

What's New At The Watch House

The Watch House dedicates this issue to the victims of sex abuse. We will discuss the obstacles many victims experience and how we can work together to protect our community from the damage inflicted by repeat sex offenders.

The Watch House will be the first facility of its kind to monitor repeat sex offenders 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Teaching Humane Existence (T.H.E.), a nonprofit organization, plans to submit a bill to build The Watch House, a 300-bed facility in the metro-Denver area. The sex offenders will live at The Watch House until the end of their sentences, or until they have reliably and sufficiently changed. Unfortunately, such change is not common. For this reason, The Watch House is committed to protecting our community by providing comprehensive management and treatment,

potentially for life since there is no known cure. This commitment begins with the solution for the problem of where sex offenders can live.

We are currently obtaining endorsements to support a bill for the creation of The Watch House. The bill is planned for the 2010 legislative season. With more than 25 years of research and clinical experience with sex offenders, our organization knows there is no other effective choice but to build The Watch House. Your endorsement helps move The Watch House bill forward.

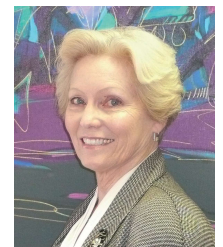
Focusing on Public Safety from the Victims' Viewpoint

By Tess Henry

As board member for T.H.E. and supporter of The Watch House facility, having worked with many victims, I see how sexual abuse affects their lives and the lives of their families. Society often conceals sex offense, forcing innocent victims to maintain secrecy and develop a lack of trust throughout their lives. We must do something to break the silence and keep these known perpetrators from further access to victims. It is extremely important that we as a society find solutions to keep repeat sex offenders out of our communities to bring public safety and comfort to the victims of sex abuse.

The Watch House is the only comprehensive plan for keeping sex offenders out of our neighborhoods. Instead of typical therapy which is only two hours a week, sex offenders at The Watch House will live in an environment of constant therapy. And it is a huge cost savings to the public because they will not continue to sit in jail on our dollar. They will have to pay to stay at The Watch House and contribute to their treatment.

Please join me in generating awareness for The Watch House so we can work together to prevent future victimization.



Tess Henry, Business Director and Board Member of Teaching Humane Existence, Volunteer for the Watch House.---

Ask An Expert

We interviewed Dr. Claire Poole, Psy. D., clinical director at Families First Colorado, about the long-term affects of sex abuse and about why he supports The Watch House.

Q: Briefly describe your job responsibilities as clinical director.

A: Families First treats children who are unable to live in a family setting due to the results from maltreatment such as sexual abuse. I'm responsible for assessing each child's mental health needs, creating treatment plans, supervising individual and family therapists, and directing the staff in their daily interactions with the child.

Q: What are the effects of sex abuse on a family?

A: When the abuse comes to light the family is thrown into a terrible mix of guilt, betrayal, anger, and fear. It is even more destructive when the abuse remains undiscovered. Sexual abuse threatens the basic fabric of family life, tearing apart bonds of trust and intimacy. Parents or siblings may blame themselves for not stopping the abuse, and they may feel both terribly resentful toward the victim, and guilty about that reaction. Trust between everyone is damaged, and sometimes trust is shattered beyond repair. Children lose faith in their parents' ability to protect them and parents lose faith in their own abilities. For complex reasons, parents who were themselves victimized as children are considerably more likely to abuse their own children, or to passively allow another person to do so. Even one episode of sexual assault can set in motion a destructive cycle that lasts through generations.

Q: What is the impact of child sex abuse on the victim's adult life?

A: Sexual abuse reverberates throughout adult life and can have a devastating

impact. All kinds of relationships are compromised by the trauma of the abuse and perhaps even more by the profound betrayal of trust. Victims typically find it harder to trust people in any relationship, possibly feeling suspicion and anger for no reason. Many are haunted by feeling damaged, guilty and disgusting. Fear and dread of vulnerability erode the foundations of every close relationship, from casual friendships to marriage. Sexual adjustment is obviously threatened and many victims of abuse struggle with finding a satisfying sex life. A history of abuse undermines an adult's confidence in his or her own parenting, and making judgments about one's own child can be agonizingly difficult. Teens and adults who are arrested for drug abuse, prostitution, assault, rape and other violent crimes are much more likely to have been sexually abused as children as compared to the general population. Depression, suicide and severe emotional problems, such as multiple personality disorder, are also highly correlated with abuse. The most important thing to realize is that a short period of sexual abuse in one's life makes for a lifetime of difficulties for the individual and for the family. Treatment certainly helps but the emotional impact resurfaces throughout life.

Q: Why will victims ask for The Watch House?

A: One of the lasting effects of being a victim is a sense of fear and vulnerability that hovers in the background of every day. Dealing with this apprehension is a great burden made dramatically harder when the perpetrator is free in the community. The Watch House promises a realistic means of protecting past and potential victims from future assault. With

this realistic protection it is a bit easier for victims to manage their feelings of vulnerability.

Q: Why do you support The Watch House?

A: T.H.E., the organization behind The Watch House initiative, works with perpetrators who are, as a group, rigid personalities who do not change much with any kind of treatment. But they are not "monsters;" most are themselves victims of childhood maltreatment. While we can, and should, take a compassionate attitude toward these individuals, we must recognize the reality that we do not have effective methods of treatment for them. On one side, we try to provide safety to the community through monitoring and ongoing intervention such as provided by T.H.E. On the other, we recognize that perpetrators also have rights to dignity and to pursue their own happiness. Presently the system lets us down on both sides. Too many perpetrators are so marginalized by the rules of monitoring that they cannot keep employment, keep a home, or develop a network of healthy relationships. Not only is this unfair and unproductive, it makes monitoring considerably more difficult and opens the way for some perpetrators to escape the monitoring system. The Watch House is an innovative approach that addresses both sides of the problem in an organized, responsible, and humane way.





Sex Offense - Hurt that Lasts a Lifetime

- By Liz Veeder

I am writing this from the experience of a late fifty-year-old mother, grandmother and sibling.

This thing called sex offense is life-changing. It never lets go of you or anyone you are close to. Some might want to say it is “just in the past,” but when the outcome of being sexually abused affects so many aspects of your life afterwards, there is no way to “lose it”. To make matters worse, I find sex abuse is still going on today within my extended family.

When I was eight years old my Dad came to my bedroom looking for my sister, when he forced me onto my bed, shoved his tongue into my mouth, laid on top of me and groped me. As I struggled to get free I was crying and ran to find my mother. I saw that my mother was in the kitchen on the phone. She saw my distress and got off the phone to ask what the matter was. I sat on the floor, sobbing and telling her what had happened. She looked concerned and told me nothing like that would happen again. It did. Incidences continued off and on for years.

Later I learned to leave and physically move away each time my dad would make

new sexual advances. However, I had no choice as a child, I was trapped in a sexualized relationship with my dad. He continued to make advances and I continued to struggle with the relationship. What I did not learn until much later and after much therapy was that I had to live in a mentally “checked-out” way to do so. I never told my mother about any of the other incidences again; she was not there for me. It made me feel unprotected, untrusting, embarrassed, ashamed, withdrawn, alone and insecure.

I never brought it up again, until my dad molested one of my daughters, which I will get into next. Having my plea for help and protection from my mother go unheeded played a large role in the development of my avoidance of confrontation and being able to access my feelings.

Being cut off from my fear set me up in a couple of ways. First, my avoidance set me up to set my daughter up to be sexually molested by the same man, my dad. Second, due to my disconnectedness, I was set up to not notice. She didn’t tell me what was happening. I finally noticed she had taken a black magic marker and marked out her own

face in every photo in her photo album. That night in her bedroom it took me three hours of talking, coaxing, encouraging and making guesses on what was going on with her. She told me only after she had me promise not to tell anyone. I promised, but that is a promise you don’t keep. When I called my dad the next day and told him he was no longer welcome in my house, he immediately said, “It was only with you and your daughter and I will never do it again.” The next call I made was to report him. Within two weeks he had packed up my mom, who had a cerebral aneurysm years before and was not very functional, and moved to Tucson, Az.

My daughter was awarded a year’s worth of counseling, both group and individual. She never cooperated and was dismissed from both group and individual counseling. My daughter has held onto her anger, shame and “perceived guilt” even to this day. In her resistance to dealing with the impacts of the sex abuse that happened to her, she has been instrumental in allowing an admitted child molester, in her husbands’ family, to go unreported and continue to abuse. This sex offender, my daughter’s brother-in-law, admitted to sexually abusing at least two of my daughters’ nieces.

Sexual abuse not only harms victims in their past and present, but has tragic outcomes in the future. The touching, caressing, fondling or penetration that happens in a physical sense is bad enough, but it is intensified by the psychological control created by feelings of guilt, shame, or avoidance. The effects can last a lifetime, affecting the victim directly and all the people in a relationship with them. Exposing the sexual abuse forces the world around the victims, including their family, friends and acquaintances, to take a stand. They either stand for the truth and assist in exposing the perpetrator, or continue to live in denial and ignore the truth. It is very hard for people to stand up to anything unpleasant. As soon as Dad began molesting me, my life would have turned out better had someone acted upon my complaints. He needed to live in The Watch House, but nothing like that existed. By endorsing The Watch House today, we can keep repeat sex offenders out of the community and help people, like me, whose lives are affected by these perpetrators.

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KEEPING AN EYE ON SEX OFFENDERS
the WatchHouse



Endorse

Help us keep repeat sex offenders out of our neighborhoods. Endorsing The Watch House is extremely important for the safety of our loved ones. As a citizen, it's up to you to help us convince politicians that The Watch House is the only solution to the repeat sex offender problem. Visit our web site at www.TheWatchHouse.org to complete an endorsement form today.



Learn

We'd love to provide more information about why The Watch House is the only solution to the problem of where sex offenders *can* live. After hearing our development plan, you will want to endorse The Watch House as the long-term solution for stopping repeat sex offenders.



Donate

Please visit our Web site to contribute \$25, \$50 or \$75 to generate awareness for The Watch House and keep repeat sex offenders out of our neighborhoods. Your donation drives the answer to better sex offender management.

the WatchHouse
KEEPING AN EYE ON SEX OFFENDERS

Take Our Survey

We want to hear from you! Please visit our Web site at www.TheWatchHouse.org to take our three minute public safety survey. Your input will help us show government leaders that we want them to support a solution that ensures the safety of our loved ones from sex offenders.