USE SANDUSKY TRIAL TO FOCUS ON PREVENTING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE
URGES NATIONAL ORGANIZATION

Northampton, Mass., June 5th, 2012 ~ As the Jerry Sandusky child sexual abuse trial begins, Stop It Now!, a national organization with 20 years of experience talking to people about child sexual abuse, is prepared to talk with adults concerned about child sexual abuse and keeping children safe. Stop It Now! offers the only telephone and email Helpline dedicated to preventing child sexual abuse.

"In the first two weeks after the sexual abuse allegations at Penn State, our Help Services experienced a 130% increase in contacts," said Jenny Coleman, Help Services Coordinator. "This case shines a spotlight on a challenging and difficult topic. People need somewhere to turn to talk about their own situations. We heard from survivors of childhood sexual abuse who didn't understand why no one ever stepped in - even though there were many signs that there was something wrong."

Through its website and Help Services, Stop It Now! provides practical advice, balanced information and support for acting to keep children safe. Stop It Now! recently launched its Ask Now! advice column. Ask Now! posts and categorizes questions and guidance about actual situations and concerns so that other adults can easily and privately find help and guidance for their own, similar concerns.

"We hear from adults with questions about the behaviors of adults and children in their schools, churches and neighborhoods. Parents call with concerns about behaviors between children and with worries about their own children's behaviors. We speak with extended family members and friends who want to know how to talk with someone they care about when they are concerned about that person's behaviors and interactions with children. And we speak with people concerned about their own behaviors and thoughts," Coleman continued.

"We expect as this story unfolds many of those following the case will be outraged or fearful about what could happen to children they care about," said Deborah Donovan Rice, Executive Director of Stop It Now! "We understand how daunting having a conversation about child sexual abuse can be. But we
must talk to our friends, our colleagues and begin to tackle this issue as a community of caring adults so that we can focus the attention on what can be done - especially before a child is ever harmed," Donovan Rice continued.

Stop It Now! has posted a list of Frequently Asked Questions they expect people to have based on issues raised during the trial, including why don't adults do more to protect children, why don't children tell if they've been abused, and where to go if you're worried about someone's behavior towards children.

Given the allegations of the Sandusky case, Stop It Now! is calling on all adults, especially parents and professionals who work with children, to learn to recognize "warning sign" behaviors that should elicit concern and prompt more questions. Free Warning Sign tip sheets are available at StopItNow.org. Understanding what behaviors and patterns to look for is the first step toward responsible adults taking that information and applying it in everyday situations.

"While the backdrop for the Sandusky trial includes high stakes college sports, we know that all organizations where children spend time need to have proactive and comprehensive policies and practices to create safe environments," said Donovan Rice. "And parents need to know what questions to ask to ascertain that the programs they're considering for their children are knowledgeable and proactive about preventing child sexual abuse. We encourage all parents to be proactive and ask administrators about their policies and practices for keeping children safe. Prevention of child sexual abuse is possible."

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Stop It Now! Prevention Resources

- Help Services
- Behaviors to Watch for When Adults Are With Children
- Don't Wait: Everyday Actions to Keep Kids Safe
- Create Your Family Safety Plan
- Nine Questions Parents Need to Ask When Selecting a Program for their Child
- Talking to Children and Teens
- Sexual Safety in Sports: Talking about Coaches Who Show Inappropriate Interest in Kids
- Safety in Daycare and Educational Settings

Visit the Stop It Now! Press Room