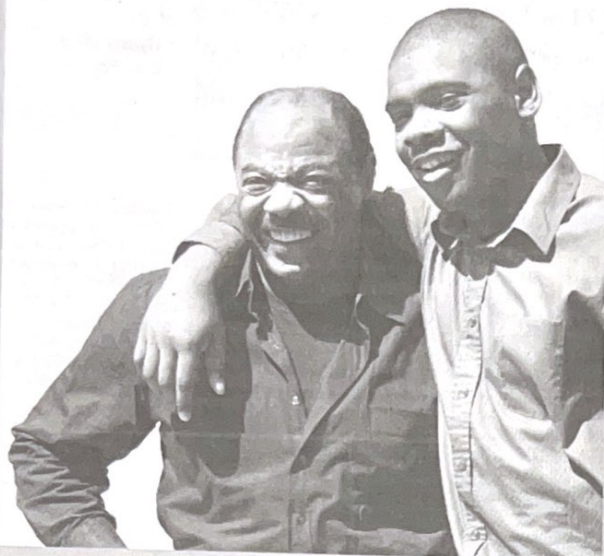


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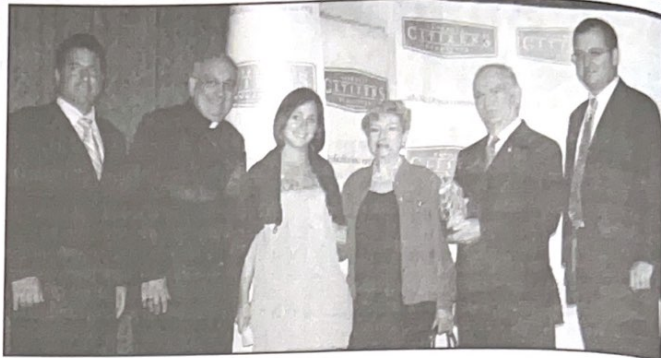


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Catholic Legislator of the Year

The Catholic Citizens Committee presents State Senator Serf Maltese of Queens with its Outstanding Catholic Legislator of the Year Award. Pictured, from left, are George Prezioso, Chairman of the CCC; Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio; Kerry McCabe; Senator and Mrs. Serf Maltese and CCC President, Marty Cottingham. The Catholic Citizens Committee is an organization dedicated to advancing the interest of the Catholic Community in the public square. The reception at the Hilton Hotel was attended by over 200 people and raised \$85,000. For more information about CCC log on to www.catholiccitizenscommittee.org.

43 People Are Trained to Teach Child Safety Program

BY SISTER PAT HUDSON, OP

Forty-three people gathered on a recent Saturday at Immaculate Conception Center, Douglaston, to be trained to present the child safety program, Child Lures, to protect our most precious possession, our children.

Sister Marie Mackey, CSJ, started the day prayerfully with a meditative chant that reminded us that we need to "keep watch and pray." She invited the group to reflect on readings from Matthew and set the tone of the day by inviting the group into a discernment process that was completed at the end of the day.

The participants came from all parts of the diocese and from a wide variety of backgrounds. The members of the group understood that they would be serving parish religious education programs throughout the diocese at the invitation of the pastors or directors of religious education.

Some religious education programs have successfully presented Child Lures in a program developed in the parish and they will continue to do so. Others have asked for assistance. They will receive that assistance through our Child Safety Presenters sometime during the fall semester. Catholic schools have Child Lures as part of the curriculum and it is taught by the teachers in the schools.

The Child Lures trainers, Maryanne Behan, from St Thomas Aquinas, Flatlands, and Donna Spoto, Holy Trinity, Whitestone, presented the program using two different models. Maureen Kelly-Valenzuela, a member of Mary Queen of Heaven, Mill Basin, described the presentations as "sensitive and with dignity."

A third model will be presented during the follow-up meeting in two weeks for those who have discerned that they will be

Child Lures presenters. At that meeting they will receive all the props and manuals that they need to demonstrate the "lures." The material also includes a DVD developed by Laura Ciralo of Sacred Heart, East Glendale, with a PowerPoint presentation so that a presenter might choose to use whatever is practical and comfortable in a particular situation.

Msgr. Guy Massie, a Safe Environment advisory board member, talked to the group about the importance of the work they are about to do. He spoke of the misunderstanding of some people who think Child Lures is a sex education program. It is not.

We are aware that the Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education Board of Education, regulation A-750 speaks of the establishment of child abuse prevention and intervention teams. Our program does not conflict with what is established in the public schools. Rather it provides us with an opportunity to teach the children that they are precious in the eyes of God and no one should harm them. It looks at child safety from a unique perspective.

"What can be more useful than protecting God's children?" said Mary Ann Kellen from St. Helen, Howard Beach. Robbin Johnson from Christ the King, Springfield Gardens, called the training day "profound."

It is important to give credit where credit is due. The Child Lures presenter training came out of a conversation with four faith-filled, dynamic women, Donna Spoto, Pat Brintle, Laura Ciralo and Maryanne Behan. The Safe Environment Office supported their idea and the day became a reality. Bishop DiMarzio approved the program in the spring of 2008.

Sister Pat Hudson, OP, is the diocesan director of the Safe Environment Program.