

## *December 2011 LaPrensa Article – English Version*

In the last couple of weeks, the main stream media was overload with the sexual abuse scandal of Penn State. Parents all over United States became frighten thinking about the safety of their children.

The subject also arrived to *El Centro de la Mujer*, where the participants, mostly mothers, became concerned with the breaking news as well. In open discussion, the women expressed their feelings about it and also stated how careful parents need to be about where their children stay and who to trust. Traditionally, they said, the Latino community doesn't talk about these things. It seems that there is a tendency to blame the victim. "People will always say what did she wear?" E.P. said. "Or what did she say to provoke him", M.M. added

Participants agreed that in the country of origin, such as Mexico, Argentina, Nicaragua, victims and their families usually ask other family members for help. "It is very rare to go to the police for safety", M.C. stated

It seems like the law is not very strict and when it comes to children, sometimes nobody believes them. "And especially if the abuse happens within the family", A.Z. replied.

When the question was asked if the Penn Sate sexual abuse allegations was relevant to Latinos, they all said "yes".

"Definite! Sexual abuse of children is unfortunately of epidemic proportions everywhere. Ethnic communities are not immune," stated *Cece Norwood*, founder of *Nirvana Now* and hostess and facilitator of *the Sexual Abuse Prevention Awareness Treatment Healing Coalition of NW Ohio (SA PATH)*. And she added "Common among ethnic communities is not talking about it publically, and often times not privately, because of cultural norms designed to silence women and girls. Nonetheless, The Penn State tragedy is an opportunity for ethnic communities to have open discussions about the sexual abuse of their children so it can stop. It is an opportunity to openly discuss the horrific damage done to children which in turn negatively affects families and ultimately the ethnic community at large. If ethnic communities are to prosper and grow all parts of the community must be healthy, starting with the children"

*Ms. Norwood* added "People will now understand the importance of the following facts: last year 13% of Lucas County Children Services cases were because of child sexual abuse, 116 sex offenders in Lucas and Wood County Sheriffs' custody, right now (more leaving in our neighborhoods on probation or parole), similar to other races, the median age for Latina reported child sexual abuse is 9 years of age, 21.2% of Latinas report having experienced sexual violence in the past, it is estimated 7.9% Latinas will experience some form of sexual violence in her lifetime, a 2009 study found that Latinas had a higher prevalence of child sexual abuse than their white counterparts, and a serial child sexual abuse offender will abuse, on average, 400+ kids in his/her career. Maybe now people will want to do something to stop sexual abuse of children".

*El Centro de la Mujer*, among other services, offers support and advocacy to Latina victims and survivors of abuse. A representative of El Centro participates in the monthly

meetings of the SA PATH Coalition in order to support their efforts and to obtain the latest information around the subject.

Ms. Norwood will be visiting El Centro de la Mujer on Monday, December 12<sup>th</sup> to open a dialogue about child abuse and will share some facts about the impact.

For more information about her presentation, contact El Centro de la Mujer at 419-708-0668 or email [elcentrodelamujer@yahoo.com](mailto:elcentrodelamujer@yahoo.com)