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For four years, our team at the Moore Center for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse has worked tirelessly toward our mission to support and conduct research that betters our understanding of child sexual abuse prevention.

In the last year, we’ve made critical inroads in furthering the science of prevention and advancing the public health approach as the best and most effective strategy to ensure that our children aren’t harmed by sexual abuse.

Part of our work has also been to evaluate the policies that affect youth who have engaged in harmful or illegal sexual behavior. Since our founding in 2012, the Moore Center team has assessed the degree to which sex offender registration and notification requirements negatively impact youth. Our multistate study is near completion, and the results replicate the findings of our prior work. Thus far, no state’s juvenile registration policy is associated with any improvement in community safety. More ominously, a survey of youth in treatment for harmful sexual behaviors suggests that those who are registered are less safe and experience more mental health problems than those who are not registered. We believe these studies will impact how national policy is implemented and bolster the argument that children should not be subjected to sex offender and notification policies. We were successful in making this argument to the public in articles and op-ed pieces throughout 2016.

In March 2016, author Sarah Stillman featured our Center’s research in The New Yorker. In “The List” she interviews Josh Gravens, who was arrested and placed on a public registry before becoming a leading figure in the movement to stop requiring children to register as sex offenders. He has counseled hundreds of children and says their experiences are much like his own and don’t improve with time. Stillman’s piece strongly articulates the point that placement on the registry can feel like a lifetime sentence.

We hope that our research will help shift the nation’s response away from ineffective, after-the-fact policies and toward a preventive, public health focus that more effectively protects children from harm. We remain thankful for the support we need to continue producing innovative research in this critical field. Our work is made possible because of a substantial gift from the Moore family—Steve, Julia and Chloe—who have been our champions. We are pleased to share that they are continuing their support of our Center for another five years.

We are also thankful to all of our donors who gave generously in 2016 and believe in our vision of a world where all children are safe from sexual abuse.
Mission, Vision and Framework

Mission
The mission of the Moore Center for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse is to support and conduct research that betters our understanding of child sexual abuse, educate policymakers and the public and cultivate partnerships with organizations to develop proven strategies that prevent child sexual abuse.

Vision
Our vision is a world without child sexual abuse. At the Moore Center for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse, we know this kind of abuse is preventable, not inevitable, which is why our work centers on developing strong prevention strategies. We believe that everyone shares the responsibility for prevention, and everyone benefits when children remain safe from abuse.

RECAP Framework: A Public Health Perspective
From clean water to safe housing to near-universal immunization, established public health practices dating back to the mid-19th century have delivered longer life, better health and higher quality of living in communities around the world. The same techniques can be applied to the task of preventing child sexual abuse, based on five fundamental steps that have been applied to public health challenges across the U.S. and around the world:

- **Research** to advance the primary prevention of child sexual abuse, including the development and rigorous evaluation of prevention interventions
- **Education** for policymakers, funders, advocates, educators, health and social service practitioners, media, parents and other stakeholders to deliver the message that child sexual abuse prevention is both essential and achievable
- **Communication** that delivers clear, unbiased, objective information on all aspects of child sexual abuse, including victimization, perpetration and prevention
- **Advocacy** that secures resources and support for evidence-based policies and practices to prevent child sexual abuse
- **Policy** efforts that support a public health approach to child sexual abuse prevention

The Year in Review
The Moore Center had an exciting and productive year in 2016, reaching a growing and diverse audience. The Center continued to focus on sound research, informed policy and strategic outreach. Here are a few highlights of our work.

We welcomed Karen Baker, director of the National Sexual Violence Resource Center as a Scientific Advisory Board member.

Dr. Letourneau was published in the Star Tribune calling for a focus on prevention in response to the Jacob Wetterling case.

Dr. Letourneau was interviewed by Minnesota Public Radio on the harm of imposing sex crime policies on juveniles.

Dr. Shields was invited to speak about the commercial sexual exploitation of children to the National Conference of State Legislatures.
Dr. Letourneau spoke at the 2016 TEDMED conference in Palm Springs, California, and gave a compelling argument that child sexual abuse is preventable.

Dr. Letourneau’s class, Child Victimization: A Public Health Perspective, received outstanding ratings from students.

The Moore Center’s research on juvenile sexual offending was profiled in The New Yorker in March 2016.

Dr. Letourneau served as a committee member for the World Health Organization Guidelines Development Group to address child victimization.

Dr. Letourneau presented the impact of sex crime policies on children and their families to 150 judges in Oregon.

Dr. Letourneau was promoted to professor with tenure in the Department of Mental Health.

Dr. Shields was promoted to associate director at the Moore Center.

Dr. Letourneau represented the Moore Center at a meeting organized by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to discuss child abuse and neglect, which brought together representatives from several organizations, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Psychological Association, Prevent Child Abuse America and the Council for a Strong America.
Amanda Ruzicka, research associate at the Moore Center, has been keeping our research projects on track since she became the first staff member to join Dr. Letourneau, the Center’s inaugural director, in April 2012. In her role, Ruzicka is responsible for a wide range of activities, including managing the Center’s research studies, aiding in intervention and research project development and planning the Center’s child sexual abuse prevention symposium, held every year in April.

As an undergraduate at Kutztown University of Pennsylvania, Ruzicka studied clinical/counseling psychology and conducted clinical work with young men with problem sexual behaviors.

While earning a master’s degree at Towson University in clinical psychology, Ruzicka conducted clinical work at the Center for Eating Disorders at Sheppard Pratt and evaluated school-based prevention interventions with the American Institutes for Research and Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. After graduation, she recognized that her passion was working in the field of prevention research and was eager to apply her knowledge to the prevention of child sexual abuse.

“Through my work with young men with problem sexual behaviors and adolescent girls who have experienced trauma, it has always been clear to me that effective treatment services are necessary for both child sexual abuse victims and offenders; however, before working at the Moore Center, I didn’t fully appreciate how essential rigorous research and effective interventions aimed at the prevention of child sexual abuse are,” she says.

Since working at the Moore Center, Ruzicka has learned a lot about how child sexual abuse can be prevented using a public health approach. “Prevention seems like a hard goal to achieve, but I want people to know that as more research is conducted and more experts support prevention, we are proving that violence like child sexual abuse can be prevented,” she says.

The Moore Center is currently in the process of developing three prevention interventions: one to teach middle school students about appropriate behaviors with younger children, one to help parents promote healthy sexual development in their children, and one to provide helpful resources for adolescents with an attraction to younger children. “I can’t wait to see what impact these programs have on child sexual abuse prevention,” she says.

When she’s not working, Ruzicka loves spending time outdoors with her family. “Some of our favorite things to do are swimming, taking walks and playing sports. We all love the water, so we visit the beach and our favorite lake in the mountains as much as possible.”
Prevention Research
Educating Youth and Families

The average age of someone who commits a sexual offense against a prepubescent child is just 14 years old. In fact, about half of all such offenses are committed by youth. That surprising fact is why several of our studies are devoted to preventing older children, including teens, from engaging in harmful or illegal sexual behavior with younger children.

This year, we received funding from the National Institutes of Health’s National Institute of Child Health and Human Development to create a school-based prevention program targeting sixth- and seventh-grade children to teach them how to behave responsibly with younger children.

We’ve also partnered with Dr. Tamar Mendelson, associate professor in the Department of Mental Health at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, to create an education-based intervention for at-risk families. Caregivers will learn positive parenting techniques and how to encourage healthy sexual development in their children. We look forward to sharing the results of these studies.

Research Highlights

• Our national study on the collateral consequences of youth who have committed sex offenses will be completed this year.

• Phase two of our novel “Help Wanted” study was funded by Raliance. During this phase, we are developing an online prevention intervention tool for adolescents with a sexual interest in children.

• Our findings from our project that evaluated the cost, causes and consequences of child sexual abuse were published in the journal Child Maltreatment in an article titled “Initial Assessment of Stewards of Children Program Effects on Sexual Abuse Reporting Rates in Selected South Carolina Counties.”

• Our research team will soon be interviewing stakeholders for our project evaluating states’ responses to the commercial sexual exploitation of children.
Media Highlights

In 2016, the Moore Center for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse played a vital role in bringing knowledge and expertise related to child sexual abuse prevention to the attention of our stakeholders. Here are the headlines that have been the most impactful.

“The List” by Sarah Stillman (The New Yorker) 
March 2016

This long-form article describes the challenges of young adults who were required to register as sex offenders when they were children and discusses the work that researchers, policy experts and activists are doing to bring attention to these harmful policies.

“Should a Juvenile Offender be Locked Up Indefinitely?”
by William Brangham (PBS NewsHour) 
June 2016

The series Broken Justice looks closely at criminal justice issues and policies across the U.S. In this episode, Brangham interviews youth who have been charged with sex crimes and are held beyond their release date. Dr. Letourneau asserts that because recidivism rates for juveniles charged with sex crimes are so low, the policy of committing juveniles is a wasted cost to taxpayers and does not make sense.

“What’s the Real Rate of Sex-Crime Recidivism?”
by Steven Yoder (Pacific Standard) 
May 2016

In the 1980s, a counselor working with convicted sex offenders made an assertion that would change history. Researchers, including Dr. Letourneau, are now setting the record straight that recidivism rates are much lower than previously reported.

“After Jacob, Work Harder to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse”
(op-ed) by Elizabeth Letourneau, PhD (Star Tribune) 
September 2016

Dr. Letourneau’s op-ed argues for a paradigm shift in the way we view and respond to child sexual abuse. We cannot wait for children such as Jacob Wetterling to be harmed before we take action.
We are thankful for the generous contributions from our passionate donors, which totaled more than $25,500 in 2016, an 82 percent increase from last year!

Gifts help us continue our research, particularly in areas that have proved hard to fund through traditional research funding sources. We want to thank everyone who made a contribution.

Our Center Benefactors

- Anonymous
- Anne Daignault
- The Daignault Family Foundation
- Dorothy A. Drago, MPH, in honor of Deborah Dempsey and Victoria Rice Brown
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- The Lagrotta Family, in honor of Dr. Letourneau
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- The Schneider Family
- Scott L. Schneider
- David W. Scruggs, in honor of Deborah Dempsey
- James Seeman, in honor of Deborah Dempsey
- Sharper Future

Grant Awards

We regularly apply for grants from the federal government and national organizations that support our mission and research. Below are grants awarded in 2016 or continuing into 2017.

- Annie E. Casey Foundation
- Anonymous Donor Advisor Group
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- National Institutes of Health’s National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
- National Institute of Justice
- Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
- Raliance

Moore Center Gifts, 2014-2016
Advisory Boards

Scientific Advisory Board: We sincerely thank our Scientific Advisory Board members, who are charged with helping to identify knowledge gaps and prioritize areas where our resources can achieve the greatest impact. In 2016 our board included:

- Karen Baker, director of the National Sexual Violence Resource Center
- Esther Deblinger, co-director, Child Abuse Research Education & Service Institute, and professor, School of Osteopathic Medicine, Rowan University
- David Finkelhor, director, Crimes Against Children Research Center, co-director, Family Research Laboratory and professor of sociology, University of New Hampshire
- Andrea Gielen, director, Center for Injury Research and Policy and professor, Health, Behavior and Society, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
- James A. Mercy, director, Division of Violence Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention & Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Michael Seto, director, Forensic Research Unit, The Royal’s Institute of Mental Health Research, director of Forensic Rehabilitation Research, Royal Ottawa Health Care Group and adjunct at University of Toronto, Ryerson University, Carleton University and University of Ottawa
- Karen Baker, director of the National Sexual Violence Resource Center
- Esther Deblinger, co-director, Child Abuse Research Education & Service Institute, and professor, School of Osteopathic Medicine, Rowan University
- David Finkelhor, director, Crimes Against Children Research Center, co-director, Family Research Laboratory and professor of sociology, University of New Hampshire
- Andrea Gielen, director, Center for Injury Research and Policy and professor, Health, Behavior and Society, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
- James A. Mercy, director, Division of Violence Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention & Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Michael Seto, director, Forensic Research Unit, The Royal’s Institute of Mental Health Research, director of Forensic Rehabilitation Research, Royal Ottawa Health Care Group and adjunct at University of Toronto, Ryerson University, Carleton University and University of Ottawa

A special thank you to Madeline Carter and Deborah Donovan Rice, who retired from the Board this year. We thank you for your time and service to our Center.

Policy Advisory Board: The Policy Advisory Board consists of experts in the legal, government and policy fields. The board is responsible for identifying emerging issues and trends and advising on public policy as it relates to child sexual abuse prevention. All members also serve on the board for the Advisory Council on Child Trafficking (ACCT).

- Allison Abner, television writer and producer, Netflix’s Narcos and NBC’s The West Wing
- Faiza Mathon-Mathieu, legislative counsel at the Office of the Inspector General, Department of Homeland Security
- Tracy Sefl, senior advisor, Democratic National Committee and Ready for Hillary SuperPAC and serves on the board of directors of Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN)
- Autumn Hanna VandeHei, former deputy assistant secretary for legislation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Moore Center Staff

Leadership
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Ryan T. Shields, PhD
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