



Angela D. Alsobrooks,
State's Attorney

Contacts:

Jackie Dilworth
Director of Communications
YMCA of Metropolitan Washington
(202) 384-6818; Jackie.Dilworth@ymcadc.org

John Erzen, II
Communications Director
Prince George's County
Office of the State's Attorney
(301) 952-2848; jeerzen@co.pg.md.us

Shining a Light on Child Sexual Abuse in Prince George's County

The Y and Prince George's County's State's Attorney team up to educate 43,000 residents on how to recognize, prevent and react to child sexual abuse

[FT. WASHINGTON, MD, June 27, 2012] – One in four girls and one in six boys will be sexually abused before their 18th birthday. In 90% of those cases, the abuser is someone the child knows and trusts. The reality is horrific, but there is momentum towards changing the way our community protects each and every child. Today, the YMCA of Metropolitan Washington and Prince George's County State's Attorney Angela Alsobrooks announced a new partnership for prevention. With a five-year goal to educate 43,000 adults in Prince George's County, Darkness to Light's evidence-based training will create widespread awareness about how to recognize, prevent, and react to child sexual abuse. This partnership is a vital step towards building a safer, more interconnected community.

"For too long, our children have been told not to talk about the abuse they have suffered, to keep it a secret because it is ugly," State's Attorney Alsobrooks said. "Our partnership with the YMCA and Darkness to Light will put an end to these secrets so our children do not have to live with this burden and future generations do not have to suffer from this senseless, horrific abuse."

The nationally-recognized *Stewards of Children* training emphasizes that preventing child sexual abuse is an adult responsibility. A six-year old is not equipped with the life skills to fend off sexual advances from an adult relative, or even recognize them for what they are. Yet, the statistics show that adults aren't bearing the load. By training 43,000 adults in Prince George's County by 2017, the Y and State's Attorney Alsobrooks will educate and empower 5% of the population – the tipping point for igniting behavior change. This partnership will serve as the model for abuse-proofing the YMCA of Metropolitan Washington's entire service area, which also Montgomery County, northern Virginia, and Washington, DC.

"At the Y, the health and well-being of children and families has been at the heart of our mission since 1852," states Angie Reese-Hawkins, President & CEO. "Long before Penn State's abuse scandal hit the airwaves, more than 40 YMCAs across the country have been addressing this issue by training adults to spot and prevent child sexual abuse. With our presence and long history of providing opportunities for social and personal change, we are proud to collaborate with State's Attorney Alsobrooks to shine the light on this compelling issue."

[OVER]

The Darkness to Light *Stewards of Children* training is the only evidence-based program available nationally that is proven to increase knowledge, improve attitudes and change child-protective behaviors. In the three-hour training, adults learn the steps to prevent abuse, recognize the warning signs, and react responsibly when abuse occurs. Trainings are scheduled to take place on July 11th and July 18th from 10:00am – 2:00pm at YMCA Potomac Overlook, located at 10709 Indian Head Hwy., Ft. Washington, MD 20744. To sign up, please contact John DeGout at john.degout@ymcadc.org or (202) 797-4468.

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About the YMCA of Metropolitan Washington

The Y is one of the nation's leading nonprofits strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. We have been engaging men, women and children in the metropolitan Washington region for 160 years – regardless of age, income or background. Anchored in Washington, DC, suburban Maryland, and northern Virginia, the YMCA of Metropolitan Washington creates a positive difference in the lives of more than 200,000 people each year through its 17 branches and program centers. We have the long-standing relationships and physical presence not just to promise, but to deliver, lasting personal and social change. For more information, visit www.ymcadc.org or follow us at www.facebook.com/ymcadc.

About Prince George's County State's Attorney Angela D. Alsobrooks

In 2010, Angela Alsobrooks became the first woman to be elected State's Attorney for Prince George's County. As State's Attorney, Ms. Alsobrooks leads a staff of 90 attorneys and 100 professional administrative staff who work tirelessly to prosecute people accused of committing crimes. She plays a key role in public safety and strives to carry out her responsibilities as the county's top prosecutor in a firm, fair and consistent manner. After completing her undergraduate degree in public policy at Duke University, and earning her law degree from the University of Maryland, Ms. Alsobrooks was hired to serve as the county's first full-time Assistant State's Attorney dedicated to prosecuting domestic violence perpetrators. She tried scores of cases and successfully prosecuted violent offenders.

About Darkness to Light

Darkness to Light is a national non-profit organization with the mission to empower people to prevent child sexual abuse. We do this by increasing public awareness of the issue, educating adults to prevent, recognize the signs and react responsibly to child sexual abuse, and by engaging communities in building and sustaining child sexual abuse prevention initiatives. Learn more www.D2L.org.