



PRESS RELEASE

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Former Pennsylvania First Lady Michele M. Ridge Joins PCAR/NSVRC in Unveiling National Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Campaign

ENOLA, Pa. (May 18, 2006) – Child sexual abuse happens at an alarming rate. Each year, it is estimated that more than 651,500 children (the equivalent of ten times the average SuperBowl attendance) will experience the hurt and devastation of sexual abuse.

Gathering today at Pennsylvania’s State Capitol in Harrisburg, the National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC), together with Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape (PCAR), unveiled Vision of Hope – a national campaign aimed at preventing child sexual abuse. Nationally, Vision of Hope will promote critical research, effective prevention strategies, adult responsibility and accountability and crisis response to victimized children.

“Through Vision of Hope we are working to protect and restore the hopes and dreams of our children,” remarked Delilah Rumburg, executive director, NSVRC/PCAR. “Our vision is to create permanent change that allows every child to live a life free from sexual abuse.”

Leading the campaign is former Pennsylvania First Lady and mother of two, Michele M. Ridge. She is joined in this effort by the following professionals who are dedicated to promoting solutions that protect children from a lifetime of devastation:

- Jim Anderson, Executive Director, Pennsylvania Juvenile Court Judges’ Commission; Harrisburg, Pa.
- Anne Ard, Executive Director, Centre County Women’s Resource Center, Inc.; State College, Pa.
- Gloria Blint, Principal, Red House Communications; Pittsburgh, Pa.
- Kathleen Brown, PhD, RN, Adjunct Professor, University of Pennsylvania; Philadelphia, Pa.
- Lori Burkholder, anchor, WGAL-TV; Lancaster, Pa.
- Dr. Cindy Christian, Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia; Philadelphia, Pa.
- Barbara Clark, Executive Director, Network of Victim Assistance; Jamison, Pa.

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- Theodore Corbin, Medical Director, Violence Prevention Program of Thomas Jefferson University Hospital; Philadelphia, Pa.
- Judy Griffin, Community Leader; Meadville, Pa.
- Mark Hanna, President, Hanna & Associates; Pittsburgh, Pa.
- Sonia Holman, President, Mount Vernon Group; Mount Vernon, Va.
- Ellen Hughes, Host/Producer WITF-FM; Mechanicsburg, Pa.
- Beth Hunsicker, Associate Marketing Manager, Hershey Company; Hershey, Pa.
- Rear Admiral Louis V. Iasiello, Community Leader; Washington, DC
- Theo Kotjarapoglus, Community Leader; Boiling Springs, Pa.
- Allen Kukovich, Former Senator, Office of the Governor; Pittsburgh, Pa.
- Nolan Kurtz, Klett, Rooney, Lieber and Schorling; Harrisburg, Pa.
- Janet MacKay, Executive Director, Victims Resource Center; Wilkes-Barre, Pa.
- Lynn Marks, Executive Director, Pennsylvanians for Modern Courts; Philadelphia, Pa.
- Melinda Marley, Community Leader; Ellittsburg, Pa.
- Joan Martin, Community Leader; Erie, Pa.
- Nobuko Oyabu, Photojournalist; Omaha, Neb.
- Cathleen Palm, Child Advocate; Bernville, Pa.
- Delilah Rumburg, Executive Director, Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape; Enola, Pa.
- Benjamin Saunders, Professor of Psychiatry, Medical University of South Carolina; Charleston, S.C.
- Christine Toretti Olson, Chairman and CEO; S.W. Jack Drilling Company; Indiana, Pa.
- Paul Tufano, Senior Vice President and General Counsel, Independence Blue Cross; Philadelphia, Pa.
- Stephanie Walsh, Executive Director, Center for Victims of Violence and Crime; Pittsburgh, Pa.
- Joel Weisberg, Director of Bureau of Disability Determination, Department of Labor and Industry; Harrisburg, Pa.
- Nancy Wells, Community Leader; Pittsburgh, Pa.
- Bob Zimmerman, former PA Secretary of Health and Regional Director, U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services; Mechanicsburg, Pa.
- Georgina Zogby, Community Leader; Mechanicsburg, Pa.

“Too often I’ve seen the faces of young victims whose lives have been devastated by acts of sexual violence,” remarked Ridge. “As chairperson of the Vision of Hope Advisory Council, it is my goal to support and sustain innovative child sexual abuse prevention strategies.”

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“Once I lived in terror and had no voice,” said Jenna, age 16, a survivor of child sexual abuse who spoke at the Capitol. “Today, I use my voice so that other kids who have been sexually abused know they are not alone.”

In addition to formally naming advisory council members, the press conference launched an educational media campaign focusing on children’s “hopes and dreams.” The campaign includes a case for support document, print advertisements, radio spots and a web site: www.theirhope.org, where individuals may visit for information about Vision of Hope and how to make a difference in the life of a child.

Child sexual abuse violates a child’s right to normal, healthy and trusting relationships. Perpetrators are frequently known to the child as someone she/he loves and trusts. Without help, the impact can last a lifetime.

For the past 30 years, the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape has been at the forefront of the anti-sexual violence movement providing innovative solutions to prevent sexual violence. Together with the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, PCAR has been engaging partners in its efforts to prevent sexual violence and bring hope and healing to survivors. For more information visit www.pcar.org or call 1-888-772-PCAR.

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