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America**



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Alliance Seeks to Make Child Sexual Abuse Prevention a National Priority

Washington, DC -- June 4th, 2012-- Three national organizations combatting child sexual abuse (CSA) are working diligently in an alliance to support and enhance federal government policies and procedures that will make CSA prevention a national priority.

Darkness to Light, Stop It Now!, and Prevent Child Abuse America have created the CSA Prevention Alliance (Alliance) to introduce a new national standard for CSA prevention and intervention. The Alliance supports federal agencies in finding ways to integrate child sexual abuse and exploitation prevention policies and practices into schools, child/youth-serving organizations, law enforcement agencies and other federally funded programs.

“The Alliance members came together to collaboratively focus our organizational efforts toward a primary goal: children and youth grow up protected from sexual abuse,” said Deborah Donovan Rice, Executive Director of Stop It Now! “Abuse is preventable when the best available tools are matched by a strong will to protect, whether at the community level or the federal government level. This is what Alliance members have learned over their more than 60 years of combined experience.”

The Alliance continues to advocate for federal agencies to proactively respond to this national outcry by advancing policies that better protect children from abuse. The Alliance suggests that federal agencies can improve child protection by including grant special conditions that would require grantees to implement CSA prevention policies and procedures. For example a grant special condition could require CSA prevention training for all adults involved in the program.

Due in part to the ongoing investigations and legal proceedings at Penn State, the public is voicing outrage at the lack of protection of children by adults in roles of responsibility.

“The Penn State revelations have brought the issue of child sexual abuse to the forefront of national public consciousness for the first time,” said Jolie Logan, President and CEO, Darkness to Light. “This provides an unprecedented opportunity to create real and lasting change in how we, as a society, protect children.”

Federal efforts such as the Department of Health and Human Service’s Federal Interagency Work Group on Child Abuse and Neglect (<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/fediawg>) and the Justice Department’s Defending Childhood Initiative (<http://www.justice.gov/defendingchildhood>) are

encouraging. The Alliance seeks to assist more federal agencies to find ways to integrate CSA prevention policies and practices into all child/youth-serving organizations and professions. As participants in the National Coalition to Prevent Child Abuse and Exploitation, the Alliance also works to support the *National Plan to Prevent the Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children*.

“During the presidential campaign season there will be on-going debate about what constitutes the role of government in people’s lives,” says James M. Hmurovich, President & CEO, Prevent Child Abuse America, “but there should be no debate about whether the federal government has the potential to positively impact the lives of all children by playing an active role in the prevention of child sexual abuse. The Sandusky allegations provide an opportunity for the federal government to assume a leadership role to craft policies, ranging from educating adults about what they can do to prevent child sexual abuse to asking youth serving organizations to implement comprehensive child sexual abuse prevention policies and practices. This is not just the smart thing to do, but the right thing to do, and to use the Sandusky case as a call to action.”

For more information, contact:

Ben Tanzer, Prevent Child Abuse America
312-663-3520, ext. 823 - work
312-806-4066 - cell

Darkness to Light * 7 Radcliffe Street * Charleston, SC 29403 * 843-965-5444 * www.D2L.org
Prevent Child Abuse America * 228 S. Wabash Avenue * 10th Floor * Chicago, IL 60604 * 312-663-3520 * www.preventchildabuse.org
Stop It Now! * 351 Pleasant Street * Suite B-319 * Northampton, MA 01060 * 413-587-3500 * www.stopitnow.org