



Child sexual abuse can be prevented and treated with a conscious, sustained effort.
Stop the Silence provides that effort.

Stop the Silence: Art as Advocacy Program¹ 2014

Stop the Silence: Stop Child Sexual Abuse (Stop the Silence, www.stopcsa.org) is an international organization that began in 2002. The **Mission** of Stop the Silence is to expose and stop child sexual abuse (CSA) and help survivors heal worldwide and focuses on the importance of a social justice and civil rights orientation underscoring the lack of upheld rights of child victims and adult survivors. Our goals, accomplished through evidence-based programming, are to: 1) promote CSA awareness, prevention and healing; 2) stop CSA and related forms of violence; and 3) celebrate the lives of those healed. We focus broadly on the themes of Awareness, Prevention, and Healing.

The community of those affected by CSA is huge, and is comprised of both the enormous numbers of child and adult survivors of CSA, as well as all those affected around them. As many as 1 out of 4 girls and 1 out of 6 boys are sexually molested in the U.S. by the time they are 18 years old, and survivors are (under) estimated at over 40 million in the U.S. alone (not including surrounding individuals, families, and communities). Those affected cut across all genders, ethnicities, cultures, sexual orientations, though the poor are at much higher risk. Outcomes can be quite severe (from poor school performance to major psychological problems to drug and alcohol abuse to suicide and homicide to chronic disease) and can last for decades and over a life time. Stop the Silence embraces the power of art's advocacy and educational value, as well as tested training curricula, to raise awareness about, prevent, and heal CSA, and provide justice.

Matthew McVarish, an accomplished Scottish playwright, actor, and musician, and survivor of CSA was inspired by the work of Stop the Silence when, in 2008, he went looking for help and healing options online and found our website (www.stopcsa.org), which resulted in the development of one of the pieces we use to raise awareness, educate, and catalyze action. *To Kill A Kelpie* (www.tokillakelpie.com) is about two grown brothers who, following the death of their uncle, break their silence about a secret, and their realization that his gruesome tales of a child-devouring monster (the "Kelpie," a concept that is put in cultural context when the show is provided for varying audiences) were simply a climate of fear created to ensure their quiet and

¹ Developed by Pamela Pine, PhD, MPH

cooperation during years of child sexual abuse. *To Kill a Kelpie* journeys through a family album filled with life shaping events and conflicting memories, deftly handling huge themes and fine details with an equal measure of care, and is able to provide a venue that can invite and initiate discussion through numerous points of entry: awareness, outcomes, prevention, healing.

Mr. McVarish completed the script in 2008. It was performed in Scotland (Phase 1), where it received rave reviews. In 2011, HHS (Office on Women's Health) and Adam and Partners Investment Advisors provided backing to bring the play to San Francisco, Chicago and Washington, D.C. (Phase 2). Audiences were invited via partnerships with relevant community-based groups and media outreach. As a part of the overall production, accompanying and evaluated culturally-appropriate, after-show presentations/discussions raise awareness, and educate and catalyze action about CSA by tapping into the audience's emotional openness after the play. In April 2012, Phase 3, brought the production to Off-Broadway in collaboration with Poorboy Theatre Co. and the Moira Anderson Foundation in Scotland and with support from Creative Scotland. The goal was to further test the production by reaching a savvy theatre audience and generate professional reviews, which it did (ask us). *Kelpie's* next stop was San Diego at the International Conference on Violence, Abuse and Trauma (09/12), to reach an audience of professional peers. *Kelpie* was again received with high acclaim. This was the production's international kick-off and completed Phase 3.

In 2012/13 ward-winning Scottish director Edward M. Smith oversaw the making of *To Kill A Kelpie*, the film (see the trailer at: <https://vimeo.com/69371750>), subtitled in various languages. It was field-tested and evaluated in the Fall of 2012 at Cornell, Emory, Indiana, and George Washington Universities, while other theater groups began performing *Kelpie* elsewhere. Phase 4 involves productions and screenings of *Kelpie* (and/or the use of other artistic pieces, as relevant and/or needed) and the after-show presentations/guided discussions and question/answer sessions with university/community audiences across the U.S. and the world.

The full program "package" involves the establishment of on-going community-based programs with and through outreach to universities and non-profit and other groups to raise awareness and educate in the vicinity of each showing, and the collaboration with others for the training of service providers. The program also uses a specially-designed computer-based Benefits Visualization approach and provides the means to keep programs on track to deliver social and economic goals. Programming is interactive, contextual, scalable, and relevant to systems strengthening. The overall program integrates arts and culture with public health information and programming in order to move forward a highly innovative awareness, education, and community-building and public health prevention/mitigation effort while maintaining highest standards of artistic merit.

To bring this program to your community, contact Pamela Pine, PhD, MPH, Founder and CEO. Write to pamelajpine@gmail.com.