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www.ChildproofAmerica.org

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URGENT WARNING TO PARENTS!

Childproof America is receiving daily calls from parents with children being pursued online through apps like Instagram and Snapchat. The online “friend” claims to be a peer from another state or country. The conversations start off slowly, building trust so the “target” becomes vulnerable and emotionally attached to the “peer”. Parents, these predators

are experts at their craft and can get your child to do things you have warned them about for years.

The two goals these predators are working to achieve are;

1. Getting your child to trust them enough to send them an inappropriate image of themselves. Once they have this, they can sell it on the black market or try to extort money from your child. They will threaten to make the image public if demands are not met. This is called Sextortion and is a MAJOR problem according to ICAC, Internet Crimes Against Children.
2. They will ask your child to sneak out of the house to meet them to do XYZ.

On the next page, read a letter from a mom who saw this happen to her young teenage daughter.

What can you do to protect your kids?

Childproof America will be hosting a **FREE SOCIAL MEDIA SAFETY SEMINAR SATURDAY, MARCH 30TH, 1PM -5PM!** Hear from expert speakers who will share their invaluable insight on social media safety and social media addiction. Find out how the two issues go hand-in-hand. See speaker roster with bios on page 4.

Tickets are free, but you must register for this event on Eventbrite as seating is very limited. Content is appropriate for mature 13 +.

Sign up information for this event is available at the end of the newsletter.

*Could this happen
to your child?*



Fort Bend County, Texas.

Savannah is our precious 15-year-old daughter. Adopted from Russia at 2 years of age, God has blessed her not only with a family that adores her, but intelligence, talents and beauty. She has been given every opportunity to achieve the highest of aspirations. But deep down inside every heart is a desire to know and be known completely. And that's the lure of social media.

Savannah became an expert on iPhones and iPads long before her parents could figure out how to open a new window or change the settings. If there was a glitch or something not working, Savannah could figure out how to fix it. While on long trips or just when bored, she was given a device to play with. It seemed so harmless at first; just silly videos and a zillion selfies.

After some time, we began to notice strange pages that had been left open on web browsers, unknown email accounts, and social chat apps that had been installed. We had already warned her of the perils of social media- not knowing who is really on the other end nor their true intentions. Due to the explicit content and graphic nature of these accounts, we changed all the devices' passcodes and cut her off of screen use of any kind unless supervised. Unfortunately, getting caught seemed to make her better at concealing it. Repeatedly and habitually, she was still gaining access to view pornography through Google chat rooms/social media messages and participate in online sexting with people she did not even know. By this time, she had learned to cover her tracks; specifically opening private browser windows (incognito windows) so her viewing history and activities were undetectable.

Realizing we needed another layer of protection, we purchased a special router for our home that turned off all our devices' WIFI automatically at 10 PM. Besides our phones, we have one iPad that has cellular service so it can be switched to satellite capabilities if WIFI is unavailable. From time to time, she figured out the passcode to this device or inconspicuously changed the setting so that it never went dark (did not need the passcode). At night, she would steal the iPad from our study, open private browser windows, download the social media apps (no, you don't have to go through the app store), stay up all night in numerous chat rooms, delete the apps, and return it back to its place before morning. Unbeknownst to us, this went on for some time.

Continued on next page



For the past year or so, Savannah had begun to withdraw from personal relationships. She didn't have many school friends causing a void in her life of positive, healthy interactions. Some depression had been noticed so she had seen a counselor on and off but her vulnerabilities and insecurities made her prey to the control of others. Social media became an obsession and an addiction- a drug in which she began to dissociate from reality and think these online, distorted and/or deceptive relationships were heartfelt and real. Savannah became more and more fixated on her 18th birthday- sharing her unrelenting decision to move out, even though it would be the summer before her senior year. When questioned what she would do for money and where she would live, she simply stated, "I already know what I'm going to do. You don't need to know."

Due to her history, a few friends and family members knew she was not allowed to have social media accounts. Still not knowing she was gaining access at night on the iPad, she "friended" someone who immediately called to tell us she was online posting at that very minute. Being caught red-handed made everything spiral out of control. That next night, she packed her bags, snuck out of the house, and rode her bike 15+ miles through some of the roughest parts of Houston. She left behind a note saying that she was not missing, that she knew exactly where she was going. She wrote about a lady that she had met 2 years ago, that had become "very dear to her" and she would be staying there. Mercifully, she had been picked up by the Houston Police Department and was safely brought back home instead.

At this point, we do not believe that Savannah has been completely open with us regarding the person and contents of her runaway note. There is no plausible reason for her irrational decisions unless someone, the "dear lady" she met online, had been sexually desensitizing her, encouraging her covert activities, filling her mind with things she wanted to hear, and grooming her to leave home for an "exciting and fulfilling life." Since her return home, we have actively pursued educating her on the vile existence of sex-trafficking, groomers, and spotters who are scheming to find vulnerable children on social media. She has also spoken with Childproof America, who helped her understand the harsh reality of this nefarious epidemic that is destroying our children. There have been some encouraging steps forward, however we are still battling a war for our daughter in this phone-saturated, social media-hyped world in which we live.



Date: Saturday, March 30th ♦ **Time:** 1pm-5pm, *Doors open at 12:45pm*
Location: Children's Assessment Center, 2500 Bolsover St. Houston, TX 77005
Tickets are FREE, but you must register on Eventbrite due to limited seating:
bit.ly/SocialMediaSafetySeminar

Social media is increasingly being exploited to contact, recruit and sell children for sex, according to a study by The University of Toledo Human Trafficking and Social Justice Institute. "It is vitally important to educate parents, professionals and youth—especially our middle school or teenage daughters who may be insecure—about the dangers of online predatory practices used by master manipulators," said Dr. Celia Williamson, UT professor of social work and director of the UT Human Trafficking and Social Justice Institute. Read the full article at bit.ly/Link-SocialMediaSexTrafficking



Kelly Litvak,
Executive Director, Childproof America



Kelly's personal mission statement "is to empower youth with the life skills needed to break the generational cycle of self-destruction". This passion, combined with the knowledge of a human trafficking epidemic sweeping silently and strategically across our "safe" communities has ignited a fierce call to action to force change from suburbia to Capitol Hill.

Kelly received her Bachelor of Science degree in Organizational Communications, with a concentration in Psychology, from Ohio University in 1988. A college internship serving victims of domestic violence first sparked her interest in an at-risk population. Her deep compassion for hurting and vulnerable youth are the driving forces behind her call to serve as a non-profit leader.

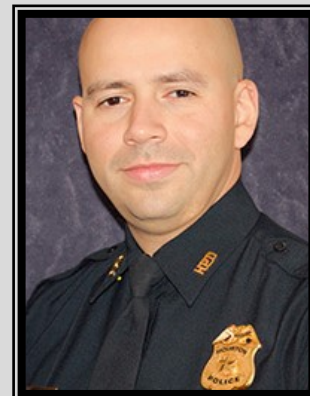
Kelly's topics for this seminar will include:

What is sex trafficking? > Demographics - *no longer a foreign issue but right in your own backyard*
 > Spot the Pimp > Classic grooming stages > Social Media impact and suggested parent monitoring apps > Words of wisdom from parent victim

Presentation appropriate for mature 13 +



**Sergeant Luis Menendez-Sierra
Houston Police Special Victims
Division and Commander with the
Houston Metro ICAC Task Force**



Sergeant Luis Menendez-Sierra of the Houston Police Department serves as the Commander of the Houston Metro Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force. The Task Force covers eight counties (Harris, Montgomery, Ft. Bend, Galveston, Brazoria, Liberty, Waller, Chambers) in the Houston Metro Area and works cooperatively with the other 60 Task Forces nationwide. The Task Force actively seeks out child predators and brings them to justice. Sergeant Menendez's main goal and objective is to save children from these predators and find them the help they need with the assistance of the 65 affiliate agencies and organizations.

How can a stable, well-adjusted, "stranger danger informed" child be lured by a stranger online? What is the psychological pull predators use to get your child to walk out the front door in the middle of the night? Hear from expert therapists who will speak to the emotional addiction children experience through their devices.

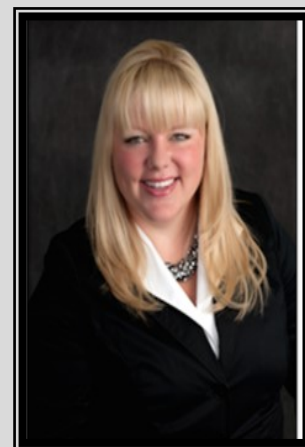


Meg Wilson,
Licensed Professional Counselor, MA, LCDC, LPC, NCC, CCTP

Meg is a licensed therapist who specializes in anxiety, depression, women's emotional health, domestic violence, mood disorders, adolescent behavior, life adjustment issues, trauma and PTSD, and traumatic brain injury. Additionally, she has a strong practice in substance abuse/dependence. Meg is in private practice in the Memorial area of Houston, TX. She is a Licensed Chemical and Dependency Counselor (LCDC) and Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) who has experience working with adolescents and adults with mental health and addiction issues, and their families.

Dr. Cassidy Gillaspie
Child/Adolescent Psychiatry and Addiction Medicine

Dr. Gillaspie is a practicing Neurologist in Houston, TX. She graduated from UT Health Science Center at San Antonio School of Medicine in 2006 and has been in practice for 12 years. She specializes in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Addiction Medicine. Dr. Gillaspie has held many leadership positions within the community including the committee on Eating Disorder Specialists, Associate Professor Texas A&M Health Science Center, Medical Executive Committee of Seton Shoal Creek Hospital, as well as numerous volunteer activities.



SOCIAL MEDIA SAFETY SEMINAR FOR PARENTS

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The Children's Assessment Center

Free parking at the Children's Assessment Center's garage

Childproof America empowers families in the battle against sex trafficking. Our mission is to educate, equip and support America's parents in the protection and defense of their children, and improve the quality of aid to impacted families. As advocates, we provide legislative pathways for concerned Americans to enforce harsh penalties to those violating the innocence of our children.

ChildproofAmerica.org

**Safeguarding Families Against
Sex Trafficking**

Kelly Litvak

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Current Needs: How you can help right now!

- ◆ Sign up for your FREE tickets to our Social Media Safety Seminar on Saturday, March 30th! See our homepage, or above, for details and ticket link.
- ◆ Follow us on social media to see our App of the Week articles, great information and current events! If you have a favorite post, please share it so other can have this useful information as well.
- ◆ Sign up to be a part of our 500 for \$25 campaign, visit site for more details
- ◆ Sign up for our newsletter so you don't miss out!
www.childproofamerica.org/newsletter

Follow us on social media

