

Our mission is to respond to the complex needs of abused and neglected children, and those involved in their care, by providing best practice counseling, legal, and educational services. Through research, communications and training initiatives, we work to expand these programs to prevent abuse and help more children heal.



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## Please Don't Look the Other Way! Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect

**By Mary L. Pulido, Ph.D.**

*Executive Director, The New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children*

Recently, there was a horrific news report about a three year-old girl who died from her injuries inflicted by her stepfather. He beat her because she soiled her pants. It seems every week we learn of another senseless tragic death that could have been prevented.

See something? Hear something? Please, do something! This is not an alert warning about a strange package on a subway platform. It is an alert for another type of terror: the abuse and neglect of children. It's everyone's job to protect children, not just the local authorities. **April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. Make it your time to learn how to help a child who is at risk.**

It's interesting to me that although the age of social media has dramatically lowered the threshold on privacy standards—many adults are still reticent about reporting their suspicions about child abuse and neglect. How many times do we hear on the news, "I knew something was wrong, but I never thought he'd hurt the baby;" or, "They are always fighting in that house, but you are afraid to get involved, don't know if they could turn on you." This type of "bystander" behavior is far too common.

So, alarmingly, significant numbers of child abuse and neglect incidents go unreported. I am encouraging you to take action. When a child is brought to the attention of the authorities, the children and their parents can get the help that they need to prevent future abuse and strengthen their family. It can mean the difference between life and death for newborns and children under the age of four, when most fatalities occur.

I'm urging everyone to take the steps needed to protect children. Go with your gut, as we hear all the time about other types of dangerous situations. If something is making you suspicious or uneasy, it's worth reporting. I encourage everyone to learn how to recognize the signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect. Our website [www.nyspcc.org](http://www.nyspcc.org) offers a guide.

Many people tell me that taking the step of reporting makes them anxious, and that is understandable. Perhaps you are not 100-percent sure about your concerns. Even if this is the case, you can and should take steps to help rescue the child. I counsel parents that if they have a "reasonable suspicion" that a child is at risk, that's enough to make a call to the state's child abuse hotline. Much child abuse occurs behind closed doors; therefore, it's important for concerned friends, family members and neighbors to be familiar with the signs. And children, particularly younger ones, who may not be in school yet, will probably not tell you that they've been hurt, so concerned adults need to be their advocates if they have suspicions.

Please learn the basic steps and take action.

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## Letter from the Executive Director



Dear Friends:

With a new year upon us, I am pleased to give you a few highlights about all of the wonderful things you helped The NYSPCC accomplish.

- The NYSPCC continued to protect the safety of children, strengthen vulnerable families, and help children to heal from abuse, by serving 6,302 children, 292 parents and caregivers, and 2,236 child welfare professionals.
- We published an article in the *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse* in August about our Safe Touches research entitled, "Sexual Abuse Prevention Concept Knowledge: Low Income Children are Learning but Still Lagging."
- We also expanded our child sexual abuse prevention efforts by training professionals to facilitate Safe Touches workshops in upstate New York, Pennsylvania, and Athens, Greece.
- The NYSPCC welcomed a new Board President, Karl G. Wellner, and three new Children's Council Members, Vicky Cornell, Costas Spiliadis, and Dr. Thomas Kelly.
- After several years of stalwart advocacy by The NYSPCC, the New York State legislature passed a bill that requires staff members at private schools to report instances of child abuse to law enforcement, giving private school students the same protection as public school students. The bill became a law in December.
- I was elected to the national board of directors for the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children, through which I will be able to provide a powerful voice for children at a national level.
- The NYSPCC began working with NYC Elite Gymnastics to improve the organization's policies and procedures related to child safety and sexual abuse, and we will soon begin working with the Athlete Assistance Fund to increase protections for young gymnasts across the country.

As we move forward into 2019, The NYSPCC greatly values your continued support. You can help us to keep thousands of more children safe from abuse and neglect by making donations, raising awareness on social media, and attending one of our upcoming events.

- On April 11th, we will host our Spring Luncheon at The Pierre Hotel, with special guest speaker, Tara Westover, best-selling author of *Educated*;
- On November 20th, our Food & Wine Gala will be held at The Metropolitan Club.

Our work in New York City and beyond is only possible with the support of our friends and colleagues. Thank you for your continued belief in our mission and for helping to keep children safe. We look forward to sharing a great year ahead with you.

Warm regards,

Mary L. Pulido, Ph.D.  
Executive Director

## Please Don't Look the Other Way! Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect

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First of all, if you see a child being abused, or hear a child screaming in pain, call 911. If you have suspicions that a child is at risk, every state has a hotline that you can call to make a report. They will ask for your name and number, but you can choose to remain anonymous. Even if you are not certain about all the specifics, *make the call*. It's then up to the investigators to follow through.

The Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-4-A-CHILD) serves the U.S. and Canada, the hotline is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with professional crisis counselors who—through interpreters—provide assistance in over 170 languages. The hotline

offers crisis intervention, information, and referrals to thousands of emergency, social service, and support resources. All calls are confidential. Please make the call!

Yes, taking action may be a bit upsetting. That's understandable, as it's such an important undertaking. Nevertheless, you'll rest easier knowing that due to your intervention, the child and their parent will be getting help and attention. Remember, child abuse is preventable. Everyone must be part of the solution.

For more information on keeping your child safe visit [www.nyspcc.org](http://www.nyspcc.org).

## Program Spotlight

### Protecting Young Athletes

The NYSPCC is proud to tell you that we are working to improve child protection and safety in the sport of gymnastics.

In the Spring of 2018, NYC Elite, a local gymnastics organization, reached out to The NYSPCC and asked for our help to protect the more than 5,000 young athletes enrolled in their programs. In response, The NYSPCC Training Institute taught 29 staff members from three NYC Elite facilities how to identify and report sexual abuse. More training sessions will be scheduled in the summer and fall of 2019.

Tina Ferriola, NYC Elite's Chief Executive Officer, was so impressed with our Training Institute that she asked The NYSPCC to conduct a full audit of the organization's policies and procedures related to child safety. The project, led by Dr. Mary Pulido, is currently underway and should be completed by Spring 2019.

Ms. Ferriola also sits on the Board of the Athlete Assistance Fund, which is currently helping gymnasts who were impacted by the Larry Nassar child sexual abuse scandal to access mental health services. Ms. Ferriola advocated for The NYSPCC to become involved in the Foundation's efforts to protect gymnasts across the nation. With her support, our Training Institute was awarded a grant from the Athlete Assistance Fund to provide training and consultation services. In 2019,



our Training Institute will develop and conduct child protection workshops for elite-level athletes, coaches and parents across the country, as well as improve national protocols through the development of Gymnastics Accreditation Standards for Child Safety Practices and the development of a Safe Gym Handbook & Policy Guide.

We look forward to keeping all of you apprised of our ongoing work with NYC Elite and the Athlete Assistance Fund to ensure young gymnasts are able to have fun and compete in a safe environment, free from the trauma of sexual abuse.

## Help, Hope and Healing

Eddy Pérez can't remember a time when his parents were happy together. For as far back as he can remember, his father verbally and physically abused him and his mother, Veronica. Eventually, with Eddy's encouragement, Veronica found the courage to call the police and leave her husband.

Despite moving to a safe home environment, 12-year-old Eddy had emotional scars that needed to be addressed. He was referred to The NYSPCC's Trauma Recovery Program for therapy. When Eddy began treatment, he suffered from depression and intrusive thoughts—flashbacks from particularly violent episodes with his father. Eddy was also struggling in school and was socially detached, not hanging out with his friends or playing the sports he had previously enjoyed. But what made his therapeutic care most challenging initially was that Eddy refused to talk about what happened to him and held negative views of therapy.

During their earliest counseling sessions, Eddy's therapist provided psycho-education, teaching him what trauma is and how to identify his symptoms. This helped Eddy learn how to understand his emotions, which was the first step in helping him develop coping skills. Through talk therapy sessions, Eddy learned that his flashbacks were often triggered by the smells of alcohol and cologne, which reminded Eddy of his father. The therapist then helped Eddy develop strategies for managing this and other triggers. The therapist also helped Eddy identify activities that he found pleasurable and helped him cope with negative emotions, such as listening to uplifting music or engaging with peers. As Eddy's anger and depressions started to lift, he developed a positive attitude about therapy which motivated him to engage fully in his treatment.

The therapist also met regularly with Veronica to help her understand how the domestic violence affected Eddy and to encourage her to be more empathetic and supportive. This was hard for Veronica, who would sometimes yell in anger, exacerbating Eddy's symptoms and undermining their relationship. The therapist helped Veronica understand how yelling triggered her son's anger and identify ways that she could de-escalate the situation and communicate in healthier ways.

Eddy and Veronica continued their treatment with The NYSPCC's Trauma Recovery Program for over a year. Upon discharge, Eddy was greatly improved. His intrusive memories decreased. He was more socially and physically active, regularly playing baseball and soccer with his friends. He was doing better at school and looking forward to applying to colleges. Eddy's mother also became more supportive and nurturing which played an important role in continuing Eddy's journey of healing.

### HELP MORE CHILDREN LIKE EDDY

To make a donation,  
fill out the enclosed return envelope.  
Gifts can also be made online at  
[www.nyspcc.org](http://www.nyspcc.org) or over the phone  
by calling 212.233.5500.

## Signature Events

### Spring Luncheon

The 7th Annual Spring Luncheon, held on April 17, 2018, featured Gold Medal Olympic Gymnast McKayla Maroney. During an intimate conversation with Dr. Mary L. Pulido, Executive Director of The NYSPCC, Maroney discussed her road to recovery, following the horrific child sexual abuse at the hands of Larry Nassar, the team doctor for the United States Gymnastic team, and what she plans to do moving forward.

**“Within the gymnastics world, there’s no question we need to rebuild from the ground up so this never happens again.”**

— MCKAYLA MARONEY



Valesca Guerrand-Hermès,  
McKayla Maroney, Dr. Mary L. Pulido,  
and Elizabeth Mayhew



Jean Shafiroff, Deborah Norville,  
and Dr. Penny Grant

### Food & Wine Gala

On November 6th, over \$520,000 was raised at the annual Food & Wine Gala. Chef Costas Spiliadis of estiatorio Milos curated the menu and Deborah Norville, Anchor of Inside Edition and NYSPCC Children’s Council Member, hosted the evening.



Dr. Mary L. Pulido, Chef Costas Spiliadis,  
and Vicky Cornell

### The NYSPCC Junior Committee’s May Soiree and Hope Flows

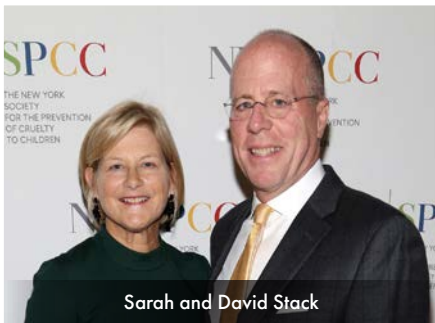
On May 10th, The NYSPCC Junior Committee returned to FISHBOWL for their annual May Soirée cocktail party. In December, they launched Hope Flows, a yoga fundraiser benefitting the Trauma Recovery program. The committee raised over \$25,000 for The NYSPCC.



Matt Semino, Jennifer Nichols Armstrong,  
MaryKate Boylan, Lea Kadish, Jonathan Klein



Hope Flows at Earth Yoga NYC



Sarah and David Stack



Thomas and Maarit Glocer, and Karl Wellner

### Family Holiday Party

Every December, The NYSPCC hosts a toy drive and holiday party for the children and families who visit the agency for therapeutic services. On December 10th, 2018, the families were treated to a Winter Wonderland, featuring delicious food, arts & crafts, and a clown show. Thanks to the generosity of compassionate donors, we were able to delight every child with at least two presents!



## SAVE THE DATE

**Spring Luncheon featuring  
Tara Westover**

**Thursday, April 11, 2019**

The Pierre

**Food & Wine Gala**

**Wednesday, November 20,  
2019**

The Metropolitan Club

**FOR RESERVATIONS AND FOR  
MORE INFORMATION**

 **212.233.5500 ext. 229**

 **info@nyspcc.org**

## In the Community

Abuse, neglect, and family violence aren't easy experiences to recover from, which is why The NYSPCC wants to do whatever it can to help improve the lives of the children and families we serve. With the help of our corporate partners and friends in the community, The NYSPCC creates a warm and pleasant atmosphere that puts children at ease, allowing them to engage fully in their therapy. We provide them with books to take home after every therapy appointment; we offer school supplies and backpacks at the start of every new school year; and we give them gifts every December to brighten their holiday season.

The NYSPCC would like to thank the following organizations for their contributions in 2018:

- Scholastic and Macmillan Children's Publishing Group kept our children's library full and the love of reading alive.
- In September, Julianne Michelle Reeves and Lori Snyder hosted a school supply drive at Eleteuri, ensuring that our kids were ready for the 2018-2019 school year. IMPACT, a student organization at CUNY York College, also collected backpacks filled to the brim with school supplies.
- The many companies and community groups who participated in our toy drive, made the holiday season a joyful one for hundreds of children and families:
  - Adobe
  - Alamo Drafthouse
  - Arturo Riddick
  - Carolina Isaza Ortiz
  - Colgate-Palmolive Company
  - Commerzbank
  - Gibney, Anthony and Flaherty
  - Good News Church of NYC
  - GPL Ventures
  - Hamlyn Williams
  - ITOCHU Prominent
  - Laura Szamatulski
  - Lemonade
  - Marvel Entertainment
  - MediaCom
  - Pace University—Lubin School of Business
  - Pilot Fiber
  - Success Academy
  - The Alexander
  - Titmouse



GPL Ventures collected boxes of toys, video games, and more for The NYSPCC's families.



Student organization IMPACT from CUNY York College holding backpacks filled with supplies to help children excel in school.



Thanks to generous donations, children have the necessary tools for a successful new school year.



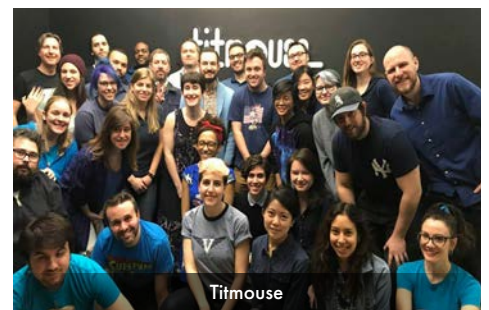
Children get to select all the supplies they need including backpacks, binders, markers, and pens.

## Child Abuse Prevention Month

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month, a time to recognize the importance of families and communities working together to prevent child abuse and neglect. In 2018, The NYSPCC launched a social media awareness campaign, sharing resources on how to keep kids safe. On April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018, Wear Blue Day for Child Abuse Prevention, we asked companies and organizations to wear blue, the official color of prevention.



The Eta Iota Chapter of Kappa Delta Sorority at Pace University



Titmouse

# Join The Junior Committee

The New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children's Junior Committee is a dynamic group of young professionals passionate about protecting children and furthering the lifesaving mission of The NYSPCC.

**Make a difference and join us today!**

For more information visit:  
[www.nyspcc.org/juniorcommittee](http://www.nyspcc.org/juniorcommittee)

 Facebook: @nyspcc

 Twitter: @nyspcc

 Instagram: @thenyspcc



## Special Thanks

We are grateful to the following supporters who have made Annual Fund gifts of \$500 or more in 2018 to help support our work with NYC's children:

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