

Safe environment efforts continue *renowned speaker, Dr. David Walsh to address diocesan Catholic school administrators and teachers*

by Wayne Pelzel
Diocesan Director of Schools

Nationally, sexual misconduct has led to many changes in the workplace. This is also true in the church. Article 12 of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People states: "Dioceses/eparchies will establish 'safe environment' programs. They will cooperate with parents, civil authorities, educators, and community organizations to provide education and training for children, youth, parents, ministers, educators, and others about ways to make and maintain a safe environment for children."

In compliance with the USCCB Charter, the New Ulm diocesan safe environment program has been in place for three years. During that time, 16,000 people in the diocese have received training, including 13,000 children and youth who attend the New Ulm diocesan school and religious education programs. Also in accordance with the Charter, parish and school employees and volunteers have had background checks and have been trained in issues relating to sexual misconduct, safe environment and reporting sexual abuse.

The mandates of Article 12 in the Charter, are ongoing and require annual monitoring and training. This year's safe environment training for all diocesan school teachers and administrators includes a presentation by renowned author, Dr. David Walsh, Ph.D., president of the National Institute on Media and the Family. Dr. Walsh is a leading authority in North America on family life, parenting, and the impact of media on children. He is also a prominent voice addressing issues related to the influence of media on brain development. He is a frequent guest on national radio and television and has appeared on such programs as NBC Dateline, CBS This Morning, The News Hour with Jim Lehrer, Good Morning America, Today Show, and National Public Radio's All Things Considered.

Dr. Walsh's presentation will take place on Monday, September 19, 2005, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at St. Mary's School in Sleepy Eye, MN. His morning presentation is entitled "Boy Brains and Girl Brains: What Does Science Tell Us?" The afternoon presentation is "Raising Media Wise Kids: Safety in the Cyberhood."

Bishop John C. Nienstedt will celebrate Mass with workshop attendees at 10:45 a.m. at the Church of St. Mary's, Sleepy Eye. Lunch will provide opportunities to interact with educators at specific grade levels. Teachers and staff from St. Mary's in Sleepy Eye will moderate these lunch time sharing opportunities. There will be no classes held at the New Ulm diocesan schools this day as all staff will be attending the workshop.

Dr. Walsh's presentation is open to the public, however, registration is limited. Cost is \$15 which includes lunch. To register contact Cindy Blickem at the Diocesan Pastoral Center, 1400 6th Street North, New Ulm, MN 56073; (507) 359-2966; email: cblickem@dnu.org.