



NY | SPCC

THE NEW YORK
SOCIETY
FOR THE PREVENTION
OF CRUELTY
TO CHILDREN

2023
Annual Report

Our Mission

The NYSPCC responds to the complex needs of abused and neglected children, and those involved in their care, by providing best-practice counseling, legal, and educational services. Through research, communications, and training initiatives, we work to expand these programs to prevent abuse and help more children heal.

Dear Friends,

I'm so honored to have the pleasure of introducing myself as the new President and CEO of the NYSPCC. I joined the organization in May 2024, after serving as Associate Commissioner of the United States Children's Bureau, under the Biden-Harris administration. The Society has a long 149-year history of supporting children and families, and I am very proud to have the opportunity to lead us into our 150th year!

This report looks back at all that we accomplished in 2023 under the leadership of the prior Executive Director, Dr. Mary L. Pulido. We extend our thanks to Dr. Pulido, and former Board President Daniel M. Healy for their many years of service and dedication to the NYSPCC. The details of 2023 are in the report, however, I want to mention a few notable successes.

First, we have advanced our Safe Touches program to consider the needs of children on the autism spectrum. In 2023, the Training Institute completed an 18-month pilot project to adapt its evidence-based child sexual abuse prevention program, Safe Touches, for elementary school-aged children with autism and similar disabilities. The pilot project reached 371 children in 43 special education classrooms in the Bronx and Manhattan and was met with overwhelmingly positive feedback. Ninety-nine percent (99%) of teachers and school counselors attending the workshop with their students would recommend Safe Touches to their colleagues.

Next, we made some adjustments to the way that the clinical team works, including streamlining the intake process, as well as caseloads and responsibilities, which has allowed us to increase the number of families we serve. As a result of this effort, we increased the number of families served in our Trauma Recovery program by 62%.

The NYSPCC has the benefit of partnering with young professionals who believe in the work that we do. The Young Professionals Committee (YPC) has been dedicated to fundraising for us and, to that end, held a series of networking "friend-raiser" gatherings, hosted a summer kick-off party, and ran the NYC marathon! In total, these events raised more than \$27,000.

By the time this report is published, it will be near the end of 2024. There are so many promising efforts happening here and I am looking forward to all of what will come. I am grateful to be entrusted with the leadership of the NYSPCC as we enter our 150th anniversary celebration. We are doing new things, headed in a new direction, and I hope you will join us on this exciting journey!

In Unity,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aysha E. Schomburg, J.D." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Aysha E. Schomburg, J.D.
President and CEO

Trauma Recovery Program: Helping Children Heal

Nia & Alexis

Tragedy struck sisters Nia and Alexis after their mother asked them to watch over their three-year-old brother, Emerson. Nia and Alexis, ages 10 and 12 respectively, were mature and responsible for their age and had successfully performed this duty many times before without any problems. However, on this particular day, their routine was disrupted by the arrival of an unexpected visitor at their apartment.

For a brief moment, their attention shifted away from Emerson. In that split second, Emerson managed to climb onto the windowsill—and before the girls could react, he fell from their fourth-floor apartment and died. The aftermath was devastating. Nia and Alexis, who were subsequently removed from their mother's custody and placed into foster care, were overwhelmed with grief, guilt, and confusion.

The transition was harsh and disorienting for the two young girls. While in foster care, Nia and Alexis were referred to the NYSPCC for therapy. They were each assigned individual therapists who worked closely with them, helping them navigate their complex emotions and severe trauma. Through therapy, they began to develop coping skills that would allow them to process their grief in a healthy way.

In addition to the individual therapy sessions, the therapists also collaborated with the girls' kinship guardian, their maternal aunt, and their mother, who visited regularly in their foster home. Together, they formed a support network that aimed to create a safe and nurturing environment for the girls. Over time, with the steadfast support of their therapists, foster mother, and biological mother, Nia and Alexis slowly began to heal.

The road to recovery was long and fraught with challenges, but the love and care of their family, coupled with the therapeutic support they received at the NYSPCC, allowed them to process the loss of their sibling and begin to rebuild their lives.

Names of the family members have been changed. Actual family not depicted.

Through therapy, they began to develop coping skills that would allow them to process their grief in a healthy way.



Programs

Trauma Recovery Program

Children who experience physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, or other traumatic events are prone to developing anxiety, anger, depression, fear, nightmares, and other post-traumatic stress symptoms. Without treatment, these symptoms can persist and negatively affect their lives.

The NYSPCC's Trauma Recovery Program provides a safe, supportive, and nurturing environment that helps children and youth, ages 5-21 years, to recover from traumatic experiences. Our clinical team provides services in English and Spanish seven days a week, including weekend and evening hours, free of charge. Services include:

- **Individual Therapy:** NYSPCC therapists provide child-centered, Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. Talk, art, movement, and play techniques are used to teach children how to identify and manage their emotions, understand and develop helpful thinking patterns, process and make meaning of their traumatic experiences, and boost their overall resilience.
- **Family Therapy:** NYSPCC therapists counsel parents, foster parents, and other caregivers to help them understand trauma symptoms and how to support their children's recovery.
- **Collateral Sessions:** NYSPCC therapists are in regular contact with social workers, teachers, and other professionals involved in the children's lives to ensure that their needs are understood and met in all aspects of their lives, not just in the therapy room.



In 2023, the Trauma Recovery Program helped 94 children recover from traumatic experiences and work towards their treatment goals.

82%

of the children who were assessed after completing 24 weeks of treatment saw a reduction in their trauma symptoms.

In addition, our clinical team trained five Master's-level student interns, preparing them for careers in the child protective field.



"Thanks for everything. This group was definitely worth it, and I'm proud to say I will be a better dad!"

– Parenting Journey Participant

Therapeutic Supervised Visitation Program (TSVP)

NYSPCC's Therapeutic Supervised Visitation Program serves families in which the parent-child interaction must be closely monitored due to issues of child abuse, domestic violence, mental illness, or substance abuse. Each of these cases are referred by the respective judge presiding over the case. Our therapists help parents improve their relationships with their children and develop the awareness, knowledge, and skills they need to create nurturing homes. Each family receives:

- **Therapeutic Supervised Visits:** During weekly visits, children and visiting parents repair their relationships through healing conversations, playing games, and creating art. NYSPCC therapists conduct coaching sessions with parents for 15 minutes before and after every visit to collaborate on identifying their children's needs, reflecting on their parenting strengths, and identifying parenting goals.
- **Assessment & Goal Setting:** NYSPCC therapists assess each family's history and dynamics, create goals for the family, and develop a plan for the parent to achieve them.
- **Parenting Journey:** All visiting parents attend Parenting Journey groups, which provide them the opportunity to learn new strategies for self-care, reduce isolation through peer support, and empower parents to make healthier parenting choices by learning from their own experiences of being parented.
- **Support for Custodial Parents:** A Parent Therapist provides custodial parents with therapeutic coaching, referrals for social services, and safety planning to protect themselves and their children from domestic violence.

TSVP served 83 families in 2023, including 124 children and 173 adults.

In 2023, 95% of parents who completed the program's Parenting Journey support group reported an improvement in their self-care and parenting skills.



Programs

Training Institute

NYSPCC's Training Institute is dedicated to equipping children, parents, and professionals with the knowledge and tools they need to keep children safe. In 2023, the Training Institute reached 9,845 children, parents, and professionals with abuse prevention education. Through in-person and virtual trainings, conference presentations, and self-paced online courses, the Training Institute provided education to 5,382 parents, caregivers, and professionals on preventing sexual abuse and online exploitation, identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect, supporting children who have experienced trauma, and managing stress and secondary traumatic stress.

The Training Institute also provides training and technical assistance to agencies seeking to implement the NYSPCC's evidence-based and best practice programs: Safe Touches® and Restoring Resiliency Response® (RRR). In 2023, the Training Institute contracted with the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) to train them on the RRR® model. RRR® is a crisis debriefing model that was developed to specifically support child protection and other frontline staff after a critical incident, such as a child fatality. Through consultations and a multi-day training, Washington State DCYF staff learned about secondary traumatic stress, how to facilitate individual and group sessions utilizing the RRR® protocol, and how to best implement the model statewide.

Safe Touches® Program

Child sexual abuse is a widespread public health issue that typically occurs when children are between the ages of seven and 13. The NYSPCC's Safe Touches® Program is designed to prevent child sexual abuse from occurring by empowering children with the knowledge and tools to keep themselves safe. Safe Touches® is an evidence-based child sexual abuse prevention program offered to children in kindergarten through third grade. Using puppets, specially trained educators perform skits and engage children in discussion to teach them four key body safety lessons:

1. Understanding which parts of the body are considered private;
2. Recognizing the difference between safe and not safe touches;
3. Knowing who to talk to when they feel unsafe or confused; and
4. Practicing what to do if they ever feel unsafe or receive a not safe touch.

In 2023, Safe Touches® workshops were provided in-person in **172** classrooms, reaching **3,419** children in kindergarten through third grade.

97% of teachers said the workshops were presented clearly to their students.

95% of teachers found the children to be actively engaged during the workshops.

98% of teachers and school counselors would recommend Safe Touches to their colleagues.

Safe Touches® workshops are available in-person or virtually, and in English or Spanish. The Safe Touches® Program is delivered through the NYSPCC's Training Institute.

The Training Institute reached **906** additional youth in 2023 through **61** workshops on child sexual abuse, online child sexual exploitation, bullying/cyberbullying, sexual harassment, and healthy relationships.



Programs



Government Grants

Expanded Services for Children in Foster Care

In 2023, the NYSPCC received a \$1,000,000 award from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to provide trauma-informed interventions for children and youth in foster care. We were one of only two organizations in the nation to receive this competitive grant. This federal support has increased our capacity to deliver many vital services.

The HHS grant has allowed us to significantly expand the number of children we serve through our Trauma Recovery program. We are supplementing individual therapy with Art and Mindfulness group workshops. These group activities are fun and engaging, but also focused on creating coping skills and supporting children's healing.

Birth parents whose children have been placed in foster care have joined our Parenting Journey workshops to improve family engagement and help support biological family reunification, where possible. We are also providing trainings to help foster and potential adoptive families understand the needs of children who have experienced trauma.

Additionally, this grant is allowing the NYSPCC to provide training workshops to the staff of foster care agencies and other child welfare professionals on implementing trauma-informed practices to better support children and families.

In 2023, NYSPCC clinicians offered crisis debriefing services for **117** professionals.

Crisis Debriefing Services



Trauma therapists, social workers, and other child welfare service workers are often exposed to horrific cases of physical and sexual abuse, child fatalities, violence, and other traumatic events, which can seriously affect their mental health and work performance. To support these caring professionals after critical incidents, the NYSPCC offers crisis debriefing services that provide the therapeutic support needed to recover and continue providing top-tier services for children and families. Using the Restoring Resiliency Response® Protocol, NYSPCC therapists host 60-minute sessions for individuals and 90-minute sessions for groups that focus on expressing thoughts and feelings, reducing stress and anxiety, providing insight into self-care, and developing coping skills to accelerate the recovery process.

Advocacy

During the 2023-2024 legislative session, NYSPCC advocated for essential online safety legislation: the Stop Addictive Feeds Exploitation for Kids (SAFE for Kids) Act and the NY Child Data Protection Act, which were signed into law by Governor Hochul in June 2024. The SAFE for Kids Act addresses the harmful impact of addictive social media algorithms, while the NY Child Data Protection Act prevents the commodification of children's data without consent.

Through active participation in the Keep Kids Safe Online Coalition, comprised of various stakeholders dedicated to a safer online world for children through critical legislation, the NYSPCC furthered its commitment to combatting the exploitation of children, both off and online.





Therapeutic Supervised Visitation Program: Strengthening and Healing Families

Brian & Nadine

*Names of the family members have been changed.
Actual family not depicted.*

When he first visited the NYSPCC in the summer of 2023, Brian was eager to attend the Therapeutic Supervised Visitation Program with his children, Derrick and Dani. His ex-wife, Nadine, however, was reluctant to bring them in. During intake, Nadine reported that Brian physically, emotionally, and financially abused her. Brian denied the allegations of abuse but admitted that struggles with alcohol and an inability to maintain stable employment led to bitter fights. Regardless, Nadine refused to let Brian see Derrick and Dani after they separated to protect their safety. Brian got sober, found a good-paying job, and remarried. With a stable income and home life, Brian sought visitation with his kids.

At the time of the family's first visit, six-year-old Derrick and four-year-old Dani hadn't seen their father in almost two years. They were shy and nervous around him. For Derrick, it was partially because he was old enough to remember his parents' fights, and for Dani, Brian was a stranger to her. Their NYSPCC therapist knew the first goal would be to help the children grow more comfortable and familiar with their father.

During sessions with the therapist, Brian expressed his frustration, not fully understanding why his children weren't excited to see him. The therapist helped Brian understand how divorce and separation affected Derrick and Dani and how to grow more attuned to what they were feeling. She encouraged him to let the children set the pace and choose the activities they engaged in, so whether they were making art, singing songs, or playing games, the children had a sense of control. The therapist also encouraged Brian to talk about his day-to-day life. Derrick and Dani were excited to learn they had a new stepbrother and asked a lot of questions about the cartoons he liked to watch and what games he liked to play. These conversations helped Derrick, Dani, and Brian get to know each other and grow their bond.

Nadine also attended sessions with the therapist. She expressed anger and resentment about being forced to bring her children to spend time with Brian and explained that it made her feel voiceless and powerless. The therapist listened and offered empathy, respect, and support. The therapist was also transparent with Nadine about what was happening during the

“Brian and Nadine demonstrated such extraordinary growth and worked together for the sake of the children.”

supervised visits to assure her that Derrick and Dani were safe and that their blossoming relationship with Brian was important for their mental and emotional health. These conversations gave Nadine an important outlet for her stress and worries and also enabled her to trust the therapist and the visitation process.

As Nadine grew more comfortable with the visits, she grew to accept that Brian and the children would eventually spend time together unsupervised and encouraged Brian to take on some co-parenting responsibilities. Brian started using some portions of the supervised visits to review Derrick's homework assignments. He also brought gifts of school clothes and school supplies.

Because Brian showed up consistently week after week with great enthusiasm, Derrick and Dani grew to trust and like their father. Dani told the therapist, “I know he loves me. He laughs a lot around me. He plays with me.” As the children felt safer and started looking forward to visits with their dad, Nadine also began to recognize Brian's commitment to building a paternal relationship with their children. During their last few sessions at the NYSPCC, Nadine and Brian showed more respect and support for each other as co-parents.

After just five months in the program, the assigned judge recommended we close the case early and transition the family to unsupervised visits. “This is uncommon,” said their NYSPCC therapist. “But Brian and Nadine demonstrated such extraordinary growth and worked together for the sake of the children. It was a best-case scenario.”



Safe Touches®:

Adapts its child sexual abuse prevention program for children with autism and similar disabilities

Through generous funding from the New York Community Trust, the NYSPCC's Training Institute completed a successful pilot project to adapt its evidence-based child sexual abuse prevention program, Safe Touches®, for children with autism and similar disabilities and deliver the program in classrooms across New York City. From June 2023 to March 2024, a total of 43 workshops were held for 371 children in kindergarten through 6th grade in public school special education classrooms.

Children with disabilities are uniquely at risk for child sexual abuse (CSA) and two to four times more likely to be sexually abused than children without disabilities. It is important to note the significant rise in children being diagnosed on the autism spectrum, now affecting one in 36 eight-year-olds. To date, this program is one of the few, if not the only, programs that exist to reach this vulnerable population with sexual abuse prevention education tailored to their unique learning needs.

The Training Institute worked with the NYC Department of Education to identify its pilot school sites. The Training Institute held informational sessions with school personnel, parents, and caregivers at each site to better understand the needs of children with autism and to receive feedback on the project. The Safe Touches curriculum was adapted with support from expert consultants, including New York University's Autism Nest Project, former special education teachers, and

a pediatrician specializing in working with children with disabilities. The program was adapted to include pre-workshop planning activities to prepare the facilitators, teachers, and students for the workshops. Components of the script were re-worded and visual aids were created to be more inclusive of the learning needs of children who are neurodivergent. Facilitators were trained to be flexible in their approach to workshop delivery and the classroom setting and to allow additional time for children to process questions or take timed breaks.

Lastly, the activity booklet, My Body Belongs to Me®, which goes home with every child who attends a Safe Touches® workshop, was updated and now includes a social story. Social stories use pictures and words to detail a sequence of events that explain social situations and help children with autism learn ways of behaving in these situations. This booklet is intended to support parents and caregivers in talking to their children about body safety at home and reinforce the key concepts covered in the workshop. In addition, virtual workshops were provided to parents and caregivers of children with disabilities and to special education school personnel to increase their knowledge of child sexual abuse and learn ways to prevent abuse and keep children safe. A total of 12 workshops were held, reaching 77 school personnel and 126 parents and caregivers.

Implementation fidelity data was collected on the adapted workshops, as well as feedback from 147 teachers, school counselors/social workers, and aides in the classrooms after the workshop. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Ninety-seven percent (97%) of staff agreed or strongly agreed that the children were engaged during the workshop, and 99% said they would recommend a Safe Touches workshop to their colleagues. Through this program, the NYSPCC can effectively educate vulnerable children on how to best protect themselves from sexual abuse. The Training Institute presented on this pilot project at the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC) Annual Colloquium in New Orleans, LA, in June 2024.

Events

Spring Luncheon 2023

The NYSPCC's 2023 Spring Luncheon was held on April 27th, 2023, at The Pierre in New York City. The Luncheon featured Erica Bell, LMSW, Victim Specialist at the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), Laura Riso, M.A., a Victim Specialist & Victim Services Division Relief Supervisor at the FBI, and James R. Marsh, Esq., Founder of Marsh Law Firm, which exclusively represents survivors of sexual abuse and discrimination. The Luncheon featured a compelling discussion about online internet safety and sextortion and raised approximately \$300,000 for the NYSPCC.



Fall Gala 2023

The NYSPCC's 2023 Fall Gala was held on November 15th, 2023, at the iconic Rainbow Room in New York City. The NYSPCC honored the renowned California-based health and wellness spa, Golden Door, and insurance company, Lemonade, for their incredible support of our work to heal children and families who have experienced trauma. The Gala was hosted by Mo Rocca, correspondent for CBS Sunday Morning and host of the Mobituaries Podcast, and featured performances by the Young People's Chorus of New York City and Mr. Chris Norton. This spectacular evening raised over \$620,000 in support of our child abuse prevention and treatment programs.



Ralph Lauren

The NYSPCC partnered with the Ralph Lauren Madison Avenue locations in New York City for a charitable shopping event June 17th- June 18th, 2023. Ralph Lauren generously donated 10% of the sales from the two-day event to the NYSPCC, which totaled nearly \$9,000.



Young Professionals Committee Gala

The NYSPCC's Young Professionals Committee (YPC) hosted a vibrant Miami Vice-themed Gala at the Daintree in New York City on November 12th, 2023. The YPC had a tremendously successful year, raising over \$27,000 in support of our mission.



Summary of Financial Statement*

Support and revenue

Contributions	\$ 960,864
Special events	\$ 691,202
Government contracts and grants	\$ 211,254
Training Institute	\$ 256,360
Investment return, net—operating	\$ 2,391,554
Other	\$ 100

Total support and revenue \$ 4,511,334

Expenses

Program expenses

Trauma Recovery	\$ 1,131,608
Training Institute/Advocacy	\$ 1,346,141
Supervised Visitation	\$ 1,224,511
Research and Evaluation	\$ 704,221
Archives	\$ 360,034

Total program expenses \$ 4,766,515

Fundraising	\$ 897,460
Administrative and general	\$ 449,469

Total expenses \$ 6,113,444

Investment return—net non-operating \$ 143,556

Adjustment to accrued pension benefits \$ (50,905)

Increase in net assets \$ (1,509,459)

Net assets—beginning of year \$ 36,837,721

Net assets—end of year \$ 35,328,262

*Dated December 31, 2023



Thank You

The NYSPCC's ongoing commitment to protecting children and strengthening families would not be possible without the generous support of individuals, foundations, corporations, and government agencies that share our mission of ensuring the safety and well-being of New York City's most vulnerable children. We thank all those listed below for supporting the NYSPCC's critical, life-saving work.



\$10,000 — \$24,999

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How You Can Help



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- Donate to our Annual Appeal.
- Make monthly contributions. Small gifts add up!
- Give through a Donor Advised Fund.
- Check to see if your company has a Matching Gift Program so you can double your impact.



ATTEND EVENTS:

- Support the Fall Gala or Spring Luncheon.
- Join our Young Professionals Committee and support their fundraising efforts.
- Sign up as a runner for the TCS NYC Marathon and fundraise for the NYSPCC!



LEAVE A LEGACY:

- Include the NYSPCC in your will or make a charitable bequest.
- Designate us as a beneficiary of your life insurance policy.



ENGAGE:

- Lead a fundraiser in your community on our behalf.
- Engage your company! Help us form a partnership with your organization.
- Get your children involved! Set up a lemonade stand or bake sale.
- Organize a toy drive or underwrite our children's holiday party.
- Arrange a Safe Touches® workshop for your child's school.



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520 Eighth Avenue, Suite 1401
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Tel: (212) 233-5500
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