



Survivors Network of those  
Abused by Priests

Fall 2015



I am writing to you as an abuse survivor and someone who has been involved with SNAP for 20 years. I can honestly say SNAP has changed my life for the better. Your support of SNAP and its mission to protect the vulnerable, heal the wounded and expose the truth helps connect survivors around the world, and it is in that spirit that I encourage you to make a gift of \$75 or more today. I can tell you first-hand how powerful those connections can be. **This is my story.**

My childhood abuse began in the spring of 1964 in a small town within the Diocese of Worcester, MA. *I was 11 years old, and the priest, age 36, was Fr. David Holley.* For a boy who had not yet gone through puberty, his persistent sexual demands were a lot to contend with. Then, eighteen months after he arrived, the priest suddenly left town. My abuse was over, but the fallout and the secret remained.

As an adult, I didn't realize the significance of what had happened to me. It also did not occur to me that 10 or 20 years after he had assaulted me, he would still be molesting children in other parts of the country.

My life-changing moment arrived on December 16, 1992. I was sitting at my kitchen table, leafing through the *Boston Globe*, when I saw a small story about two guys from New Mexico accusing a former Massachusetts priest of child sex abuse in the 1970s. It was Father Holley. With much dismay, I realized that he had remained a priest for some 30 years, having assignments in three states in the Southwest after leaving Massachusetts.

I contacted one of the victims. He had recovered his memories, tracked down Fr. Holley in Denver, and searched out other Holley victims in Alamogordo, NM. At last count, there were 29. This brave man challenged me to set the record straight, and let it be known that the problems with Holley had started back in Massachusetts in the 1960s. If Worcester officials had taken proper action, so many kids would have been safe. He said to me: "It is a rare occasion when someone has an opportunity to take a stand on an issue and affect the lives of countless people he will probably never even meet."



Inspired and convinced, I called the *Boston Globe*, told my story, and soon afterwards, had my picture on the front page of *USA Today*. **And then remarkable things started happening.** Other victims of Fr. Holley came forward. Then, victims of other Worcester priests started speaking out, too. It was as if through my courage, others found their own courage.



I found my way to SNAP two years later, when I was struggling through the complicated legal aspects of my lawsuit. Feeling alone and confused, I reached out to a man in St. Louis whose name I had seen in another *Boston Globe* story. His name was David Clohessy. He took me under his wing and guided me through one of the most emotionally difficult

periods of my life. Two years later, I established the first SNAP chapter in New England and started providing the same guidance to others.

For me, that camaraderie is the essence of SNAP. We are, after all, a survivors *network*. It is the sharing of previously unspoken experiences and the lifting-up that we all do for each other that has made SNAP such a powerful and effective force. *This letter gives me an opportunity to pay tribute to those two survivors who came into my life at crucial moments.* They helped me move forward and changed my life in ways that are still unfolding more than two decades later.

SNAP set the example for survivors supporting one another to come forward and tell their secrets to a society unprepared to hear them, to seek justice and ultimately, to keep kids safe.

Through SNAP outreach efforts, more and more victims are connecting with us and recognizing the power within themselves. This fall when the feature film *Spotlight* is released to worldwide audiences, we expect the related publicity to trigger a wave of victims reaching out to SNAP for support. We expect that the challenge to our financial resources will be greater than at no other time since the *Boston Globe* reporting rocked the Catholic Church in 2002.

**Help us rise to the occasion of this key moment in our history.** Your gift of \$75 or more will support training and materials for leaders taking calls from survivors in crisis. This will enable us to expand our outreach efforts, so we can provide some desperately needed solace and courage to those about to find their voices for the first time.

Gratefully,

Phil Saviano  
New England SNAP Leader

*P.S. Mark your calendars for the November 6, 2015 release date of Spotlight, which chronicles the true story of the investigative reporters on The Boston Globe Spotlight Team and their coverage of the Catholic sex abuse scandal, for which they won the 2003 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service.*