Tenorio donating supplies for the Parents Anonymous® Children's Program, GTE Pacifica providing a telephone and free services for the Response Line, and numerous volunteers contributing their time and other resources.

The successful implementation of Parents Anonymous® in Saipan demonstrates once again the relevance and importance of Parents Anonymous® programs in diverse cultures. Various aspects of Chamorro and Carolinian traditions are respected and incorporated into the Parents Anonymous® program and the program follows all Parents Anonymous® Group Standards to ensure quality programming.

Additional exciting development is underway throughout the country. With funds appropriated through Congress and in partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Parents Anonymous, Inc. provides significant resources including training, technical assistance and publications to selected sites targeted for expansion in Alaska, Arizona, Iowa, Ohio, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and Utah. Accredited Parents



The community members on Saipan displayed strong enthusiasm and support for the planned Parents Anonymous® program. Members of the steering committee, which conducted final planning and implementation of the new Parents Anonymous® groups, are shown above.

Anonymous® organizations in these states have committed to developing new Parents Anonymous® groups, implementing new Parents Anonymous® Children's Programs and strengthening existing Parents Anonymous® groups in their communities, as well as piloting the new Parents Anonymous, Inc. national database.

Furthermore, eight Parents Anonymous® accredited organizations are expanding Parents Anonymous® programs within their states through federal Office of Child Abuse and Neglect grants awarded in October 1999. Parents Anonymous® programs in Alaska, Arizona, California, Delaware, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and Utah are developing new Parents Anonymous® groups and Parents Anonymous® Children's Programs while expanding and strengthening many already existing Parents Anonymous® groups in their communities. A new program in Plattsburg, New York was also funded and is in the process of becoming accredited by Parents Anonymous, Inc. and developing new Parents Anonymous® groups in upstate New York.

The National Network is growing as well, with newly accredited Parents Anonymous® organizations in Wisconsin, Delaware, Iowa, Alaska and Kentucky. The Youth and Family Project in West Bend, Wisconsin; Cumberland River Comprehensive Care Center serving eight counties in Eastern Kentucky; Delaware Ecumenical Council on Children and Families; Parents, Inc. serving Anchorage and Fairbanks, Alaska; and Children and Families of Iowa in Des Moines are the newest accredited

members of the Parents Anonymous® National Network. New Parents Anonymous® groups and Parents Anonymous® Children's Programs are currently being developed in communities served by these five well-established community-based organizations.

Additional new development is taking place in Manchester, Hartford and New Britain, Connecticut; Vermont; Goldsboro, North Carolina; Washington, D.C.; Central Louisiana; New York; and West Virginia. Technical assistance site visits and community meetings are scheduled in several of these areas during the first few months of 2000. Just across the border, the YMCA-YWCA of Kamloops, British Columbia began two new Parents Anonymous® groups and Children's Programs in the fall after extensive training was provided by Parents Anonymous, Inc.

Welcome . . .

to the following newly accredited organizations to the Parents Anonymous® National Network:

- **Parents, Inc., Anchorage, AK**
- **Delaware Ecumenical Council on Children and Families, Wilmington, DE**
- **Children and Families of Iowa, Des Moines, IA**
- **Cumberland River Comprehensive Care Center, Corbin, KY**
- **The Youth and Family Project, West Bend, WI**

Major Initiative Begins in California

Parent Leadership Training Implemented Statewide

Parents Anonymous, Inc. is pleased to begin an innovative two-year parent leadership training initiative in partnership with the California Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP).

The goal of this initiative is to create meaningful opportunities and roles for parent leaders, develop a strong cadre of parent leaders throughout the state and ensure that staff in public and private systems are well-prepared to support and partner with parent leaders. OCAP is a national leader in implementing meaningful parent leadership opportunities statewide as required by the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA).

Parents Anonymous, Inc.'s extensive experience and strong expertise in promoting innovative parent leadership strategies nationwide and OCAP's commitment to implement successful parent leadership opportunities statewide have helped forge this dynamic partnership. Both organizations believe that when parent leaders have active roles in planning, implementing, overseeing and evaluating programs for families and children, better outcomes are achieved.

Parents Anonymous, Inc. is providing



Joe Gonzales, Chair of the Los Angeles County Parent Leadership team, leads the discussion at a training in Chico, California. Inset: Dr. Lisa Pion-Berlin discusses parent leadership with Larry Grandstaff, OCAP; Dixie Ferguson, OCAP; Todd Franke, UCLA; George Chance, OCAP; and Kim Relph, OCAP.

Parent Leadership Training for public and private agency staff and to parents who are program participants to promote the growth, development and support of parent leaders in local communities.

During the training process, staff create an organizational plan for supporting and utilizing the contributions of parent leaders. Parent leaders develop a personal Parent Leadership Plan to best utilize their own skills and abilities to make positive changes in their homes, in the community-

based programs in which they participate, and in their communities. In addition, agency staff and parents jointly establish a Parent Leadership Plan appropriate to their own community which supports parent leaders in activities such as participating in local planning processes, recommending allocation of funds for services, evaluating services and working in other key areas related to ensuring quality programs for children and families.

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First L.A. County Parent Leadership Team Inducted

In September 1999, at a ceremony held in Claremont, 11 parents who attend Parents Anonymous® groups in Los Angeles were inducted into the first Los Angeles County Parent Leadership Team.

The team includes parents, two grandparents and a foster parent who have shown leadership within their Parents Anonymous® group.

"Parents Anonymous, Inc. partners with parents in all facets of the work that we do. By sharing their experiences and perspective, parents impact policy and practice, affecting the lives of all families," said Dr. Lisa Pion-Berlin, President and Chief Executive Officer of Parents Anonymous, Inc.

The Parent Leadership Team works collaboratively with Parents Anonymous, Inc. in advocacy efforts, media outreach, co-training, planning conferences, and contributing to *The Parent Networker*, the Parents Anonymous® newsletter written by and for parents.

"Their participation is key to creating effective, responsive services for children and families," stated Pion-Berlin. "I am pleased to be joining in partnership with parent leaders who are willing to take on this role and work towards creating positive changes for families."

Jay Gomez, representing L.A. County Supervisor Mike Antonovich, presented a proclamation to Parents Anonymous, Inc. in honor of the parent leaders. Impressed by the dedication of the newly inducted Parent Leadership Team, Gomez made the commitment to do

***"Parents Anonymous®
is a wonderful and
important organization
offering a place of
strength and hope for
all parents."***

everything possible to support the development of additional Parents Anonymous® groups throughout Los Angeles County.

The new team is chaired by Joe Gonzales, a single father of three young children. Proudly holding his new gavel, Joe pledged that he and the new Parent Leadership Team would do all they can to "reach as many parents as possible, and assist in any way necessary to achieve Parents Anonymous® objectives."

Special guest Pomona Mayor Eddie Cortez summed it up when he said, "We've all heard it takes a village to raise a child. Well, it also takes a village to raise parents." A father of eight children, Mayor Cortez emphasized how difficult the role of parenting is and how important it is to have help. "Parents Anonymous® is a wonderful and important organization," Cortez stated, "offering a place of strength and hope for all parents."

New Members Join National Parent Leadership Team

Parents Anonymous, Inc. is delighted to welcome seven new parents to the National Parent Leadership Team (NPLT). With a commitment to promoting parent leadership and shared leadership, Parents Anonymous, Inc. developed the NPLT in 1994 to impact policy and practice affecting the lives of all families. The new members are:

Bunti Reed (Alaska)— Bunti has been involved with Parents Anonymous® for almost 15 years. She first became a parent group leader in 1987 in a Parents Anonymous® group in Washington. She later moved to Alaska where her 11-year old son was severely injured by a falling tree. He was flown to Seattle, Washington for treatment, and members of Bunti's former Parents Anonymous® group rallied around her and became her support system. The accident propelled Bunti into activism for the rights of the disabled. When she became involved in helping to develop Parents Anonymous® in Alaska in 1998, she became the parent group leader in a Parents Anonymous® group for parents of special needs children. Bunti currently works for Juneau Youth Services.

Joe Gonzales (California)— Currently serving as Chair of the Los Angeles County Parent Leadership Team, Joe has attended a Parents Anonymous® group for two years and is a parent group leader. He co-presented at several conferences in California where he spoke about parent leadership and about the benefits of Parents Anonymous®. A recent article in the *Inland Valley Daily Bulletin* (Ontario, California) featured Joe and his involvement with Parents Anonymous®. A father of three, Joe hopes to encourage other fathers to participate in Parents Anonymous®.

Cleopra Dyas (California)— Cleopra has two children and is also a grandmother. She is a member of the Los Angeles County Parent Leadership Team and recently served as a co-trainer at a parent leadership training in Sacramento, where she shared her experiences regarding the juvenile justice system. She is working with Parents Anonymous, Inc. to inform community members in South Central Los Angeles about Parents Anonymous® and to help develop new Parents Anonymous®



National Parent Leadership Team Members: Back— Deborah Arleque, Bunti Reed, Debbie Garrick, Jackie Ramirez, Freddie Gardner. Front— Bridget Hammons, Sara Green, Ginny Payton, Sue Smith, Viviana Solari, Cleopra Dyas and Frieda Dost. Not shown- Joe Gonzales.

groups in that area. Cleopra is employed as a system probation officer and serves as the vice president of membership for SOAR, a community outreach center in Los Angeles.

Jackie Ramirez (New Jersey)— Jackie has been involved with Parents Anonymous® for almost 12 years and has been a parent group leader of her Parents Anonymous® group for 10 of those years. Jackie has made several television and radio appearances to help generate awareness about Parents Anonymous® and has given several public talks about Parents Anonymous® including one to parents of substance-abusing children and one to police officers.

Debbie Garrick (Oregon)— Debbie joined Parents Anonymous® in 1991 and

became a parent group leader after about six months. The encouragement she received from her group gave her the confidence to be a strong advocate for her son and daughters. Debbie is interested in advocating for children and families at the local, state and national level. She gave a presentation to the Parents Anonymous® parent forum in Oregon on drugs and alcohol abuse. A feature story about Debbie ran in her local paper, generating awareness about Parents Anonymous® and its positive impact on the lives of families.

Viviana Solari (Utah)— A native of Argentina, Viviana came to the United States in November 1998. She helped start her Parents Anonymous® group in Utah in February 1999 with a friend from Argentina who became the group's facilitator. Viviana became the parent group leader of her Spanish-speaking Parents Anonymous® group at its inception, and is delighted to now be a member of the National Parent Leadership Team.

Bridget Hammons (Utah)— Bridget joined Parents Anonymous® in March 1999 and has been actively involved in strengthening her Parents Anonymous® group. Through outreach activities, Bridget helps to ensure that parents know that Parents Anonymous® is available to help strengthen their families. Bridget has become an advocate for child abuse prevention and family strengthening and serves on the Parents Anonymous® advisory board in Utah. Her greatest goal is to be a role model for other parents.

MOVING ON

In December, Patricia Enciso, National Parent Leadership Team member from California, completed her three-year term as a member of the Team. During her term Patty served as a co-trainer at many Parents Anonymous® workshops and trainings, was interviewed by the media, participated in outreach and advocacy campaigns and served on numerous Parents Anonymous® working groups. Although Patty is no longer an NPLT member she continues to participate in and support Parents Anonymous® programs within her community. She is now employed by Tri-City Mental Health Center in California as an Intensive In-Home Case Manager. We appreciate Patty's hard work, significant contributions and dedication to Parents Anonymous®.

News from the Parents Anonymous® National Network

Parents Anonymous® organizations across the country implement Parents Anonymous® groups in partnership with local communities and are supported by thousands of volunteers, public awareness activities and advocacy efforts. Here is some news about the latest activities from our National Network of Parents Anonymous® organizations.

ALASKA

Anchorage and Fairbanks— The first Parents Anonymous® group in Anchorage began in January at Parents, Inc. Before the Parents Anonymous® group actually began, five parents had already decided they would attend. The Cook Inlet Tribal Council will be working in partnership with Parents, Inc. to bring Parents Anonymous® groups to their community. Parents, Inc. will also develop Parents Anonymous® groups in Fairbanks in the early spring.

Juneau— Parents Anonymous® of Juneau presented a "Pamper Yourself" night for parents in their Parents Anonymous® groups. The moms and dads who attended were treated to massages, facials, makeovers, and manicures given by the parents themselves and by local business owners. Helen Kalk, Parents Anonymous® coordinator, said that the event has made the groups richer and has improved communication.

On January 22, potential facilitators and parent leaders participated in a full day of training. The event was co-facilitated by two parent leaders.

ARIZONA

Parents Anonymous® of Arizona received two awards recently. The Spirit of Parenting Award, given to community-based organizations working to strengthen families, was presented by the Arizona Parenting Alliance. Michele Keal, Executive Director of Parents Anonymous® of Arizona, was honored with the first Cherish the Children Award given by the Greater Phoenix Child Abuse Prevention Council. Michele has lead the agency since it began in 1980 with a \$4,000

grant from Parents Anonymous, Inc. The agency has grown from being housed in a small, donated cottage to 12 offices across the state. The main office will move this spring to a new one-story building designed especially for Parents Anonymous® of Arizona.

IOWA

Des Moines— Parents Anonymous® of Iowa held a conflict resolution training and team building retreat in November for program staff, board members, Parents Anonymous® group facilitators, children's program workers, and parent leaders. All participants were very positive about the retreat and felt it would be helpful in their work with parents and children in the Parents Anonymous® groups. The weekend gave participants time to get to know one another and plan for the future direction of Parents Anonymous® in Iowa.

Fort Dodge— After developing a successful Parents Anonymous® group at the correctional facility in Fort Dodge, Parents Anonymous® of Webster County has received a request to develop a Parents Anonymous® group at the Mount Pleasant correctional facility. Tom Dunbar, Parents Anonymous® Coordinator in Fort Dodge, provided initial training at the site and will oversee the development of this new Parents Anonymous® group.

Families attending Parents Anonymous® groups in Fort Dodge had a wonderful holiday party thanks

to donations from local businesses, including Yonkers Department Store. In addition, the Parents Anonymous® program in Des Moines shared donated toys with families attending Parents Anonymous® groups in Fort Dodge. Parent leaders also organized a canned food drive and collected food for a Parents Anonymous® family in need.

MARYLAND

A volunteer recognition ceremony, with the theme "Celebrate the Magic of Volunteers," was held in the fall. The teenage daughter of a parent attending a Parents Anonymous® group whose life has been changed by Parents Anonymous® expressed her thanks to the volunteers, "After the first session, (my mother) felt that Parents Anonymous® could help her... My mom is a better mom for joining the Parents Anonymous® group offered by The Family Tree," she said.

National speakers and parenting workshops are planned for Child Abuse Prevention Month in April. Other upcoming special events that will benefit Parents Anonymous® of Maryland include the 9th Annual Great Chefs Dinner in February; the 5th Annual Sports Ball in April; and The Hartford County Spring Fling in May.

MICHIGAN

With a goal of expanding from one to three Parents Anonymous® groups, Fritz Naylor, Coordinator of Parents Anonymous® of Kalamazoo, Calhoun and Barry Counties, was busy this fall educating others about Parents Anonymous®. Two of the new Parents Anonymous® groups planned include a daytime group in Kalamazoo and a new group in Battle Creek. Parent leaders of the current Parents Anonymous® group have been involved in outreach activities within the community. Naylor is scheduled to speak on "Alternative Discipline and Family Strengthening" at the Kalamazoo Women's Festival in March and plans to continue to speak out for Parents Anonymous® in Michigan.



Tom Dunbar, coordinator of Parents Anonymous® of Fort Dodge, receives \$1,000 from Target volunteer program staff. The grant will fund the purchase of a helpful parenting guide for Parents Anonymous® parents.

MISSOURI

Benton Park West Neighborhood Hub, the Parents Anonymous® accredited organization in St. Louis, introduced mothers of children under age 3 and mothers-to-be to Parents Anonymous® at a Healthy Families Day in January. A Parents Anonymous® group for Bosnian refugees began in January and new Parents Anonymous® groups are being developed for fathers and for families attending Head Start.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Parents Anonymous® of New Hampshire staff have been busy expanding their Parents Anonymous® program. They increased awareness of their 24-hour-a-day parenting helpline, made numerous presentations to Child Protection Services, counseling agencies and juvenile court offices, and participated in several parenting and child abuse prevention conferences within the state. In addition, Parents Anonymous® of New Hampshire was featured in an article in the *Concord Sunday Monitor*. These outreach activities have resulted in seven new Parents Anonymous® groups beginning in New Hampshire.

NEW JERSEY

In November, Parents Anonymous® of New Jersey held its Family Conference. One hundred thirty parents, community leaders, professionals and volunteers participated in a day of workshops and fun. The highlight of the conference was a presentation by a father in the POSSE program (Parenting Our Successors in Society Effectively). This Parents Anonymous® group for young minority fathers gives dads, most of whom had absent or negative male role models, a place to learn about their role as fathers and the importance of family unity. The audience was moved to a standing ovation after each young man spoke of past regrets and hopes for the future of his family. Jack Terhune, Commissioner of Corrections, received the Torch of Friendship Award in recognition of his commitment to expand Parents Anonymous® in New Jersey prisons. The conference also provided an opportunity to thank three collaborative partners, NORWESCAP, the



Members of POSSE, a Parents Anonymous® group for young, minority fathers, and Jack Terhune (center), Commissioner of Corrections, display an illustration created by one of the fathers at Parents Anonymous® of New Jersey's Family Conference.

Sisterhood, and MECHA, who have trained staff answering dedicated phone lines for the Parents Anonymous® Stressline for parents in New Jersey.

OHIO

Canton—Following the Parents Anonymous, Inc. Strategies for Best Practice Institute in October, staff from Families First, the Parents Anonymous® organization in Stark County, developed two new Parents Anonymous® groups and two Parents Anonymous® Children's Programs. Rachel Valentine, Parents Anonymous® Director in Stark County, spoke about the help, hope, strength and support parents receive in Parents Anonymous® groups during a recent live interview on a local radio station.

Columbus—Parents Anonymous® of Central Ohio developed two new Parents Anonymous® groups in collaboration with Diversified Community Services. These Parents Anonymous® groups help incarcerated fathers and mothers.

Staff also have reached out to teen parents in the community and have a Parents Anonymous® group for teen parents in the Columbus area.

OREGON

In September, Parents Anonymous® of Oregon, Inc. hosted a parent leadership training for 27 parent leaders. The successful training resulted in the formation of the Oregon Parent Leadership Team. One of the top priorities for the Team is to increase collaboration with the Department of Children and Family Services in Oregon.

Parents Anonymous® of Oregon plans to develop three Parents Anonymous® groups for Spanish-speaking parents and two groups on the Warm Springs Reservation for Native American parents.

PENNSYLVANIA

Parents Anonymous® of Pennsylvania's Executive Director, Program Director and a Parent Leader presented a workshop, "Parent Leadership in Parents Anonymous®," at the statewide Children's Trust Fund Conference in November. The Children's Trust Fund awarded a grant to Parents Anonymous® of Pennsylvania to expand Parents Anonymous® groups in northwestern Pennsylvania.

New Parents Anonymous® groups for Spanish-speaking families are being developed in partnership with organizations serving the Latino population in Philadelphia and Lancaster.

Parents Anonymous® of Pennsylvania will host the "Great American Wagon Pull" in June. Sponsored by Radio Flyer Corporation, the event helps to highlight the support families receive from Parents Anonymous® and provides a fun-filled day for the whole family.

In April during Child Abuse Prevention Month, Parents Anonymous® of Pennsylvania will focus on the successes of Parents Anonymous® in preventing child abuse.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Marty Banks, Executive Director of Parents Anonymous® of South Carolina, Inc., reports great success with the Parents Anonymous® group for teen parents, a partnership between Parents Anonymous® of South Carolina and the Clarendon County School District. Banks attributes the success to the fact that the Parents Anonymous® groups meet on campus during the day, which is the natural gathering time for teens. The teen moms and dads have shared wonderful stories about how much they enjoy the Parents Anonymous® group and how they are learning parenting skills and feeling confident to try new behaviors.

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Bosnian Families Benefit from Parents Anonymous®

Parenting is tough enough without the challenges of a new job, a new language, a new neighborhood, and new customs. Yet these challenges are what many refugees new to the United States face when they arrive with their families. The International Institute of Metropolitan St. Louis and the Benton Park West Neighborhood Hub Parents Anonymous® program joined forces to help ease the transition for some parents, beginning first with the Bosnians, St. Louis' largest refugee population.

St. Louis has the second largest Bosnian refugee population in the United States, behind Chicago. The Institute staff and volunteers annually help almost 6,000 immigrants and refugees from more than 40 countries become self-sufficient residents of St. Louis and helps broaden understanding and appreciation of the cultures which make up the community. In 1998 they resettled a record 1,500 refugees, 1,100 of them Bosnians.

After hearing about Parents Anonymous® at a community meeting, Lara Fallon, mental health coordinator at the International Institute, met with staff at the Benton Park West Neighborhood Hub, the accredited Parents Anonymous® organization in St. Louis, and together they developed

a Parents Anonymous® group for Bosnian parents. Outreach was conducted to parents in the local Bosnian community.

Belinda James, Parents Anonymous® Coordinator in St. Louis, says that the Parents Anonymous® group is getting off to an excellent start. "It is exciting to know we can offer Parents Anonymous® to diverse cultures."

Each member of the Parents Anonymous® group receives the *I Am A Parents Anonymous® Parent* booklet (IPAP) which the Institute staff translated into Bosnian. Also available in English and Spanish, the IPAP describes the Parents Anonymous® principles, the shared leadership model unique to Parents Anonymous® groups, and vital parenting information to support the journey of personal growth, change, and family strengthening.

Fallon believes that the Parents Anonymous® group will benefit the Bosnian community. "We wanted a more holistic approach to parenting education and Parents Anonymous® was the answer," she said. "The

Parents Anonymous® group reinforces the lessons of the Institute's parenting classes."

Jasminka Grubor, who attended Parents Anonymous® training with Fallon, facilitates the Parents Anonymous® group. A mother of two, Grubor came to the U.S. from Bosnia three and a half years ago. She agrees that Parents Anonymous® is "a good thing."

"Families often have big problems when they come as refugees. Their children are learning a new language, the parents need to work, and it's hard to keep up with the changes in their children,"

"It is exciting to know we can offer Parents Anonymous® to diverse cultures."

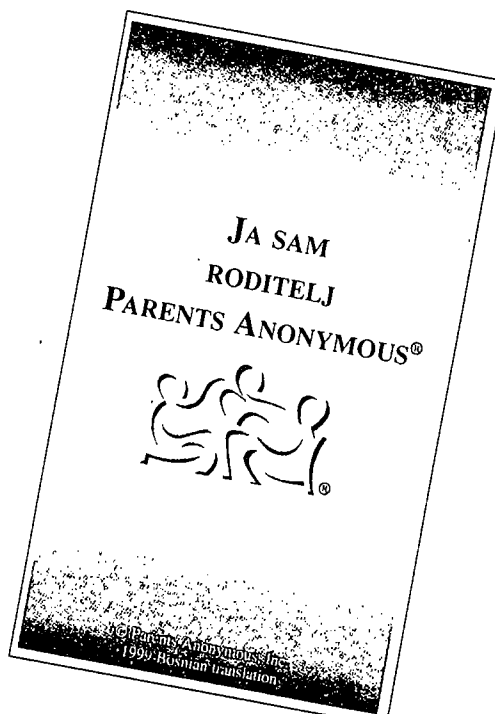
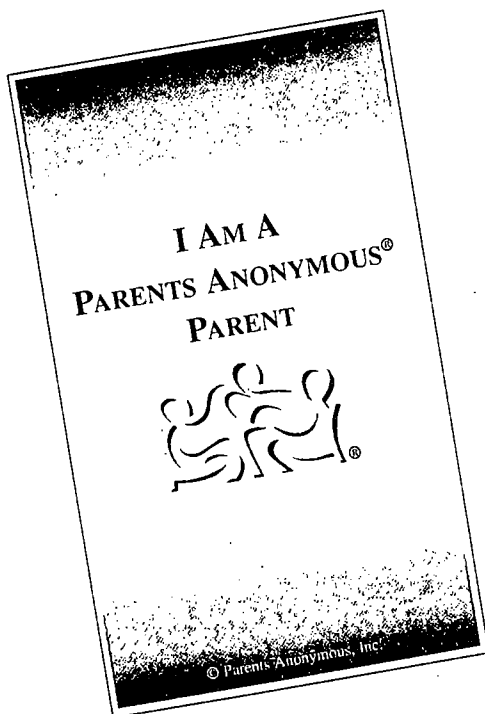
said Grubor. "If these parents are able to talk about their experiences, they will get advice from each other and find solutions."

Grubor sees the Parents Anonymous® group as a good place for parents to get information from their facilitator and each other on how they can help their children.

Parents Anonymous, Inc. is strongly committed to providing culturally responsive services that meet the diverse needs of families and communities. The Parents Anonymous® group for Bosnian families demonstrates how successfully a Parents Anonymous® program can be integrated with the important aspects of a community's culture.

The Benton Park West Neighborhood Hub offers three other Parents Anonymous® groups throughout the St. Louis Metro area. Through the support of The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, Parents Anonymous, Inc. provided training and technical assistance in St. Louis to help develop the current Parents Anonymous® groups.

Fallon and James are hard at work developing new Parents Anonymous® programs for other refugee communities in the St. Louis area, including West Africans, Iraqis and Somalians.



Strategies for Best Practice Institute A Huge Success

In October, Parents Anonymous, Inc. hosted the second annual Strategies for Best Practice Institute. Representatives from every accredited Parents Anonymous® organization in the country, a staff member from Parents Anonymous® of Bermuda and all the National Parent Leadership Team (NPLT) members attended the Institute.

During the five day institute, the NPLT trained in partnership with Parents Anonymous, Inc. staff. The participants were the first in the country to receive intensive training on the new Parents Anonymous® Children's Program (see page 2). Additional training expanded attendee's skills in developing, maintaining, promoting and expanding Parents Anonymous® programs within their state.

To ensure program quality and consistency, Parents Anonymous Inc. requires that each accredited organization has a staff member or volunteer who becomes a Certified Trainer by successfully completing the Strategies for Best Practices Institute. Certified Trainers are directly responsible for training others in the Parents Anonymous® model and ensuring that the Parents Anonymous® Group Standards are met.

Parents Anonymous, Inc. provided each Certified Trainer with a Certified Trainer's Tool Box. The Tool Box contains a wealth of training materials and resources so that Certified Trainers across the country will be well equipped to train others about Parents Anonymous®.

"I've learned many things to take back to my Parents Anonymous® program," said one attendee. "I also learned more about developing Parents Anonymous® groups in diverse settings."

"I have absorbed so much information from this training. I can't wait to put it into action," said another participant.

One participant summed it up by saying, "I have attended few conferences that match how warm and open everyone here has been. I'll definitely be back!"



Dr. Lisa Pion-Berlin discusses the core values of Parents Anonymous®.



Participants get hands-on experience with activities that can be used in the Parents Anonymous® Children's Program



National Parent Leadership Team member Ginny Payton assists presenter Sheri Rosen during the Parents Anonymous® Children's Program training.



A simulated Parents Anonymous® group increased participant's knowledge regarding Parents Anonymous® group standards.



Friends and colleagues of Juanita Chávez dedicate a tree in her memory. Chávez, who was a Senior Program Associate at Parents Anonymous, Inc., died in 1998.

Parents Anonymous, Inc. Presents at National Conference on Juvenile Justice

The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges asked Parents Anonymous, Inc. to serve as faculty at the 27th National Conference on Juvenile Justice.

The conference, entitled "Juvenile Justice in 2000: Accentuate the Positive," will be held in Tampa Florida, March 19-22. Kathy Du Vernet, Senior Program Associate from Parents Anonymous, Inc., and a parent leader from the National Parent Leadership Team will present a workshop on "Parents Anonymous®: A Model for Strengthening Families."

It is expected that approximately 1,400 participants including judges, prosecutors, defense counsel, police officers, juvenile officers, probation officers, child welfare personnel, school administrators and legislators will attend the conference. The conference provides an important opportunity to share the effectiveness of Parents Anonymous® in diminishing juvenile delinquency and to forge stronger linkages with juvenile and family court judges throughout the country.

National Network Gathers for "Leadership 2000" in Washington D.C.

On Feb. 6-8, 2000, Parents Anonymous, Inc. hosted a meeting in Washington, D.C., entitled Leadership 2000: Beginning the New Millennium," for all accredited organizations of Parents Anonymous, Inc. Executive directors, key program staff and parent leaders met and discussed issues relevant to the growth and development of quality Parents Anonymous® programs and other leadership issues for the year 2000. Congressional appointments were arranged so participants could share the exciting results of their local Parents Anonymous® program activities.

On Sunday, Feb. 6, and Monday,

Feb. 7, agenda topics included discussion on the Parents Anonymous® Children's Program and parent leadership. The National Parent Leadership Team met and lead discussions with other parent leaders in attendance. Meetings of the Parents Anonymous® Program Expansion Project sites and the Network Advisory Council were held. In addition, there was an orientation session for new members of the National Network.

Parents Anonymous, Inc. Selected as an Official Charity of the Los Angeles Marathon

Parents Anonymous, Inc. has been selected as one of the 50 Official Charities of the 2000 City of Los Angeles Marathon. The 15th Los Angeles Marathon will be held Sunday, March 5, 2000.



Parents Anonymous, Inc. is working in conjunction with 49 other local and national charities to reach a collective fundraising goal of one million dollars. In the past The Los Angeles Marathon has raised a collective one-million dollars in a single morning, a goal that the charities will once again strive to achieve.

"This is our first year participating in the Los Angeles Marathon, and we are very pleased to have this opportunity to further our efforts to strengthen families and prevent child abuse," said Dr. Lisa Pion-Berlin, president and CEO.

The City of Los Angeles Marathon will offer the opportunity for runners, walkers, cyclists and volunteers to make a difference for Parents Anonymous, Inc. Parents Anonymous, Inc. will provide entertainment, refreshments and prizes along its portion of the 26-mile route.

www.parentsanonymous-natl.org

Web Site is New & Improved

Updated in December 1999, the new Parents Anonymous, Inc. web site has been re-designed to inform visitors of the latest Parents Anonymous® activities nationwide.

The interactive site also includes information for parents on finding a local Parents Anonymous® group and guidelines for community-based organizations on becoming an accredited Parents Anonymous® organization. In addition, the site provides tips on parenting, child abuse prevention information and resources, and links to other sites.

Parent Leadership Training continued from page 4

Parents Anonymous, Inc. also provides follow-up technical assistance to support parents and staff as they implement their plans and address challenges that may arise.

For 30 years, Parents Anonymous, Inc. has promoted mutual support and parent leadership to build and support strong, safe families. Parents Anonymous, Inc. is nationally recognized for its expertise in parent leadership and conducts training and customized technical assistance for public and private agencies and communities regarding effective strategies to achieve meaningful parent leadership.

To model the principles we promote, Parents Anonymous, Inc. always partners with members of the Parents Anonymous® Parent Leadership Team to

conduct trainings. Team members also help develop publications and other materials for use by parent leaders. In 1998 Parents Anonymous, Inc. held its first National Parent Leadership Institute where more than 100 parents from across the country were provided with training to increase their knowledge, skills and abilities regarding parent leadership roles and opportunities.

If you are interested in expanding parent leadership opportunities in your state or community and would like to talk with Parents Anonymous, Inc. regarding parent leadership training and technical assistance, please contact Sheri Rosen, Director of Training & Technical Assistance at (909) 621-6184, extension 216 or e-mail her at pasherir@juno.com.

National Network News continued from page 7

UTAH

Parents Anonymous® of Murray and Midvale currently has five Parents Anonymous® groups—one in conjunction with the Department of Workforce Services, two Parents Anonymous® groups in Spanish and two in English. The Spanish-speaking parents, many of them on fixed incomes, joined forces during the holidays to purchase new toys and clothing for families in a local homeless shelter. The project was a real boost to their self-esteem and a great experience for everyone. Two new Parents Anonymous® groups, one in English and one in Spanish, are being developed with the YWCA residential program.

WISCONSIN

Joy Breese, Program Director for Parents Anonymous® of Washington County will be presenting a workshop in April on the Parents Anonymous® model of shared leadership for parents and professionals at the Wisconsin Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect. Parents Anonymous® of Washington County currently has two Parents Anonymous® groups.

August 1999

Please share this letter with any one you wish to that needs to know about our program. I am a young mother who made a mistake at an early age. You have inspired me to love myself and my child. Our Parents Anonymous® group meetings are organized and motivating. I always learn when we meet. Please keep this program in progress. Without your guidance and help, I will not have the patience to endure the burden to be a parent at this age. Our Parents Anonymous® group meetings have inspired me to complete school and continue my education. I realized now that it will take an education for me to be able to help myself as well as my child. I am sorry for my mistake, but I know that this is not the end of the world.

Thank you for all the Parents Anonymous® group sessions.

Sincerely,
Teen Parent, South Carolina

From the President & CEO continued from page 1

as an organization to create and maintain strong working relationships with parent leaders. This results in effective shared leadership with staff, volunteers and Boards—from the Parents Anonymous® group, through all functions of our local, state and national organizations.

Parent leaders offer valuable "expertise" and staff need to be challenged to include their voice to ensure achievable goals through shared leadership. We need to commit to having meaningful parent leadership roles on our policy councils, strategic planning committees, inter-agency groups and local, state and national advisory boards. In order for parents to hold meaningful roles in planning, designing and assessing programs in partnership with staff, staff and parents have to be willing to commit to establishing roles, determining outcomes to measure success, and training on collaboration and other skills. Furthermore, policy-makers should also collaborate with parents who have directly experienced family problems and can speak from experience about needs, concerns, and services.

As the nation's oldest child abuse prevention and treatment program, Parents Anonymous® is celebrating a generation (or 30 years) of work in

diverse neighborhoods all across America. Since a generation reflects the average time it takes for children to take the place of their parents, it is time for our field to move forward with all the knowledge, skills and abilities learned, tested, and developed to partner with families in need who want to turn their lives around forever. As we say in Parents Anonymous®, I believe that the future holds much help, hope, strength and support for families today and the field as a whole.

With regard to help— We must commit to the national replication of effective community-based programs rather than waste valuable resources on limited, unproven strategies. We do have effective strategies and proven programs in this field and we should fearlessly challenge ourselves to go to scale with these programs.

With regard to hope— The future must be our venue and vehicle of hope for parents, their children, and staff in the field. Parents Anonymous® parents always tell us that their own process of healing can be tracked by their changing feelings of hopelessness to hopefulness. I believe that we as a field can make a positive difference with the next generation if we jointly define goals which translate into measurable

results when staff, volunteers, parents, government, and business collaborate.

With regard to strength— We need to closely examine our values, methods and models to ensure that we are building on the strengths of families and not just giving lip service to the idea. We as professionals need to commit to a working and ongoing partnership with parents. We need to be open to learning, dedicated to creating meaningful leadership roles for parents, and accepting that change will occur when parent leaders engage in critical dialogue and take action within a shared leadership atmosphere regarding strategic planning, program implementation and evaluation, training, and policy-making.

With regard to support— We need to create welcoming and mutually supportive environments for parents to give and get help. Otherwise the blame and shame they already feel will deter them from seeking help early or whenever they are willing to begin the struggle to change their attitudes, behaviors and lives in significant ways. We need to trust the life experiences of others as "expertise" and support the creation of community and non-judgmental acceptance

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From the President & CEO

continued from page 1

offered by parents to one another. We as staff should also be looking at ways to link with one another to support programs across a continuum of strategies which offer help to diverse families.

Much can be achieved when we commit to find common ground between organizations at the local, state and national levels; challenge ourselves to grow and change just as we encourage growth and change in

the families we work with; take action to ensure shared leadership roles and responsibilities with parents; and pledge to take risks and go outside of the "box" with regard to collaboration and service delivery. By working together in the New Millennium, we all can find help, support, strength and hope to maintain or renew our dedication, and the tenacity and courage to strengthen families in partnership with their communities all across the world.



Alexandra, daughter of Luisa Meléndez,
Executive Assistant at Parents Anonymous, Inc.



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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,

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:

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Parent Leader Receives Award

Parents AnonymousSM parent Dick Anderson of Phoenix was the recipient of the 1999 Jolly K. Award presented by Parents Anonymous, Inc.

Anderson was chosen to receive the award because of his tireless efforts and dedication in setting positive examples for other parents. He has been a Parent Leader in a local Parents AnonymousSM group for six years and is one of the original members of Arizona's Parent Leadership Team.

"I am very proud to have won this award," says Anderson. "Parents AnonymousSM has not only helped me to transform my life, it provides me with the opportunity to help others as well."

Parents Anonymous, Inc., created the Jolly K. Award in honor of the parent who started the organization 30 years ago. It is given to a parent who exemplifies the principles of Parents AnonymousSM and who has made significant contributions at the local, state

or national level.

"Dick Anderson has been and continues to be an avid advocate and participant in parent leadership at Parents AnonymousSM in Phoenix," said Michele Keal, President/CEO of Parents AnonymousSM of Arizona, Inc. "Through Dick's efforts, parent leadership in Arizona is thriving."

"We were delighted to have presented this award to Dick Anderson," says Dr. Lisa Pion-Berlin, President and Chief Executive Officer of Parents Anonymous, Inc. "Dick represents thousands of Parents AnonymousSM parents throughout the country whose efforts make Parents AnonymousSM successful."



Freddie Gardner, board chair; Michele Keal, Parents Anonymous of Arizona, Inc., and Lisa Pion-Berlin, president and CEO, with Jolly K. Award recipient Dick Anderson.

Senator Stevens Honored for His Leadership

Parents Anonymous, Inc. honored U.S. Senator Ted Stevens (R-AK) with the 1999 Outstanding Leadership Award.



The award is given to the professional, policy maker, corporate representative, or other individual who has demonstrated national leadership around the issue of strengthening families to prevent child abuse. Parent leaders and volunteers from the new Parents AnonymousSM accredited organization in Alaska, Catholic Community Service, helped present the award.

"Senator Stevens has had a long-standing commitment to improving child abuse prevention programs," said Lisa Pion-Berlin. "Thanks to his critical support, training began in Dec. 1998, for the parents and professionals who have begun the first Parents AnonymousSM program in Alaska."

In honor of the occasion, Anchorage, AK artist Barbara Lavallee, a nationally known illustrator of children's books, created Stevens' award in the form of a special signed print entitled, "Generations." On the print she wrote, "To a leader in child abuse prevention whose commitment to Parents AnonymousSM is far-reaching and will help America's children and families for generations to come."

Bellamy Wins First J. Chávez Award

Dondago (Donny) Bellamy, Program Director for Parents Anonymous of New Jersey, was presented with the first Juanita Chávez Award at the 1999 National Leadership Conference.

Named after Juanita Chávez, a beloved staff member of Parents Anonymous, Inc. who died in March 1998, the award recognizes the recipient's promotion of parent leadership.

Bellamy has over 15 years experience in the field of child abuse preven-

tion and working with minority populations. He currently serves as program supervisor for POSSE, Parents AnonymousSM groups targeting African-American fathers in the Newark area. His "energy and genuine enthusiasm" are apparent in all that he does, remarked Jackie Ramirez, the parent leader who nominated Bellamy.

"Donny talks about being a father, husband, and coach as if these were truly important things in life—and they are," said Ramirez. "With his demeanor, he not only inspires fathers but mothers too."

"Donny has been, and continues to be, an avid advocate for parent leadership and mutual support," said Kathleen Roe, executive director of Parents AnonymousSM of NJ.



The Bellamy Family: Candicé, wife Carol, Donny Jr., and Franklin with Donny, Freddie Gardner and Jackie Ramirez.

Feeling Alone? Call Parents AnonymousSM

by Sara Green, OR

I'm a former teen parent and have been a single parent to my daughter for 11 years. At age three she was diagnosed with insulin dependent diabetes. At the time, I was working two jobs, going to college, raising my daughter. I finally lost it.

I didn't want to hurt her in any way and knew that I needed help. I found Parents AnonymousSM in the phone book and began attending my local group.

After one year, I was interviewed to serve on the National Parent Leadership Team. Soon after accepting the position, I attended a meeting in California that really opened my eyes to the scope of the organization. I thought Parents AnonymousSM was just the small group I attended every week. But through that meeting, I saw how many states are really involved in helping parents all across the country.

I saw the "big picture" and realized

how fortunate my daughter and I are to be a part of Parents AnonymousSM.

I was able to share why Parents AnonymousSM is so important to me and my daughter recently on a half-hour special on KPTV Channel 12. On Apr. 15 the network aired the special, "Oregon's Answer to Scared Straight" which talked about helping today's kids.

Appearing on this broadcast was important to me because I want all parents to know that they're not alone in parenting—everyone needs help. In a Parents AnonymousSM group you get the best support possible by hearing from people who are in the exact same situation as you and who are also working to make things better for their families.

The more people who know about Parents AnonymousSM, the better job we can do as parents and the more successful our future will be.

PARENTAL GUIDANCE

Books, tapes and other parenting resources reviewed by parents.

by Debbie Arleque, WA

VIDEO: "Winning at Parenting Without Beating Your Kids"

by Barbara Coloraso

This is one awesome video tape! I feel this tape should be required viewing for all parents. I first received this tape over seven years ago and have viewed it at least that many times.

When I first was given the tape and was told it was two hours long I thought, "I really don't want to sit for two hours and listen to someone tell me what to do," and "who has that much time?" I thought I would put the tape in and do some house cleaning and listen at the same time. Well, I ended up sitting on the couch for the next two hours, it was that good. It was like watching a stand-up comedian.

Members of my Parents Anonymous group have been passing it around for many years. We have had facilitators cook us a dinner and then view the tape, and we have spent an hour from each of two meetings to view the tape.

In fact one of our facilitators has gone on to now lead a local class based on the tape. I don't think a week goes by without someone quoting Coloraso off the tape.

We have had parents take the tape home and end up watching it three times in a week. Coloraso covers everything from your two year old's tantrums, to your I-don't-want-to-clean-my-room kids, to your teenager getting put in jail. She talks about the "brick wall" parent, the "jelly fish" parent, and the "back bone" parent. Allowances, chores, and eating problems are just a few of the topics she covers.

A note about the title: the "without beating your kids" part refers not to physical beating but to winning in the sense that you both win and no one "beats" the other. I have enjoyed this tape for many years and hope that others find it just as helpful and fun to watch. Check it out at your local library, book store or video store.

Imagine

by Susan B. Bilchik, M.Ed., Clinical Director, Children of Separation and Divorce Center, Rockville, MD

Imagine me... I am very, very tiny. From head to heels, I may only be 21 inches long and weigh less than 10 pounds. I have soft, velvety skin, and the smallest little fingers and toes. I have just a few wisps of hair and big, bright eyes. I cannot walk or talk. I cannot get my own food, or change my own diaper. I can't use words yet to tell you when I need to be hugged, or when I am cold or hot, or when I am hurting. I need for you to know me, to know just how I like to be rocked and how I like to be held.

I need you to know when I'm crying in hunger, in frustration, or when my crying is just a discharge of energy before sleep. I need you to know my schedule and routines; my favorite book, my most beloved doll or blanket.

I need you to be there in a loving and predictable way. Over time, I learn that when I cry for you from my crib, you will come to take care of me. I begin to trust that when I need you'll be there, and that even though I can't always tell you what I need, you will figure it out. Over time, I learn that I can affect my world and therefore begin to trust others.

As you touch me gently, I soak in your feelings about me. I can tell when you are tense or angry. At this very early age, I begin to see myself through your eyes. If you respond to my needs over and over, in a loving and consistent manner, I begin to see myself as loveable and worthwhile. Our relationship sets the tone for all my future relationships.

When you applaud my new skills and provide a stimulating environment for me, I continue to try new things. I need toys, books and music. But I especially need **you**; to sing to me, to talk to me and to reinforce all that I am learning. I love repetition, that's why I always

continued on page 5



Charles Davenport and Teresa Rafael.



Teen parents, Keora Quijada and Victor Valdez, (left and middle) participated in the "Honoring Teen Families" workshop.



One hundred strong, the delegation from Pennsylvania was the largest.

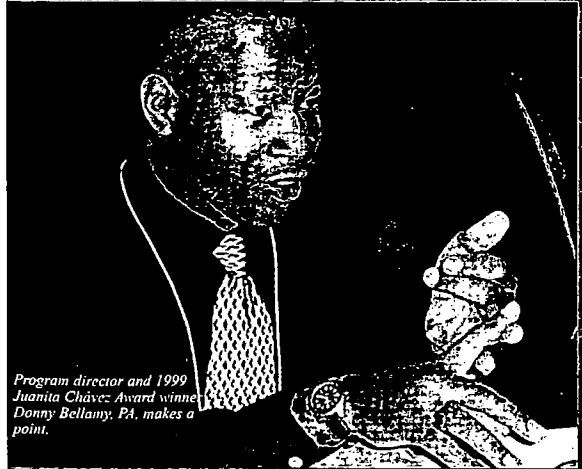
1999 National Leadership Conference Inspires!



Freddie Gardner, National Board Chair.



Parent Leaders work on letters to their congressional leaders.



Program director and 1999 Juanita Chávez, award winner Donny Bellamy, PA, makes a point.

Nearly 400 people from 29 states traveled by train, plane, bus, and car to the 1999 Parents Anonymous National Leadership Conference, "Celebrating the Strengths of Families and Communities: A Shared Vision for Our Future," held in Arlington, Virginia, February 16-19, 1999. Half of those attending were parent leaders. Parents Anonymous Inc. was able to raise funds to underwrite 200 parent leaders and several facilitators from Parents Anonymous organizations throughout the country.

Several plenary sessions were led by noted leaders in the fields 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" at the opening plenary session. Susan Notkin, director of the Children's Program, Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, spoke at Friday's breakfast plenary about "Community Partnerships to Protect Children," the largest foundation effort to reform child protective services in four select communities.

A highlight for many conference-goers was the Friday luncheon plenary delivered by Shay Bilchik, administrator, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. His talk on "Strengthening Families to Prevent Juvenile Delinquency" included a poignant piece written by his wife, Susan, entitled "Imagine" (see pages 3 & 6).

Thursday was a busy day of congressional visits for participants. Parent leaders visited more than 100 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!"

The Thursday evening plenary featured award winners (see page 2). 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.

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."

Many conference-goers even managed to do some sight-seeing in Washington, D.C., including a tour of the Holocaust Memorial Museum, led by Susan Berlin, Lisa Pion-Berlin's mother.



Edna McConnell Clark Foundation staff.



Conference participants take Saturday morning's hotel evacuation in stride. The "broken pipe" delayed Saturday's events by about 30 minutes.



Members of the National Parent Leadership Team, past and present, and Charles Davenport, son of Juanita Chávez (third from left).



Performers from Dance Place present "Hope Full of Buckets."



Ginny Payton, NPLT member from OH, treats participants to a song.

continued from page 3

choose *Good Night Moon* for my bedtime story. I like to hear it over and over and over again. This is how I learn.

Can you see how dependent I am on you? I need you to be there to take care of me and also to protect me. I need a safe environment, where I can explore and grow without hurting myself. It will be a long time before I know my own limits. I need someone to feed me, and clean me, and to dress me warmly when it's cold outside.

I do better with schedules and routines. I feel safer when I know what to expect, when I know what's coming next. I can explore my world more freely when there are safe arms to come crawling back to.

So much of what I learn in these first few months of life will become building blocks for the years ahead. My ability to trust others, my ability to love, to feel good about myself and to feel safe in a relationship all come out of the very early bonding I develop with you, my parents.

When you are distracted or angry, I am sometimes left alone to fend for myself. I feel the tension in the house and your rough handling of me makes me cry. When you are too "tired" to get up for a midnight feeding, I cry and cry. My stomach hurts. . . I can't understand why you don't come to me. And when I am shifted from one environment to another and have many different caretakers, I feel disoriented and lost.

Mom, Dad, it's true. I take and take and don't give a whole lot back, yet. I cause overwhelming changes, in an already stressed out family system, with my endless schedule and exhaustive needs. The only way to deal with all of this is by your working together. It means you have to communicate with each other. Share what you know about me, with each other: about my changing needs, my health, my routines and my environment. More than anything, I need love and affection from both of you. While you may feel great stress and hopelessness in your lives, please remember, this is just the beginning of my life.

© Susan B. Bilchik, M Ed.

From
the

Research Department



Summer 1999

Peggy Polinsky, MSW, Ph.D. Director of Research

FYI...

Parents Anonymous, Inc. is committed to developing a standardized, uniform data collection system for the National Network. The ability to accurately describe the kinds and numbers of Parents AnonymousSM participants will greatly increase our ability to improve program planning, compare our organizations to each other, and compete for funding dollars. Group data collection and training feedback forms are being pilot tested in California. The goal is to have a computerized system of data recording available by January 2000.

1998 National Parent Leadership Institute

One hundred Parents AnonymousSM parent leaders attended the National Parent Leadership Institute in California in March 1998. Parent Leadership Power was everywhere!! Feedback forms completed at the time of the Institute gave very high ratings to the workshops as well as the Institute overall for quality, content, and opportunities to interact with others in the Parents AnonymousSM National Network.

Eight months after the Institute, a survey was mailed to those who had attended, asking them about parent leader activities and completion of their action plans made at the Institute. In general, the parent leaders had been very active and many had worked hard on the goals they had set for their action plans involving increasing community awareness and getting more people into Parents AnonymousSM and developing local parent leadership teams. Some barriers were reported such as (surprise, surprise) "It took more time than I thought." Nevertheless, many said their experience at the Institute provided the skills and the motivation they needed to get things done.

THE BIG WINNERS!! Three Parents AnonymousSM parent leaders won all-expense-paid trips to the 1999 National Leadership Conference!! HOW?? They were selected in a drawing from the names of those who responded to Institute survey. *Congratulations!*

Calvin B of Vermont
Nettie Mae P of Florida
Dawn P of Illinois

MORE WINNERS! Every respondent was sent \$10 worth of coupons for McDonald's and the first 25 respondents were sent a Parents AnonymousSM tote bag. They were:

ARIZONA

Donna D
Richard A

CALIFORNIA

Beth R
Patty E

FLORIDA

Nettie Mae P

ILLINOIS

Kathleen M
Rose B
Tracy S
Douglas E.

IOWA

Frieda D

KENTUCKY

Tonia C

MARYLAND

Darlene S.

MASSACHUSETTS

Dawn S
Debbie C
Lan G.
Patricia O

MISSOURI

Michael C
Sue S.

OREGON

Sara G

VERMONT

Marie W
Norm L

WASHINGTON

Richard W
Teresa W

WISCONSIN

Joy S
Mary S

1999 National Leadership Conference

More than 200 Parents AnonymousSM Parent Leaders attended the National Leadership Conference in Virginia in February!! Again, Parent Leadership Power was everywhere! The overall Conference, the plenary sessions, and the workshops were generally rated very high for interest, content, and presentation. One parent leader's comments reflected those of many Conference participants in their view of the benefits and growth that came from attending: "It was an honor to be invited to the conference. I learned a lot I didn't know. I look to the future in a more positive way now."

Three months after the Conference, a follow-up survey was sent to parent leaders to ask about their leadership activities since the Conference. Not all of the results are in yet, but a preliminary analysis shows that many are participating in meaningful leadership activities such as serving on boards and councils and appearing in the media. Most parent leaders gave high ratings to their confidence in themselves as parent leaders and as positive role models for other parents.

CONFERENCE WINNERS!! The first 25 to return the Conference follow-up survey were sent a beautiful Parents AnonymousSM mug. They were:

ARIZONA

Christine J
Donna D
Kimberly N

MASSACHUSETTS

Moe L

MICHIGAN

Carol F

CALIFORNIA

Cleopra D
Donna G

MISSOURI

Mary Ann T

ILLINOIS

Rose B

NEW JERSEY

Jackie R

IOWA

Frieda D

NEW YORK

Lorna G

MARYLAND

Laura B

OREGON

Sara G
Tonya C

PENNSYLVANIA

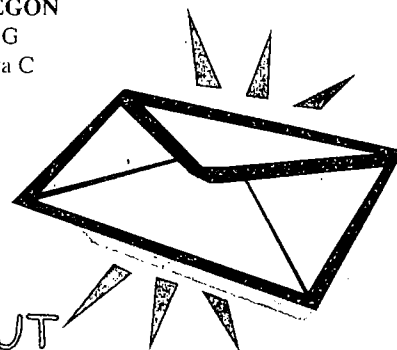
Angelique O
Bob S
Barbara B
Charlotte H
Debbie G
Michele C
Peggy Z

TEXAS

Minnie W

WASHINGTON

Deborah A
Michelle L



IT'S WORTH IT TO FILL OUT PARENTS ANONYMOUS, INC. SURVEYS!

Thank you to everyone who participated and a special thank you to those who responded promptly.



Ideas and Tips for Your Group

This is a forum for Parents AnonymousSM groups to share ideas and tips with each other. We would like to hear from others out there about your group's fun or special activities. Please send your group ideas to the Director of Communications, Parents Anonymous, Inc., 675 W. Foothill Blvd., Suite 220, Claremont, CA 91711. You may also e-mail to pasgraham9@juno.com

by Debbie Arleque, WA

I have been attending our local Parents AnonymousSM group for the past nine years.

Although I know I wouldn't have survived this long as a parent without weekly discussions in my Parents AnonymousSM meetings, there can be more to our meetings than just talking.

...doing something creative is just a relaxing, fun change of pace.

We have, on occasion, had pot luck dinners and Thanksgiving dinners for our volunteers. We have read with our children or gone for walks. Most recently we had pizza delivered and our facilitator, who is VERY handy with wood crafts, led us in making wooden decorated bunnies.

It was great to sit and relax, talk freely about parenting and watch the talent unveil in the room. Each and every bunny was different and each one was great, as are our Parents AnonymousSM parents! I don't know exactly what it is, but sitting and talking with friends and doing something creative is just a relaxing, fun change of pace.

Well, that was just one of our fun nights. Thanks, and keep meeting!



Parents AnonymousSM in the News

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 parents seeking help in creating safe and caring homes for their children.

The following parent leaders were featured in recent months:

The June 1999 issue of *Redbook* magazine featured parent leader Julie Casey of CA in the article "The Day I Hurt My Child." The article, which captured the essence of Julie's personal story, also included expert advice to parents from Dr. Lisa Pion-Berlin on "How to Control Your Anger." *Redbook* is a monthly, international publication targeted to young, married, working mothers, ages 25-44 and has a circulation of over 2 million.

Judi Foglesong of Carlsbad, AZ was featured in the article, "My son pushed me to the edge" in the national magazine *First for Women* (Mar. 29, 1999). The magazine has a readership of 4 mil-

lion. Judi said, "Moms need to know it's okay to seek support, and that's why I'm sharing my story."

Eileen Ostman, mother of two, was featured in a *Juneau Empire* newspaper article (Apr. 20, 1999) about the Parents AnonymousSM program in Juneau, AK. Ostman said she joined the Parents AnonymousSM group because "she was losing herself in the role of a full-time mother."

Parents Anonymous, Inc. was among the organizations listed as a resource for nationwide parent leadership training programs in the Spring 1999 issue of *America's Family Support Magazine* from Family Resource Coalition of America.

Imagine

by Susan B. Bilchik, M.Ed., Clinical Director, Children of Separation and Divorce Center, Rockville, MD

Imagine...soy muy, muy pequeñito. De la cabeza a los pies, mido solamente veintiuna pulgadas y peso menos de diez libras. Tengo la piel muy suave y los dedos tan pequeñitos. Tengo unos pocos mechones de pelo y unos ojos grandes y brillantes. No puedo caminar o hablar. No puedo alimentarme solo, o cambiarme el pañal. Todavía no puedo utilizar palabras para decirte cuando necesito un abrazo, o cuando tengo frío o calor, o cuando me duele algo. Necesito que me conozcas, que sepas como mecarme y como me gusta que me sostengas en tus brazos.

Necesito que sepas distinguir cuando llore porque tengo hambre, o porque estoy frustrado, de cuando llore solamente para descargar un poco de energía antes de dormirme. Necesito que sepas mis horarios y rutinas; mi libro favorito, el muñeco o la frazadilla que más quiero.

Necesito saber que siempre estarás disponible y lista para darme amor. Con el tiempo, aprendo que cuando llore para llamarte desde mi cuna, vendrás a ayudarme. Empiezo a confiar en que estarás a mi lado cuando te necesite, y que aunque no siempre puedo decirte lo que necesito, tu lo podrás descifrar. Con tiempo, aprendo que lo que hago afecta el mundo en el que vivo y empiezo a confiar en los demás.

Cuando me toques gentilmente, puedo sentir lo que tu sientes por mí. Me doy cuenta cuando estés tensa o enojada. A esta edad tan temprana, empiezo a verme a mí mismo por medio de tus ojos. Si tu respondes a mis necesidades una y otra vez, de manera consistente y con amor, empiezo a verme como alguien que puede ser amado y siento que tengo valor. Nuestra relación es el patrón de todas mis relaciones futuras.

Cuando aplaudes mis nuevos trucos y me provees con un ambiente estimulante, yo continuo probando cosas nuevas. Necesito juguetes, libros y música. Pero más que nada te necesito a ti; para que me cantes, para que me hables y para que refuerces todo lo que

continued on next page

continued from previous page

estoy aprendiendo. Me encanta la repetición, esa es la razón por la que siempre elijo que me leas el mismo libro cuando me voy a dormir. Esa es la forma en que aprendo mejor.

Puedes ver cuánto dependo de ti? Necesito que estés a mi lado para cuidarme y protegerme. Necesito un ambiente seguro, donde pueda explorar y crecer sin dañarme. Va a pasar mucho tiempo hasta que aprenda cuáles son los límites. Necesito alguien que me dé de comer, que me limpie y que me vista adecuadamente cuando hace frío.

Me siento mejor cuando tengo horarios y rutinas. Me siento más seguro cuando sepa que esperar, cuando sepa que es lo que va a pasar. Puedo explorar mi mundo más libremente cuando me esperen unos brazos seguros y firmes.

Una gran porción de lo que aprendo en estos primeros meses de mi vida formará la base de los próximos años. Mi habilidad para confiar en los demás, mi habilidad para amar, para sentirme bien conmigo mismo, y para sentirme seguro dentro de una relación; dependen del vínculo que forme con ustedes, mis padres.

Cuando estás distraída o enojada, me quedo solo, luchando por mí mismo. Siento la tensión que hay en la casa, y cuando me tratas bruscamente me hace llorar. Cuando estás "demasiado" cansada para levantarte a darme de comer a la medianoche, yo lloro y lloro. Me duele el estómago... y no entiendo por que no vienes a atenderme—cuando me llevas de un lugar para otro y me cuidan distintas personas, me siento desorientado y perdido.

Mama, Papa, es verdad, yo tomo y tomo y todavía no devuelvo mucho. Con mis horarios y necesidades agotadoras, causo tremendos cambios, en este sistema familiar que ya de por sí está estresado. La única forma de vivir con todo esto es por medio del trabajo conjunto de ustedes. Esto significa que ustedes tienen que comunicarse el uno con el otro. Compartir lo que saben de mí; de cuando necesito ser cambiado, de mi salud, mis rutinas y mi ambiente. Más que nada, necesito amor y afecto de ustedes dos. Aún cuando ustedes se sientan agotados y sin esperanza en la vida, por favor, recuerden que éste es sólo el principio de la mía.

Traducido por Gabriela Cetrola, UT
© Susan B. Bilchik, M.Ed.

O.O.B.L.E.C.K. What is It? and Why is It So FUN?!

by Sue Smith, MO

The Conference program promised a way "to release your creative energy, and learn ways to spend hours of fun with your child/children."

Curiosity peaked, participants filed into Salon G to learn just that. Little did they know, they were about to have a close encounter!

"The Science Center in Missouri sent a shuttle to the planet OOBLECK," I told my audience. "They gathered samples from the planet and brought it back for me to share."

Separate containers of OOBLECK were handed out for all participants along with objects like metal washers, tongue depressors, and foam.

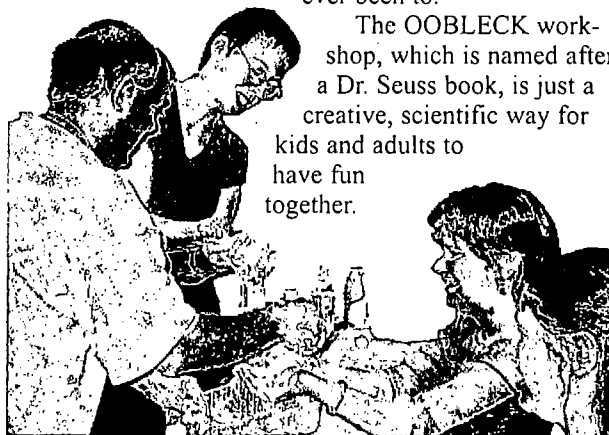
I explained to everyone that all objects have scientific properties which cause them to react certain ways to other objects. I then instructed everyone to use the objects to see what properties OOBLECK had.

As participants used the objects to determine OOBLECK's properties, they were suddenly transformed into fun-loving, goo-dripping, big "kids."

It made my day to see that people enjoyed it that much. I first tried OOBLECK at a parent liaison meeting of the

Missouri Botanical Gardens. The Parents Anonymous, Inc. National Leadership Conference was the first time I had presented the workshop to adults. It was the best workshop I have ever been to.

The OOBLECK workshop, which is named after a Dr. Seuss book, is just a creative, scientific way for kids and adults to have fun together.



Responses from my workshop showed how much people had enjoyed themselves.

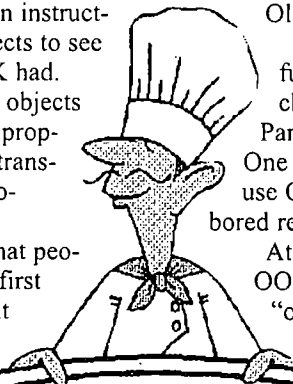
"Playing with OOBLECK was therapy for me!"

"It's gonna be OOBLECK city in Olympia, WA."

Many planned to share the fun with their children, their children's teachers, or their Parents AnonymousSM group.

One participant said she would use OOBLECK to "occupy bored relatives."

At any rate, participants of the OOBLECK workshop had an "out of this world" experience!



4 Boxes Corn Starch

4 1/4 Cups water

15 drops green food coloring

Another 2 1/2 Cups water

Swirl and tip bowl of OOBLECK back & forth. DO NOT STIR. You can use objects to experiment with such as wooden sticks, styrofoam, etc.

to see what OOBLECK reacts to.

OOBLECK is fun and safe. It flakes off clothes, vacuums off carpet. To dispose of leftovers, wait until it hardens and throw away.

**WHATEVER YOU DO, DON'T SEND
OOBLECK DOWN ANY DRAIN!!!**

News Briefs

PARTICIPATION SOUGHT— A new, three-year national outcome study on Parents AnonymousSM will begin in late 1999 in cooperation with the Office for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). Once an evaluator is chosen, parent leaders, volunteers, and program staff from around the country will be sought to respond to questions about the Parents AnonymousSM program and their role in it. Participants and their responses will remain confidential. All Parents AnonymousSM groups in the National Network will participate in this exciting opportunity.

CONGRATULATIONS NOMINEES— In addition to the award recipients featured on page 2, we congratulate those nominated. **For the Jolly K. Award:** Patti Enciso of Pomona, CA; Linda Khadem of Glen Burnie, MD; Sue Smith of St. Louis, MO; Bob Straw of Elizabethtown, PA; and Murry Widman of Westville, NJ. **For the Juanita Chávez Award:** Claire S. Hew of Tucson, AZ and Linda McDaniels of Seattle, WA.

BULLETIN FEATURES PARENTS ANONYMOUSSM— Over 70,000 copies of a special OJJDP bulletin, exclusively on the program, effective strategies, and major initiatives of Parents Anonymous, Inc., has been produced and is being distributed nationwide. "Parents AnonymousSM: Strengthening Families" is part of OJJDP's Family Strengthening Series, which provides assistance to ongoing efforts across the country to strengthen families. To receive a free copy of the publication, call 1-800-638-8736, or print your own copy from the Internet at www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/171120.pdf.

PION-BERLIN INVITED TO SUMMIT— Dr. Lisa Pion-Berlin, president and CEO of Parents Anonymous, Inc., recently attended *Safe From the Start: The National Summit on Children Exposed to Violence* held June 22-24, 1999 in Washington, D.C. hosted by Attorney General Janet Reno, Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala, and Deputy Attorney General Eric H. Holder, Jr. The invitation-only National Summit brought together 150 of the country's most renowned experts to create a National Action Plan to address the vital needs of child crime victims and witnesses.

The Parent Networker is published bi-annually by Parents Anonymous, Inc. We welcome your comments and suggestions for articles.

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RESEARCH PROFILE

 N U M B E R 1 • F E B R U A R Y 2 0 0 0

by Lisa Pion-Berlin, PhD, ACSW, President and Chief Executive Officer
Margaret L. Polinsky, MSW, PhD, Director of Research

INTRODUCTION

Child maltreatment is an extremely serious social problem, with high costs and severe lifelong consequences for children and families. More than one million children are abused and neglected annually, at a rate of 23 per 1,000 (Sedlak & Broadhurst, 1996). The annual monetary costs are \$9 billion, at minimum, for child welfare, health care, and out-of-home care--and related costs for services such as emergency room treatment, special education, and family preservation increase this figure significantly (National Child Abuse Coalition, 1999). The impact of child maltreatment extends far beyond the family, affecting a broad array of significant social problems and needs, including crime, delinquency, health, mental health, education, substance abuse, and child welfare.

PARENTS ANONYMOUS® STRENGTHENS FAMILIES

Parents Anonymous, Inc. was founded in 1970 as the first child abuse prevention and treatment program in the United States. A courageous mother seeking help to create a safe and caring home for her family partnered with her social worker to launch 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 Anonymous® 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.

As the nation's premier family strengthening program, Parents Anonymous® encourages parents to ask for help early, whatever their circumstances, in order to effectively break the cycle of abuse by strengthening parents and ensuring that children live and grow in safe, nurturing homes with hope for the future. Parents Anonymous® has benefited more than a generation of families of all social, economic, and cultural backgrounds, and has touched the lives of millions by partnering with communities and involving volunteers, agencies, and parents seeking help.

The uniqueness of Parents Anonymous® is embedded in its shared leadership-mutual support model, which builds on the strengths of parents in their families and communities. Parents Anonymous® simultaneously eliminates risk factors such as unrealistic expectations, destructive attitudes, and harmful behaviors, while enhancing protective factors such as increased self-esteem, increased competencies, and provision of a nurturing environment for parents and their children (Pion-Berlin, 1999). This twofold approach has been identified as the most effective strategy for the prevention of child maltreatment (Kumpfer & Alvarado, 1998; National Research Council, 1993). In addition, Parents Anonymous® addresses the enhancement of the five major types of family protective factors:

- Supportive parent-child relationships.
- Positive discipline methods.
- Monitoring and supervision.
- Families who advocate for their children.
- Parents who seek information and support.

(Kumpfer & Alvarado, 1998, p. 3)

PARENTS ANONYMOUS® PREVENTS AND TREATS CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

National research definitively confirms the effectiveness of Parents Anonymous® in diminishing the impact of risk factors while dramatically increasing the resiliency of parents and children, resulting in the prevention of child abuse and neglect (Behavior Associates, 1976; Cohn, 1979). Studies of mutual support and shared leadership indicate that the effectiveness of Parents Anonymous® can be attributed to its shared leadership-mutual support approach, where confidentiality is assured and parents can discuss their problems in a reciprocally supportive, nonjudgmental setting (Blizinsky, 1982; Levine, 1988; Nix, 1980; Riessman & Carroll, 1995; Thompson, 1994, 1995; and Yoak & Chesler, 1985).

The first national study of Parents Anonymous® clearly demonstrated the effectiveness of the Parents Anonymous® program (Behavior Associates, 1976). Study results showed a significant and immediate reduction in physical abuse. Verbal abuse also declined immediately and continued to decline over time. Other significant changes in Parents Anonymous® parents included increased self-esteem, decreased social isolation, and enhanced knowledge of child development, resulting in more appropriate behavioral expectations of their children (Lieber & Baker, 1977).

National research definitively confirms the effectiveness of Parents Anonymous® in diminishing the impact of risk factors while dramatically increasing the resiliency of parents and children, resulting in the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

In a separate investigation, the Berkeley Planning Associates (1977) confirmed the positive findings of Behavior Associates (1976). This first national evaluation study was conducted in order to determine the relative effectiveness of different treatment strategies for parents, including Parents Anonymous®, individual counseling, case management, lay counseling, group therapy, and parent education. A major conclusion of the study was that "...parents who participated in Parents Anonymous®, irrespective of whatever other

services they received, were significantly more likely to have their problems resolved than clients who did not participate in this service" (Cohn, 1979, p. 495).

The effectiveness of Parents Anonymous® has also been demonstrated by other researchers who reported improvements in parents' self-esteem, ability to cope with stress, knowledge of child development, and problem-solving ability, as well as decreases in parents' abusive behaviors, impulsiveness, inappropriate expectations of themselves and their children, and social isolation (Alexander, 1980; Borman and Lieber, 1984; Hunka, O'Toole, and O'Toole, 1985; Savells and Bash, 1979). In additional studies, Parents Anonymous® parents described the Parents Anonymous® model as relevant, supportive, accessible, and non-threatening, which contributed to their ability to solve their parent-child relationship problems (Powell, 1979, 1981).

Furthermore, national research on Parents Anonymous® original children's programs revealed significant improvements in children's self-esteem,

behavior, and social interaction skills (Behavior Associates, 1983, 1984). The study concluded that these children reduced their lying, decreased their physical aggressiveness, and were better able to concentrate.

Because of its demonstrated effectiveness, Parents Anonymous® was highlighted by Congress in the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (1996) as the benchmark for child abuse prevention and treatment programs throughout the United States. Moreover, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) of the U.S. Department of Justice, acknowledges and promotes Parents Anonymous® as a national Model Family Strengthening Program to prevent juvenile delinquency. The first publication in OJJDP's Family Strengthening Series was on Parents Anonymous, Inc. and highlights the critical linkages between Parents Anonymous® and juvenile delinquency prevention efforts (Rafael & Pion-Berlin, 1999). In 2000 OJJDP will select an evaluator to conduct a national outcome study on Parents Anonymous®.

PARENTS ANONYMOUS® IMPACTS OTHER SOCIAL PROBLEMS

As Parents Anonymous® strengthens families by preventing and treating child abuse, it also decreases the potential for other social problems to occur. It is well-documented that children who are abused and neglected are at higher risk for a number of interrelated social problems, including juvenile delinquency,



crime, emotional and developmental problems, substance abuse, poor academic performance, homelessness, and unemployment, each of which has enormous monetary and social costs (CWLA Stat Book, 1999; Jacobson, 1999; Kumpfer & Alvarado, 1998; The National League of Cities et al., 1999; Widom, 1992).

Parents Anonymous® Prevents Juvenile Delinquency and Crime

Research has overwhelmingly established that being abused or neglected as a child increases one's risk for delinquency, adult criminal behavior, and violent criminal behavior (Widom, 1992). In addition, children who are abused or neglected are at higher risk for committing crimes at younger ages and being arrested more frequently than nonabused children (Widom, 1989, 1992, 1996). In fact, a history of child maltreatment has been found to increase the chances of youth violence by 24% (Thornberry, 1994), and increase the likelihood of arrest as a juvenile by 53%, as an adult by 38%, and for violent crime by 38% (Widom, 1992). Findings reported by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (1999) noted that 19% of State prison inmates, 10% of Federal inmates, and 16% of those in

local jails or on active probation had been physically or sexually abused before their current sentence. Significant relationships have been found between the prevalence of child maltreatment and negative outcomes during adolescence such as serious delinquency, violence, pregnancy, drug use, and mental health problems as well as lower school performance (Kelley, Thornberry, & Smith, 1997).

The prevention of child abuse and neglect can result in reducing juvenile delinquency, reducing the numbers of teenagers who run away, deterring adolescent drug and alcohol addiction, and helping young people avoid the traps of prostitution and pornography (National Child Abuse Coalition, 1999). Deterring one young adult from a violent criminal career can save society an estimated \$1.1 million (Kumpfer & Alvarado, 1998).

Parents Anonymous® Treats Emotional and Developmental Problems

Being abused or neglected as a child results in behavioral and emotional problems, including feelings of helplessness, terror, isolation, guilt, and grief. When these children become adults, they experience increased rates of suicide attempts and are at higher risk for antisocial personality, alcoholism, and prostitution (Office for Victims of Crime, 1999; Widom, 1996).

Recent brain research highlights the importance of positive parent-child interactions during the first three years of life which

further supports the need for early intervention programs to prevent child maltreatment, juvenile delinquency and other social problems (*Newsweek*, Spring/Summer 1997). In the special issue of *Newsweek*, Parents Anonymous® was the only direct service program highlighted as a resource for parents, in contrast to the web sites and information services listed.

For very young children, it has been found that traumatic experiences of abuse or neglect at the beginning of life have profound negative effects on the parts of the brain that are responsible for basic regulatory capacities and response to stress (Siegel, 1999). In addition, the legacy of child maltreatment is seen starkly in the population of disabled adults where an estimated 25% became disabled as a result of child abuse and neglect (Kilpatrick & Saunders, 1997).

Parents Anonymous® Deters Substance Abuse

A study of children in Grades 6, 9, and 12 demonstrated that children who had been abused were not only more likely to use alcohol, marijuana, and almost all other drugs, but also more likely to use multiple substances at a younger age. These children reported



that they used substances in order to cope with their painful emotions and to escape from their personal problems (Harrison, Fulkerson, and Beebe, 1997).

Parents Anonymous® Enhances School Performance

Numerous studies have demonstrated that students who are abused or neglected are at significant risk for poor academic performance, grade repetition, and discipline problems (Eckenrode et al., 1993; Reyome, 1993). Furthermore, when even one young person leaves high school for a life of crime and drug abuse, the cost to society is \$1.7-\$2.3 million (Snyder and Sickmund, 1999).

Parents Anonymous® Prevents Homelessness and Unemployment

Abused children often end up in foster care. Of the 25,000 to 30,000 young people who become of age and leave foster care each year, 25-40% experience homelessness and less than half of them have jobs within one year (Cook, 1992). Compared to the general population, adults who were in foster care as children report less educational, employment, and income achievement (Benedict and Zuravin, 1996).

CONCLUSIONS

Family strengthening has been identified by prominent researchers as the most effective strategy for decreasing child maltreatment and thus decreasing the negative social consequences of child abuse and neglect. By starting with families as early as possible to

improve parenting practices and provide parental support, family strengthening programs can curb crime and delinquency, reduce problem behaviors in school

and elsewhere, prevent drug use, decrease family conflict, and strengthen communities (American Psychological Association, 1996; King et al., 1992; Kumpfer & Alvarado, 1998; Mayer, 1995).

Based on nationally-established criteria, Parents Anonymous® is a highly effective family strengthening program because it is comprehensive, flex-

ible, responsive, family-focused, community-based, encourages mutual respect and trust, and has a clear mission with high standards of quality and good management (Schorr, 1997).

Parents Anonymous® 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 (University of Minnesota, 1990). Through prevention, Parents Anonymous® decreases child maltreatment as a risk factor that can escalate into other costly social problems such as juvenile delinquency, crime, emotional and developmental problems, substance abuse, poor school performance, homelessness, and unemployment. Investing in Parents Anonymous® not only saves society millions of dollars annually by deterring the tremendous emotional and social consequences of child abuse, it also saves the lives of millions of America's children and assures strong families for the next generation.

Family strengthening has been identified by prominent researchers as the most effective strategy for decreasing child maltreatment and thus decreasing the negative social consequences of child abuse and neglect.

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For information on starting Parents Anonymous®
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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.

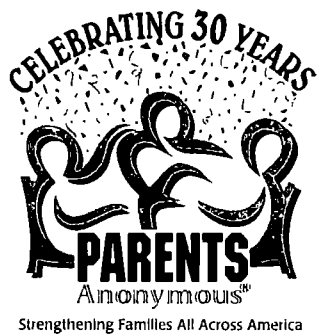
The Committee is also aware of the efforts of other parent self-help organizations that are working to prevent child abuse. The Committee recognizes that Child Abuse Prevention Act funds would allow these organizations to help more families in crisis.

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



NATIONAL PARENTS ANONYMOUS® HELPLINE AN EFFECTIVE MODEL FOR STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND PROTECTING CHILDREN

What Is the Need?

- Child maltreatment is an extremely serious social problem, with high costs and severe lifelong consequences for children and families. More than one million children are abused and neglected annually, at a rate of 23 per 1,000 (Sedlak & Broadhurst, 1996). The annual monetary costs are \$9 billion, at minimum, for child welfare, health care, and out-of-home care. In addition, related costs for services such as emergency room treatment, special education and family preservation services increase this figure significantly (National Child Abuse Coalition, 1999).
- The impact of child maltreatment extends far beyond the family, affecting a broad array of significant social problems and needs, including crime, delinquency, health, mental health, education, substance abuse and child welfare.
- Being a parent is a critically important job, 24 hours a day, every day of the year. All parents need help and support at some time in order to provide safe and caring homes for their children. Millions of parents feel isolated, alone and frustrated and need a safe and easily accessible avenue for reaching out for help.
- There is no national toll-free telephone system that is designed to provide immediate support to parents seeking help and to connect them with proven effective community-based programs for on-going support and assistance. There are national toll-free telephone lines for help in domestic violence situations, help with poison control issues and help for children and youth who are experiencing problems. It is distressing to recognize that there is no accessible national avenue for parents who have the courage and tenacity to reach out for help in being the best parents they can be.
- Critical situations can arise anytime and parents can avoid a crisis by having the opportunity to find help before reaching the point that their emotions and behaviors are out of control. When a parent is awake at night with a crying baby, has just lost a job, is entering into a divorce or other significant relationship loss, is a single dad who is worried about his teen-aged daughter who is long past her curfew, or has never learned from her own parents how to provide a safe and caring home for a child, there is a greater possibility that the child will become a target of the parent's frustration, stress and rage. Calling a caring, supportive advocate at the National Parents Anonymous® Helpline will provide a vehicle for managing these feelings and learning new parenting strategies that avoid making the child a target.
- Parents are our greatest hope for preventing child abuse before it damages their families and harms their children. It is the responsibility of all of us to support parents in providing safe and caring homes for their children.

THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION
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www.parentsanonymous-natl.org

e-mail: parentsanon@msn.com

What Is the Solution?

- Parents Anonymous, Inc., the nation's oldest child abuse prevention program, proposes to develop and operate a National Parents Anonymous® Helpline so that parent throughout the country, in all states, on reservations, in urban and rural areas, can access immediate support and help where trained advocates provide 24-hour assistance every day of the year to parents who call. From 1970 - 1992, Parents Anonymous, Inc. operated a national toll-free telephone helpline for parents seeking help. Congressional support is now needed in order to reinstate this critically needed service and take it to full national scale.
- Since 1970, parents have reached out to Parents Anonymous® as a vehicle for making lasting, effective, positive changes in their lives. With a name parents trust and a thirty-year history of successfully responding to the immediate and long-term needs of parents seeking help, Parents Anonymous, Inc. has responded to needs of millions of parents who have reached out for help, support, strength and hope.
- Based on a comprehensive plan developed in collaboration with Superior Consulting Company, the National Parents Anonymous® Helpline will utilize the most up-to date communication strategies and ensure the greatest accessibility and most immediate help for parents via the telephone system and via real-time electronic communication, utilizing e-mail and other technology. Almost all parents can access a telephone and most can access a computer through schools or the public library if they don't have one at home.
- When parents contact the National Parents Anonymous® Helpline, in addition to the immediate assistance provided, they are connected to a National Network of dynamic community-based Parents Anonymous® programs where on-going support is available free of charge to participants. A data bank of other local resources will ensure connections to appropriate additional services and written materials on a variety of parenting issues will be available in multiple languages. The Helpline will assist parents with the wide range of issues they face, whether it is problems with discipline, communication, drug and alcohol abuse, child development, educational needs for their children or other issues.
- Given the diversity in our country, assistance will be available in more than 140 languages through the use of multi-cultural staff and the A.T.& T. language line and for the hearing impaired through the use of TDD services.
- Through publicizing the National Parents Anonymous® Helpline, the message will be conveyed that "It is a sign of strength to ask for help" and parents will be encouraged to reach out for help at anytime, whatever their current situation or the parenting problems they are facing.
- Based on the Parents Anonymous® principles of parent leadership and shared leadership, the National Parents Anonymous® Helpline will be developed and operated with the meaningful involvement of parent leaders from across the country who will provide their experience and suggestions to help ensure the effectiveness of all aspects of this valuable service.
- The anticipated costs for the National Parents Anonymous® Helpline are a small investment to make to strengthen our nation's families and help protect our most vital resource, our children.

4/11

ACF

Parents Anonymous

Budget, leg for ACF

Maddie -

Sen. approps staff - turned off by P.A. ^{may pick it}

Hill + HHS has told them they are supportive
want to see it spread at the localities

There will be funding for these activities -

2000 Earmark in the report - goes further - recognizes where ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~last~~ ^{last}
authorizing leg - various ~~the~~ ^{the} orgs such as P.A.

↓ CAPTA reauth. - Child Abuse + Prevention + Treatment

will soon

announce ~~the~~ ^{the} availability of grant -

They have gotten ~~the~~ ^{the} in past but not enough

They would prefer a sole source
not to have to compete -

HHS prefers competition - to give out to a # of grantees

current grant will end - Sept. 2000

our message -

"These kinds of activities are great - with support
we've been assured that a grant
announcement will go out ^{to solicit grantees to}
do these activities.
we encourage you to compete + apply."

delayed obligation - genuine - gone at later in year.

program announcement - late this week a early next



April 7, 2000

Ann O'Leary, Special Assistant to the President
c/o Heather Howard, Associate Director
Domestic Policy Council
The White House
Second Floor, West Wing
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Ms. O'Leary,

We are requesting a meeting on Wednesday, April 12, 2000 at 11:00 a.m. to discuss an event at the White House that would feature the unveiling of Parents Anonymous, Inc.'s 30th Anniversary poster. The poster is a wonderful visual representation of the rich diversity of families who utilize Parents Anonymous® programs. I am the President and Chief Executive Officer of Parents Anonymous, Inc., the oldest child abuse prevention organization in America. Through weekly, ongoing Parents Anonymous® groups we help thousands of families learn new skills, transform their attitudes and behaviors and create long term positive changes in their lives. While the parents are meeting, their children participate in Parents Anonymous® Children's Programs to promote their healthy growth and development.

The 30th Anniversary poster is being distributed by our dynamic National Network of Parents Anonymous® organizations to raise awareness about family strengthening and child abuse prevention issues. We would like to unveil the poster at the White House surrounded by families who have found help, support, strength and hope through Parents Anonymous®. An event at the White House with Parents Anonymous® parents would send the critical message that *asking for help is a sign of strength.*

President Clinton, First Lady Hillary Clinton and Vice President Gore are all familiar with Parents Anonymous, Inc. and its work to strengthen America's families. 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. I represented Parents Anonymous, Inc. at the 1994 conference on fatherhood hosted by Vice President Gore and his wife, Tipper. Two years later he graciously agreed to write an article for *The Parent Networker*, our newsletter produced by and for Parents Anonymous® parents.

During our 30th Anniversary year, we are interested in partnering with the White House to celebrate the success of parents who have turned their lives around forever through Parents Anonymous®. In addition to the unveiling of the

THE WHITE HOUSE
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e-mail: parentsanonymous@net.net

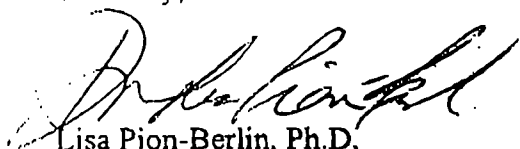
Page 2

Ann O'Leary

Parents Anonymous® poster, I am interested in discussing ways in which Parents Anonymous, Inc. can participate in any planned White House activities that would bring focus to issues regarding family strengthening and child abuse prevention in America.

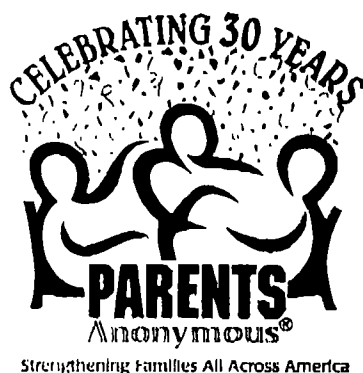
My Senior Communications Associate Stephanie Graham will call Tuesday, April 11 to confirm our Wednesday, April 12 appointment. I look forward to meeting with you to establish an ongoing partnership between Parents Anonymous, Inc. and The White House. Our successful collaboration will provide families help today and hope for the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa Pion-Berlin", is written over a horizontal line.

Lisa Pion-Berlin, Ph.D.

President and Chief Executive Officer



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.

• • • • •

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.