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“Missionary Disciples” is a publication of the Catholic Diocese of Fairbanks that serves northern and western Alaska. Its purpose is to provide a regular opportunity for all ministries throughout the Diocese to share information so our tremendous diversity may enrich our common mission of service to the people of our Diocese.

If you have questions or suggestions, please contact David Schienle at the Chancery at (907) 374-9500 or dschienle@cbna.org.

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Catholic Diocese of Fairbanks Diocese of Fairbanks
A Message of Reconciliation and Healing to Our Native Alaskan Peoples
In the past few weeks, news outlets have begun reporting on the discovery of large, unmarked graves near Catholic mission sites across North America. These graves contain the remains of hundreds of indigenous children who were cared for by the church’s boarding schools in the past century.

I know these news stories are disturbing and that for some Native people, they have triggered renewed sorrow and anxiety about their own trauma. Sadly, the Church’s missionaries did not always respect the inherent dignity of the indigenous people they encountered. In our own diocese, Yup’ik, Athabaskan, and Inupiat people were at times subjected to what is best described as ethnic abuse, in which their Native language, culture, and traditions were vilified and suppressed. The damage was especially devastating when visited on children, who were taught to hate an essential part of themselves at the same time they were told how much God loves them.

Abuse of any kind is always wrong because it violates the inherent dignity God has stamped into every person, that makes each of us sacred and filled with His beauty, goodness, and truth. I have met many individuals who suffered abuse from those in the Church, who have shared that the deep wounds followed them their whole lives and created serious if not insurmountable barriers to a trusting relationship with Christ and His Church. It has been so tragic to witness the effects of abuse on very real people in our diocese.

I am coming up on seven years as the Bishop of the Diocese of Fairbanks. I have had the honor of visiting 37 of our remote parishes located in Native Alaskan villages. This has been a great blessing and clearly has helped me grow to understand the Native Alaskan cultures. During these travels through a network of river systems, it was pointed out to me where small communities used to exist decades ago. As we know, in many of these places, the grave markers, wooden crosses, have deteriorated by weather over time. The current dialogue is a reminder that we increase our care and concern for sacred burial grounds.

This resilience is alive today and is very much embedded in the fabric of the culture of our Native Alaskan peoples. I personally recommit myself and the Diocese of Fairbanks to walking side-by-side with our Alaska Native communities as they begin to heal from the wounds of the past. We humbly pray that our Native brothers and sisters will permit us to accompany them as we move toward reconciliation and becoming a truly loving family of God. My great hope is that these news stories will not further wound or divide us but nurture a greater awareness of this innate sacredness in every person, especially among those for whom abuse has deeply wounded their self-image.

May God bless each of you, and fill you with his grace, beauty, goodness and truth that lives within you!

Sincerely in Christ,

Bishop Chad W. Zielinski
Diocese of Fairbanks
Staff Changes

Rural Ministries

Marilyn Sipary
With mixed feelings, we thank Marilyn Sipary for her ministry and wish her well. Over the past eight years, Marilyn has become well aware of the needs and concerns of the local parishes, the region’s vision and mission, and the diocese’s needs. Her concern and creativity have helped keep the mission before us and keep the vision of local leadership alive! ~ Sr. Kathy Radish, O.S.F.

Adeline (Addie) Journey
Waqaa everyone. I’m excited to be part of the Support Staff here in St. Mary’s. I am daughter of John and Marcia Thompson. I graduated from the Mission in 1985. I also graduated from Sheldon Jackson College in Sitka in 1988, where I met my husband, Andy. We’re blessed with eight children: David, Rachel, Chris, Tatianna, Wasuli, Connor, Jeremy, and Dylan. We’re also blessed with two grandchildren Cayden and Cayleigh. I’m the youngest of 10. Lilly Afcan is one of my sisters. You may all remember her from the Native Ministry program when it first started. As you can see from my picture, I enjoy the subsistence life here in St. Mary’s. I love to yuraq (Eskimo dance).

Office of Faith and Family

Hello, my name is Ben Colwell, the new Director of Faith and Family Formation. Most of my life I called the Midwest my home until moving to Alaska as a Catholic missionary. I’m a graduate of Loras College in Dubuque, Iowa, where I studied both English and Theology. I am excited to step into this office and bring my passion for creativity, art, and faith together to best serve the church.
Faith and Family Formation

by Ben Colwell, Director of the Office of Faith and Family Formation

Young Adult Feast and Faith is Back

The Covid-19 pandemic put up a lot of barriers for various ministries causing a lot of us to take a step back from the hands-on activities that built up our faith. Questions began to be asked, such as “what will it be like when we go back” or “will there be anything for us when we go back?” Thankfully, the office of Faith and Family Formation had an answer to both these questions. In late August, young adults from the community came together for the return of Feast and Faith, a night focused on community building as well as spiritual formation. Those in attendance played games, had hardy conversations, and prayed together. It was the first of many to come in the aftermath of this pandemic. For further young adult formation information, join the Catholic Young Adults of Fairbanks Facebook page! https://www.facebook.com/groups/CatholicYAofFairbanks.

Respect Life Month

October is Respect Life Month. Respect for life comes in many forms. Some of the ways you can help the promotion of Respect Life month is through prayer. Consider this month as an opportunity to pray for those who might be suicidal, those who might be facing the death penalty, those who are considering abortion, and anyone else who may be in danger of not upholding the dignity of human life.

Feast and Faith restarted with a bonfire gathering.
Prayer for Life and Dignity
Prayer for Life and Dignity Eternal God, creator and sustainer of life, bless us with the courage to defend all life from conception to natural death. Bless us with the strength to respect all peoples from east to west, from north to south, so that we may truly follow the call of Jesus to be neighbor. We ask this in the name of Jesus, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

40 Days for Life
During Respect Life Month, the Fairbanks community offers this beautiful opportunity to be a beacon of hope for those who may need it by partaking in the 40 Days for Life campaign. The goal of the campaign is to pray for the end of abortion by publicly partaking in a peaceful vigil for 40 days. The 40 days are September 22 – October 31. Please consider signing up for an hour during one of those days. Your prayers and presence are both integral to preserving the dignity of the unborn. More information can be found at https://www.40daysforlife.com/en/fairbanks.

Burial of Rev. Chuck Peterson, S.J.

You may have heard that Pope Francis has announced the topic of the 16th worldwide Synod of Bishops. The title of the synod, to be held in 2023, is “Towards a synodal Church: communion, participation and mission.” The synod will open on October 9th, and the Holy Father has asked every single diocese in the world to participate in the process. So what exactly is a synod? A synod is a gathering of the bishops with the Holy Father to discuss doctrinal or pastoral issues. Other individuals who have expertise regarding the topic of discussion are also asked to participate. These can be men and women religious, priests, and the laity. The synod offers suggestions to the pope, which may or may not become official teachings at a later time. Literally
speaking, the word “synod,” derived from the Greek words syn meaning “together” and hodos meaning “road or way,” means a “coming together.”

The synod preparatory document asks all the dioceses of the world to consider, pray and discuss the following: “The fundamental question that guides this consultation of the People of God...is the following: A synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, ‘journeys together.’ How is this ‘journeying together’ happening today in your particular church [i.e. your diocese]? What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our ‘journeying together’?” Over the next several months, Ben Colwell, our director for Faith and Family Formation, will begin to organize questionnaires, talking groups, and conferences at the different parish, regional and diocesan levels so that all of the faithful have an opportunity for prayerful participation in this process. The discussion will culminate in a document that will be sent to the USCCB. The input from our diocese will be combined with input from the rest of the dioceses of the United States and sent to Rome, where it will be used to facilitate the gathering of the universal synod in 2023.

If you are interested in reading more about the particulars of the synod, the preparatory documents can be found here: https://www.synod.va/en.html

The official opening of the Synod on Synodality here in the Diocese of Fairbanks will take place with a Mass celebrated by Bishop Chad at Sacred Heart Cathedral at 11:00 am on October 17th. The Mass will be live-streamed.

Vocation Update

by Rev. Robert Fath, Vicar General and Director of Vocation

The beginning of September means the beginning of school for our students around the diocese. The same is true for our three seminarians: Dcn. Piotr Oprych, Dcn. Dominik Wojcik and Mr. Josh Miller. After spending the summer here in the diocese Dcn. Piotr and Dcn. Dominik have returned to Ss. Cyril & Methodius Seminary for their final semester of studies. Once they have completed their academic formation in December, they will return to the diocese to be ordained priests. Their ordination Mass is scheduled for Wednesday, January 12th, at 10:00 am. While it is always exciting to have an ordination, this particular ordination Mass will be a first for the Diocese of Fairbanks. Never in our history have we ordained two men to the priesthood at the same time! Pray for our transitional deacons as they enter their final months of preparation.

Josh Miller spent the summer in Omaha, NE, at the Institute for Priestly Formation. The IPF is an 8-week intensive spirituality program that allows seminarians to grow in their love of God and desire to serve the Church as priests. Josh found the program to be a wonderful experience. Josh returned to the diocese in mid-August for his pastoral internship year. Until the middle of May 2022, Josh will be working in the diocese, learning about the ebb and flow of priestly ministry. While in Fairbanks, he will work at Sacred Heart Cathedral, assisting with liturgies, religious education, sacramental preparation, and learning about the aspects of parish administration. Josh will also spend time at the Catholic Schools of Fairbanks, the ICC Soup Kitchen, Fairbanks Correctional Center, and Fairbanks Memorial Hospital. He will also have an opportunity to spend time in the villages, getting to know our Native peoples. He will spend six weeks in the Fall out on the coast and six weeks in the Spring in the interior. Continue to pray that the Lord will send workers into His vineyard. If you know of a young man who may be interested in discerning a call to the priesthood or religious life, let the Vocations Office know at vocations@cbna.org.
The Diocese of Fairbanks welcomes Fr. Juan Martin Sierra from the Institute of the Incarnate Word (abbreviated IVE). Fr. Juan was raised in the northern part of Argentina, in an area with the most Catholics. The second child of seven, his father was a lawyer and his mother a teacher for disabled children. While studying law in college, he was introduced to the Institute of the Incarnate Word and entered the community. Fr. Juan is not new to the United States. As part of his seminary studies, he attended an IVE seminary in Cheverly, MD, for two years. He was ordained to the priesthood in December of 2005.

The Institute of the Incarnate Word, the religious community Fr. Juan is a member of, focuses on evangelization of the culture, also called inculturation of the Gospel. Not only are they entrusted to the care of many parishes, but they also run several houses for handicapped children, teach at universities, and operate several schools. They minister in 42 countries. Known for working in some of the most challenging locations, they have ministers in countries such as Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Taiwan, Papua New Guinea, Russia, and
some former Soviet Union Eastern Europe countries.

After ordination, Fr. Juan was then sent to Tajikistan from 2006-2007, the smallest and poorest country of the former Soviet Union. The parish that he served at was only 50 miles from the border of Afghanistan. In the whole country, there were only 300 Catholics. In the 1980s, the Christian population of Tajikistan was about 30% until the fall of the Soviet Union, when the Taliban tried to take over the country. So, as a result of the civil war, many Europeans left the country. Today only 1% of the population is Christian.

His next assignment was in Kazakhstan from 2008-2009, the largest and wealthiest of the former Soviet Union countries, the exact opposite to Tajikistan. Kazakhstan’s Christian population makes up about 30%. There are many Catholics in the northern part of the country. Fr. Juan was in the south of the country with a small Catholic population. The parish had about 60 parishioners.

For the last 11 years, Fr. Juan has been working in his home country. His last assignment was in a rural community with a parish boundary of 1,500 square miles. He put 50,000 miles a year on his vehicle driving to 24 rural schools located in the parish area. Many of his parishioners did not have water or electricity. Ten thousand parishioners lived in the local town and another ten thousand in remote areas.

For several years, the Diocese of Fairbanks has been reaching out to religious orders worldwide that might be interested in sending...
ministers to the diocese. When Fr. Juan’s provincial offered several possible assignments in the United States, Fr. Juan heard that the diocese does not have a native Spanish-speaking priest. When he heard this, he accepted the assignment for our diocese. Both the diocese and the Hispanic community are very appreciative of his willingness to minister here. Currently, Fr. Juan is assigned to Sacred Heart Cathedral. Fr. Juan shares that if this year goes well, another priest will join him next year, with several religious sisters also expected to arrive.

Rev. Abraham Nemaisa

Rev. Abraham Nemaisa has become the newest priest to arrive in Fairbanks. Rev. Abraham, like Rev. Welcome Chipiro, are from the Diocese of Mutare in Zimbabwe. Rev. Abraham shared that his Bishop asked him to consider coming to the Diocese of Fairbanks, because we needed priests. Reflecting on the missionary priests who came from other countries to Zimbabwe to spread Catholicism, he
happily agreed to continue the church’s mission by coming to Alaska. Fr. Abraham comes from a family of one brother and five sisters. When he was a boy, he altar served, seeing the work of the priests. As a young man, he wanted to do the same and entered seminary. He was ordained in 2015. Fr. Abraham’s first assignment was at St. Paul’s church in Dangamvura. In 2018 he was transferred to St. Charles Lwanga Mission, where there was a Catholic boarding school. He was there when the rains from Cyclone Idai caused a mud slide that devastated the school. Two students and a night watchman were killed in the mud slide. The boarding school converted to a day school while they are repairing. In 2019, he worked at St. James’ Parish, Chipinge, before agreeing to come to Alaska.

He has already helped with Mass at St. Nicholas Church, Sacred Heart Cathedral, and St. Raphael Church. He has found Alaskans just as friendly as people in Zimbabwe. He is adjusting to driving in the United States since, in his home country, they drive the British way, on the left side of the road. He said that one adjustment is the time difference with Zimbabwe. When he calls home at 10 PM, it is 7 AM the next day.

Fr. Abraham would like to say that the first parish in the Diocese of Mutare was founded in 1896. His home parish was the second parish to be founded in 1910. There are many priests and religious who come from his parish. There have been about ten priests ordained, 30 nuns, and many seminarians from his home parish. He said, “We are praying that in Alaska they get more priests and religious.”

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**Rev. Stan Jaszek**

**Lumen Christi Award Winner!**

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Congregation to Rev. Stan Jaszek for becoming one of this year’s Lumen Christi Award Winner. To read about Fr. Stan, go to: [https://bit.ly/3Ay1VSs](https://bit.ly/3Ay1VSs)
Co-directors of the Native Ministry Training Program (NMTP), Dominic and Lala Hunt, started last year at the height of the pandemic lockdown. Now, as villages are opening up, Dominic and Lala discussed some of their goals for the coming year.

They are looking forward to meeting the people in the region and reconnecting with communities and ministers. Lala explained that because people could not gather, families were isolated, lay ministry training had to stop, and parish councils could not meet. Services had to be limited or stopped altogether. Dominic and Lala said they see the need for family ministries in providing resources for parents. They want to restart training for lay ministers and help encourage volunteers for

On September 18th, Dominic Hunt was ordained as a Deacon. Bishop Chad Zielinski is joined with Dcn. Dominic Hunt, his wife Lala, and Rev. Stan Jaszek.
Sorrow

by Rev. Tom Kuffel, Pastor of Immaculate Conception Church, Fairbanks, Alaska

Sorrow misses — looses. We lose our beloved. We miss our friend. We have lost something so dear to us that the sword of sorrow pierces our hearts. Incapacitated, we can do nothing to ease the pain, the woundedness, and the loss.

Empty of feeling, we enter into the mystery of desolation. Sorrow creates a desert within our soul, and our life burns away. What was once a blooming paradise now becomes a wasteland, for we miss what we once had.

Sorrow creates passion. Passion literally means suffering, and when we enter the passion of our sorrow, we feel the weight of death, for that, is the ultimate sorrow: unredeemable loss. We face not merely the death of a loved one but their eternal loss.

Jesus predicts his death and reveals the horror of it: crucifixion, that death in which sadistic and vicious attacks shame and defame our very dignity. This prophecy already predicted by Isaiah exposes the shame of sorrow. We lose our dignity through inhumane atrocious and violent acts that brutalize our total being: mind, body, heart, and soul.

Yet, sorrow in all it’s power and passion that causes deep and depressing pain is the very means of healing if we understand sorrow. Sorrow exposes what we lost through sin: divine dignity and beauty. Sorrow unveils for us the meaning behind the crucifixion of Christ. What He endured is what we have become.

We, everyone to whatever degree, have become brutal, cruel, and barbarous. We have become beastly in our behavior, wanting to shame one another, but through the crucifixion of Christ, our transgressions have been borne, and our wounds have been healed. Yet, healing of sorrow comes at a price. I must expose my shame and repent to be healed. I embrace my cross and endure my passion, and unite myself to Christ totally.
Old Glory, A Love Story
By Patty Walter

Last June, as we were starting to resurface from the pandemic, I found myself searching for unity in a world that seemed incredibly torn. Through all the rhetoric, name-calling, and hatred being penned and cast on social media and within the news, I knew for certain that our American Flag still stood for everything it always had and that we needed patriotism now more than ever. After all, the American Flag has survived battles, inspired songs, and evolved in response to the growth of the country and the “Republic for which it stands.”

Can you imagine the inspiration Francis Scott Key felt on September 14, 1814, when he saw the huge garrison flag—measuring 30 feet by 42 feet—still waving at Fort McHenry after we defeated an advancing British fleet? The sight of the flag and the ineffectiveness of a 25-hour bombardment convinced the British to retreat. Major George Armistead had the flag ordered in 1812 desiring “to have a flag so large that the British will have no difficulty seeing it from a distance.” Many students will learn of the War of 1812, but do they learn of the influence of our American Flag? These were the thoughts that filled my mind when I drove through our city wondering, “where are all our flags?”

My thoughts turned to my childhood and how my parents had instilled love of God and Country into the eight of us. I thought of my Dad, who had served 20 years in the United States Army, an enlisted man, only to retire and continue to serve our country through Civil Service. A helicopter & fixed wing tech rep, he had served in Vietnam, Korea, and the Gulf War. Dad loved America. He loved the flag, “Old Glory,” he called her. It’s why his children can’t hear a patriotic song without shedding a tear; for we dearly love “her” too. As a military family, the first thing Dad did upon each new assignment was to raise the flag. To this day, at my mother’s home, there stands a 20-foot flagpole that Dad had raised right outside their 2nd story dining room window so he could bid “her” good morning and good night.
One in five people in the United States experience a mental illness each year. In Alaska, that equates to 108,000 adults throughout the state. Alaskans struggle to get the help they need. NAMI Alaska is trying to change those numbers.

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) is the nation’s largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for millions of Americans affected by mental illness. Our mission is to end the stigma of mental illness. NAMI advocates for access to mental health services, treatment, support, and research and is committed to raise awareness and build hope.

Our programs change lives and reduce stigma.

NAMI Alaska¹ offers a number of on-line programs and support groups, and as well as in-person classes and groups in Anchorage, Fairbanks and Juneau.

On-line educational programs include:

- **NAMI Basics OnDemand** for parents, caregivers and other family who provide care for youth aged 22 or younger who are experiencing mental health systems.

- **NAMI Homefront On-Line Education Program** for families, partners and friends of military service members and Veterans.
  Next On-Line program runs from October 6 to November 10 - **Wednesdays, 5:30 – 7:30 pm Alaska Time**

On-line support groups include: (Sign up at: namialaska.org/online-support-groups)

- **NAMI Family Support Group** – Peer led support group for any adult with a loved one who has experienced symptoms of a mental health condition. (Sign up at: namialaska.org/online-support-groups)
  **On-Line Groups meet:**
  - The first Tuesday of every month from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM
  - The third Wednesday of every month from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM
  - The second and fourth Saturdays of every month from 9:00 AM to 10:30 AM

- **NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group** – peer-lead support group for individuals (age 18+) who have experienced symptoms of a mental health condition.
  Online Groups meet:
  - The second and fourth Thursday of every month from 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm
In July Bishop Chad Zielinski visits St. Peter in Chains Church in Ruby, AK. From left to right: Bro. Bob Ruzicka, OFM, Bishop Chad Zielinski, Rev. Joe Hemmer, OFM, Bro. John, OFM
ONLINE FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP

Support for family members and caregivers affected by mental illness in Alaska

Share your experiences, discuss challenges, and receive support in a confidential environment

Join from your computer, tablet or smartphone

No cost to participate

No cost to participate.
To learn more and view meeting schedule go to:

www.supportgroupcentral.com/NMAK

To pre-register and access meetings:

1. Go to: www.supportgroupcentral.com/NMAK
2. Click on: “Not yet a Member?”
3. Create an account and return to the NMAK page
4. Register for an upcoming meeting under “Our Meeting Calendar”
5. Log on up to 15 minutes before the scheduled meeting time

NAMI Alaska
For more information, email alaskanami@gmail.com
Roll up your sleeves for a night of fun and games in support of our schools on Oct. 9.

CAN WE DEAL YOU IN?

10-09-2021 | WWW.HIPOWAUCTION.COM | (907) 313-3291

Virtual auction & dinner event in support of the Catholic Schools of Fairbanks.

Schedule of Events
5 - 6 p.m. Dinner Delivered
6 - 8 p.m. Virtual Event
8 p.m. Raffle Drawings
All Week: Online Bidding
Sign up for a dinner box and purchase raffle tickets (Jeep Grand Cherokee from Gene's Chrysler Dodge Jeep RAM or Alaska Airlines ticket vouchers) at hipowauction.com.
October is Respect Life Month

Safe Environment Office

FYNDout Free 2021 Fall Banquet Fundraiser

Friday, October 15, 2021
At The Westmark Hotel
6:00-8:00 Dinner & Keynote
Learn More At:
FYNDOUTFREE.COM/2021-BANQUET

Living in the Image and Likeness of God:

Excerpt From: A Pastoral Letter From The Catholic Bishops of Alaska

"Human life is sacred precisely because its origin is from God, is sustained by God, and is ordered to return to God. This biblical understanding is the basis for the Church’s teaching that all life, from conception to natural death, is sacred and holds an inherent dignity that must be protected.

Human life participates in divine life by grace. Thus, every child conceived in the womb deserves protection and has a right to be born. Every elderly person, as well as anyone living with a disability or terminal illness deserves love and respect for his or her dignity, even in sufferings. No matter what difficulties or sufferings any human life embraces and endures, it is valued and always sacred."
If A Child Discloses Abuse:

HERE ARE SOME TIPS-

- Stay Calm! Based on your reaction, your child will decide how to feel.
- Listen carefully
- Tell your child it was not his/her fault and that you love them.
- Tell your child they are believed, safe, and did the right thing in telling you.
- Report the abuse to local law enforcement and the Office of Children's Services. They will get you the help you need.

Warning Signs:

IN YOUNG CHILDREN:

- Regressive behavior
- Bed Wetting
- Thumb sucking
- Fearfulness
- Hesitation to be around a certain adult.

IN TEENS:

- Self-harm behaviors
- Excessive anger or depression
- High risk sexual behavior
- Eating disorders
- Alcohol and drug use.

INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM "PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN" DEVELOPED BY THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS
How Can You Prevent Your Child Becoming A Victim?

- Talk with your children about appropriate boundaries
- Let them know that they can come to you if a situation makes them uncomfortable
- Explain methods used by those who wish to take advantage of them
- Check their social media accounts to make sure they do not disclose personal information or post/send inappropriate photos
- Help them to understand that when using social media, they should not befriend people whom they do not know. Unfortunately, adults often pose as teens in their quest to lure and groom young people
- Because research shows that teens often tell a friend rather than a parent, coach your children to tell a trusted adult if their friend discloses to them inappropriate behavior by an adult or online “friend”
- Let your children know that you will not punish them if they report suspicious or inappropriate behavior.

Model appropriate boundaries

- If a young child does not want to hug or kiss someone, don’t force it
- Teach them about the private parts of their body and the anatomical names for each.
- Be careful about posting personal or private information online, including photos
- Speak up if you notice that an adult appears to be violating appropriate boundaries.
- Report any concerns to the pastor, principal, or the adult’s supervisor

REPORT ABUSE OF CHILDREN
CALL 1-800-478-4444

AND

CALL LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

Child Abuse is against the law and needs to be reported.

IF YOU NEED HELP CONTACT OUR VICTIM ASSISTANCE COORDINATOR CYNTHIA KLEPASKI. CALLS ARE CONFIDENTIAL!
(907) 750-1132

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