



VIRTUS™
Excellence
Builds
Trust

COMMUNICARE™

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VIRTUS™ Ad Hoc Committee

The National Catholic Risk Retention Group, Inc., (National Catholic) Board of Directors selected an Ad Hoc Committee of its board members to determine the scope of the project and to oversee development of the VIRTUS™ program.

Chairman

Joseph Frank
Archdiocese of Newark

Members

Reverend Edward J. Arsenault
Diocese of Manchester

Maryellen Connor
Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph

Staff and Advisory Members

Douglas W. Grund
The National Catholic Risk Retention Group, Inc.

Peter Persuitti
Munich-American RiskPartners

Project Coordinators

Sharon W. Doty, Esq.
THE AGOS GROUP, LLC

Alinda F. Jones, Esq.
THE AGOS GROUP, LLC

VIRTUS™ Steering Committee

National Catholic has invited international experts from a variety of organizations and disciplines to participate in a Steering Committee—to provide guidance in the decision-making process for the VIRTUS™ Ad Hoc Committee.

Chairman

Peter Persuitti
Munich-American RiskPartners

Members

Michael J. Bemis
The National Catholic Risk Retention Group, Inc.

The Most Reverend Raymond J. Boland, D.D.
Bishop of Kansas City-St. Joseph

Sister Patrice Hughes, S.C.
National Catholic Education Association

Barbara Kraft
Price Waterhouse Coopers

Lynn Lowder, Esq.
Mail Boxes Etc.

Jack McCalmon, J.D.
THE AGOS GROUP, LLC

Reverend Kevin C. McCoy, S.T.D.
Pontifical North American College, Vatican State

Monsignor Kevin M. McDonough, J.C.D.
Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis

John Patterson
Nonprofit Risk Management Center

Carol Stanton
Glastonbury Abbey

Taking bigger and bigger steps

The National Catholic Risk Retention Group, Inc. (National Catholic) is pleased to announce our progress on the development of the VIRTUS™ program. Only a year after the concept of VIRTUS™ was formalized, numerous steps have been taken to move the project off the drawing board onto a path toward pilot implementation.



Mr. Frank

"The really tough part of any development project is getting started addressing issues as big as those that VIRTUS™ is tackling," said Joe Frank, chairman of the VIRTUS™ Ad Hoc Committee (Committee). "During the past several months, the seed of an idea has germinated, taken root, and grown into a more clearly defined outline of specific program components, including a well-defined goal created under the advisement of a specialized team of highly qualified experts."

VIRTUS™ is about establishing a common understanding of appropriate human relationships. In its first phase, VIRTUS™ will focus specifically on the relationships between adults and the children and other vulnerable populations they supervise.

The most laborious, yet, important task was reviewing the credentials and work product of dozens of experts—experts with a wide range of knowledge and experience in the issues surrounding appropriate human relationships. This assignment provided the Committee with entrée to those most qualified to provide "expert consultation" to achieve our mission.

The Expert Consulting Team (Experts) will advise and consult with the Committee throughout the Phase I development process to ensure that the very best research and practical experience is being leveraged. Page 2 of our newsletter will introduce you to the Experts and illustrate why the Committee is more confident

than ever in the value of VIRTUS™.

While researching candidates to serve as Experts, the Committee became well acquainted with dozens of programs. "Some programs are better than others—and there appear to be few genuinely 'new' ideas or techniques," said Fr. Edward Arsenault, chairman of the board of National Catholic and a member of the Committee. "Clearly, VIRTUS™ will draw on the best ideas, best research, best practical experience, and best guidance of all existing programs. Unlike existing programs, VIRTUS™ will attempt to address the whole aspect of appropriate human relationships, rather than focus exclusively on the more subjective and inflammatory pieces of the puzzle."



Fr. Arsenault

During the past fall and winter, the Committee worked with THE AGOS GROUP, LLC (AGOS), the VIRTUS™ development coordinator, to draft and issue a request for proposal through which to identify experts and vendors with the credentials and creativity needed to build the individual components of the program. Nine proposals were submitted.

In April, the Committee met with the Experts to discuss program content, establish priorities, review the proposals, and begin to consider possible vendors and consultants. While the review process is still ongoing, one result of the meeting was clarification of specific content areas and elements necessary for each. Proposals were reviewed and discussed against the backdrop of the specified components. Hence, the Committee and Experts were able to see what

would need to be generated for development of a comprehensive abuse prevention and response program—with an emphasis on prevention.

(continued: See "Taking bigger steps" on page 4)

The focus of VIRTUS™ is to help establish a common understanding of, and a common commitment to, appropriate human relationships.

Collaborating with preeminent experts to generate

Following several months of research and review, the VIRTUS™ Ad Hoc Committee (Committee) has selected a panel of experts to advise and consult the Committee on the development of VIRTUS™. The Committee met with the Expert Consulting Team (Experts) in April, and laid the foundation for the development of program content. Following, in alphabetic order, is a brief biography of each expert and a summary of his/her value to this project:



Barbara Bonner, Ph.D.

Dr. Bonner is director of the Interdisciplinary Training Program in Child Abuse and Neglect at the Center for Child Abuse and Neglect in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine. She is past president of the American

Professional Society on the Abuse of Children, and currently is treasurer and serves on the board of the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect. Dr. Bonner is an expert in utilizing interdisciplinary teams to solve problems in the area of child abuse. Plus she brings a unique perspective on the "community's" perception of how the Church has responded to the abuse issue, and how to refocus the faithful on developing and nurturing appropriate human relationships.



David Finkelhor, Ph.D.

Dr. Finkelhor is chair of the team that developed and oversees the nationally renowned abuse program for Boy Scouts of America. Throughout the VIRTUS™ expert search, the Boy Scouts' program was repeatedly mentioned as

being particularly well focused for its target market. Dr. Finkelhor is widely cited as the leading expert in the area of child abuse prevention research. His substantial research and his experience in overseeing the Boy Scouts'

program will provide insight into developing a menu of program components designed to reach each of our targeted constituent groups.

Ray Leonardini, J.D.

Mr. Leonardini is an attorney in California who, until recently, served as general counsel for the California Catholic Conference. He is committed to the development and implementation of programs and policies that provide for a healthy human community created, supported, and generated by and within the Church. His experience in working with bishops and clergy in the development and implementation of far-reaching abuse policies will provide valuable insight to the Committee.



Michael Morton, M.S.

Mr. Morton has a wealth of experience inside the Church in researching and responding to the abuse issue. His experience includes treatment of clergy and years of consultation with Church officials in the United States and Ireland about the nature

and source of the abuse issue. He will provide the Committee with valuable insight into avoiding numerous implementation barriers that other programs may have experienced.



Fr. Stephen Rossetti, D. Min., Ph.D.

Fr. Rossetti is chief executive officer of St. Luke Institute, one of the world's most respected treatment facilities for clergy and religious, and is well respected by Church leaders and professionals in the abuse field. His breadth

and depth of experience in the treatment arena will add significant value to the reactive components of VIRTUS™. Plus, his research and experience with offenders will provide the Committee with invaluable guidance on early intervention, which is a crucial part of the

VIRTUS™ continuous improvement model.



Phyllis Willerscheidt

Ms. Willerscheidt is chairman of the board of the Interfaith Sexual Trauma Institute. She has provided presentations and training for the Bishops Conference. Currently, she is executive director of the Commission on Women in the Church for the

Archdiocese of Minneapolis/St. Paul. In addition to her other responsibilities, Ms. Willerscheidt mediates resolution between abuse victims and their abusers, with a goal of helping the victim move forward with a healthy and happy life. Her experience in responding to abuse will provide the Committee with significant insight into developing proactive prevention programs designed to foster appropriate and healthy relationships between clergy and the faithful.

- Ad Hoc Committee researches existing abuse programs and interviews preeminent experts
- Ad Hoc Committee develops and issues request for proposals
- Proposals received and reviewed by Ad Hoc Committee and AGOS
- Ad Hoc Committee identifies Expert Consulting Team to provide advice and guidance
- Ad Hoc Committee and AGOS meet with Expert Consulting Team to generate and prioritize critical program components

VIRTUS™
Conceptualized

TNCRRG commits to funding VIRTUS™
and appoints Ad Hoc Committee

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Experts attend
feasibility Forum

Ad Hoc Committee selects
Steering Committee of Advisors

Ad Hoc Committee selects
THE AGOS GROUP, LLC
to manage development

Ad Hoc Committee
pilot sites for

critical components and priorities for VIRTUS™

The Committee met with the Experts in Boston, on April 5 and 6, to discuss the specific components needed in a comprehensive abuse prevention and response program. The two groups agreed that preventing abuse is the ultimate goal of VIRTUS™, and education will play a critical role in reaching that goal.

The Experts advised the Committee that the single greatest need is an education-based prevention program for parents and children. The Experts agreed that no comprehensive education and training program currently exists which addresses adults and children and, in particular, with significant religious underpinnings.

The format suggested for VIRTUS™ includes a menu of components that will allow bishops and other Church leaders to meet their local needs. The Experts noted that a comprehensive set of options, combined with flexibility and choice, would help VIRTUS™ avoid the one-size-fits-all paradigm that may have undermined other programs.

“We want to give the bishops extraordinary program content, proven delivery instruments, and a program which can meet the needs of dioceses of all sizes,” said Fr. Edward Arsenault, a member of the Committee and chairman of the board of The National Catholic Risk Retention Group, Inc. “The months we’ve spent on due diligence and review of other programs will help us to provide a program based on the best examples of successful solutions.”

When the Boston meeting concluded, the Committee and Experts identified certain components mandatory in any comprehensive program. Those components include:

- Education focused on the boundaries of appropriate relationships. This would include training on the cultivation and nurturing of appropriate relationships, as well as the symptoms and signs of possible abuse. It would include design of a reporting mechanism and procedure—to empower

the faithful to report symptoms and signs of abuse—so early intervention more frequently would have a chance to supplant crisis response. Education and training would focus on the adults who have responsibility for protecting children and keeping them safe.

- For children, all content should be developmentally appropriate. Parents should be educated about the training being provided to their children and to the adults who are in a position to have contact with their children. This would include teachers, clergy, volunteers, and others.
- For clergy, education would include a rigorous focus on their leadership role in cultivating, nurturing and, as necessary, restoring trust in human relationships. Additionally, the clergy would be offered counseling and support for dealing with abuse that is perpetrated by a peer. Plus, the clergy would have an opportunity to air their concerns and frustrations that arise from obstacles to building appropriate relationships.
- Screening of lay staff, volunteers, and transferring priests and deacons. This component would include education on the appropriateness and legal requirements regarding background checks. Plus, this component would include training on effective hiring practices and would establish lines of responsibility for reviewing all screening, hiring and transfer information.
- The Experts suggested additional screening and education for seminarians, including psychosocial and psychosexual testing—

as an early intervention tool to recognize possible issues prior to an individual’s placement.

- In addition to prevention and education, the program would provide support for dealing with incidents, including establishment of healing procedures for all parties involved—victims, offenders, and the affected local faith communities—as well as establishment of intervention and risk management guidelines.
- Victim advocacy would be a key response component. This would include listening to victims, providing care and concern for victims (including resources inside and outside the Church), designing a justice process that is satisfying and healing for victims, providing care and treatment for abusers, and providing a comprehensive pastoral response to the local faith community.

“As we’ve discussed from the beginning of the VIRTUS™ concept, our major focus is on a proactive approach that includes holistic prevention,” said Joe Frank, chairman of the Committee. However, we understand the reality that incidents do happen. Under those circumstances, we expect VIRTUS™ to make the best use of all available resources in providing a thorough response that is healing to everyone involved.

“Then, consistent with our continuous improvement model, we expect to learn something new that can be widely shared in an effort to keep upgrading our prevention methods. After all, prevention is our ultimate goal.”

Ad Hoc Committee begins planning for VIRTUS™ Phase II

Ad Hoc Committee conducts focus groups with pilot dioceses and archdioceses to fine-tune pilot program

Phase I components developed and pilot test sites are prepared for testing

Ad Hoc Committee selects vendors for Phase I

Phase I pilot testing begins

Plans developed for general implementation of VIRTUS™ Phase I

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Ad Hoc Committee selects Phase I components

Foundations are approached for matching funds to continue long-term program development



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COMMUNICARE™

How can you help make VIRTUS™ a reality?

Successful implementation is a foremost concern among the developers of VIRTUS™. The National Catholic Risk Retention Group, Inc. (National Catholic), realizes that many good risk management and loss control programs may be sitting on shelves collecting dust—often due to implementation mistakes. National Catholic intends to avoid such a fate for VIRTUS™ by involving a broad audience of individuals in the presentation, proofing, piloting and general implementation.

The VIRTUS™ Ad Hoc Committee (Committee) knows that the entire Catholic community must understand, appreciate and have confidence in VIRTUS™ for broad implementation to be a success. Bishops, priests and laity must be confident in the quality of the program and play an active role in promoting it to the faithful.

To lay this foundation for broad implementation, National Catholic has:

- Identified and selected preeminent expert consultants,
- Determined the most productive role for those experts,
- Clearly defined the outline, specific content, and expected outcome of the program, and
- Initiated the process of identifying and selecting vendors and other professionals to develop program components.

The Committee is confident that bishops, priests and laity will understand both the humanitarian and loss control value of VIRTUS™, and will appreciate the simplicity of implementation. Likewise, priests will see VIRTUS™ as a powerful tool to help restore and enhance the faith community's trust in the Church. Laity will see it as concrete evidence of the Church's response to community concerns. To reach these important objectives, the Committee is seeking the advice of bishops, priests and laity in our development decision-making process, and would appreciate any recommendations

National Catholic is counting on you to help us give VIRTUS™ a level of integrity and effectiveness worthy of the Church.

and guidance.

As individuals dedicated to supporting the faithful in living whole and rewarding lives, clergy, lay staff and volunteers will benefit from the training offered through VIRTUS™. Phase I will empower clergy, lay staff and volunteers to be effective role models and to give the faithful access to the mentoring, nurturing and healing that appropriate relationships make available through the Church. Trust will be restored.

The toughest part of the VIRTUS™ project is

behind us ... clarifying what to do, how to do it, and getting started. Now, National Catholic is counting on you to help us give VIRTUS™ a level of integrity and effectiveness worthy of the Church. With your help, VIRTUS™ won't become another program that sits on the shelf and collects dust. Instead it will be a powerful tool for enhancing

the lives of the faithful.

To ask questions, or make comments or suggestions about VIRTUS™ or this quarterly publication, call Sharon Doty at THE AGOS GROUP, (800) 205-5262, or Doug Grund at National Catholic, (248) 642-6676.

To ask questions, make comments, or send suggestions by e-mail, go to www.virtus.org and follow the written instructions. All comments are forwarded to the Committee for consideration.

Taking bigger and bigger steps

(continued from page 1)

Page 3 of this newsletter provides an overview of the content and priorities identified and agreed upon by the Committee and Experts.

The Committee will now proceed to select vendors, establish delivery dates, and marshal resources to develop tangible parts of the program. As each component or group of components is completed, a pilot test will begin, with an eye on general implementation of the first component by next winter. "With regard to our progress, here's an analogy everyone can follow," said Joe Frank. "Creating VIRTUS™ is a lot like creating a new sports team. We established a name: VIRTUS™, and a theme: *Excellence builds trust*. In the last few months we've created the rules: *our research and review efforts*, and assembled a coaching staff: *the Ad Hoc Committee, Steering Committee and Expert Consulting Team*.

"Now, we're in the process of selecting players: *vendors and consultants*, and writing

the playbook: *the program content*. And in the next several months we expect to start practicing the plays in our playbook by *selecting and pilot testing our first component*."

A couple of noteworthy developments are already under way. Borrowing from the Latin word for "share," and "impart," and drawing on the VIRTUS™ themes of "community" and "pastoral care," *Communicare*™ was selected as the name of this publication. These values will appear in every phase of VIRTUS™.

Also, the next issue of *Communicare*™ will contain information on the status of VIRTUS™, with one page dedicated to a germane risk management topic. In the subsequent issue, two pages will be devoted to risk management topics. Over a series of four issues, *Communicare*™ will mirror the progress of VIRTUS™—transforming from a vision and a progress report to a solid training tool based on necessary and effective content.