

Parents Anonymous®

The Problem

In 1990, an estimated 2.5 million incidents of child abuse and neglect were reported to child protective service agencies in the United States. That figure represents a 105 percent increase over the number of reports in 1980, a mere 10 years ago.

It is important to note that in some 80 percent of reported child abuse cases, overwhelmed, stressed parents were alleged to have abused their children. Given the current economic and social pressures facing many families today, parents are often confronted with stresses that challenge their ability to cope. Many families struggle financially and, as a result, are unable to provide adequate child care or even meet the children's basic needs. In other cases, child abuse results when parents have never learned how to be good parents.

Experts believe that the majority of parents with abuse problems were abused as children, physically, emotionally, and/or sexually. The "learned" behavior becomes the mode by which parents resolve conflict, communicate with their children, and even discipline them. Unlearning the behavior is the first step in stopping child abuse and creating healthier environments for children.

Given support and proper intervention, the majority of

parents with problems can keep their families intact, stop unwanted parenting behaviors, and begin healing.

The Parents Anonymous® Solution

Parents Anonymous®, Inc. helps families by offering free, professionally facilitated, peer-led support groups for parents with abuse problems. The philosophy of the organization is that parents have the ability to heal themselves by seeking solutions to their problems within themselves.

In 1991, Parents Anonymous® served 30,000 families through more than 1,200 support groups. These groups meet in schools, hospitals, community centers, churches, and a variety of other sites. In addition to the traditional parent-support model, Parents Anonymous® has created special groups for teenagers, various ethnic groups, prison inmates, and grandparents. There is also special programming for children connected to some support groups.

A Parents Anonymous® group is often the first step a parent takes in seeking help to control anger directed toward his or her children. A Parents Anonymous® group offers a safe atmosphere where parents discuss what works with their kids and what doesn't. Each individual can examine his own

behavior and chose more humanistic options in parenting.

Kiwanis and Parents Anonymous®

Kiwanis clubs can work with Parents Anonymous® chapters in their mission to prevent child abuse and neglect. There is also a need to start new Parents Anonymous® support groups in many areas.

The first step a club should take is to contact a state or local Parents Anonymous® affiliate. A list of chartered state and provincial organizations appears at the back of this bulletin. If your club is outside the United States and Canada, or in a state without a chartered affiliate, complete the coupon on the last page of this bulletin and send it to the Parents Anonymous® National Office. The office will tell you who is conducting Parents Anonymous® groups in your area or provide information on the process to start a Parents Anonymous® group.

When a club's committee for Young Children: Priority One contacts the local Parents Anonymous® group, it can:

- Meet with leaders of the Parents Anonymous® chapter to discuss the needs of the Parents Anonymous® program and how the club or

division can help.

- Invite a Parents Anonymous® representative to speak at a club meeting.
- Ask if a local Parents Anonymous® group would allow a member of the committee to attend a meeting of the Parents Anonymous® group.
- Develop a plan to help the Parents Anonymous® chapter and present it to the club's board of directors.

Kiwanis support can take many forms. Most Parents Anonymous® chapters need financial assistance, volunteer support, and additional publicity.

Support Projects

Child Care—Provide child care for Parents Anonymous® groups that don't have the resources to conduct children's groups. This would eliminate an obstacle for parents, enabling them to attend group meetings regularly. The club could hire a licensed, trained child care worker or use members of the club to provide this service.

Transportation—Transportation problems keep some parents from getting to Parents Anonymous® meetings. Club members could give rides to parents who need them or set up a bus system that would pick up all the parents in the group.

Adopting an Office—The Parents Anonymous® state and affiliate offices often need more help to give adequate support to local Parents Anonymous® groups. A club or division could provide volunteers to help with general office tasks, arrange for members to share their professional expertise (legal, accounting, management, publicity), raise funds, or help set up a "Support Council" of companies that are willing to help the Parents Anonymous® chapter.

Public Awareness Campaign—To help Parents Anonymous® make the community aware of what Parents Anonymous® does and its presence in the community, clubs could develop and distribute flyers, ask for public service ads in newspapers or on radio and television, sponsor a parenting event, or establish a speakers bureau. For additional information on public awareness activities, request service bulletin PO #10 from the Program Development Department of Kiwanis International.

Speakers Bureau—A club could help set up and publicize a speakers bureau featuring Parents Anonymous® leaders and experts on various parenting issues.

Stressline—Many chapters of Parents Anonymous® and the National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse have established a phone line that parents can call for advice or support. Clubs that want to set up a parent stressline in cooperation with Parents Anonymous® can contact the Ohio Parents Anonymous® office to learn how it organized its stressline.

Special Events—A Parents Anonymous® group could use Kiwanis support for an event outside the Parents Anonymous® meeting that would allow the Parents Anonymous® parents to do something special with their families. This could be a picnic, a "family expedition" to a tourist attraction, or a "messy fun day" for the children. For more information on possible activities, request the Family Day Kit and service bulletin PO #10 (see section on parent support) from the Kiwanis International Office.

Parent Aides—Parent Aides are trained, professionally supervised individuals who assist parents under stress and parents whose children are at risk of abuse or neglect. They visit families and help the parents understand the developmental stages of their children, develop coping skills, increase communication, and use

community resources. A Kiwanis club could help set up a Parent Aide program or support an established program with funding or volunteers. To learn more, contact the National Parent Aide Network, 3050 Central Avenue, Toledo, Ohio 43606. Phone: 800/924-2643 or 419/535-3202. Web: www.childabuse.com

Adopt a Parents Anonymous® Group—There are certain costs in running a Parents Anonymous® group, and a club could help with these expenses. In addition, a club could work with the group's facilitator to offer assistance to members of the group, such as helping to pay medical expenses for a child, transportation to a doctor's office, or searching for a job.

Printing—Handouts for groups, newsletters, and other small printing jobs could be done by a Kiwanis club member to reduce the Parents Anonymous® chapter's expenses.

Public Service Announcements—A club or division could work with a Parents Anonymous® chapter to create and distribute print, audio, or video public service announcements.

Videotapes—There are many excellent tapes on parenting issues that could be purchased by a club and loaned to members of local Parents Anonymous® groups. Or, a club could support the production of a tape by a Parents Anonymous® chapter that answers a need they feel has not been served by a professional production.

Family Support—A club could offer to give whatever assistance a family needs. Volunteers could visit and help with the children, provide transportation, help set up a family budget, or help make the Holiday season a merry one.

Fund Raising

Kiwanis clubs could support a

Parents Anonymous® organization by developing a fund raiser to benefit Parents Anonymous®. Linking Kiwanis resources with the Parents Anonymous® cause could create a high-profile event that garners great community support, raising public awareness as well as money. This event could be targeted for April, which is Child Abuse Prevention Month. Listed below are some possible events, but there are many other possibilities. Form a committee of Kiwanians and Parents Anonymous® supporters and develop a fundraiser that takes the best advantage of the resources you have and will “sell” well in your community.

Dinner—A per-plate dinner is often successful. Find a theme. Try to keep costs to a minimum by soliciting in-kind donations of food, printing, a facility, or even a activity.

speaker. Combine the contacts of the Kiwanis club and the Parents Anonymous® mailing list to launch ticket sales.

Raffle—Declare that all proceeds will go to support Parents Anonymous® and solicit one—or a few—expensive items that can be awarded as prizes. Sell tickets for \$1.00 to \$5.00.

Auction—The value of the items collected for an auction can vary tremendously, but the people who come must be interested in many of the items on the block. The auctioneer needs to be a professional. Consider selling low-cost tickets (\$1.00) as a mechanism for Kiwanians to push attendance and to cover basic expenses. Then, all the funds raised during the auction can go to Parents Anonymous®.

Flea Market—The items collected may have very little value, but quantity and location are important. The more items collected and the busier the location of your market, the more money you will raise.

Bingo—This has proven to be a good fund raiser for several Parents Anonymous® organizations, and it requires a minimum investment of time and people. The first step is to find out how many bingo games already operate in the area. The second is to attend several to learn what the local bingo customs are.

Car Washes—While there are probably more effective ways to raise money, a car wash is an excellent ice-breaker, involving Kiwanians and Parents Anonymous® members in an enjoyable, relaxing

Parents Anonymous® State Organizations

To learn more about Parents Anonymous® (PA) and Parents Anonymous® organizations in your area, contact one of the state or provincial organizations listed below or contact the Parents Anonymous® National Office.

National Office:

Parents Anonymous® Inc.
675 W Foothill Blvd, Ste. 220
Claremont, CA 91711
Phone: 909/621-6184
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www.parentsanonymous.org

Alabama

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Alaska

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PA of Juneau Alaska

Catholic Community Service
Helen Kalk, PA Coordinator
8617 Teal Street
Juneau, AK 99801
Phone: 907/463-6183
Fax: 907/790-2149
Email: Helen.kalk@ccsjuneau.org
Web: www.catholiccommunityservices.alaska.com

PA of anchorage and Fairbanks

Parents Inc.
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Arizona

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Arkansas

PA of Arkansas
SCAN Volunteer Service Inc.
Linda Bateman, Executive Director
211 W 3rd Avenue, Ste. 120
Pine Bluff, AR 71601
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Fax: 870/536-9727
Email: lfbateman@aol.com
Web: www.scan-ar.com

California

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PA of Baldwin Park

Christina Olmos, Facilitator
City of Baldwin Park Family Service Center (Span)
14305 Morgan Street
Baldwin Park, CA 91706
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Fax: 626/851-3676

PA of East Los Angeles

Vilma Quezada, Facilitator
Bienvenidos Family Services (Spanish)
5233 E Beverly Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90022
Phone: 323/728-9577
Fax: 323/728-3483

PA of Lake County

Gina Griffin, Facilitator
South Shore Family Center (English)
15145 Lakeshore Drive
Clearlake, CA 95422
Phone: 707/994-7068, ext. 117

Fax: 707/994-7089
Email: ggriffin@lake-coe.k12.ca.us

PA of Lancaster

Jackie Breuer, Facilitator
Children's Bureau of Southern California (English)
921 W Avenue J, Ste. C
Lancaster, CA 93534
Phone: 661/949-0131, ext. 115
Fax: 661/729-8912

Sandra Williams
California Senior Program Coordinator
El Dorado School (English)
361 E Pondera
Lancaster, CA 93535
Phone: 909/621-6184, ext 216
Fax: 909/621-0614
Email: swilliams@parentsanonymous.org

Alejandra Rizo, Facilitator
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Fax: 661/951-2197
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PA of Long Beach

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California Senior Program Coordinator
City of Long Beach Center for Families and Youth
(English & Spanish)
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Long Beach, CA 90804
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Fax: 909/621-0614
Email: swilliams@parentsanonymous.org

PA of Los Angeles (Lincoln Hts.)

Daniel Gil, Facilitator
Lincoln High School Parent Cntr Rm 114 (Spanish)
3501 North Broadway
Los Angeles, CA 90031
Phone: 323/221-4143
Fax: 323/223-1291

PA of Napa County

Rosario Cordon, Facilitator
Aldea Children and Family Services (Spanish)
1801 Oak Street
Napa, CA 94559
Phone: 707/253-0123 ext. 47
Fax: 707/253-8118

PA of Pacoima

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PA of Pomona

Augusto Minakata, Facilitator
First Christian Church (Spanish)
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Pomona, CA 91766
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PA of South Los Angeles

Tamma Pritchett, Facilitator
Beyond Shelter (English)
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South Los Angeles, CA 90003
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PA of Ventura County

Jesse Romero, Facilitator
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Colorado

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PA of Weld County, Colorado

Child Advocacy Research & Education Inc.
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Delaware

PA of Delaware

Delaware Ecumenical Council on
Children and Families
Robert Hall, Executive Director
240 N James Street, Ste. 131B
Wilmington, DE 19804
Phone: 302/225-1040
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District of Columbia (DC)

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PA of Metropolitan District of Columbia

DC Children's Trust Fund
Kinaya Sokoya, Executive Director
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PA of Central Florida

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PA of Chicago, Illinois
Uhlich Children's Advantage Network

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PA of Webster County, IA

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Maryland

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PA of Marquette

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PA of Missouri

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PA of Hillsborough and Coos County, NH

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New Mexico

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New Jersey

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New Mexico

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PA of Northeastern New York

YWCA of Schenectady
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Web: www.ywcascchenectady.org

PA of Plattsburgh, New York

Child Care Coordinating Council of
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PA of Syracuse, New York

Madison Family Outreach
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Executive Director
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Phone: 315/952-5094
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PA of Liberty, New York

Community Action Commission to
Help the Economy, Inc.
Walter Stein, Director

63-65 Main Street
Liberty, NY 12754
Phone: 845/292-5821, ext. 629
Fax: 845/292-3904
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North Carolina

PA of North Carolina

Wayne Uplift Resource Association Inc.
Linda Holden-Cox, Director
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Northern Marianna Islands

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PA of Commonwealth of the Northern Marianna Islands

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