

FROM THE DESK OF

Donna
— RICE HUGHES —



ENOUGH IS ENOUGH®

Making the Internet Safer for Children and Families

DECEMBER 2024



Dear Friend,

I love the Christmas season. I love it because for me, Christmas is magical. It evokes childhood memories, innocence remembered, family, and most importantly, the meaning behind Christmas, which is a message of hope and new beginnings.

I am personally writing this letter, as I do every year, with gratitude in my heart for you, and the opportunity for Enough Is Enough to be your voice and advocate with the media, Big Tech companies and lawmakers to protect children from the atrocities of online exploitation and abuse.

That said, I have a confession. Appealing to friends and supporters like you - who are essential in carrying out our culture-changing and life-saving work - is an uncomfortable ask for me. With that in mind, I humbly invite you to partner with us once again this year to safeguard the precious innocence of children with your most generous year-end gift.

If you have an internet-connected child or teen in your life, you already know that their digital worlds have fully integrated with their offline worlds. So much so that the screen time spent on devices may occasionally require a digital detox or time out, which I highly recommend. As a grandparent of 5, I know this first-hand!

The explosion in the use of social media, gaming platforms, and risks associated with artificial intelligence, along with access to unfiltered public Wi-Fi, has left parents, caregivers and law enforcement officials ill-equipped and overwhelmed as to how to best protect children in the digital world.



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Fighting to prevent the internet-enabled exploitation of children in the digital world since 1994



In 2023, U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy stated that social media is the “*defining public health challenge of our times.*” **Ninety-five percent of 13-17 year olds use social media, with more than a third saying they use it “almost constantly.”** Children are exposed to harmful content ranging from violent and sexual content, to bullying and sextortion. “*We are in the middle of a national youth mental health crisis. Social media is an important driver of that crisis - one that we must urgently address,*” he continued.

Our focus is prevention... an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. In so many instances, kids live with the devastating impact of online sexual exploitation and abuse for a lifetime, yet it's challenging to put a **face on prevention**. One of the ways we do this is by sharing the stories of heroes who have fallen prey to online risks and their paths to recovery and healing, which often include their willingness to educate parents, kids and even lawmakers through their tragedies.

This year, your support enabled EIE to launch a new vehicle to do just that. **"Internet safety with Donna Rice Hughes"**, a video podcast that I am honored to host, directly addresses a myriad of risks facing children in the digital world. Highlighted below are the faces and stories of just a few of my guests.



Last year, the CyberTipline received 36.2 million reports of suspected child sexual exploitation online containing more than 105 million images, videos, and other files. This is a historic high.

John Pizzuro, CEO of Raven and artificial intelligence expert, reported on the podcast that law enforcement only has the resources to prosecute a small percentage of these cases. This means millions of children whose abuse has been captured on film are not receiving the justice they deserve.



Michael Reagan, the eldest son of former President Ronald Reagan and Academy Award-winning actress Jane Wyman, shared his personal experiences on the podcast of his own childhood sexual abuse at the hands of a trusted family friend and the lasting impact it has had on him.

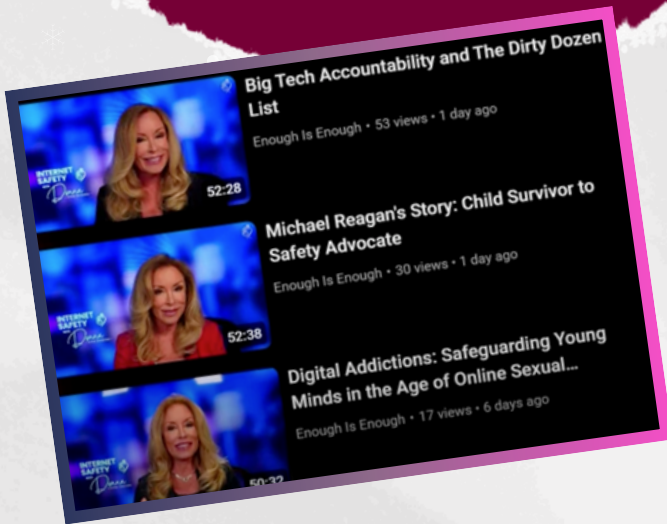
“... it's like you have the abuses, one thing, but it was the images that scared the crap out of me... that those would become public...”

He implored our podcast audience:

“Let every parent, every grandparent, soak this in... your child is not immune. When they say something, even if they hint around because they're already being shamed and maybe blackmailed because images have been taken of them, listen, believe them, have an open conversation with them. Be that safe person so that your kids know they can come to you.”

Faces behind the

Movement



The average age of first exposure to prosecutable pornography is age 12. More than half of kids (ages 13-17) said they viewed violent pornography (rape, choking, someone in pain).

EIE's response to the dire need to protect the innocence of children increasingly being exposed to this harmful content was to ask Congress to increase effort in enforcing federal obscenity laws. As a direct result, Congress included EIE-provided report language in the Appropriations Bill calling on the DOJ to investigate and prosecute major producers and distributors of hardcore adult pornography.

Online enticement increased more than 300% from 2021 to 2023. Harrison Haynes, who was experiencing turmoil as a 5th and 6th grader, turned to online gaming. He ultimately developed an online gaming addiction and was groomed by someone he thought was a "friend", who introduced him to pornography and self-harm content.

“He would send me stuff from the internet... I would wake up in the morning and play games and go to school and come home and play games and watch porn. And like, that was my life.”

This sad story has a good ending. Harrison has broken free from these addictions and is now an outspoken advocate to protect youth online.



Harrison HAYNES

Financial sextortion is one of the fastest growing crimes targeting children. The FBI and international law enforcement have issued a joint warning about a global financial crisis, following an explosion in incidents where minor boys around the world are being coerced into sending explicit images online and being extorted for money.



Brandon GUFFEY

South Carolina Representative Brandon Guffey shared about the loss of his 17 year-old son, Gavin, who tragically took his own life within hours after becoming a victim of sextortion in July of 2022. When I asked why he thought this tragic crime was escalating, he responded,

“It is a lack of big tech doing the right thing. They have the ability to stop this. There is no reason that they should allow child sex abuse materials to exchange, whether it's over text, whether it's over their platforms.”



“Imagine what a safer internet would look like if we all did our part”
Donna Rice Hughes

Preventing the online exploitation of children is a unifying, non-partisan issue that has widespread bipartisan support at both the federal and state levels of government. **EIE is hard at work as your voice advocating for culture-changing legislation with Congress and state legislatures.** America must ramp up efforts to win the war against the multi-billion-dollar child exploitation, trafficking and pornography criminal enterprises. Big Tech must be held responsible and accountable to put the safety of youth over profits. **We can't continue to fight a raging forest fire with a squirt gun!**



Donald Trump

2024 Children's Internet Safety Presidential Pledge

President-elect Trump has the opportunity to adopt the 2024 Children's Internet Safety Presidential Pledge to ensure the aggressive enforcement and funding of existing laws; the advancement of sound public policies; and the implementation of presidential directives and a robust legislative agenda to prevent child online exploitation.



On September 23rd, EIE sent the bipartisan “**2024 Children’s Internet Safety Presidential Pledge**” to Vice President Harris and former President Trump for signature. **Over 60 supporting organizations and survivor leaders representing millions of Americans joined EIE in calling upon the candidates, if elected, to adopt the Pledge.** I am now in dialogue with top transition team advisors and encouraged that our President-elect will prioritize the prevention of online child exploitation, which he spoke about publicly, and turn the Pledge recommendations into action and national policies.



EIE team with SC Governor Henry McMaster and First Lady Peggy McMaster

We launched the South Carolina initiative to prioritize the prevention of child online exploitation, engaging Governor and First Lady McMaster, Attorney General Wilson, NGOs, law enforcement and faith communities/stakeholders. Additionally, in partnership with the DOJ, EIE is developing the Internet Safety 101 Academy to pilot in S.C. to train parents and law enforcement to be the “first line of defense” to protect kids online.



We have an unparalleled opportunity ahead of us to build on our past victories and successes and move forward in 2025 with an urgency to drive this momentum forward – to do whatever it takes to achieve lasting change one child, one home and one community at a time.

Our distinguished board graciously contributes its time and talent, but also its financial resources to further our work. Will you join us again by investing in our work with your tax-deductible gift to safeguard the innocence and dignity of children in the digital world? Thank you in advance for your generosity. Together, we can make a positive lasting impact for our generation and generations to come.

May you and your loved ones have a wonderful and joy-filled holiday season,

Donna

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