

## Holy Family Safeguard the Children Committee Meeting

### Minutes

December 5, 2012

Attendees: Beth Fagan, Carolyn Strong, Collette Villegas, Lydia Banales, Evan Wyatt, Patricia Plescia, Anne Garland, Dawn Ponnet, Kelly Studer

1. Welcome/Opening Prayer
2. Kelly Studer volunteered to record Minutes
3. Next two meetings scheduled for January 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM and April 18<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM (tentative date for April)
4. Status of New and Recertification Virtus Classes:
  - a. According to Lydia, Dawn and Carolyn people are signing up for the classes, including people from other parishes.
  - b. Beth asked trainers to start thinking about later January/February classes.
  - c. In response, Dawn prepared a tentative schedule for 2013 Virtus classes at the meeting based upon the usual needs. Thanks Dawn! We don't know why we didn't do this before and plan to include it as a regular agenda item in our September meeting. For teaching the re-certification 3-hour Protecting God's Children Classes ("Protecting") and the one and a half hour recertification "Keeping the Promise (" Keeping") classes, this is the tentative schedule for 2013:

Jan: Protecting - Dawn

Feb: Keeping - Lydia

March: Protecting - Lydia

April: Keeping - Carolyn

May: Protecting -Teacher ?

June: Keeping. -Anne

July: No classes

August: 2 Keeping, 2. Protecting. Dawn, Lydia, Carolyn and Anne

Sept: 2 Keeping, 2. Protecting. Dawn, Lydia, Carolyn and Anne

Oct: 1 Keeping, 1 protecting

Nov: 1 keeping, 1 protecting

Dec.: - no classes

We can discuss and finalize at our January meeting.

5. L.A. Archdiocese Commended in National Safeguard Audit
6. Safeguard Trainers:
  - a. Anne Garland and Evan Wyatt volunteered to be trainers – Evan may or may not be able to do the January training for this year due to scheduling .
  - b. Anne Garland and Evan will fill out on-line applications. Beth will fill out check requests for both and contact Cambria for recommendation letter(s).

7. Strict Compliance with 2012 USCCB Safe Environment Audit Checklist:
- a. Lydia Banalas and Ana Lacayo met to go over the 2012 Parish Committee Pre-Audit Visit Report to ensure strict compliance, and provided a tentative list of outstanding items, some of which were discussed below. We will go over the rest at our meeting in January when Ana can be with us. Thanks so much Lydia and Ana!
  - b. Regarding Lydia/Ana's recommendation re keeping track of new ministries – we will place this as a regular item on our September meeting to coordinate with Patricia and assess and categorize any new ministries or delete defunct ones. There are two new ministries that need to be categorized on the Safeguard list that we plan to address at our next meeting:
    - Ministry of the Arts  
Grete Gryzwana  
818 679 5162  
[epiphanydance2@earthlink.net](mailto:epiphanydance2@earthlink.net)
    - Embracing the Beginning of Life Committee  
Rafael Flores  
213 434 1741  
[larafa@yahoo.com](mailto:larafa@yahoo.com)
  - c. We started to go over Patricia Plescia's compliance information for each high priority committee, but we did not have enough definition as to each Ministry's required compliance. For example, in Religious Ed, do all persons who volunteer in class need to fingerprint, or just catechists? Beth will coordinate with Michael Schmidt and Patricia Plescia to ensure the latest matrix is sent around, and any other information we need, so that this can be discussed more efficiently at next meeting. Some follow-up items that were apparent:
    - i. It was noted that all Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and Cub Scout ministries may not be up to date with compliance; Cambria Smith has been following up because of the recent disclosure of historical Boy Scout sex abuse cases.
    - ii. Children and Youth ministries who have Teen Helpers need to submit volunteer form(s) signed by their parent or guardian to Patricia. Evan will contact Eric Garland, Director of HFSP, regarding teen helpers. Beth will contact Jacqueline Wagner, Director of Toddler co-op, regarding teen helpers.
  - d. Beth Fagan was to follow-up with Cambria Smith as to whether there is any "Pastoral Decision" process that allows exceptions to Virtus and Fingerprint requirements.

[Note: this addition is inserted subsequent to the meeting and is being included here since Monsignor requested it be made of record with the Committee: Beth Fagan emailed Cambria Smith and received the following response from Monsignor:

*Elizabeth Calciano  
Safeguard the Children Committee  
Holy Family Church*

*Dear Elizabeth,*

*Someone recently inquired as to whether I condoned exceptions to the official **Safeguard the Children** guidelines regarding Virtus training and fingerprinting for volunteers working with children in the parish. It has been stated that while serving as pastor I made a pastoral decision to sanction exceptions for some people who objected to the child protection policies put in place by the Archdiocese.*

*I take this opportunity to advise you and all whom it may concern that I do not have an exception policy now nor have I had one (or made exceptions) at any time in the past. I would like this to be a matter of record and I would like the committee to be aware of it.*

*Clement Connolly.]*

- e. Beth Fagan will contact Cambria Smith as to whether the Committee may keep a very tasteful and elegant see-through plastic holder that would hold the English and Spanish versions of the Safeguard the Children Brochure: [http://www.la-archdiocese.org/org/protecting/safeguard/Documents/2012-0321\\_Working\\_Together\\_Brochure-EN.pdf](http://www.la-archdiocese.org/org/protecting/safeguard/Documents/2012-0321_Working_Together_Brochure-EN.pdf) so that they are available to be taken. There is a long background that the Committee discussed at length. One of the questions in the standard pre-audit report for the Archdiocese that we have always had to answer in the negative is whether HF keeps the Safeguard the Children brochure in the vestibule. We do not. There has been long-standing resistance to doing so - apparently due to a concern that it will lead to cluttering up of the vestibule because every organization wants to have their brochures and flyers in the vestibule. We believe that if we place a plastic holder on a trial basis in the vestibule that we could satisfy this Archdiocesan requirement without cluttering up the vestibule. We could draw a distinction with other organizations placing their brochures there because we know of no other Ministries that have such a mandate.

[Note from subsequent to meeting: After the meeting, we looked and could find no Archdiocesan rule per se on this issue, but the Archdiocese Pre-audit report Checklist does specifically ask this question which in our view implies a rule that it be included.]

Other parishes make the brochure available in their church vestibules, but many of the Committee members felt that the Safeguard mission is important enough to make an exception to the general rule of not cluttering up the vestibule. The brochure is supposed to be available to all who come to Mass. Most people do not go the Welcome Center, and it is

kept there with multiple other brochures, so it is easily overlooked. The views of the Committee on this were not unanimous and there was some dissension and concern expressed regarding the cluttering issue, although collectively there was not an objection raised with the Chair asking Cambria Smith if we could keep a plastic holder there to dispense them (one in English and another in Spanish). There was no formal vote.

8. Child Abuse Prevention Month Planning Activities:
  - a. Kelly Studer presented proposed speaker, Marsha Aguirre, for Child Abuse Prevention Month.
  - b. Beth would like to schedule a telephone conference with Marsha Aguirre.
  - c. Evan Wyatt agreed to chair Child Abuse Prevention Month. Kelly Studer will assist Evan with the planning, as needed.
9. Subcommittee on Virtus Compliance/Efficiency by Ministry: Michael Schmidt and Beth Fagan are working on revamping the Safeguard Ministry tab on the HF web-site and making all Safeguard information (including all of the information from the old notebooks) , minutes, and forms web based – for transparency and efficiency reasons.