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STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Jerry Sandusky Sentencing – A Call To Action.

CHICAGO, IL, October 9, 2012 – With Jerry Sandusky’s sentencing now complete there will be a temptation for our country to close the book on this story and focus on other concerns that impact us, such as job creation, the economy, and ensuring our national security. But to do so would be to ignore another concern that impacts all of us: the on-going responsibility of adults to ensure that all children have the opportunity to lead healthy lives. To neglect this lesson is to dismiss the reality of the adverse consequences on our communities when a child is abused.

This sentence must not be the end of something; but the beginning of something new. As a nation, we can learn from this tragedy and make the individual and collective commitment that we will ensure the safety of children we think are in danger, we will support community organizations that work tirelessly to help families in need, and we will make the commitment of good stewardship to our children’s development.

As upsetting, and tragic, as this event has been, it has also increased awareness about how we can prevent sexual abuse by understanding the ways predators groom children; and how sexual abuse is less a tale of “stranger danger,” and more about the potential danger to children who are betrayed by a trusted adult or peer acquaintance.

Because of this event the norm of silence about child sexual abuse is beginning to become a more open and honest discussion about what it takes to ensure healthy child development. Institutions in communities across the nation are refining how they deal with situations like this and how they can prevent them from ever occurring again.

Given this, we challenge all adults to see today’s sentence as a call to action, and a moment where they can pledge to do what’s necessary to prevent child sexual abuse in their own communities by:

- Taking a renewed interest in the lives of our children, where they go, who they play with, what they’re watching on television and the internet and which adults they spend time with;
- Reducing the amount of one on one unsupervised non-parental adult-child time



- Learning the signs of abuse and reporting abuse when we suspect it;
- Ensuring that the organizations that serve children and families have sexual abuse prevention policies in place; and
- Volunteering at local organizations that work to prevent child sexual abuse.

“From a tragedy such as this, hope can emerge, and the future health of not just our nation’s children and their families, but the nation itself can be addressed,” said James M. Hmurovich, President & CEO, Prevent Child Abuse America. “Today is a new day, and while we will not forget what brought us here, it can be the start of something healthy and positive. We hope you will join us, because what could be more important than the health and happiness of our children and their families.... Nothing I can think of.”

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ABOUT PREVENT CHILD ABUSE AMERICA

Prevent Child Abuse America, founded in 1972 in Chicago, works to ensure the healthy development of children nationwide. The organization promotes that vision through a network of chapters in 50 states and 530 Healthy Families America home visitation sites in 39 states, the Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and Canada. A major organizational focus is to advocate for the existence of a national policy framework and strategy for children and families while promoting evidence-based practices that prevent abuse and neglect from ever occurring. To learn more about what we’re doing to prevent child abuse and neglect and how you can help, please visit our websites, preventchildabuse.org and healthyfamiliesamerica.org.