



Children's Health Fund

From: **Children's Health Fund**
Contact: Rebecca Hut 212-535-2163/cell 917-613-2089 RHut@chfund.org
Caitlin O'Neill 212-981-5275 / cell 646-594-5817 Caitlin_o'neill@dkcnews.com

IN THE WAKE OF A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS IN NEW ORLEANS, 4 YEARS AFTER THE STORMS, CHILDREN'S HEALTH FUND PROVIDES FREE TRAINING TO OVER 300 MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS & SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

BULLYING: TREATING THE CHILDREN, HEALING THE SYSTEM

***Will be presented by Dr. Susan Lipkins, PhD a nationally
recognized expert in the field of bullying & hazing.***

NEW ORLEANS, LA– The **Children's Health Fund** (CHF), a national organization that advocates for and develops programs that provide clinical care to children in need, to host an all-day free workshop which will be led by psychologist, **Susan Lipkins, PhD** an expert in the field of bullying and hazing. Karen Savoy, of St. Amant Louisiana, founder of Mothers Against School Hazing, will also provide insight for 300+ mental health professionals, school administrators and juvenile justice workers at the Radisson Airport Hotel in New Orleans on **Friday, August 28th, 2009**.

Hurricane Katrina had a profound effect on New Orleans' Mental Health System which has yet to recover. Recent budget cuts are threatening the closure of The New Orleans Adolescent Hospital on September 1, 2009.

“The lack of funding and lack of recovery in the Gulf coupled with the shortage of mental health professionals in the area makes access to mental health services extremely difficult and potentially very damaging for these children,” Dr. Irwin Redlener, president Children's Health Fund, said. “That is why CHF is committed to continuing its clinical work in the Gulf, advocating nationally on behalf of all children, and investing in important trainings like this one.”

Dr. Lipkins will focus the all-day training on the psychological underpinnings of how victims, bystanders and bullies are created as well as specific bullying intervention strategies.

According to Dr. Lipkins, bullying is an intentional act of relational aggression that is meant to harm a victim either physically or psychologically. Bullies usually operate alone

or in small groups and choose to victimize individuals who they perceive as vulnerable. Hazing is a process, based on a tradition that is used by groups to discipline and to maintain a pecking order. Regardless of consent, the rituals require individuals to engage in activities that are physically and psychologically stressful.

Our current “*Vulture Culture*” supports bully behaviors that are increasingly apparent in our schools and in cyberspace. We need to address these issues as a community, in order to stabilize our children and decrease relational violence. “I am pleased to participate in this important event. I intend to bring hope and help to those attending” states Susan Lipkins. PhD.

The need for a psychosocial training program developed following the Gulf Coast Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in August, 2005. Days after the storms, Children’s Health Fund responded to the urgent needs of children and families, and it became evident that these hard-hit communities required medical and mental health services. As a result, CHF established three permanent medical and mental health programs in New Orleans, LA, Gulfport, MS and Baton Rouge, LA. In addition, the area schools, social service agencies, law enforcement and clergy had critical needs for training and support, given the mental health crisis growing on the Gulf Coast.

“The Children’s Health Fund immediately acted on these providers’ requests for support and began comprehensive trainings on critical topics such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Compassion Fatigue/Burnout in Providers, and to date has held close to 70 workshops that trained over 1,000 local professionals impacting thousands of children,” states Rita Domnitz, MS, Ed. Psych, Assistant Director, National Network, Mental Health Trainings, Children’s Health Fund. “We are thrilled to have Dr. Lipkins join us to support local professionals to enhance their dedicated commitment to children.”

The training was made possible by the support of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

Children’s Health Fund (CHF)

Founded in 1987 by pediatrician/advocate Irwin Redlener, MD, and singer/songwriter Paul Simon, the Children's Health Fund (CHF) works nationally to advocate on behalf of all children and to develop health care programs for the most medically under-served population- homeless and disadvantaged children. CHF's 22 pediatric programs and 2 affiliates in 15 states and DC have provided essential primary care services in more than 1.8 million patient visits via mobile medical clinics. In response to the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, CHF established three permanent projects in the Gulf Coast area, New Orleans, LA, Gulfport, MS and Baton Rouge, LA. For more information about CHF visit: www.childrenshealthfund.org

#