



January 4, 2024

Dear ICAN Partners and Friends,

Since my last Executive Director message, the world has changed in so many ways. These changes have been within our home base and include the emergence of profound state and global challenges.

Because the safety and well-being of children is at the heart of ICAN, we are deeply disturbed by the sad realities of children and families desperately seeking refuge at the borders, and the devastating televised images of young victims in Eastern and Middle Eastern Europe.

These images defy emotional resolution and present the horrific helplessness of children at the hands of powers in control of their survival. And we feel helpless.

Those who have participated in ICAN's Child Death Review Team know this struggle with emotional resolution after each review of a child's brief and tragic life.

Here's a difference: what is learned from these difficult reviews can become lessons for prevention of future tragedies. And it has, not just for the members of the Team, but for doctors, lawyers, social workers, teachers, and community providers who learn of risk factors and missed opportunities. Much of ICAN's focus is based on these findings: Safe Sleep and No-Hit Campaigns, Children's Traumatic Grief and Loss, Safe Surrender, Perinatal

risk, Domestic Abuse, and the critical need to share information among agencies and disciplines.

That's our challenge. – to prevent harm to children as early and effectively as possible, allow them to stay safely in their homes, neighborhoods, and schools and to know when this is not possible. To be the safety net that can save them from lifelong physical and emotional limitations or death.

This is a quote from a new publication by Christina Crawford, ***“I Never Got to Say Goodbye”***:

“When Childhood is spent fearing for your life, avoiding violence, being forever vigilant, there is no time or energy left over to learn the important healthy lessons of childhood – such as trust, friendship, sharing, intimacy, reasonable risk-taking and love.”

Christina was the nation's first public figure to publish on the terrors of being a child victim. She wrote of having no safety net.

So, let's not lose our empathy for the world's children, but unlike the helplessness we feel as the observing audience for global tragedies, we can become empowered to do what we came here to do, - tighten the safety net for vulnerable children in our own neighborhoods.

Dedication

I dedicate this ED message to my favorite cousin, Jack Emmott. Ravaged by polio at age 6 years, he endured a life of pain, surgeries, iron lung, and permanent quadriplegia. His determination and hope led him to a noble practice of family law and advocacy for victims of abuse, disability, discrimination and loss.

These were his words:

"Aren't we all accidental tourists? We have no voice in deciding the time, the date, or place of our birth. We do not select our parents or our brothers and sisters. Our nationality or the color of our skin is not our choice either. Regardless, we are all the same. We are all children of God. Whether we are rich or poor. Have long lives or die too soon. Whether we are disabled or able-bodied. Bookworms or athletes. Confined to a wheelchair with polio. A Purple Heart recipient. Live lives of privilege or poverty or sacrifice. We are all truly accidental tourists."

Last month, Jack Emmott succumbed to the Covid Virus.

Rest in Peace, Jack...what a difference you made.

ICAN Update:

This Fall, our Team said goodbye to three wonderful ICAN managers: Tom Fraser, Nancy Urquilla and Marianne Yamato. Marianne was promoted within DCFS, Tom retired but is staying with us part time through an ICAN Associates Hospital Network grant, and Nancy retired and relocated to a life of travel and sailing in Florida.

The good news is we've welcomed three outstanding new administrators: Toai Griffin, Joyce Tajuna and Peter Sabado. They've hit the ground running to manage many of our Teams and projects. You can learn more about our stellar ICAN Staff on theICAN4kids.org website under Who We Are.

Upcoming ICAN 2024 events:

January 25th at 1:30 p.m., ICAN Annual Policy Committee Meeting: Music Center DTLA

March 28th, Children's Traumatic Grief and Loss Conference,
California Endowment Center

October 10th, ICAN NEXUS Conference, Sheraton Universal
Hotel

Committees and Teams will convene virtually at their scheduled
meeting times.

I wish each of you a very joyful, healthy, and rewarding New Year!

Take care of yourselves and know how important you are, - as a
professional, an advocate, neighbor, family, or friend. Together we
are indeed making a difference.



**Artwork by Aimee Kim, Grand Prize Winner of the 2023 ICAN Student Poster Art
Contest**



***With sincere appreciation,
Deanne Tilton Durfee, Doc. Hc
Executive Director, Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse
and Neglect (ICAN)***

***“Children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they
have never failed to imitate them”***