

Making a Difference

Newsletter for
Maryland Coalition Against Pornography, Inc.

MCAP Hotline: 301-439-8475

www.mcap1.com



TOGETHER WE CARE

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Fall 2016

IT'S OUR 30th ANNIVERSARY! COME CELEBRATE WITH US!

MCAP has been faithfully working on solutions to the problems of pornography in our state for 30 years. Please see the enclosed flyer with details about the party and plan to come. Be our guest!

About our guest speaker: Savannah Lawrence joined the NCOSE team as a Legal Fellow from Brigham Young University in March 2016. Savannah has a passion for social justice and is particularly concerned about the issues revolving around the family. Savannah shares NCOSE's passion for fighting against pornography because she recognizes how pornography destroys the family by weakening marital bonds, and ostracizing children from their parents.

Savannah's passion for social justice led her to attend law school at the J. Reuben Clark School of Law at Brigham Young University. After her first year of law school, Savannah traveled to Uganda as a summer intern to combat sex crimes against women, promulgated by Uganda's discriminatory intestacy laws. In her second year, Savannah worked as a family law research assistant for Professor Lynn Wardle, regarding family law issues. She also volunteered at the Provo Family Justice Center, where she helped indigent domestic violence victims.

Prior to law school, Savannah attended Brigham Young University for her undergrad. Savannah has travelled extensively throughout both the United States and the world. She participated in a study abroad in Jerusalem, where she also traveled to Egypt and Jordan. Savannah has traveled to several countries in Europe, and she spent a year and a half in South Korea as a service missionary, where she learned to read and speak the Korean language.

MCAP Calls for Action: Pornography is a Public Health Crisis

Porn websites now constitute 30% of all web traffic. Research shows that viewing pornography has the same effect on the brain as drugs and most children are now exposed to pornography before they even reach puberty. Pornography objectifies women and creates unrealistic expectations for relationships, acting as a twisted form of sex education. Research shows that viewing pornography is linked to an increase in sexual violence and a decrease in empathy and self-esteem among viewers.

MCAP is asking Maryland legislators for a resolution, stating that this problem has become more than any individual or family can combat on their own. We need our legislative bodies, educational institutions, private businesses and community members to educate, prevent, and treat this growing pandemic. A resolution does not change existing laws, but it does create a foundation on which to build changes in attitudes and policies. Please sign this petition! Pornography is creating a public health crisis. An online version of this petition is at <http://www.thepetitionsite.com/437/665/759>. Post it on your Facebook account, help us spread the word, mention it to your legislators. We are seeking sponsors.

October is National Cyber Security Awareness Month!

Led by the Department of Homeland Security and the National Cyber Security Alliance, National Cyber Security Awareness Month (NCSAM) is a great time to reflect on your own personal online security and safety. Don't forget to include your children in the conversation too!

The premier educational program to equip parents is the Emmy Award-winning Internet Safety 101 series from Enough is Enough. For more information about it, see <http://internetsafety101.org/> where you can see a YouTube video trailer about it. Ask your local PTA to obtain the DVD/workbook package, and/or ask Maryland Public TV to televise it statewide.

For a related online video resource from the Stop Child Predators organization, see "Names Hurt" - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZSqEJceJZA>

MCAP Mobile Billboard Campaign Goes Forward



To all who contributed to this mobile billboard campaign, we appreciate your support! This truck will be driving along routes in Prince George's and Montgomery Counties for three weeks.

We may want to run a campaign like this again next year, what do you think? Let us hear from you, and if you think it is worthwhile, donations to fund it are needed. Please see the enclosed remittance envelope, or you can donate using the PayPal button on our web page. Thank you!

Watching Porn Leaves People Feeling Lonelier Than Before

Pornography is on the rise, not only because it is easier to access, but because of the lack of information people have about the negative and harmful effects associated with this addictive material.

Porn offers users temporary relief from anxiety,

depression, and loneliness, but in reality, the more pornography a person consumes, the more their brain connects being aroused with porn's fictional fantasy and the harder it becomes for them to be aroused by a real person or a real relationship. This leads to a continuous cycle of growing anxiety and a sense of isolation, which leads them back to porn, and the cycle begins again. That works out really well for pornographers, but not for the consumer.

Dr. Gary Brooks, a psychologist who has worked with porn addicts for the last 30 years, says, "Any time [a person] spends much time with the usual pornography usage cycle, it can't help but be a depressing, demeaning, self-loathing kind of experience." As a result, many users start feeling like something's wrong with them; they don't know how to be turned on by a real person, much less form a deep personal connection with one.

Naomi Wolf, an author and political activist, has traveled all over the country to talk with college students about relationships. "When I ask about loneliness, a deep, sad silence descends on audiences of young men and young women alike," she says. "They know they are lonely together...and that [porn] is a big part of that loneliness. What they don't know is how to get out."

Studies have found that when people engage in an ongoing pattern of "self-concealment,"— when they do things they're ashamed of and keep them a secret from their friends and family members—it not only hurts their relationships and leaves them feeling lonely, but also makes them more vulnerable to severe psychological problems. For both male and female porn users, their habit is often accompanied by problems with anxiety, body-image issues, poor self-image, relationship problems, insecurity, and depression.

One aspect of the negativity porn teaches users is that the worth of both men and women is nothing more than the sum of their body parts and how much sexual pleasure they can offer. Those perceptions cannot help but to creep into the porn users' view of themselves and other people in real life. The harder it becomes for the users to see themselves and others as anything more than sexual objects, the harder it is to develop real relationships.

"There's a certain way of experiencing sexual arousal that is the opposite of closeness," Brooks says. "At best, it can be managed somewhat by some people, but most of the time it creates a barrier that poisons relationships."

As users become numbed by exposure to graphic sexual images and videos, they miss out on building real, fulfilling relationships with their partners, friends, and community. In the end, no amount of pornography will take away anyone's real life problems -- it will just become one of them.

Want more information about dealing with pornography addiction and finding the strength to heal? Download Lifestar Therapy's free eBook, "The First Step: Taking the First Step Towards Recovery" at <http://www.lifestartherapy.com/ebook-download/> for more tips to help.

Should You Give Your Child a Smartphone?

It's hard to believe that a decade ago, smartphones were uncommon. Many people didn't even own a cell phone. Now, as we heard from *Vanity Fair* journalist and author of *American Girls: Social Media and the Secret Lives of Teenagers* Nancy Jo Sales, nearly every social interaction - and sexual interaction - of teenagers is shaped by the tiny, always-throbbing devices they carry with them wherever they go. This has given rise to cyber-bullying and a spate of suicides, sexting and sexual exploitation of teens by teens, and the nearly non-stop viewing and amateur production of pornography. Teenagers and children are pulled into the social webs woven from Facebook to Instagram, from Snapchat to a half-dozen other underground cyber-settings, the interactions and content curated only by the children who populate them, free of parental or adult supervision.

Teenagers know that it's making their lives miserable. The girls Sales talked to told her so. They also said that they had no way of getting out. Much of life is now lived online, and to opt out is to engage in voluntary isolation. The currency is often nude or sexually explicit pictures or "selfies"—and increasingly, that's often non-optional, too.

Parents cannot control the new world of teenagers. For parents who wish to rescue their children from the cyber-jungle or spare them the pain that is engulfing millions, there are a number of answers. Open communication and open conversations. Attempted oversight of social media use. Accountability software and filters on all technological devices, and one that may be very unpopular but might make the most sense of all: *Don't give your children smartphones.*

Children, and most teenagers, do not need a phone with Internet access. They do not *need* non-stop access to social media sites that put them under the influence of their peers rather than adults. They do not *need* the social pressure that inevitably comes with entering a cyber-world of teenagers with new standards. And above all, they *should not have* access to all the pornography the web can offer.

It's becoming all too common for parents to find children on smartphones, watching hardcore pornography. The former average age of first exposure to porn, which used to be age eleven, is now age nine. All it takes is a moment for these children to be robbed of their childhood by accidentally seeing porn

online. Their worlds change in that moment. They cannot un-see what they have seen. And they should never have had access to it in the first place.

Teenagers are more likely to actually need a cell phone, especially when they get their driver's licenses, so parents can contact them and they have a way of communicating with people when they are out. But when teenagers need a phone, they don't really need nonstop social media connection, they don't need SnapChat (a "sexting" app that destroys photos in seconds), and they absolutely should not have access to the pornography that is so easy to find. A phone that allows them to make phone calls and text is good enough.

So think twice about giving pornographers the access to your children that they seek. They know that children and teens are most likely to find porn on phones, and that's why they've made a huge effort to create porn that can be viewed and streamed on mobile devices. They know how to access your children—through a smartphone. Don't give them one.

Is it Art or is it Porn?

Teaching kids a definition of pornography can be tricky when it comes to fine art. Even the Sistine Chapel ceiling includes nude figures of Adam and Eve and a whole host of chubby naked cherubs! In certain circumstances involving art, your kids may say, "That's pornography!" but you know it's really not. How do you explain the difference between an age-appropriate definition of pornography and the nudity that is sometimes a part of fine art? See another great article from the Protect Young Minds organization:

<http://protectyoungminds.org/2016/09/08/porn-vs-art-explain-child/>

There's not room enough here to reprint what the article says in full, but a short answer to those questions is to ask the child how the image makes them *feel*, which gets at the intent of the image – is it to titillate? Teach kids that porn focuses on parts of the body, but good, true art focuses on the entire person as a unique human being. Art exalts the human form and portrays it with awe and respect. Good, true art makes us want to do something positive—for example, right a wrong, reflect on our own mistakes, or appreciate beauty. Pornography, on the other hand, wants to create or intensify sexual feelings and pull us into a self-centered and ultimately destructive lust.

On This Occasion of Our Anniversary...

We look back but also want to look ahead, so we would welcome our readers' suggestions about what MCAP ought to be addressing in these changing times. Please email us at mcapinc@juno.com or telephone us at **301-345-7825** and let us know your ideas!

ACTION BOX

- [] Please sign our petition to Maryland legislators to emulate those of Utah, to pass a resolution declaring pornography's harms to be a public health crisis. See the article on Page 1.
- [] Visit the MCAP web page and click on the "Porn Harms Action Center" icon, which links to actions you can take.
- [] Participate in the White Ribbon Against Pornography (WRAP) campaign by flying ribbons on your car, mailbox or wearing one. Call Eva Murphy, 301-345-7825, if you would like more ribbons to distribute.
- [] We are in need of new Board members. Please consider volunteering! Contact Bob Kammer at 301-942-0882 or email us at mcapinc@juno.com

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2016 WHITE RIBBON CAMPAIGN
FED UP WITH PORN?

Maryland Coalition Against Pornography
P.O. Box 2868
Silver Spring, MD 20915-2868

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