

LEADERSHIP CHANGE AT ADULTS SAVING KIDS

ADULTS SAVING KIDS
(FORMERLY A-STOP)
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STAFF:

Rev. Al Erickson
Executive Director

Ina Erickson
Prayer Coordinator

Phyllis Beatty
Director of Training

Amy Hartman
Project Manager

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Stuart Goldberg, Chair

Elaine Degelau, Secretary

Kari Christianson

Herb Smith

Sue Sorenson

Dr. Richard Wallace, Th.D.

The mission of
ADULTS SAVING KIDS:

To prevent commercial
sexual exploitation, bringing
honor and accountability
to all relationships.

ADULTS SAVING KIDS wishes to announce a change in leadership which both honors our beginning and carries our mission into the future.

Pastor Al Erickson has chosen to resign from the position of Executive Director as of June 1, 2004. He and his wife Ina will become special spokespersons and emissaries, expanding our capacity nationwide to keep children safe from commercial sexual exploitation.

The board of directors has awarded Al and Ina the title of "Founders," with Al also being designated "Executive Director Emeritus."

The ADULTS SAVING KIDS board has selected Amy Hartman and Phyllis Beatty as Co-Executive Directors to lead the organization.

Amy has been with ADULTS SAVING KIDS for over ten years, working closely with Al to manage the organization, as well as develop resources, programs, and trainings.

Phyllis has worked with ADULTS SAVING KIDS for nearly two years, providing expertise in training, coaching, organization development, and strategic planning.

This new leadership team provides continuity and assures that the Founders' vision and the organizational mission will continue.

ADULTS SAVING KIDS is growing as an organization and being heard as never before. Opportunities for carrying out our mission are numerous. Our

strategy of strengthening our relationships with the ELCA and the Women of the ELCA is beginning to bear fruit.

The new National Advisory Council (see article page 3), made up of representatives of each of the synods where we have active ADULTS SAVING KIDS teams, has given the organization a tremendous boost.

The Ericksons brought into being the radical idea that children can grow up in a world free of commercial sexual exploitation, if we only recognize how the system works, tell the truth about it, and engage people in action on behalf of children. Thanks to the Ericksons and people such as you who share this vision, that day shall come.

As we move forward with this leadership change, we invite you to:

- Support and pray for the mission of ADULTS SAVING KIDS;
- Participate in a celebration event for Al and Ina (see enclosed invitation);
- Create something for a memory book that will be given to Al and Ina at the celebration event;
- Consider making a donation to ADULTS SAVING KIDS in honor of Al and Ina.

Thank you for your continuing support of ADULTS SAVING KIDS.

Stuart Goldberg

ADVENTURES

SIEBERT LUTHERAN FOUNDATION AWARDS ADULTS SAVING KIDS \$50,000

ADULTS SAVING KIDS is honored and much strengthened to receive from the Siebert Lutheran Foundation of Milwaukee, Wisconsin monies to work throughout the six synods of Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, starting June 1.

This \$50,000 for one year will allow ADULTS SAVING KIDS to hire one of the LaCrosse Area Synod team members, Mary Molstad, as well as have other staff assist her in cultivating and establishing the message and programs of ADULTS SAVING KIDS throughout the designated area. It will also cover the expenses involved.

With this grant we will break new ground by having a regional coordinator outside of Minneapolis targeting a specified number of synods. Mary will be enrolling new synods (namely Northwest Wisconsin, South Central Wisconsin, and East Central Wisconsin) and more fully engage synods with which we are currently working (Northern Great Lakes, LaCrosse Area, and Greater Milwaukee Area.)

Along with other ADULTS SAVING KIDS staff, Mary will be training people in the three areas of emphasis: speaking, Prayer Project Lifesaver, and *Wise a Serpents*. She also will expand our involvement in congregations and communities.

We fully believe many young lives will be saved from ruin and dehumanization by Mary's ministry and efforts as she partners with committed people in these synods. Therefore we profoundly thank Siebert Lutheran Foundation for taking this bold, courageous, and caring step to value and safeguard the young people in the area they seek to serve.

It now becomes the challenge for these six synods to embrace this ministry and develop support for it from within. Only when local team members and pastors decide to truly stand for young people through prayer, teaching, and providing funding will this effort build a solid wall. Christ is counting on all of us.

WELCOME, MARY MOLSTAD

As the Holy Spirit builds this vital ministry within the Body of Christ, we are indeed blessed to receive Mary Molstad as a full-time staff member. Mary first encountered ADULTS SAVING KIDS in 2001, at a coffee shop in Westby, WI, through a conversation with then staff member, Rev. Owen Christianson.

Since then, Mary and the LaCrosse Area Synod team of Karen Birkedal and Rev. Steve Meyer have shown remarkable charisma and dedication as they have moved and trained many people to take on more fully what it means to be adults saving kids. For several years we have seen them come to trainings, speak at conventions, cause pastors to come alive to the issues, and persuade ELCA leaders of the vital need for this ministry.

Mary brings deep, finely tuned skills and experience with her. She is a psychotherapist, educator, and an expert witness in child sexual assault cases. For 26 years she has specialized in the assessment and treatment of children and adults who have been sexually assaulted. Her enthusiasm for preventing children from being harmed or exploited is contagious.

Most of us are stuck or ignorant in terms of what we can do in the face of predators, abusers and subtle exploiters. Mary helps all of us cut through that, making her invaluable for training leaders, pastors, and seminary classes. She will be able to provide workshops, school presentations, and college instruction.

We praise God for her and her gifts and ask you all to pray for her and her family as she takes on this new position with ADULTS SAVING KIDS. We ask the bishops and Synodical Women's Organizations in Wisconsin and the Northern Great Lakes Synod to welcome her with openness, joy, and a renewal of a commitment to really be there for the vulnerable and unsuspecting.

A new day is dawning for our beloved young people.

A NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL – NEW PERSPECTIVES

This year we began a new approach to defining and developing the future of ADULTS SAVING KIDS. The first weekend in March we invited one representative from each of the eight synods currently working with us to participate in three full days of reflection and conversation:

Barb Gullickson – Western North Dakota
 Ilene Penk – Southwestern Minnesota
 Ginger Minske – Northeastern Minnesota
 Kara Olivier – Montana
 Sharon Johnson – North Carolina
 Pam Van Duinen – Northern Great Lakes
 Jeff Schrader – Metropolitan Chicago
 Mary Molstad – LaCrosse Area

In addition to this representation, Faith Fretheim joined us from the national staff of the Women of the ELCA. We are grateful for her participation.

As they met and shared their experiences, they began to get a sense of their actions as bigger than just their own synod. Realizing how important this could be for every synod to participate in this movement, they developed a resolution to be brought before the 2005 Triennial Convention. It calls for broader participation at national, synodical, and local levels.

These committed people decided that they wanted to stay together as a group for a year, to address four specific areas of growth and development for ADULTS SAVING KIDS.

- 1) Being a national movement
- 2) Reaching the kids
- 3) Growing within existing synods, and expanding to include new synods
- 4) Funding that sustains and perpetuates our work together

The National Advisory Council is an ad hoc team called to collaborate, strategize, and vision with the ADULTS SAVING KIDS board and staff to forward the mission of ADULTS SAVING KIDS. Please pray for this group as it continues its work.

LUTHER SEMINARY CONNECTIONS

Addictions class. On April 19, ADULTS SAVING KIDS led one of the three-hour class sessions for the Pastoral Care for Addictions class at Luther Seminary. Professor Robert Albers invited us in to shed light on the topic of sexual exploitation and sexual addiction.

Pastor Al Erickson began the evening with a look at Scripture passages which speak of treachery, relating those to what we see from the sex industry today. Amy Hartman gave an overview of commercial sexual exploitation, using our videos *Wise as Serpents* and *No Bigger Lie Out There*. Bob Dykstra, a counselor who works with men who are sexually addicted, spoke about how sexual rituals begin and lead to sexual addiction.

Chapel service. Two days later on April 21, ADULTS SAVING KIDS board member Professor Richard Wallace and Amy Hartman led the chapel service at Luther Seminary. Through the sermon, prayers, and songs, the worship service expressed the reality of sexual exploitation, the need to love, respect, and protect all children, and the call for all of us to “do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God” (Micah 6:8).

April was Sexual Assault Awareness Month, so following the worship service, a group of students handed out nearly 200 copies of and engaged others in conversation about the ELCA Message on “Commercial Sexual Exploitation.” ADULTS SAVING KIDS and the Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault also provided information to students who wanted to learn more. Amy has met with several students since then who want to better equip themselves to face these issues.

Kairos class. On September 16-17, 2004 there will be a Kairos continuing education class led by ADULTS SAVING KIDS. The topic is “Being a good shepherd in today’s world,” and will include presentations by staff members and Elizabeth Griffin, a licensed family therapist who has worked extensively with sexual addiction. Contact ADULTS SAVING KIDS for more info.

ADVENTURES

ADULTS SAVING KIDS CONGREGATIONS ON THE MOVE

Teams from four congregations met on January 17, 2004 at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Minneapolis for the first-ever ADULTS SAVING KIDS Congregation training. Team members shared their experiences with using *Wise as Serpents*, learned some ideas for how to start Prayer Project Lifesaver, and made plans for how to more fully carry out being an ADULTS SAVING KIDS Congregation. The congregations that attended are:

Bethlehem Lutheran – Minneapolis
Salem Lutheran – Longville, MN
Maynard Wang Lutheran – Maynard, MN
Zion Lutheran – Arlington, MN

Please keep these congregations in your prayers, for their ongoing faithfulness to caring for their young people. If you would like your congregation to be a part of this exciting new movement, please contact our office.

NEW TRAININGS SCHEDULED

The work of preventing commercial sexual exploitation is not easy and it is not predictable. It is, however, urgently needed.

We ask you to pray for yourself and others, to consider whether or not you are called to bring leadership to your synod. If you think that might be the case, we invite you to talk with us and consider attending one of two trainings currently scheduled.

August 27-29: designed to expand leadership in synods currently working with ADULTS SAVING KIDS.

November 4-7: designed to train teams starting out in synods that have not yet formed a partnership with ADULTS SAVING KIDS.

Contact our office for more information about these trainings.

WISE AS SERPENTS: WHAT EFFECTS AND OUTCOMES HAVE YOU NOTICED?

We asked several pastors to write letters of recommendation, stating the value of the *Wise as Serpents* curriculum. What follows are excerpts of what they wrote.

Pastor James Carlson Zion Lutheran Church - Arlington, MN

Real people in the real world are the stuff of A.S.K. materials... my confirmation students' welfare depends upon it; without these lessons, our kids are ripe for the picking in a world that does not value them the way their fellow church members, teachers, and community neighbors do. It is just as vital that they be clever and informed as that they be virtuous. Matthew 10:16.

...these teenagers are now equipped to live well in the 'real world,' and to help their peers make wise choices and avoid poor ones.

Victims learn that they have options, that they are not alone. They do not have to remain trapped by anyone who is exploiting them. We show them where and to whom to go for sanctuary or help. We make the victimizer's job more difficult by publicizing the truth about sexual exploitation.

Pastor Steve Meyer Westby Coon Prairie Lutheran – Westby, WI

I have taught the *Wise as Serpents* curriculum to 49 youth and 10 parents. They were wondering why we need to talk about Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in the small, close-knit community of Westby, WI. After the first session, the question changed. No longer did the kids ask, "Why are you teaching this?" The question became, "Why did you not teach us this sooner?" The youth came to see the danger that exists for them right here in this community. By participating, parents received some starting points for meaningful, scriptural conversation with their child. Parents also learned ways in which they unknowingly contribute to the evils of the sex industry. As a result of participating in

this class, one of our adult members spoke to a grocery store manager about the placement of certain magazines by the check-out. The manager ended up moving the magazines to a better location.

Wise as Serpents has also equipped me to preach on the subject of sexual exploitation. This is information I did not receive in seminary. As a result, I have incorporated information from *Wise as Serpents* in my preaching.

Pastor Mary Hovland
Maynard Wang Lutheran - Maynard, MN

Our parish has used the *Wise as Serpents* materials since...1996...in conjunction with our confirmation class. We have had excellent attendance by the parents. Last time it just happened that the majority of parents attending were dads. They were appalled at what they saw and became very defensive as to the well-being of their daughters.

I like the way the materials regarding computer pornography and life choices...are presented as life situations on which they can comment. They are not preachy but left open for the youth to discuss and make appropriate discoveries. Our youth use computers daily and I know some of them get into sites they should not be in. I pray our parents and youth are more informed as to the number of pornographic sites and will supervise their children to a greater extent. The community library is also more aware of the difficulties with computers and pornography.

Pastor Kristen Schlauderaff
Good Shepherd Lutheran – Viroqua, WI

First, let me say this was the best material I have ever used for a youth retreat. It was clear. It was easy to use. This program was a great catalyst for me to be involved with parents as they talked with each other about their concerns for their children as they mature sexually. We found that students took the opportunity to initiate their own conversations with the adults about questions and concerns they deal with every day. Relationships

were built and continue to support these students. Some of them have volunteered to help with the program the next time it is offered. We plan on offering this retreat every other year as part of our confirmation program.

The 8th grade Sunday School teacher asked the students what they had learned. One of the students responded, "I learned how to say 'No.'" This came from one of my least verbal, least involved students. If he got that much out of the retreat, I felt the whole weekend was a success. I recommend the material readily and often to pastors who are looking for programs for their youth ministries.

Pastor John Monson
Salem Lutheran Church - Longville, MN

As a community that cares about its kids, this course has been a great gift in giving our young people both the awareness and the skills to help keep them safe in vulnerable situations. The impact of this course prompted one of our confirmation students to share insights he had learned from it with the congregation during "faith sharing" on Sunday morning. Few courses offered to our youth have retained the high number of attendees as this course. One high school student from our church who took the course and is now in her first year at college has been better prepared to avoid some of the "traps" that have presented themselves in the city and on the computer.

The course does not use a moralizing approach, but rather tells it like it is including the consequences that are not often told. The accompanying video from those formerly caught up in the commercial sex industry who tell their stories personalizes the issues. The course affirms the qualities of Christian love, kindness and innocence, while at the same time aiding learners in gaining wisdom about the tactics and devices predators use to destroy lives.

I fully support the message and methods of *Wise as Serpents* as a program that works.

ADVENTURES

METRO CHICAGO “RESPONDING TO GOD’S CALL”

Much of our prevention work is not done from our offices in Minneapolis. It is done in every synod by lay persons and pastors who have been trained to understand and speak the truth about commercial sexual exploitation. It is done by people with a passion for children, who are willing to speak with pastors, parents, lay leaders, and congregations about what they can do to build a wall of safety around their kids.

Last summer, ADULTS SAVING KIDS met with the Synodical Women’s Organization board of the Metro Chicago synod. As a result of that meeting, and through a vote by the delegates at their convention, ADULTS SAVING KIDS produced their first Leader Team Training in February. Six people, five women and one man, participated in a week-end of discovery and learning. All six are now bringing the message of prevention back to their home congregations. Several of them have entered a continuing education program with ADULTS SAVING KIDS to learn more about the sex industry, develop their ability speak to individuals and groups, and train others in the use of Prayer Project Lifesaver, and *Wise as Serpents*.

We extend our thanks to the Metro Chicago SWO board for the support and commitment to this ministry in their synod, and we acknowledge the training participants: Cynthia Brewer, Calumet Park; Gloria Green, Chicago; Jeff Schrader, Rolling Meadows; Marianne Schirmer, Marengo; Lynda P. Thweatt-Richards, Chicago; Pastor Carol Vassallo, Chicago.

In addition to this training, pastors and lay leaders from congregations throughout the synod spent Friday evening and Saturday morning with Mary Molstad, investigating the truths of the industry and previewing Prayer Project Lifesaver and *Wise as Serpents*. Their congregations now have the tools for building a wall of safety, and members of the newly trained leader team are happy to provide support.

Any congregation in the Metro Chicago synod who would like to schedule a speaker, or investigate the tools we have available for educating the adults and youth of the congregation can contact the Metro Chicago Leader Team by calling Jeff Schrader at 847-867-4124, or our office at 612-872-0684.

PRAYER CELL GROUPS: INTERCEDING ON BEHALF OF CHILDREN

Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you. Matthew 6:33

Christ Jesus, who died - more than that, who was raised to life-is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us!!! Romans 8:34

We believe prayer must go before any activity, so we at ADULTS SAVING KIDS are forming several *Prayer Cell Groups* of 4 people each, in each synod where we are working. Among all these synods, there are now four complete prayer cells and five cells nearing completion.

The job of each prayer cell is to pray for all the activity of ADULTS SAVING KIDS in their synod. We know keeping the *Prayer Cell Groups* going is very important, so we communicate weekly with a Prayer Cell leader in each synod.

Satan is working to detour the lives of kids from the plans God has for them. We all need to seek ways to equip kids with tools to give them healthy lives in Christ Jesus.

We wish to acknowledge each person working for the youth in their churches and communities.

Celebration Event for Pastor Al and Ina Erickson June 19, 2004

Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church
Minneapolis, MN
(see enclosed flyer for details)

AL AND INA TRAIN PEOPLE IN NORTHERN GREAT LAKES SYNOD

On April 23-26, Al Erickson and his wife Ina conducted trainings in four churches in various towns throughout the Northern Great Lakes Synod:

Trinity Lutheran – Rhineland, WI
First Lutheran – Gladstone, MI
Holy Trinity Lutheran – Chassell, MI
Salem Lutheran – Ironwood, MI

Al trained pastors and teachers in *Wise as Serpents* and Ina trained lay people in Prayer Project Lifesaver. They also met with the board of the Synodical Women's Organization.

The purpose of this trip was to further kindle the efforts already started by ADULTS SAVING KIDS team members from the synod. This happened as key leaders, new people, and some pastors got excited about what they can do and share.

It takes a lot of relationship-building and communication for most pastors to really get into these issues – even though those issues might well be devastating many young people in their congregations.

Out of this effort six more congregations are working to develop Prayer Project Lifesaver. Several pastors are taking on sharing with their conference pastors and getting them involved. New people are showing up as future leaders. It takes a lot of verve and nerve to initiate efforts and the flame is spreading. Northern Great Lakes is in a place to set the pace for all of the synods of Wisconsin.

**START PRAYING
FOR OUR CHILDREN.
STOP THE PREYING
ON OUR CHILDREN.**

OFFICER MATT WENTE SHARES THE REALITY OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Nearly 30 youth workers and church leaders gathered to learn from and be challenged by Minneapolis Police Officer Matt Wente on May 11, 2004. Matt shared his first-hand knowledge of how young people – mostly girls – are recruited into prostitution. He stated that the Twin Cities has 1600 “escort” phone listings and more strip clubs than the city of Chicago. He asked everyone to figure out ways to let parents and youth know what’s going on, so that they could prevent young women from being caught in a life of prostitution.

This event was sponsored by the Minneapolis Area Synod Bishop’s Task Force on the ELCA Message on “Commercial Sexual Exploitation.” Members of the task force include Bishop Craig Johnson, Kari Christianson, Pastor Henry French, Jo Mueller, Pastor Kwanza Yu, Marilyn Erickson, and Amy Hartman.

“Love born of faith in Jesus Christ calls us all to attend to, discuss, resist, and reject the system of sexual exploitation.”

- from the ELCA Message on “Commercial Sexual Exploitation”

Call 1-800-638-3522 ext. 2996 for a free Message or get a copy online from www.elca.org/dcs/studies.html

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS...

- Susan Krause for her graphic design work.
- Ken Beenken for his bookkeeping help.
- John Watne for his website design.
- Robert Burich for his computer assistance.
- Ruth Engelstad for her work to create a bibliography of resources and keep the offices organized.
- Women at Ebenezer Tower for their help with our mailings.

ADVENTURES

THE 2003 NUMBERS ARE IN!

We have gathered statistics for 2003 from our staff and from the synods with which we are working.

<i>Number of trainings in the synods done by ADULTS SAVING KIDS staff</i>	6
<i>Number of people attending</i>	59
<i>Number of presentations given by volunteers in the synods</i>	136
<i>Number of people attending</i>	5,523
<i>Number of presentations given by ADULTS SAVING KIDS staff</i>	35
<i>Number of people attending</i>	975
<i>Number of children reached through Prayer Project Lifesaver</i>	2,000

UPCOMING EVENTS

May 23	Prayer Project Lifesaver Training
June 19	Celebration event for Al and Ina Erickson
June 21-25	Northeastern Minnesota Tour Bethel – Little Falls Messiah – Mountain Iron Salem – Longville Zion - Cloquet
Aug. 27-29	Leadership Training
Sept. 16-17	Luther Seminary Kairos class
Nov. 4-7	Leadership Training