

COLORADO'S #1 HISPANIC-OWNED BILINGUAL PUBLICATION



LA VOZ

BILINGÜE



[Find a Lawyer - Free](#) Free, Confidential Lawyer Locator. Save Time - Describe Your Case Now! www.LegalMatch.com

→ In English
→ En Español

[Ask a Lawyer Online Now](#) 27 Lawyers Online Now Answer Your Questions In Minutes. eAnswer.com/Law

→ In English
→ En Español

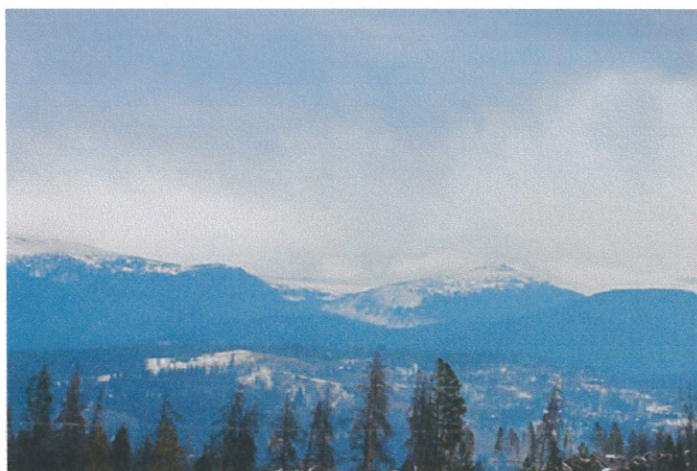
[Guilty of Sexual Torture](#) Former Dept. of Education Official Sentenced For Domestic Sex Torture: www.DNAinfo.com

AdChoices

[Home](#) [Classifieds](#) [Media Kit](#) [Advertising](#) [Subscription](#) [Register](#) [Contact Us](#) [Login](#)

- Arts & Entertainment
- Automundo
- Business
- Classifieds
- Commentary
- Community
- Education
- El Mundo
- Health
- Immigration
- La Vida Latina
- La Voz NAHP Awards
- Letter to the Editor
- Mis Recuerdos
- My Money
- Nuestra Gente
- Of Special Interest
- Politics
- Que Pasa
- Sports
- Student of the Week
- Technology
- Vecinos
- Where Are They Now?
- Archives
- Home

Protecting our children



The skies darken over Fraser, Colo. on Saturday, bringing a storm with hurricane force winds to areas in the mountains. (La Voz Staff photo)



By Ernest Gurulé
News@lavozcolorado.com

11/15/2011

For what may seem like forever, it has been a source of pride and honor; the rock in the community where children aspired to go and where parents were proud to say their children went to school. But a cloud sits heavy upon it and has sullied it in the worst possible way.

A trusted adult has been arrested and charged with sexual crimes against the very children he was asked to protect and the university, reportedly aware of the matter--at its highest levels--remained silent. But the university, in this case, is not the Penn State that has all but seized headlines for a week for doing next to nothing in a tawdry sex scandal. It is The Citadel, the 'West Point of the South.'

But the alleged crimes for which each institution is in the news are essentially identical. Individuals, whose names once reflected the integrity and honor of their respective universities, are today reviled, despised as sexual predators. And the schools they once represented are under moral and microscopic scrutiny because, despite knowing they had serious problems, they essentially chose to do nothing.

"It's morally reprehensible," said Dr. Desmond Runyan, Executive Director of Denver's Kemp Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect. Runyan, who over his career has seen countless numbers of sexual abuse cases, is incredulous. "How can anyone not do anything?"

At Penn State, where former number two man in the University's football

Click on our advertising links for:

[SERVICE DIRECTORY](#)

[CLASSIFIEDS](#)

'You Tube Videos'



"In the Heights" Reception.

[Pulsa aquí para más episodios](#)

Follow La Voz on:



Publicidad

WARNING:

Do Not Click This If You Have Moral, Ethical Or Religious Reasons Forcing You To Cower Helplessly While Someone Violently Attacks You, Your Wife Or Your Kids...

POLL QUESTION

AdChoices 

[Sex Abuse Defense](#)

Aggressive Defense
Against False
Allegations of Child
Sexual Abuse
www.paulstuckle.com/

[Insurance Archeology](#)

Historical insurance
policies are valuable.
Insurance Archeology!
policyfind.com

[Coaching for Survivors](#)

Free mp3: Recovering
from Abuse
[www.rachelgrantcoaching.c...](http://www.rachelgrantcoaching.com)

[Fear No Man](#)

Discover What The
Martial Artists And The
Army Don't Want You
To Know
[www.CloseCombatTraining.c...](http://www.CloseCombatTraining.com)

[Win a free LCD Television](#)

IndianWomensHealth
wants an opinion
Participate and Win
IndianWomensHealth.com

program, Jerry Sandusky, allegedly abused young boys for more than a decade, and The Citadel, where a respected cadet is accused of similar crimes, that's what happened. Despite documentation of crimes against young children, each university essentially looked the other way.

"At the time, we took what we thought were the necessary steps," said Lt. General John Rosa, Citadel President. "Now, we know we didn't."

Rosa's lament is remarkably similar to Penn State's iconic football coach Joe Paterno, who also reflected on his school's sex scandal. "It is one of the great sorrows of my life. With the benefit of hindsight, I wish I had done more."

But in each situation, and in similar situations occurring every week across Colorado and the country, far too often apologies seemingly outnumber demonstrable actions in protecting young children from those who prey on them. One reason is because, too often, children's stories are ignored or thought to be imagined.

"We do know about a third of the kids who are sexually victimized aren't believed," Runyan said. Also working against these victims is their own silence. "Most people never tell." Victims are too often ashamed of what took place. As a result, too many simply choose to carry their silent burden through life. It's a weight, Runyan said, that "victimizes again."

Also, because most victims choose to live with the pain and shame of a sexual assault, it is almost impossible to make a sound estimate on the number of victims there are. The best guess, said Dr. Runyan, is one out of four women and one out of six men in America has been sexually abused. And in the vast majority of sexual assaults, the perpetrator is someone the victim knows, often a trusted friend of the family or relative. Additionally, sexual assaults cross ethnic, cultural and economic lines. It's a crime of egalitarian exploitation.

The Denver Kemp Center, which is renowned for its work in the prevention and treatment of sexual abuse of young children, says sexual abuse can be a lifelong and disabling condition. Its victims carry documentable cases of depression, sexual dysfunction and, in many cases, other health conditions that can be traced to their abuse.

Silence or failure to act when sexual abuse was known or suspected played significant roles at both Penn State and The Citadel. At Penn State, one former football graduate assistant told NBC that the Penn State image of 'Camelot' and kind, gentle and caring image of Paterno, which is a huge marketing tool for the university, are myths. Football, says Matt Patkis, is Paterno's "kingdom" and he acts only when he's dealing with someone on his level or there's something that "will serve him." Sandusky's alleged behavior did not 'serve' him. And the victims, all young boys---as many as twenty---did not move him.

The former assistant also believes that Sandusky's inappropriate behavior with young boys was known among the close knit football staff that regularly saw him with his victims at the Penn State facilities. "He picked on kids who didn't have a support system," Patkis said of Sandusky whose alleged victims were culled from the foundation he ran for underprivileged children.

But what has stuck with Patkis and millions of others who've read the grand jury account of the investigation is how one assistant coach caught Sandusky in the shower in a sexual act with a young boy yet did nothing beyond telling his father and, later, Coach Paterno the following morning. While many believe his inaction should have been grounds for termination, the state 'whistle blower' law is actually protecting him from being fired.

In Colorado, there is a law that requires witnesses to report sexual assaults but it does not apply to private citizens. "There is a whole list of people who have a duty (to report)," said Pueblo County Judge Ernie Ruybalid. But the list is very specific. It mandates that doctors, nurses, child health associates, hospital personnel (admissions or patient care), police and firefighters, even commercial film and photo processors report this crime. And new legislation to include private citizens may never be enacted.

"It could cause great confusion and anxiety," Ruybalid said. Attorneys could---and would---attack a private citizen's credibility. Did what they see involve consenting adults? Did what they see involve juveniles? "You would almost have to investigate to stay out of trouble," he said. Nevertheless, said the veteran Pueblo County jurist, "there may not be a legal obligation but there's certainly a moral obligation."

Because the problem of sexual abuse has an impact on so many children, an ad campaign---in English and Spanish---aimed at young children and their families has just been launched. The Denver Children's Advocacy Center and INOBTR (I Know Better) through a federal grant have partnered to place billboards throughout the metro area alerting children and their families to this, oftentimes delicate issue. "We have a commitment to our children to keep them safe," said Laura Sonderup, Bilingual Campaign Director for Hispanidad, an agency that specializes on Hispanic advertising and marketing.

Beside billboards, the campaign will also include advertisements that run before movies in theaters across the metro area. While the subject matter is touchy and many parents may prefer to address it with their children themselves, Sonderup says it's a serious enough issue that it qualifies for public airing. "If we offend someone with the message, I'm not going to apologize for it," she said. "If you can save one little person from becoming a victim, then I'm happy to irritate people." The commitment, she said, is first and foremost to those most likely to be victims.

The campaign, which began in October, will run through the end of the year.

© 2011 La Voz Bilingüe. All Rights Reserved.

[Advertising](#) | [Media Kit](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Disclaimer](#)

4047 Tejon Street, Denver, CO 80211, Tel: 303-936-8556, Fax: 720-889-2455

Site Powered By: [Multimedia X](#)