Not on My Watch

Where vulnerable people are, the potential for exploitation exists. Safe environment policies, screening techniques, and training are only pieces of a much larger effort to keep our kids safe. We deceive ourselves when we think that these steps are enough in themselves!

It takes awareness – ongoing awareness – on everyone’s part, children and adults alike, to create and maintain an environment free of abuse and exploitation. The more we learn about the problem, know what to watch for, and how to respond, the better chance we have to keep our kids safe from harm.

Don’t get taken in by the myths of “We’re safe because…

- ...we do CBIs.” Criminal background investigations only expose those who have already been convicted. The perpetrator who hasn’t been caught is still out there.
- ...everyone’s been safe environment trained.” One or two training sessions isn’t enough to maintain a sufficient level of awareness.
- ...everyone knows everyone here.” Most abusers look like the good guys. What we don’t know CAN hurt us.
- ...it’s never happened here.” Just because it hasn’t doesn’t mean it can’t. Child molesters are everywhere.

Get creative in growing awareness.

- Get kids involved through contests and safety training. The best way to solidify learning is for them to have opportunities to share what they’ve learned.
- Support events and distribute materials available from community sources.
- Encourage all parishioners to attend live safe environment training events.
- Put safe environment materials in the hands of parents.

Abuse happens when our guard is down. We must never become complacent!

- Have safe environment bulletin boards and kiosks been updated and re-stocked recently? Are they visible and attractively arranged?
- Is there adequate supervision of children AND the adults who are working with them?
- Are reporting protocols reviewed occasionally with those working with minors?
- Are pulpit announcements regularly made explaining safe environment efforts to the entire parish?
- Are April Child Abuse Prevention Month bulletin inserts used?
- Is the bulletin used for child safety information throughout the year?

Kids and adults who know what to look for and what to do when they see it make the biggest difference.

Our Church raised the bar when it placed child safety among its highest priorities. Child abuse is preventable!