



An Educational Partnership with USA Gymnastics to
Advance Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Efforts

Sexual abuse is a devastating crime that affects far too many children and youth in communities and organizations across the nation. Our hearts go out to the many survivors of these crimes who drive our commitment to prevent and stop all forms of child abuse.

In 2012, Child Lures Prevention/Teen Lures Prevention accepted an invitation to be an Educational Partner with USA Gymnastics and its We Care and Clubs Care awareness campaigns, in an effort to help prevent child sexual abuse. We continue to readily serve in this capacity in 2016, and support the important steps USA Gymnastics is taking to help ensure the health and personal safety of each and every one of its member athletes.

Over the past 10 years, USA Gymnastics has implemented [Policies & Procedures](#), promoted Awareness Campaigns for [Member Gym Clubs](#), Member Athletes & [Athlete Families](#) and provided [Educational Resources](#) to prevent inappropriate behaviors and combat sexual misconduct within its sport.

Although child sexual abuse is a challenging issue, and often difficult for adults to discuss, it can be done. In an effort to keep teens healthy and safe, USA Gymnastics President Steve Penny direct-mailed Teen Lures Prevention's "Let's Talk Teens Parent Handbook" to the parents of every 13-year-old member athlete. Right away, one mother called to thank Mr. Penny and USA Gymnastics.

Upon reading the "Let's Talk Teens Parent Handbook," the mother shared it with her gymnast daughter and asked her if she had ever experienced any problems with her Gym Club or Coach. The daughter then shared with her mother that her coach had been texting her for some time and, just recently, the texts had become sexual in nature. The mother and daughter immediately reported the inappropriate texts to local police and their Gym Club. The Member Gym Club alerted all Club Parents and additional girls came forward with evidence of similar sexual texts from the same coach. The coach was arrested.

These girls were each spared further harassment and possible sexual abuse because USA Gymnastics made an organizational commitment to help prevent inappropriate behaviors and sexual misconduct by educating parents, athletes and member Gym Clubs - and providing them with the tools to do so. *(In addition to their accessible [We Care website articles & resources](#), USA Gymnastics has direct-mailed 50,000 'Let's Talk Teens' parent handbooks to 13-year-old member athletes' parents, and over 76,000 "Think First & Stay Safe Parent Guide"s to 9-year-old member athletes' parents since 2013.)*

Every child has a right to be safe and live free of abuse. If each child-serving organization would make an organizational commitment to providing professionals and parents/caregivers with effective prevention resources, then together we will help stop child sexual abuse. Let's all step up and do our part!

Child Lures Prevention/Teen Lures Prevention looks forward to a continued educational partnership with USA Gymnastics as USA Gymnastics strengthens its policies and reporting procedures to help ensure athletes can play, practice and perform in an abuse-free environment.

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