



# SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM

## ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK

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### CHILD PROTECTION HIGHLIGHTS -- WINTER 2012

#### 1. Annual Audit Results

Each year, Archdiocese of New York undergoes an audit, to determine our compliance with the *Bishops' Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. This audit is consulted by outside auditors, under the supervision of an independent National Review Board established by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. In December 2011, the Archdiocese was found to be full compliance with the *Charter* -- our seventh consecutive finding of full compliance.

#### 2. Summary of Child Protection Policies

All those who are in regular contact with minors must: (1) complete the screening process (including a background check); (2) abide by the Safe Environment Policies, the Policy Relating to Sexual Misconduct, and the Code of Conduct; and (3) complete Safe Environment training appropriate to their position. If any person is not in compliance with these requirements, they may not work or volunteer with minors. The Archdiocese also has policies regarding the proper response to any allegation of child sexual abuse, which include full cooperation with local law enforcement agencies.

New policies were introduced to deal with maintaining proper professional boundaries, guidelines for appropriate physical contact between adults and minors, and barring sex offenders from entering onto Church or school property.

#### 3. Statistical Summary of Efforts to Date

Since the start of the program in 2003, the following protective steps have been taken:

**86,667** background checks have been completed on clergy, employees, and volunteers (this includes criminal background checks and sex offender registries);

**77,527** clergy, employees, and volunteers have received training on keeping children safe (either through "VIRTUS -- Protecting God's Children" or "Safer Spaces" classes);

**157,479** children received age-appropriate, morally sound safety training during the 2010-2011 school year; safety information was also provided to parents of school and religious education students.

**48** people have been excluded from working with minors due to negative results of background checks or failing to comply with training or background check requirements.

#### 4. Recent Initiatives

To maintain the effectiveness of the program, we are taking the following steps for the future:

- **Renewal of Background Checks** -- A new policy is being formulated to refresh background checks of all staff.
- **On-Line Training** -- volunteers and non-instructional employees are now able to fulfill their training requirement by viewing the "Safer Spaces" video through an on-line training tool;
- **Training Refreshers** -- we have implemented an on-line training refresher for educators in leadership positions (principals and directors of religious education) and a standard printed training refresher resource for teachers, catechists, and others who work and volunteer regularly with minors
- **Updated Training Materials** -- our "Safer Spaces" training video, which is used for volunteers and non-instructional employees, has been updated to include new information and policies; a new version of the VIRTUS training video was introduced in Fall 2011.