



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF HARRISBURG



www.hbgdiocese.org

Office of Communications

4800 Union Deposit Road
Harrisburg, PA 17111-3710
(717) 657-4804

Immediate Release

December 6, 2018

Contact: Rachel Bryson

(717) 657-4804 ex. 235

rbryson@hbgdiocese.org

www.hbgdiocese.org

Retired State Police Captain to Oversee Roman Catholic Diocese of Harrisburg's Youth Protection Programs

HARRISBURG – A retired Captain who successfully ran the Megan's Law Section of the Pennsylvania State Police will run the Roman Catholic Diocese of Harrisburg's Safe Environment program. Retired Capt. Janet A. McNeal, through her firm Law and Grace Consulting, will review the Diocese's current youth protection programs, develop programs and policies to make any needed improvements and will serve as our Safe Environment Coordinator.

"Captain McNeal brings a wealth of experience with her," said Bishop Ronald W. Gainer. "As a contractor with the Diocese, she is a neutral party, with no conflicts of interest, who has dedicated her entire professional career to seeing that justice is served and survivors of a range of crimes, but specifically sexual crimes, are heard and supported.

"As part of her role, Capt. McNeal will review every clergy child abuse case reported to the Diocese, in order to evaluate what went wrong and help us continue improving our youth protection policies and trainings, as a means of reducing the risk for future abuse."

McNeal brings 26 years of law enforcement investigative and policy development experience to this position. She has a three year contract with the Diocese and will operate independently, reporting her recommendations directly to Bishop Gainer. McNeal has been granted complete access to all the Diocese's records. In addition to reviewing every case reported to the Diocese, McNeal will also meet with survivors to hear their stories and determine what stage they are at in the healing process.

"I'm a mother, a grandmother, a police officer, a Protestant and I've dealt with sex offenders for most of my career," McNeal said. "I'm here for the survivors. I want to hear

their stories, learn what stage of healing each survivor is at and work with them so they are no longer a victim of abuse, but are victorious at finding healing.

“I’ll be dealing with the past, present and future of sexual abuse in the Church,” McNeal added. “I’ll be reviewing every case reported and will speak with the survivors. Already in my short time working with the Diocese, it is clear that Bishop Gainer is serious about correcting the mistakes of the past, ensuring survivors receive the support they need and the safety of our children.”

McNeal will operate as a contractor and be independent of the Diocese. In addition to reviewing all previous abuse reports and supporting survivors, McNeal will also work with parish pastors/administrators, parish staff, school administrators/principals and appropriate Diocesan department heads to ensure that all adults who come in contact with minors are effectively screened and trained, according to the Diocese’s regulations, policies and procedures. She will also ensure that children in the Diocese’s Catholic schools and Religious Education programs participate in the required Safe Environment training program.

“I truly believe that I’ve been called to do this,” McNeal said. “I’ve been involved in the church my entire life. I’ve been married to a member of the (Methodist) clergy for 45 years. My role is to determine where we need to improve and make sure survivors are finding healing.”

During her 26 years with the State Police, McNeal was assigned as the chief administrator for the Megan’s Law Sexual Offender Registry for the entire Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. In this role, she oversaw the entire operations for this department, including developing policies and procedures, developing a plan to automate the offender registration process and overseeing the development of the offender website.

McNeal has also served on crisis response teams and ecumenical taskforces for the United Methodist Church and is a licensed private investigator.

To learn more about McNeal and the steps the Diocese’s has taken to reduce the risk of abuse, please visit www.YouthProtectionHBG.com.

###